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Tese de doutoramento

Lillian Hellman's South through Her Characters: A Study of Three Film Adaptations

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Dna. **Mónica Ledo Fernández**

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Dna. **Patricia Viviana Fra López**

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Abstract

The relevance of the study of fictional characters is justified by the fact that, regardless of the medium in which they appear, they represent meaningful experiences for individuals. In particular, the southern film characters adapted from original works by American playwright Lillian Hellman are still of current interest because of their attractive complexity as well as for the regional and universal themes they stand for. This dissertation aims to provide an interpretive analysis of her most representative southern characters in three films of the Classical Hollywood: *The Little Foxes* (1941), *Another Part of the Forest* (1948), and *Toys in the Attic* (1963). For this purpose, an in-depth analysis of characters has been carried out paying attention to both their self-identity and social features. From an eclectic theoretical approach (sociology, southern studies, identity theory, and film character analysis), this study focuses on the social, cultural, political, and economic contexts portrayed in the above-mentioned adaptations without completely losing sight of the original plays. It points out to the relevance of characters for the reception and transmission of socio-cultural issues through cinema. This work confirms that, despite the historical distance with topics belonging to times of the past and located in specific areas of the South of the United States, the understanding and sympathy of the contemporary viewer can be achieved through the connection established with the characters. It also highlights the fact that southern identity does not vanish with the Old South but it mutates and evolves with society and in no case excludes universal traits. The detailed analysis of film characters, rather than the study of the story introduced or the themes themselves, is thus here validated as a practical tool for the understanding of society and the expansion of knowledge of the world and the individual itself.

Keywords: Lillian Hellman, American South, fictional characters, film adaptations, *The Little Foxes*

Resumen

La relevancia del estudio de los personajes de ficción se justifica por el hecho de que, con independencia del medio en el que aparezcan, representan experiencias significativas para los individuos. En particular, los personajes sureños cinematográficos adaptados a partir de las obras originales de la dramaturga americana Lillian Hellman siguen siendo de interés en la actualidad por su atractiva complejidad, así como por los temas regionales y universales que reflejan. El objetivo de esta tesis doctoral es proporcionar un análisis interpretativo de sus personajes sureños más representativos en tres películas del Hollywood clásico: *The Little Foxes* (1941), *Another Part of the Forest* (1948), and *Toys in the Attic* (1963). Para ello, se lleva a cabo un análisis de personajes en profundidad prestando atención tanto a su identidad individual como a sus rasgos sociales. Desde un enfoque teórico ecléctico (sociología, estudios sureños, teoría de la identidad y análisis de los personajes cinematográficos), este estudio se centra en el análisis de los contextos sociales, culturales, políticos y económicos representados en las adaptaciones mencionadas sin perder totalmente de vista las obras originales. Se señala la relevancia de los personajes para la recepción y la transmisión de aspectos socioculturales a través del cine. Este trabajo confirma que, a pesar de la distancia histórica con temas pertenecientes a épocas del pasado y localizados en zonas específicas del sur de los Estados Unidos, la comprensión y la simpatía del espectador contemporáneo se puede obtener a través de la conexión que se establece con los personajes. Destaca también el hecho de que la identidad sureña no desaparece con el Viejo Sur, sino que muta y evoluciona con la sociedad y en ningún caso excluye los rasgos universales. El análisis detallado de los personajes cinematográficos, más que el estudio de la historia presentada o de los temas en sí, se valida de esta forma como una herramienta práctica para la comprensión de la sociedad y la expansión del conocimiento del mundo y del propio individuo.

Palabras clave: Lillian Hellman, Sur, personajes, adaptaciones cinematográficas, *The Little Foxes*

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Resumo en galego

A influencia dos personaxes no público máis aló dos seus mundos ficticios estar en plena expasion. Sen dúbida, os personaxes de ficción poden afectar a nosa conciencia do mundo, as nosas emocións e a nosa percepción da vida. Nun mundo onde as pequenas pantallas pasaron a formar parte da nosa vida cotiá, a percepción dos personaxes fíxose máis intensa e significativa. Seres imaxinarios da gran pantalla e da pequena fundíronse ata certo punto nunha constelación de personaxes en disposición dun fácil acceso ás salas do público, creando así unha experiencia máis tanxible. Polo tanto, os personaxes xa non son entidades estrañas completamente separadas do noso mundo; pola contra, conseguiron máis "características humanas" ao aumentar o contacto entre mundos, facilitando así a relación ou a simpatía con eles, por moi diferentes ou afastadas que sexan as súas experiencias das nosas vidas.

Os personaxes, entendidos como artefactos construídos comunicativamente e coma seres representados con vida interior (Eder, "Analyzing" 73), constrúense porén a partir da imaxinación dos seres humanos como "produtos dunha praxe social" (74) a pesares de estaren dotados dunha vida propia. Polo tanto, os personaxes son especialmente interesantes e atractivos para nós e poden afectar ás nosas experiencias individuais, de xeito que, como se está facendo máis evidente sobre todo no caso das películas, o público tende a identificarse máis cos personaxes que coas historias. Polo tanto, non sería ilóxico considerar que os personaxes que nos captivan son os que fan que as historias sexan memorables. Neste sentido, os personaxes redondos (Forster) dramaturga estadounidense Lillian Hellman (1905–1984) destacan como elementos principais das historias que habitan nos seus mundos ficticios, espazos imaxinados modelados para contar historias ilustrativas de épocas concretas do sur dos Estados Unidos. Polo tanto, as obras de Hellman seguen sendo de interese actual, como o demostran as continuas revisións do Sur e os seus temas, así como os seminarios de estudo das súas obras, obradoiros literarios e representacións teatrais en todo o mundo. A pesar da aparente distancia cos temas e os tempos retratados nos seus dramas, os seus personaxes e como estes contribúen á trama posibilitando unha conexión co espectador, segue chamando ao público contemporáneo.

Nesta liña de razoamento, o obxectivo principal desta tese é a análise interpretativa crítica dos personaxes sureños máis representativos creados pola dramaturga Lillian Hellman que deron o salto do escenario á gran pantalla en tres adaptacións de Hollywood: *The Little Foxes* (1941), *Another Part of the Forest* (1948) e *Toys in the Attic* (1963). Para iso, sen perder a perspectiva das pezas orixinais de Hellman baixo os mesmos títulos e dos contextos sociais, políticos, económicos e culturais retratados en tales artefactos fílmicos, adoptamos para este estudo un enfoque teórico ecléctico que nos permite analizar os personaxes de maior profundidade, prestando atención tanto á súa propia identidade como aos seus trazos sociais, o que nos leva a dar conta do Sur de Lillian Hellman dende un punto de vista integral e con detalle.

Xirando arredor das aventuras e conflitos da familia Hubbard, o título principal e, polo tanto, a peza central desta disertación é *The Little Foxes*, a obra máis recoñecida da autora. Non obstante, como precuela desta e, en consecuencia, presentándonos datos do pasado da familia Hubbard, *Another Part of the Forest* é certamente significativa para unha mellor comprensión tanto dos personaxes como das situacións nas que se verán implicados máis tarde como adultos, xa que nos permite observar o desenvolvemento da súa identidade dende a mocidade. Finalmente, damos un salto no tempo ao sur da Gran Depresión con *Toys in the Attic*, onde nos atopamos cunha familia diferente, os Berniers, que mostran unha vez máis as tribulacións de tres irmáns do Sur dos Estados Unidos en relación ao diñeiro así coma os seus sentimentos, obxectivos e preocupacións máis persoais.

The Little Foxes (1941), de William Wyler, contou cun guión escrito por Lillian Hellman que lle conseguiría á dramaturga unha nominación ao Oscar. Sen dúbida, tanto a obra como a adaptación fílmica foron grandes éxitos e pezas destacadas na carreira de ambos artistas. *Another Part of the Forest* (1948), de Michael Gordon, tivo unha boa acollida pola crítica aínda que non obtivo tanto prestixio como a película de Wyler, xa que o público parecía ter máis interese polos Hubbard como raposos adultos en lugar da súa versión moza. Finalmente, o éxito da obra e da película non se correlacionou exactamente no caso de *Toys in the Attic*, xa que a adaptación de George Roy Hill (1963) non foi especialmente

aclamada pola crítica aínda que a obra de Hellman (1960) foi considerada por boa parte dela como a mellor obra da dramaturga debido aos seus personaxes chejovianos.

Ademais de proporcionarnos a perspectiva de Lillian Hellman sobre a sociedade do sur e os principais problemas da rexión americana, os tres traballos mencionados foron seleccionados para este estudo considerando que todos eles constitúen excelentes fontes de discusión/contido sociocultural. Para comezar, todos están ambientados no Sur, introducen especialmente temas sociais e retratan personaxes con identidades complexas, tanto a nivel individual como social. Ademais, as tres obras teñen un claro foco na unidade familiar, as interaccións dentro dela e os seus vínculos rotos. As tramas xiran arredor do poder e os efectos do diñeiro; e o impulso dos personaxes para obter riqueza é o principal desencadéante dos acontecementos nun contexto onde as forzas do ben e do mal están en constante loita e vagamente delimitadas. Por iso, as pulsións individuais levan aos personaxes á perda da súa moralidade, aínda que as súas ansias nunca chegan a ser plenamente satisfeitas. Outro punto que cabe destacar é o feito de que as mulleres están a facer movementos activamente co obxectivo de acadar a súa independencia (económica e/ou emocional) e, mentres algunhas delas fracasan, outras parecen conseguila, anulando dunha ou outra forma o poder do patriarcado. En definitiva, a representación das distintas xeracións permítenos observar cronoloxicamente o Sur mentres seguimos as historias no tempo, e entender a perspectiva que Hellman tiña da súa rexión o mesmo tempo que podemos percibir como en verdade lle houbera gustado que fose.

O contido social das obras de Hellman foi constantemente enfatizado, xa que ela tratou unha ampla gama de temas serios con atención á moralidade (Greenfield e Allen 249) e os efectos dun capitalismo agresivo. Os temas e elementos recorrentes que atopamos como relevantes e comúns aos tres textos, e polo tanto de interese para o noso estudo, son os seguintes: forzas sociais interconectadas en xogo (diñeiro, status social, honra), loita polo poder (na parella, familia e sociedade), efectos da riqueza sobre a moral, as relacións de amor-odio (psicoloxicamente paralizantes, destrutivas), pulsións e desexos (mercancías, diñeiro, amor, luxuria) impulsados ata o punto de avaricia, vínculos familiares feridos ou rotos, influencias de forzas externas, problemas de xénero (dentro e fóra do fogar), institucións sociais (centradas no matrimonio, a familia e a relixión), a decadencia e a perda espiritual (paralela á perda de valores do Sur en transición aos tempos modernos), o fracaso moral e os problemas psicolóxicos (sentimento de inferioridade, soidade, depresión, e neurose).

The Little Foxes, unha das obras de teatro máis aclamadas pola crítica escrita por Hellman e considerada tamén polo público como a súa peza máis popular, estaba finalmente completa despois de nove borradores e unha versión definitiva que Hellman tardou seis meses en rematar ata que se estreou en Broadway en 1939, logrando un gran éxito (Berger 240). Dous anos despois, con Hellman a cargo do guión, a obra converteríase en película, o que supuxo a terceira colaboración dramaturga co director de cine William Wyler. Esencialmente, a obra de Hellman e a adaptación de Wyler presentan a vida dunha acomodada familia do sur, os Hubbard, que explotan a outras persoas para acadar maiores niveis de riqueza e poder. Pola súa natureza profunda e atención á complexidade dos problemas sociais, políticos e individuais, *The Little Foxes* segue a ser unha fonte perfecta tanto para unha aproximación sociolóxica como psicolóxica a un tempo e espazo particular da historia, e unha revisión do carácter do Sur. Ao mesmo tempo, permítenos explorar cuestións universais de variada natureza susceptibles de seguir chamando a audiencias de todo o mundo, independentemente dos seus matices rexionais transferidos aos personaxes, ou precisamente por mor dos mesmos.

A trama céntrase na vida dos tres irmáns da familia Hubbard: Ben, Oscar e Regina. Pouco despois do comezo da peza, atopámolos aos tres reunidos cun magnate de Chicago, que está disposto a invertir unha gran cantidade de diñeiro para poñer en marcha unha fábrica de algodón no sur. Para este negocio, espérase que os Hubbard invertan un terzo cada un a cambio do 51% do capital da firma, o que dará comezo a trama. *The Little Foxes* trata un dos temas favoritos de Lillian Hellman, a presentación da loita entre o ben e o mal, aínda que ela adoita retratalo desde diferentes perspectivas. Nesta obra introduce precisamente *outra parte do bosque*, unha modesta área limitada onde só se reúnen os raposos máis agudos para planificar como controlar unha parte moito máis proveitosa do bosque. Entre todas as tribulacións, hai campo abondo para observar cantas posibles (re)presentacións deste conflito poden

reunirse baixo a mesma rama, espallarse por todas partes ou chegar a ser contidas. Podemos presenciar como os personaxes menos corruptos tentan escapar das máis altas formas de corrupción, pero cústalles moito enfrontarse a unha forza tan poderosa. Non obstante, aínda hai esperanza, e un dos herdeiros da familia, Alexandra Giddens, ven a servir para a demostrar que o carácter "recto" —moral— non foi completamente erradicado polas innovacións do Novo Sur.

Polo tanto, esta historia non é simplemente unha historia familiar ou unha loita entre o ben e o mal; é a presentación da sociedade sureña dos anos 1900 con todo o que transmite. Foi un momento de cambio e convulsión social, representativo da confrontación e fusión do Vello Sur e do Novo Sur, todo isto facilmente comprensible a través da análise dos personaxes, xa que isto impacta profundamente nas súas identidades e, en consecuencia, nos seus comportamentos. Por unha banda, segue a prevalecer un estilo de vida rural, a memoria das plantacións e unha aristocracia decaída. Estes tempos ricos e gloriosos do pasado agora son visibles principalmente na figura de Birdie Hubbard, una "southern belle" que non se adaptou á modernidade. Por outra banda, atopamos a irrupción da modernidade e a reconstrución dun Novo Sur caracterizado pola chegada da industrialización. O norte dos Estados Unidos xa estaba industrializado e agora é hora de que o Sur abandone as tradicións rurais e afronte o impacto da industria moderna. O personaxe do norte encargado do traballo (rendible) de levar esta industria, concretamente a fábrica de algodón, ao Sur, será o magnate, o señor Marshall. En definitiva, hai unha pequena parte da comunidade sureña que, ao contrario dos que defenden unha vida conservadora, está disposta a adaptarse á industrialización. Estes novos sureños son principalmente comerciantes, banqueiros e empresarios, aquí representados pola familia Hubbard, non só preparados para o cambio senón tamén ansiosos por beneficiarse o máximo posible del.

Another Part of the Forest lévanos a 1880 nunha cidade ficticia de Alabama, Bowden, onde nos atopamos de novo cos tres irmáns Hubbard, pero agora na súa mocidade e convivindo co patriarca da familia, Marcus Hubbard, e a súa tímida esposa, Lavinia. Ambos son figuras parentais que ocupan os seus respectivos papeis dentro da unidade familiar e merecen unha atenta observación. Correspondendo cunha das coñecidas características do Sur, podemos descubrir de inmediato situacións opostas ou contraditorias que contribúen a unha sensación de mistificación e perplexidade así como á conformación das complexas identidades dos personaxes. Por un lado, decatámonos de que Marcus facía traballos de servidume ao mesmo tempo que se ocupaba da educación da súa familia e da súa propia. Por outra banda, descubrimos que a afluencia dos Hubbard procede da explotación doutros compatriotas sureños durante a Guerra Civil. O carácter de Marcus e as súas accións parecen ter unha gran presión sobre a familia, e todos semellan sentirse desestabilizados ou incómodo ao seu redor dun xeito ou doutro. Como consecuencia, o seu fillo maior Ben decide impoñerse a misión de superar o poder do seu pai —sen considerar ningún tipo de obstáculo moral—, a costa de non familiares e parentes por igual; mentres que a súa filla Regina e o seu fillo menor Óscar desexan escapar e vivir as súas vidas, ata agora escondidas detrás de diferentes formas de evasión, xa sexa amor, luxuria, avaricia ou soños de liberdade futura.

En *Toys in the Attic*, preséntasenos outra familia do sur, os Berniers, décadas despois dos acontecementos de *The Little Foxes*, experimentando os efectos da Gran Depresión. Primeiro coñecemos ás dúas irmás, Anna e Carrie, ambas solteiras, vivindo con actitudes (individuais) diferentes a súa vida en Nova Orleans. O seu punto en común, non obstante, é o seu afecto polo irmán menor, Julian, quen estivo implicado en varias perdas económicas das que elas lle axudaron a recuperarse. Non obstante, cando Julian regresa de súpeto ao Sur con diñeiro e a súa xove muller, isto supón un gran cambio para as irmás, e non saben como reaccionar adecuadamente. Séntense confundidas pola súa nova posición inesperada dentro da familia, xa que agora están a recibir agasallos en lugar de reunir o diñeiro para o seu irmán. Pero máis alá do diñeiro, o caos e o deterioro desta familia afonda nas complexas psicoloxías dos personaxes e nos seus sentimentos. Mentres Anna continúa coas súas propias actividades diarias, Carrie, obsesionada co seu irmán, trama un xeito de usar contra el á súa esposa Lily, o que a súa vez estraga o negocio do que Julian estaba a piques de sacar proveito, ademais de sacudir aos recén casados. Ao final, despois dunha discusión con Julian e Anna, abandónana todos e Carrie queda soa en Nova Orleans.

Ao explorar as conexións sociais e os comportamentos individuais nos mundos de ficción dos filmes seleccionados, o obxectivo final deste traballo é ofrecer unha lectura ampla e detallada de

diferentes tipos de seres imaxinarios e as súas complexas identidades. No marco da análise crítico-cultural, e sempre con foco nos personaxes, prestamos atención ás condicións económicas representadas nas películas e, ao facelo, elaboramos a análise de clases sociais. Dende Another *Part of the Forest* ata *Toys in the Attic*, e centrándonos especialmente en *The Little Foxes*, observamoss como, dende finais do século XIX ata mediados do XX, a avaricia e o desexo de ter o control para manipular libremente aos demais levaron á destrución e, aínda así, ao mesmo tempo impulsaron a acción, contribuíndo en consecuencia a reconstruír o sur dos Estados Unidos. Con este obxectivo, tómanse os catro grandes marcos teóricos e conceptuais para a presente proposta de análise de personaxes dos ámbitos da socioloxía, a teoría da identidade, os estudos do sur e, para unha maior concentración no detalle, a análise de personaxes cinematográficos.

As interaccións sociais, as asociacións e as organizacións xerárquicas inflúen nos personaxes en gran medida. O enfoque sociolóxico adoptado neste estudo permítenos examinar os personaxes prestando especial atención ao conflito de poder e á loita social. Mentres que a moralidade na forma de facer negocios permanece nun lugar verdadeiramente secundario, os capitalistas do norte pretenden beneficiarse do establecemento de negocios no Sur, a clase media do sur ten como obxectivo conseguir diñeiro de grupos explotados en posición inferior na escala social e os prestamistas están impulsados polo excedente procedente de quen recorre a eles. As interaccións sociais dentro e fóra do grupo configuran a identidade dos personaxes, que se supón que se axustan a un determinado sistema social e ás súas normas, a maioría das veces con pouca ou ningunha mobilidade social para subir a un nivel superior. En termos marxistas, a análise do contexto socioeconómico nos traballos obxecto de estudo parece ser claramente discernible. En primeiro lugar, a economía dun país ou rexión é fundamental no proceso de desenvolvemento da súa estrutura social. En segundo lugar, esta é a sociedade materialista que está sempre cambiando, idealmente inmersa nunha progresión capitalista. E terceiro, as comunidades sociais organízanse en grupos ou clases, cunha clara división establecida entre dúas forzas principais: por unha banda a clase obreira, sempre loitando polo éxito económico e polo recoñecemento social e, por outra, as que están no poder. As adaptacións cinematográficas das pezas do sur de Hellman dan conta de como aquela sociedade do Novo Sur e da modernidade que viría despois desta eran materialistas: o diñeiro preséntase como o obxecto do desexo e o camiño máis frutuoso para a conquista do poder, a pesar de xerar avaricia e crueldade.

Desde un enfoque da teoría da identidade podemos atender a cuestións como a influencia do pasado, os estereotipos e os estigmas nos personaxes. Ademais, podemos dar respostas a preguntas como de que maneira se identifican os personaxes como membros dun grupo: se experimentan un sentimento de pertenza ou se, en cambio, se senten incómodos, ou loitan por encaixar. Tamén nos centramos na perspectiva que os personaxes teñen de si mesmos dependendo das súas propias experiencias do Sur, do seu xénero, da percepción racial e doutros trazos identitarios importantes. O xénero e a raza, en particular, son moi relevantes nos textos analizados: por unha banda, hai evidencias das condicións pouco privilexiadas da comunidade negra e do seu estancamento no nivel máis baixo da sociedade ao servizo da supremacía branca; por outra banda, o papel da muller recalca expresamente o seu comportamento activo e os seus intentos de lograr a independencia do control patriarcal.

Dende o campo dos estudos do sur observamos de preto a identidade dos personaxes en relación co binario Norte-Sur, xa que a forma en que se percibiu o Sur, tanto desde fóra —como "o outro"— como desde dentro —como ameazado e vencido—, afecta de maneira significativa a personalidade dos personaxes. Entre outras cuestións tipicamente definitorias do Sur, a honra, a escravitude e a violencia tamén están latentes nas obras como modeladores de personaxes, imbuídos nos seus trazos, e que afectan claramente a súa mentalidade e axitan as súas accións. Finalmente, a observación doutras construcións sociais relacionadas especificamente co carácter sureño, o sentimento de inferioridade e de masculinidade, contribuirá a unha mellor comprensión de actitudes e decisións dos personaxes que a primeira vista parecerían bastante difíciles de explicar.

Como afirmou Bigsby, as obras de Hellman conteñen tanto dramas privados coma cuestións públicas (295), unha das principais razóns polas que o estudo dos personaxes de Hellman supón unha fonte excepcional para a observación e análise do Sur. Ao facer unha intromisión nas salas privadas

dos personaxes facilítanos a información necesaria para comprender os seus ámbitos públicos e, por extensión, a comunidade do sur.

Desde o campo da análise de personaxes cinematográficos, e para non omitir información relevante e ofrecer comentarios de amplo alcance sen limitar as múltiples perspectivas á nosa disposición, partimos principalmente do modelo do narratólogo Jens Eder ("Analyzing", "Understanding") para unha reflexión inclusiva e multiperspectiva dos personaxes. Usando o seu "clock of character" (reloxio da personaxe) como instrumento tanto para a recollida de datos como para a análise dos mesmos, e considerando ademais o exame detallado dalgúns planos cinematográficos como clave para a análise, percorreremos os pasos suxeridos por Eder mentres analizamos os datos coa axuda de diferentes disciplinas: socioloxía, estudos do sur, e teoría da identidade e da personalidade, xeralmente relacionados con enfoques comunmente utilizados para a análise cinematográfica como a psicoloxía ou o marxismo.

Esta investigación divídese en seis partes: a primeira parte ofrece un breve panorama económico, social, político e cultural do Sur; a segunda parte presenta unha revisión da literatura e da finalidade do estudo derivada das lagoas existentes; a terceira parte introduce o marco teórico e metodolóxico do estudo; a cuarta parte subliña cuestións sociais e identitarias relacionadas co Sur a través da análise de personaxes de *The Little Foxes* de Wyler; a quinta parte repasa o pasado dos personaxes comentados no apartado anterior (*Another Part of the Forest*); e a sexta parte ilustra o que podería ser unha posible identidade futura deses mesmos personaxes do sur (*Toys in the Attic*). As nosas conclusións, xunto con algunhas notas para unha análise posterior, apórtanse nun apartado final, que vai seguido dun apéndice con mostras do esquema elaborado para a recollida e a análise de datos.

Desde unha perspectiva xeral, as conclusións básicas desta tese son consistentes coas investigacións que amosan que a análise dos personaxes é relevante para o estudo e a comprensión da sociedade. En concreto, con esta disertación doutoral tamén concluímos que os personaxes de Hellman, incluso os secundarios, resultan convincentes para o espectador, porque amosan unha imaxe realista do home e da muller sureña dos diferentes tempos históricos nos que se ambientaron os dramas. Presentándoos individualmente estudamos, desde diferentes puntos de vista, a sociedade do Sur que representan, atendendo a unha variedade de reaccións tipicamente relacionadas coa identidade sureña. A través da análise da familia Hubbard e a súa conexión co magnate do norte, o señor Marshall, exploramos como a Guerra Civil ensinara aos sureños a sabedoría da industrialización e unha economía diversificada. Foi un período tanto de desenvolvemento como de abuso, e as fortunas acumuláronse con medios e de xeitos desapiadados.

Dado que Hellman centra as súas tramas no diñeiro e nos efectos que provoca nos individuos e na sociedade, o noso achegamento á súa lectura marxista do Sur foi facilitado pola observación da evolución dos personaxes, os seus defectos, motivacións e obxectivos; e as súas diferentes reaccións ante as circunstancias do Sur. Descubrimos que, mediante o uso de recursos melodramáticos directamente relacionados cos personaxes, como bonos roubados, corrupción, chantaxe ou negocios turbios, Hellman introdúcenos na súa perspectiva da sociedade sureña en tres momentos diferentes da historia: 1880, 1900, e a década de 1920. En consecuencia, os personaxes analizados erixíronse como representantes de diferentes grupos sociais, ideoloxías disímiles e reaccións diversas ante as cuestións do sur. Por unha banda, observamos aos personaxes que representan a imaxe do novo Sur —propensos á corrupción e, aínda así, acadando éxitos e riquezas—, mentres que, por outra banda, tamén se nos deron exemplos dalgúns personaxes que seguen representando os valores do Vello Sur. Como calquera sociedade sometida á turbulencia e á confusión do cambio e a evolución, os personaxes representados por Lillian Hellman, sofren as consecuencias do *readaptamento* ou a adaptación aos novos ambientes nos que han de vivir.

Este traballo aporta, que saibamos, a primeira análise pormenorizada da perspectiva sureña de Hellman presentada na gran pantalla dun xeito exhaustivo e sistemático abarcando a máxima amplitude histórica do sur comentada pola autora. En primeiro lugar, observouse como os propios personaxes presentaban ao espectador a sociedade e a historia do sur desde a perspectiva da súa creadora. Ademais, tomáronse previamente temas especificamente vinculados á identidade do sur e aplicáronse sistematicamente aos personaxes (os parámetros do sur pódense ver concentrados do Anexo), para apreciar con que grao de significación os personaxes representaban estes temas ou estaban relacionados con eles.

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INTRODUCTION

The influence of characters on audiences beyond their fictional worlds seems to be expanding now more than ever. Fictional characters can undoubtedly impact our awareness of the world, our emotions, and our perception of life. In fact, due to the advances in technology and the expansion of virtual environments, our real world and fictional ones (imaginary realms) have never been so close. In a world where small screens have become part of our daily life, the perception of characters has become more intense and meaningful. This might be especially true for an audience that, due to the external circumstances of the current times, has seen its social interactions much reduced, getting in its stead an extended access to virtual scenarios. Imaginary beings from the big screen and the small screen have merged to a certain extent into a constellation of characters *who* can easily make their way to the audiences' rooms, therefore creating for them a more tangible experience. In this sense, characters have become more approachable, clearer objects of empathy, as they enable the spectator to comfortably enter their fictional worlds by simply tuning into a streaming platform for a regular fix of fiction. Therefore, characters are no longer strange entities completely separate from our world; contrarily, they have achieved more "human-like features" by increasing the contact between worlds, hence making it easier to relate or sympathize with them, no matter how different or how distant their experiences are from our lives.

Characters, understood as "identifiable represented beings with an inner life that exist as communicatively constructed artefacts" (Eder, *Analyzing* 73), although endowed with a life of their own, are however constructed from human beings' imagination as "products of a social praxis" (74). Therefore, characters are especially interesting and appealing for us, and they can affect our individual experiences. We can easily forget details of a plot, but we tend to effortlessly remember a story or specific relevant meanings as related to characters. For this reason, going against the traditional general opinion of viewers and readers, that a memorable work depends on the story and the narrative line behind —hence, being characters simply relegated to the background—, we dare to sustain that, on many occasions, it could be just the opposite. The reason is that, as it is becoming more evident particularly in the case of movies, audiences tend to identify more with characters than with the stories. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to consider that remarkable characters indeed are those who make stories memorable. In this sense, Lillian Hellman's *round* characters (Forster) stand out as main elements of the stories they inhabit in their fictive worlds, imagined spaces modeled to tell fictional stories yet illustrative of specific periods in the South of the United States. Hellman's works remain of current interest, as evidenced by the continuous revisions of the South and its themes, as well as in the revivals of her plays, literary workshops, and theater performances all around the globe. Despite the apparent distance with the topics and the times portrayed in her dramas, there is still *something* particularly appealing for modern audiences in her works: her characters and how they carry on the plot enabling a connection with the spectator.

In this line of reasoning, the main goal of this dissertation is the critical interpretive analysis of the most representative southern characters created by American playwright Lillian Hellman (1905-1984) that made the leap from the stage to the big screen in three classical Hollywood film adaptations: *The Little Foxes* (1941), *Another Part of the Forest* (1948), and *Toys in the Attic* (1963). For this purpose, without losing perspective of Hellman's original plays under the

same titles and the social, political, economic, and cultural contexts portrayed in such literary/filmic artifacts, we here adopt an eclectic theoretical approach that will allow us to analyze the characters in greater depth, paying attention to both their self-identity and social features, what will allow us to give account of Lillian Hellman's South from both an all-inclusive and a comprehensive point of view.

Revolving around the Hubbard family ventures and conflicts, the major title and therefore the central piece of this dissertation is *The Little Foxes*. However, as its prequel and consequently introducing us to earlier years of the Hubbard family, *Another Part of the Forest* is deeply meaningful for a better understanding of both the characters and the situations they will be later involved in as adults, as it allows us to observe the development of their identity since their early youth. Additionally, we will take a leap in time to the South of the Great Depression with *Toys in the Attic*, where we are introduced to a different family, the Berniers, once again nonetheless exhibiting the tribulations of three southern siblings regarding money and their most inner feelings, goals, and worries.

Toys in the Attic, the last play written by Hellman, will be considered as a sort of sequel for the observation of the evolution of the southern character, hence providing us with an insight to how this more contemporary southern generation could have experienced the Depression times. Despite not dealing with the continuation of the Hubbard's endeavors, this work is relevant for the study. Hellman had planned to write a sequel to *The Little Foxes* that never came to light, and in her last play we can find a continuation in time as well as recurring topics, among them money issues and frustrated dreams. In addition, the Berniers family could be understood as parallel to the third generation of Hubbards, that represented by the young Alexandra and Leo in the main text.

Precisely regarding the cyclical nature of the Hubbards' story, Rudolf Erben finds a noticeable parallelism between Hellman's unfinished trilogy and Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* —a retelling of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* that recounts the misfortunes of the Mannon family through three plays— in the sense that they both "could have appropriately marked the beginning and end of one of the gloomier decades of American life" (125). Although Hellman did not get to finish her trilogy, hence leaving the dramatic denouement for the Hubbard saga inconclusive, that information void could be perfectly filled with *Toys in the Attic* which, in addition, allows us to perceive the playwright's evolution from a style closer to that of Ibsen —social issues and protest— to a more Chekhovian one —increased focus on individual characters.

Apart from providing us with Lillian Hellman's perspective of southern society and major southern issues, the three above-mentioned works were selected for this study considering that they all constitute excellent sources for sociocultural discussion. To start with, they are all set in the South, introducing major southern topics, especially concerned with social issues, and portraying characters with complex identities, both at individual and social level. Besides that, the three works have a clear focus on the family unit, the interactions within it, and its broken bonds. The plots revolve around the power and effects of money, and characters' drive to obtain wealth is the principal trigger of events in a context where the forces of good and evil are in constant struggle and vaguely delineated. Therefore, individual drives lead the characters to the loss of their morality, although their longings never get to be fully satisfied. Another point worth mentioning is the fact that women are actively making moves with aims of achieving their independence (economic or emotional) and, while some of them fail, others seem to succeed in achieving it, overruling men's decisions in one way or another. Ultimately, the portrayal of the different generations allows us to observe the South chronologically as we follow the stories through time.

The social content of Hellman's works has constantly been emphasized, since she "dealt with a wide range of serious themes in plays that were often characterized by an ironic view of

human nature and a strong moral voice" (Greenfield and Allen 249). Relevant recurrent topics and elements common to the three texts and that we will be addressing throughout our analysis of characters are the following: interconnected social forces at play (money, social status, honor), struggle for power (at couple, family, and social level), effects of wealth on morality, love-hate relationships (psychologically crippling, destructive), drives and desires (commodities, money, love, lust) propelled to the point of greed, wounded or broken family bonds, external forces influences, gender issues (inside and outside the household), social institutions (focus on marriage, family, and religion), decay and spiritual loss (parallel to the loss of values of the South transitioning into modern times), moral failure, and psychological issues (feeling of inferiority, loneliness, depression, neurosis).

Mostly parallel to the success of the original works, the reception of the three movies under study in this dissertation also discerns *The Little Foxes* as the most applauded, back at their premieres as well as in present times. William Wyler's *The Little Foxes* (1941) counted with a screenplay written by Lillian Hellman that would gain the playwright an Oscar nomination. Undoubtedly, both play and movie were major hits, and prominent works in the career of both artists. Michael Gordon's *Another Part of the Forest* (1948) was well received by the critics although it did not get that much interest as Wyler's film, as audiences kept favoring the grown-up Hubbard *foxes* instead of their coming-of-age version. However, the success of play and movie was not exactly correlated in the case of *Toys in the Attic*, since George Roy Hill's adaptation (1963) wasn't particularly acclaimed by the critics even though Hellman's play (1960) has been considered by some critics as the playwright's best work because of its Chekhovian characters.

Together with the previous works, *The Autumn Garden* (1951), set at a resort off the coast of Louisiana, is another of Hellman's plays generally considered as southern, so much so that it contains certain evident parallels to *Toys in the Attic* and possibly to her other southern texts — troubled family relationships, money tribulations, loss of moral compass, a melancholic echo of the past, and a heightening of feelings as characters deal with social issues and shattered dreams. However, it will not be a source of analysis for this study, primarily because we here intend to focus on film characters and this play has never been adapted for the big screen. Moreover, although it presents complex southern characters and themes evidently linked to the South, it is our understanding that rather than standing out for the presentation of a social (regional) concern, it is mostly noticeable for its focus on a human universal one which preoccupies the individual since the beginning of times: the ending of the stage before old age, and the confrontation with the reality of aging.

The Little Foxes, one of the most critically acclaimed plays written by Hellman and generally considered her most popular one, was completed after nine drafts and a definite version that took the playwright six months to finish until it finally opened in Broadway in 1939, achieving a great success (Berger 240). Two years later, with Hellman in charge of the screenplay, the play was made into a film, which meant the third collaboration of the playwright with film director William Wyler. Essentially, Hellman's play and Wyler's adaptation present the life of a wealthy southern family, the Hubbards, who exploit other people in order to achieve higher levels of power. For its deep nature and attention to the complexity of social, political, and individual issues, *The Little Foxes* stands as a perfect source for both a sociological and psychological approach to a particular time and space in history and a re-vision of the *character* of the South. At the same time, it allows us to explore universal issues of varied nature likely to keep calling to audiences worldwide, independently of —or precisely because of— its regional nuances transferred to the characters.

The plot is centered on the life of the three siblings of the Hubbard family, Ben and Oscar Hubbard and their sister Regina Giddens. As the play opens, they seem to have gathered all together to receive and entertain a Chicago tycoon, who is willing to put up a big sum of money to build a cotton mill in the South. For this business, the Hubbards are expected to put a third each in exchange of the 51% of the capital in the firm. Regina's ill husband, Horace Giddens, comes back home from a hospital in Maryland, since Regina cannot do business with his money without consent. However, when his wife tells him about it, he does not want to take part in the Hubbards' business, and they have a strong argument. Later, after discovering that Oscar and Ben had stolen his bonds from his safe deposit box, he threatens Regina with writing a new will that would leave her without any money, and thus would prevent her from making her dreams come true. But all of a sudden he has a heart attack and Regina decides to simply let him die by not giving him his medicine. Making a profit of the situation, now it is she who threatens her brothers, allowing them no other possibility than to surrender to her will. In the end, she achieves economic power, but she will lose the affection of her daughter Alexandra, who decides to leave her alone.

Selected works

The Little Foxes deals with one of the favorite topics of Lillian Hellman, the presentation of the struggle between good and evil, although she usually portrays it from different perspectives. In this play, she precisely introduces *another part of the forest*, a modest limited area where only the sharpest foxes congregate in order to plan how to control a much larger part of the forest. Among all the tribulations, there is field enough to observe how many possible (re)presentations of this conflict can gather under the same branch, spread all around, or get to be contained. We can witness how the less corrupted characters try to escape from the highest forms of corruption, but they find it very difficult to face such a powerful force. Notwithstanding, there is yet hope, and one of the members of the Hubbard family, Alexandra Giddens, will help us to prove that the "straight" —moral— character has not completely been eradicated by the innovations of the New South.

Therefore, this story is not simply a family story or a fight between good and evil; it is the presentation of the 1900s southern society with everything it conveys. It was a moment of change and social turmoil, representative of the confrontation and fusion of the Old South and the New South, all of it easily understandable through the analysis of characters, as this deeply impact their identities and, consequently, their behaviors. On the one hand, there is still the prevalence of a rural lifestyle, the memory of the plantations, and a decayed aristocracy. These wealthy and glorious times of the past are now mainly visible in the figure of Birdie Hubbard, a *southern belle* who has not adapted to modernity. On the other hand, we find the emergence of modernity and the re-construction of a New South characterized by the advent of industrialization. The Northerner United States were already industrialized and now it is time for the South to abandon the rural traditions and meet the impact of modern industry. The northern character tasked with the (profitable) job of bringing this industry, specifically the cotton mill, to the South, will be the tycoon, Mr. Marshall. Ultimately, there is a small part of the southern community which, contrary to those who defend a conservative kind of life, is ready to adapt to industrialization. These New Southerners are mainly traders, bankers, and businessmen, here represented by the Hubbard family, not only ready for change but also eager to benefit as much as possible from it.

Another Part of the Forest takes us back to 1880 in a fictional town in Alabama, Bowden, where we meet again the three Hubbard siblings, but now at their early youth and living

together with the Hubbard patriarch, Marcus, and his timid wife, Lavinia, both parental figures occupying their respective roles within the family unit and worth of a close observation. At this moment, Marcus, has already amassed his fortune and he cannot but feel proud about it, especially because he has succeeded in rapidly transitioning to a remarkable wealth from remarkable poverty. On the contrary, Lavinia feels guilty about the way that money was earned even though it was all her husband's doing.

Corresponding with one of the well-known characteristics of the South, we can immediately find out opposing or contradictory situations that contribute to a sense of mystification and puzzlement as well as to the shaping of the characters' complex identities. On the one hand, we learn that Marcus did menial labor himself at the same time he was taking care of the education of his family and his own. On the other hand, we find out that the Hubbard's affluence comes from the exploitation of other southerners during the Civil War. His character and actions seem to have put a lot of pressure on the family, and everybody appears to feel destabilized or uneasy around him one way or another. As a consequence, his elder son Ben makes of his life mission to outgrow his father's power —moral concerns left aside—, at the expense of non-relatives and family alike; whereas his daughter Regina and younger son Oscar both long for an escape and have started to live their lives hiding behind different forms of evasion, be it love, lust, greed, or dreams of future freedom.

Members of the Bowden community are also the Bagtry family, in clear opposition to the Hubbards and intertwined with them. They are the exemplification of honor, of attachment to the land, and tradition. Confederate soldier John Bagtry is involved in a love relationship with the Hubbard girl, but he is more concerned with reaffirming his weakened (social) identity, for which he has already found another war to fight, far away from his hometown. His sister Birdie, at the prospect of the imminent bankruptcy of her family, desperately attempts to save her family's land, innocently seeking the help of the Hubbards for such a purpose. Different connections are established and broken as the story advances, until the powerful patriarch is left alone after every member of the Hubbard family turns on him in one way or another.

In ***Toys in the Attic***, we are introduced to another southern family, the Berniers, thirty years after the events of *The Little Foxes*, experiencing the effects of the Great Depression. We first meet the two sisters, Anna and Carrie, both single but experiencing their life in New Orleans with quite different (individual) attitudes. Their point in common nonetheless is their affection for their younger brother Julian, who has been involved in several financial loses they had helped him to regain from. However, when Julian suddenly returns to the South with money and a young and lively wife, this comes as a big change for the sisters, and they don't know how to properly react. They feel confused about their unexpected new position within the family, as they are now receiving presents instead of gathering the money for their brother. But beyond money, the chaos and deterioration in this family goes deeper into the complex psychologies of the characters and their feelings. While Anna carries on with her own daily activities, obsessed with her brother, Carrie plots a way to turn his young wife Lily against him, which in turn spoils the money deal Julian was about to profit from in addition to shaking the newlyweds. In the end, after a discussion with Julian and Anna, Carrie is left alone in New Orleans.

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Ultimate goal and specific objectives

By exploring social connections and individual behaviors in the fictional worlds of the selected films, the ultimate goal of this dissertation is to provide extensive and insightful reading of different types of imaginary beings and their complex identities. Within the frame of critical-

cultural analysis, and always with the focus on characters, we will pay attention to the economic conditions as represented in the movies, and in so doing we will elaborate on social class analysis. From *Another Part of the Forest* to *Toys in the Attic*, and particularly focusing on *The Little Foxes*, we will observe how, since the end of the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth, greed and the wish to be in control to freely manipulate others led to destruction and, still, at the same time they still prompted the action, consequently helping to re-construct the American South. With this objective, the four major theoretical and methodological frameworks for the present character analysis proposal are taken from the fields of *sociology*, *identity theory*, *southern studies* and, for a greater concentration on detail, *film character analysis*.

Social interactions, associations, and hierarchical organizations are influencing characters to a great extent. The **sociological approach** taken in this study will allow us to examine characters by paying close attention to power conflict and social struggle. Whereas morality in the way of doing business remains in a very secondary place, northerners aim at benefiting from establishing business in the South, the southern middle class has its objective put in obtaining money from exploiting groups at an inferior position in the social scale, and money lenders are driven by the surplus coming from those who resort to them. Social ingroup and outgroup interactions shape the identity of characters, who are supposed to adjust to a social system and its norms, most of the times with very little to none social mobility to climb to an upper level. In Marxist terms, the analysis of the socioeconomic context in the works under study seems to be a clearly discernible one. First of all, the economy of a country or region is fundamental in the development process of its social structure. Second, this is the materialistic society that is always changing, ideally immerse in a capitalist progression. And third, social communities are organized in groups or classes, with a clear division established between two main forces: on the one hand the working class, always struggling for economic success and social recognition and, on the other, those who are in power. The film adaptations of Hellman's southern plays give account of how that society in the New South and in the modernity that would come afterwards was a materialistic one: money is presented as the object of desire and the most successful road to the achievement of power, despite engendering avarice or cruelty.

From an **identity theory approach** we can attend to issues such as the influence of the past, stereotypes, and stigmas on characters. Moreover, we can give answers to questions such as how characters identify themselves as members of a group —if they experience a sense of belonging or if, instead, they feel uncomfortable or struggling to fit. We will also focus on the perspective that characters have of themselves depending on their own experiences of the South, on their gender, racial perception, and other major identity traits. Gender and race in particular are both very relevant in the texts under analysis: on the one hand, there is evidence of the unprivileged conditions of the black community and its stagnation in the lowest level of society at the service of white supremacy; on the other hand, the role of women is expressly emphasized by their active behavior and their attempts to achieve independence from patriarchal control.

From the field of **southern studies**, we will closely observe the identity of characters in relation to the binary North-South, since the way in which the South has been perceived, both from outside —as "the other"— and from within —as threatened and defeated—, significantly affects characters' personality. Among other matters typically definitory of the South, honor, slavery, and violence are also latent in the works as shapers of characters, imbued in their traits, and clearly affecting their mentality and stirring their actions. Finally, the observation of other two social constructs specifically related to southern character, inferiority and masculinity feeling, will contribute to a better understanding of attitudes and decisions of characters that would seem quite hard to explain at a first glance.

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As Bigsby claimed, "Lillian Hellman's works are realistic, well-made plays. They take place in private rooms which are meant to contain not merely private dramas but public issues" (295). This is one of the main reasons why the study of Hellman's characters is expected to be an exceptional source for observation and *analysis* of the South. By making an intrusion into the characters' private rooms we will be provided with the necessary information to get to understand their public spheres, and by extension, the southern community.

From the field of **film character analysis**, and in order not to omit relevant information and instead offer far-reaching comment without limiting the multiple perspectives at our disposal, we will primarily depart from narratologist Jens Eder's model ("Analyzing", "Understanding") for an inclusive and multilayered reflection of characters. By using his "clock of character" as an instrument for both data collection and data analysis, and additionally considering the detailed examination of screenshots as key for the analysis, we will walk through the steps suggested by Eder while drawing different disciplines —sociology, southern studies, and identity and personality theory, generally connected with approaches commonly used for film analysis such as psychology or Marxism. For the breakdown in each of the four quarters of Eder's clock, we will develop more from one discipline or another depending on the suitability of each according to the traits of a given character although, for data collection, we will pay especial attention to the observation of characters from the field of theories of personality, following Eder's suggestions for a better analysis of characters as fictional beings. For each of the characters, we collect data according to the steps suggested in Eder's "clock of character," which has been adapted with variations and additions of certain contents from the different selected theoretical approaches, aimed at the observation and study of the characters' traits considered most relevant for this research.

Structure of the study

This investigation is divided into six parts: the first part gives a brief overview of the economic, social, political, and cultural landscape of the South; the second part provides a review of literature and the purpose of the study deriving from the existing gaps; the third part introduces the theoretical framework of the study; the fourth part presents social and identity issues related to the South through the analysis of characters in Wyler's *The Little Foxes*; the fifth part looks back at the past of the characters discussed in the previous section (*Another Part of the Forest*); and the sixth part pictures what could have been a possible future identity of those same southern characters (*Toys in the Attic*). Our conclusions, together with some notes for further analysis, will be drawn in a final section.

Chapter 1 ("**Landscape of the South**") aims to offer a general panorama of the South, paying special attention to the geographical-cultural context in direct relation to the times and socio-historical circumstances that we can find reflected in the cinematographic adaptations of three southern works by Lillian Hellman. At the same time, this general information will be provided together with specific details about the content of the works under analysis, since they are of special interest for a better understanding of the characters created by Hellman and the situations they are experiencing. Therefore, we consider necessary to first introduce Dixie, putting the focus particularly on Alabama and Louisiana, as well as on the time periods covered in the film adaptations of the works in question. In order to better understand the historical and mental progression of the southerners, there a summary of some of the southern myths that became most popular around the world will be following. Also for this reason, we will briefly give account of the main historical changes that occurred during the periods

analyzed, concentrating on two aspects that revolutionized American life, industrialization and the birth of the city, both highly influential on the personality of the characters. Finally, we will recapitulate as concisely as possible on how the South has been introduced by the media, with special attention to Hollywood films.

In Chapter 2 ("**Literature Review and Scope of Purpose**"), we will first discuss the influence of the most relevant authors of the South, and how Lilllian Hellman came to claim her place among them, despite being in an adverse field due to the fact of being a woman and writing drama (instead of a novel). Following, we will carry out a review of the literature taking into account the interest that the different works of the playwright have aroused in diverse fields of study, centering out attention to those that either contain themes related to the South or have a greater focus on her southern works adapted for the big screen. Having outlined the later and more recent studies, we will point out the gaps in the existing literature and introduce the purpose of the present study.

Chapter 3 ("**Theoretical and Methodological Framework**") will introduce the theoretical framework of the study. To provide a comprehensive and simultaneously structured character analysis of the film versions under study, this investigation will draw from four interconnected approaches from four different fields of study: sociology, identity theory, southern studies, and film character analysis. The first section of this chapter attempts to approach analysis from a sociological perspective, with particular attention to perspectives on social order, social interactions and associations, and the hierarchical organization of society, through which we attempt to gain knowledge of the individual, community, and world alike. The approach to identity theory chosen in the second section is closely related to the previous section, looking at common issues related to social and self-identity and examining issues such as stigma and stereotypes that converge with powerful influences from the past. In the third section, similar southern themes and concepts will be addressed from the lens of southern studies, such as the southern feeling of inferiority or the southern feeling of masculinity, both particularly rooted in southern identity. The last section of this chapter is an outline of selected instruments and aspects of interest at the intersection of film and narrative studies, particularly attending to the analysis of characters. Here, Jens Eder's "clock of character" will be presented in detail for its application on the filmic texts. We will conclude with a brief description of the OCEAN —from the field of Personality Theories— as the analysis model that will allow us to approach to a detailed study of particular features within one of the most relevant quarters of the "clock of character."

Chapter 4 ("***The Little Foxes***") will present the Hubbard family in detail, from the three Hubbard siblings (Ben, Oscar, and Regina) to their spouses and descendants. This chapter will focus on the analysis of the interconnections that exist within the family, their eagerness and tribulations to achieve more wealth, the influences they have received from the past, and the perspectives of the new generations. The aims here are twofold: first, we aim to present the history of the Hubbard in detail, paying attention to the context, so that this serves to facilitate the understanding of different southern themes and issues specifically linked to Lillian Hellman's perception of the South. On the other hand, we will approach to the characters from a certain focus on the plot in order to help fill the spatio-temporal distance. For this reason, this first analytical chapter of the dissertation will be more descriptive than the subsequent chapters, where the reader, already counting on the context, will be able to follow the analysis more easily. Second, more general themes will be introduced from different theoretical approaches that contribute to [offer, provide] a multidimensional perspective of the characters and, at the same time, appear to be directly centered on the perspective or interests of Lillian Hellman.

In this way, in addition to the sociological analysis that prevails throughout the whole study, readings such as the Marxist or feminist will be provided in order to discuss issues such as the disintegration of the family (section 1), the expansion of the capitalist system (section 2), the power of patriarchy (section 3), the evolution of the social systems (section 4), or the new perspectives of the black community at the turn of the century (section 5).

The general objective established for Chapter 5 ("***Another Part of the Forest***") consists of the analysis of the members of the Hubbard family in the prequel to the work studied in the previous chapter. Therefore, it will be possible to achieve a much broader perspective and a deeper understanding of the Hubbard family, both first and second generation, through the close observation of the events of the past. In this chapter we will proceed to a deeper analysis of the identities of the characters, especially taking into account [considering] how they perceive and experience the circumstances of the period. The first section will be concerned again with the introduction of the family, but in this case from a different perspective, in direct contrast to the community in which they live, which will allow us to observe a New South that is arising with energy and presented as threatening, in opposition to an Old South that is in the process of fading or transferred to memories. In the second section, the personalities of the three Hubbard siblings will be analyzed in detail, not as descriptively as done in the fourth chapter but paying here more attention to the analysis of diverse sociological aspects purely linked to the identity of the South beyond the vision of Lillian Hellman. Finally, in the third section, we will attend to the analysis of the Hubbard parents, Marcus and Lavinia, representatives of opposite identities as well as delineating forces in the shaping of their children's (young and mature) personality.

Chapter 6 ("***Toys in the Attic***") presents an analysis of the characters of the last work under study in this dissertation, understood as a possible sequel option to the unfinished trilogy by Lillian Hellman, in a way that allows us to simply provide a generalized vision of what could have been the third generation of Hubbards in their 40s. To this end, the first section will introduce a new southern family living in New Orleans in the years after the Great Depression. Next, an analysis of Julian and Lily Berniers will be presented, in whom, in fact, characteristics can be found that could be counted on in a mature Leo Hubbard and Alexandra Giddens, respectively. In section 3 we will present an analysis of a character that allows us to broaden and deepen Hellman's perspective of the South: Albertine Prine. The last section will allow us to observe both the particular and the most universal aspects of the South of Hellman, through the analysis of sisters Anna and Carrie Berniers.

As this dissertation aims to be inclusive as well as detailed, it is necessary to put the limit on several fronts, especially because we are analyzing a large number of characters taken from three different works. Therefore, in the final part of this study ("**Conclusions and Directions for Future Research**") the main goals, aspects, and findings of this study will be summarized, together with a brief exposition of its limitations, and some notions or suggestions for further research.

A final **Appendix** will be added providing three samples (one from each work) of the data collection for the analysis of characters, based on the structure of Jens Eder's model ("clock of character"), which has been adapted to focus on content specifically linked to the South. In this way, the diverse traits of the characters can be systematically observed from different perspectives, including the sociological and psychological, which allows us to extract significant data about the South of Lillian Hellman through her characters.

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1. LANDSCAPE OF THE SOUTH

This chapter aims at providing a general background of the South with specific attention to the setting, meanings, and socio-historical circumstances that we can find reflected in the film adaptations of three plays by Lillian Hellman. This contextual information will be primarily presented together with specific details concerning the contents of the works under analysis, since these are of especial interest for a better understanding of Hellman's characters and their situations. Therefore, we will first introduce Dixie, with especial mention to Alabama and Louisiana, and the periods of time covered in Hellman's southern film adaptations, followed by a summary of the many mythical Souths that might echo throughout her stories. We will also summarize the major historical changes happening during the periods under analysis concentrated on two aspects that revolutionized the American life, industrialization and the birth of the city. Finally, we will briefly discuss how the South has been presented in the media, with particular attention to Hollywood movies.

1.1. Dixie and beyond: the meaning of the South

It was myth that contributed to the creation of the story of the South. The myth of the garden, a paradisiacal land, a new Eden, provided the first image of the region for Northerners and colonial southerners. Rooted in the perception of a fertile land, the standard practice was that of an egalitarian South, a South directed by agrarian democracy under Thomas Jefferson's rule (late 1700s). The debate about a southern identity within the United States began in the eighteenth century, and it achieved more intensity in the nineteenth century during the Civil War era. As it had happened with the West, the South became an area separated from the rest of the American nation. This fact represented a positive view of the United States as a whole, for it spawned the richness of a different culture and ideology within the country. But, at the same time, it was considered to be negative, since it was precisely an evidence of the existence of diversity, a diversity which confronted the North and the South, each of them defending completely different values.

According to Wilbur Joseph Cash, the South is "not quite a nation within a nation, but the next thing to it" (viii), an assertion which implies a close connection to a debate on identity. This southern identity was turned a recurrent theme by literature, journalism, and popular culture. Not only the northern states tried to understand the southern identity, but the South itself also made a great effort. The southerners defended their values, but at the same time they hated what was hidden behind them, reflecting a love-hate relationship with the South. This opposite perception of the same reality can be exemplified through one of the most famous characters created by the southern writer William Faulkner. In *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), one of its characters, Quentin Compson, is a student at Harvard who, when recalling his southern origins, suffers nervous attacks because of the past recollections which come back to his mind. His idea of the South momentarily awakes his violent spirit, precisely the same southern brutal spirit he hates. Nevertheless, he wants to be recognized as a southerner because in spite of all the bad images of injustice and exploitation which come back to his mind, the happy and glorious echoes of a prosperous land make him love the South anyway.

Another writer, William Styron, gives us a portrait of the South as an area well known as a myth, but unknown in reality. In *Sophie's Choice* (1979), where we can find a world of grief and depression caused by societal pressure, one *of* the characters claims: "at least Southerners have ventured North, have come to see what the North is like, while very few Northerners have really ever troubled themselves to travel to the South … I remember your saying how *smug* Northerners appeared to be in their willful and self-righteous ignorance. You said it was intellectual arrogance … How can I really have hated a place I have never seen or known?" (458). Thus, the inability to hate the south is expanded by Styron's portrait: neither southerners, nor Northerners can hate it because those who belong there recognize it as their own home, and those who belong to the North recognize that they do not really know the South.

The ambiguous perception of the South by the whole of the United States, therefore, led to the birth of different myths built around the general thought of the period. Whereas in the South slavery had been the predominant dominant system, regarded not only as a good system but as the only one possible, other different perspectives were arising in the North, trying to conquer the South. A very important image of the South was the one given by Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Its popularity and success in rousing up social feeling against slavery in the United States probably stemmed from the melodramatic and romantic tone of the book but it was, nonetheless, a powerful work. The story presents the (mis)fortunes of a slave, Uncle Tom. After being sold several times, he arrives to Legree's cotton plantation and the white man treats him in an extremely cruel way. Tom's original masters were from Kentucky (a state not usually regarded as part of "The South" by many southerners, even when it was declared as a slave state when Civil War started), while Legree is a New Orleans plantation owner. The novel establishes clear differences between a tolerant North and an oppressive South, emphasizing how the relationships between white and black man transform them into the oppressor and the victim.

Nonetheless, there are diverse northern visions of the South, which are not necessarily as negative as the former. Carme Manuel Cuenca notices that "La idea del Sur, o las distintas ideas del Sur pertenecen en gran medida al orden del mito social" (26), and the long list of southern myths, makes of the South an enigma, a puzzle whose creation the North decidedly contributed to. This idea is also supported by the economist Gunnar Myrdal, who claims that "Northerners apparently cherish the idea of having had an aristocracy and of still having a real class society — in the South" (1375–76), so they are proud of having a direct relation with the heroic and smart South, in spite of rejecting its cruel slavery system.

Michael Kreyling defends the idea that, during the war, literature and, by extension, culture which had the war as their focus, had been forged thanks to aggressive words because "[a] necessary and preliminary step in the discourse of the culture war is and (especially on the southern front) has been to inject martial rhetoric into the conversation and to ratchet-up the tension to the breaking point" (*Inventing* 168). From this, we learn that the Civil War was not only the basis of a New South, but also of a new southern culture —hence, of a different literature. In *Cavalier and Yankee* (1961), William R. Taylor explains how the popular conception of the South gradually emerged before the Civil War with the national dialogue about North and South. He talks about an imaginary division and a divided culture, concluding that both Yankee and cavalier were necessary figures for the expansionist America of the nineteenth century. The North was undergoing change in a democratic environment and they yearned for a social stability like that enjoyed by the South with its system of slavery, so they inevitably praised the southern social system (96–97).

In contrast, there is a very different perspective of the anti-slavery myth: the frontier established by the Maxon-Dixon line symbolized the division between slavery and freedom

in the antebellum period. After the war, the anti-slavery myth would develop into the popular belief that the North had everything they had fought for, that is, union, freedom and equal rights. However, far from being the truth, the southern fugitive slave would find a segregationist environment once s/he arrived to the North. The wars also brought about the myth of the Lost Cause, and in spite of losing the war, those men who defended the Old South from ravenous Yankees were depicted as noble and courageous Christian warriors. Reconstruction emphasized this idea by focusing on the southerner's resistance to modernisation. During the period of Reconstruction, the white supremacy in the South would come up with the term of Redemption to make reference to the "reestablishment of conservative control over state and local governments" (C. Jones 230–31), a way of maintaining their pride and saving face by portraying themselves as saviors of the South being lead by Reconstruction governments established against their will.

The post-war nineteenth century gave birth to Populism, another myth that emphasizes the unchanging socioeconomic state of the South, always based on farming and black slaves. Despite all the talk about a New South, the region still remained a farming area, thereby contributing to the praise of the southern heroes and their endurance as the representatives and perpetuators of the "Southern Spirit." In the 1920s was set the basis for the creation of the Benighted South myth, a slight modification of the old myth of the Savage South. It was a neoabolitionist myth reinforced by the harsh images of this and subsequent decade —labor violence, lynchings, and the terrific actions of the Ku Klux Klan— that contributed to the emergence of a Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s.

Notwithstanding, despite the differences which could exist between the northern and the southern states, they also had many things in common. As we have already mentioned, during the middle and end of the nineteenth century the differences were especially emphasized over the similarities, but southern values began to crumble at the beginning of the twentieth century, when industrialization definitively conquered the world, the rural South not being an exception. The southern playwright Lillian Hellman reflected this change in her play *The Little Foxes* (1939). Hellman, like other female writers such as Lillian Smith or Carson McCullers, portrays the nit-picking of a southern family, the Hubbards, trying to ascend in society. In order to make their dreams true, they adapt to the new times allying with modernity and taking advantage of the cotton mill industry in order to become rich.

The country finally found the long-expected union in the new aspects of a modern life. Urbanization developed up in consonance with the industries, and men soon wished to work in the factories instead of working in the farms. The initial southern resistance to the modern world began to disappear with the establishment of the cotton mill in the rural South (as Hellman tells us in her play), and other modern machines and innovations transformed the South into a world not so distant from the North. Transport —thereby, movement— pushed people towards change, since it allowed them to move to a different place and try to live a different life. In the North, transport system was much more developed than in the South, but movement would finally also arrive to the static southern world.

When industrialization was a definite reality even in the South, the United States started to grow as a great economic force. On the other hand, America was —and still is— regarded as a country where people constantly moves from one place to another, changing job, changing state and changing perspectives (in the sense of ways of thinking). Air-conditioning, for instance, is a recent innovation whose importance we must remark, because it equates the warm South to a colder North. That is to say, once modernity has conquered the United States, there is no real distinction in matters of economy or society; it is even difficult to notice a real difference with

reference to weather, when during the nineteenth century the warm weather had been precisely one of the most attractive aspects of the South, and so used as propaganda to make it more appealing to people from other regions.

As we can see, the southern community was special and distinct from the rest of the United States, because it was defined by certain beliefs and traditions which made it quite different from the North. In addition, "[t]he term *community* evokes feelings of warmth and sociability, yet it also summons memories of the violent compulsion of orthodoxy — the lynch mob was a symbol of the white community's consensus on racial mores in the age of segregation" (Wilson, "Community" 37). The southern sense of community was represented by three institutions: on the one hand, there was the courthouse square, center of business, politics and economy. Around the square, there were other symbols of power such as the government offices, jails or banks. The pool hall and the barber shop were equivalent male institutions to Eudora Welty's "Petrified Man," the women's meeting point for the exchange of news and gossiping.

The county, on the other hand, was a very important part of the southern community. Centered around a store or a church, the province brought all its inhabitants together, although they did not get especially well with the people who lived near the countryside. Finally, the third pillar of the southern community was the church. And black people were very far from all these institutions, since they had been erected only for a privileged group, that of whites, while blacks were just conceived as mules. In other words, according to Thadious M. Davis: "There was a presumption of racial affinity, commonality in the dominant views of the South as a region. Diversity was not an issue, but difference was. The result has been curious: whites in the South became simply 'southerners' without a racial designation, but blacks in the South became simply 'blacks' without a regional designation" (29).

Blacks were, in a sense, expelled from the southern community, being referred under the pejorative label of "blacks." For southerners, black people were not part of their community. Southerners, in fact, were proud of being southerners before than of being whites. Denying black people a part in their southern society was the worst they could do to them. In spite of suffering this rejection and abuse, black people developed their own society, a large community comprising all of the subgroups or quarters they had formed. This community shared a black culture and a tradition which did not forget their African roots.

Recent studies of the South debate about its meaning as place and influence, so they doubt whether it was a matter of being the South Americanized or the whole of America Southernized. That is to say, there is no agreement about the degree of influence the South has received from the North, and the influence the South and its myths have exerted on America as a whole. As Helen Taylor notices, it is very difficult to define the South, because it inevitably raises dualism or ambiguity: "Although the South is still remembered for the 'burden' of its history of slavery, secession, war, racist conservatism, and violence, its more liberal racial attitudes (and, to some extent, practices) have convinced the wider nation that it has 'risen again' to assert a new national and international importance" (8).

Those who were born in the South feel it as a distinctive place, full of brightness and glory, despite the darkness of injustice and mistreatment. Even those who were abused feel proud of the South, because, in spite of everything that happened there, it was the land which witnessed their awakening and development. No southerner or American completely reject the South, maybe because, as Eudora Welty said: "It is through place that we put out roots, wherever birth, chance, fate or our traveling selves set us down; but where those roots reach toward—whether in America, England or Timbuktu—is the deep and running vein, eternal and consistent and everywhere purely itself, that feeds and is fed by the human understanding" (132–33).

1.1.1. Spatial-economic panorama of the South

I wish I was in the land ob cotton,
Old time dar am not forgotten.
Look away! Look away!
Look away! Dixie Land.
In Dixie Land whar I was born in,
Early on one frosty mornin,
Look away! Look away!
Look away! Dixie Land.

CHORUS
Den I wish I was in Dixie,
Hooray! Hooray!
In Dixie Land, I'll took my stand,
To lib and die in Dixie,
Away, away,
Away down south in Dixie,
Away, away,
Away down douth in Dixie.

(I Wish I Was in) "Dixie's Land" (1860)
Written and composed expressly for Bryant's Minstrels
by Daniel Decatur Emmett. Arranged for the Piano Forte by W. L. Hobbs.

Dixie, a term used to name the group of states that joined the Confederacy during the Civil War, was popularized in the minstrel song "Dixie's Land", written by Daniel D. Emmett in 1859. He was a man from Ohio who reproduced the language of black slaves in the South: "Gib me de place called Dixie Land, wid hoe and shubble in my hand." The name may derive from *Mason and Dixon's Line*, the boundary separating the North from the South, although it is not clear. In any case, even when the source of the name is not well-known, it gradually became a symbol of southern patriotism, and at the same time it denotes an affective tone toward the South.

The American South, or Dixie, consists of a vast part of the United States of America, which does not exactly correspond with the geographical South, particularly depending on different periods of history. The most clear image of a geographical Dixie would be marked by the Mason-Dixon line: "Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon sailed from England to Philadelphia in 1763 to settle a wrangle between the colonies of non-conformist Pennsylvania and Catholic Maryland. The English astronomers mapped the strange-looking stars of this new continent, took their readings, and converted the results to terrain geography" (Hall and Wood 49).

Roughly, Dixie is located between the American West (basically the Appalachian Mountains) and the Atlantic Ocean, having Mexico as its Southern Frontier and the Midwest as the northern one. The South essentially includes the states that joined in the Confederacy during the American Civil War (Confederate States), although there has been disagreement on certain states consideration as southern or non-southern. Most of scholars however agree in the main states that would conform the subregion known as Deep South: South Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Georgia. We will pay especial attention to this subregion since the plays under study in this dissertation are all set in the Deep South, particularly Alabama and Louisiana.

The South, known to have a complex historical and mythological legacy, has been especially linked to its landscape and traditions, as well as to the discussion of class stratification, particularly related to the labor class and slavery as a traditional institution, consequently attaining a meaning of its own for the global economy.

The early capitalist economy that expanded from Europe to the USA gave birth to the plantation, a system that linked agriculture and slavery for the benefit of the plantation owners. It started first with the success of tobacco in Maryland and Virginia and it expanded to other new lands that were seeking to take part into the global economy. Mainly three southern areas, the Black Belt, the Atlantic coast and the Delta, reunited the main requirements to thrive with the plantation system: accessibility to international markets, large extension of land and a fertile soil for crops. The best land could be found in the lowlands, with many plantations that could easily grow crops to export. The political and economic power was in the hands of wealthy planters who owned a big quantity of slaves. Scholars like U. B. Phillips (*Life*), Eugene D. Genovese, and James Oakes, to name only a few, have paid especial attention to this white elite that has been recurrently romanticized through diverse channels, be it literature, the small screen or the big, as well as different media during the periods in question and the subsequent ones. Rich planters like Henry Hammond, who also came to be a relevant political figure, and banker Stephen Duncan, have been the subject of biographies, for both their lives and their perspectives of society.

Consequently, when we talk about the distribution of the South, we must bear in mind that the southern elite white class is the one leading to either stagnation or change, to the slow or fast development of —their region, up until the moment a new emerging white class comes to challenge them. However, on the other hand, they were dependent on black labor, hence making of slavery —since the Old South until the new forms of labor system in the twentieth century— one of the most definitory aspects of the South, not only economically but also socially and culturally, and even psychologically speaking, aspects that we will expand on later. No supremacy white people occupied a lower position in the social scale, and they held jobs related to the arts or small farming, among others. Black slaves were outnumbering poor whites and were mainly involved in the cultivation of land.

In the Appalachian, yeomen cultivated the land as a means of life and they sold the small surplus they could obtain only when there was a option for it. There were no large plantations, but there were nonetheless slave owners. The dominant class was formed by merchants, who owned a small amount of slaves, and migrant planters searching to collect benefits from the iron and salt industries. In the Piedmont, a mixed society emerged from the organization of the different classes: planters —with their slaves— settled in the bottomlands and focused on commerce; yeomen were holding a small amount of slaved and their goal was a type of general farming that enabled them to put an internal market in motion. Economically and politically speaking, as well as in the social scale, a small number of planters were those on the top holding the power, although slaves and small farmers constituted the vast majority of population.

During the early nineteenth century the perspective of economy in North and South started to differ in its orientation: plantations' interests were focused on agricultural exportation —mainly cotton— to England; the mountains and the Piedmont area were more interested in internal market, transportation, banking, and commerce, consequently boosting a more capitalist development. Once the differences grew bigger and the war exploded, after the secession, the finance industry started to bloom, exportation of goods reemerged to favor the economy of the North and eastern areas and, as it could be expected, federal states saw their power increased.

After the Civil War, the aim of Reconstruction was to redistribute society creating a free labor class, but the reality was that emancipation came with no actual noticeable change in the social system, and the South had no absence of troubles to deal with the new division of labor. In the yeoman Deep South, where some planters still retained their power, there were cycles with periods of a surplus in production followed by periods of depression, hence leading yeomen into debt and tenancy. The South remained agrarian, yet with an image of simple rural living as sharecropping and tenant-farming emerged to replace slavery. In the Piedmont areas, planters transitioned to capitalism contributing to the industrialization of tobacco, textiles and steel, all this by means of exploiting laborers. As the yeomen's position in the social scale was now lower, they gave place for a new white working class to emerge. Labor was, however, racially separated: black labor was in charge of tobacco industries whereas white labor was mostly working for the cotton factories. Planters who had adhered to capitalism provided capital to the plantation South investing their profits in industry. In the Appalachia, outside capital promoted by local elites came into the region for the extraction of timber and coal. Yeomen decline and population growth contributed to an increasing number or white laborers. Finally, blacks and immigrants arriving from different areas of Europe "were recruited to divide worker solidarity and combat labor militancy in the coalfields" (Dahl and Billings 189).

As Gaines M. Foster clearly summarizes, the South was still undeniably exceptional for decades after the war, still under a white supremacy trying to maintain their privileges although there was supposed to be a democratic control, and even though some white elites might have achieved considerable wealth, the South stayed poorer than the rest of the nation: "A few whites attained great wealth, but per capita income in the region remained at best half of the national average. In the 1890s, some southern orators nevertheless praised the South's recovery from defeat, but few talked of winning the war and many embraced the 'Great Alibi'" (Foster, "Legacy" 424).

At the same time the North was experiencing "a treasury of virtue" for having freed the slaves in the South, by the "Great Alibi", the southerners were allowed to escape any guilty or negative feeling after the war, for everything could be blamed on the war and the Northerners vision of the world bringing their Yankee manners to the South. In Robert Penn Warren's words, "[b]y the Great Alibi the South explains, condones, and transmutes everything. … By the Great Alibi pellagra, hookworm, and illiteracy are all explained, or explained away, and mortgages are converted into badges of distinction. Laziness becomes the aesthetic sense, blood-lust rising from a matrix of boredom and resentful misery becomes a high sense of honor, and ignorance becomes divine revelation" (54–55).

Agricultural benefits lessened during the first decades of the twentieth century mainly due to the aforementioned cycles of overproduction in the South as well as to an increase in global production. Plantations solution to these threats was based on increasing the production and hence, an increase labor, which was translated into more exploitation. As a consequence of this, which in turn caused racial hostility, the first decades of the century boosted the Great Migration, also known as Black Migration or Great Northward Migration, a fast movement where more than six million African Americans abandoned the rural South for the North or the West, escaping racial discrimination in search of new economic sources. In Lemann's words "the migration meant leaving what had always been their economic and social base in America and finding a new one" (6). After the Jim Crow Laws had resulted in more belligerence and propelled migration, politicians saw an opportunity to get strength from the establishment of military bases and naval industries but the economy would inevitably collapse with the Great Depression.

The diversity in the southern socioeconomic choices of the past has remained as a print in the geography of its urbanization. The Appalachian and rural plantation sub-regions are surrounded by urban cities where industry and commerce proliferated in the New South, as well as in the Sunbelt cities. Among others, Dahl and Billings reflected on these imprints of the past: "Just as the mansions of Charleston and Natchez are implicit monuments to the history of enslaved labor, vanishing sites of waged labor in coal camps and mill villages still bear traces of past exploitation as well. … The point of being able to read class in the landscape is not to reduce all things southern to class but to see class everywhere" (190).

1.1.1.1. Alabama

Alabama was deeply involved in the Civil War contributing with a great amount of soldiers, a prominent group of the period that finds a representative in Hellman's character, John Bagtry, a minor character who abandons her lover, Regina Hubbard, to honor the Confederate cause. After the war, Alabama stayed mostly dependent on agriculture, it was still a "cotton land." Public schools were built during the Reconstruction period, and legislations were supposedly made to expand women's rights, something that Hellman's plays might show to a certain extent, but we believe with an emphasis on how small that "expansion of rights" was. The mother figure in *Another Part of the Forest* (1946) is allowed to open a school with slaves as her help, but her daughter, who becomes the mother figure decades later, as we learn in *The Little Foxes*, is not considered as a male equal to enroll in business. In Alabama there were also groups who did not accept the freedmen new condition, consequently attacking them and contributing to an aggressive persecution that was usually done with the help of groups such as the KKK or similar ones.

The democrats wrote a new constitution in 1875 after winning an election managed by means of fraud and the Blaine Amendment was passed in order to forbid religious schools to make use of public money, and racial segregation at schools would be approved practically at the same time, expanding to other areas little by little in the following years until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the South was clearly racially segregated and it continued to do so up until the 50s, when black and white people were to be separate in practically every field of life: railroad cars, hospitals, restaurants, toilets, prisons, and so on. Poll taxes and a certain level of literacy were required to be allowed to vote, which prevented the big majority of illiterate freedmen to take part into it. Disenfranchisement of black people would continue up until the federal civil rights were passed in 1965.

We can mention as first relevant migration influx in Alabama that one made by people who moved from rural areas to Birmingham city to join the heavy industry or the mining life, hence contributing to its economic growth. In the first years of the 40s, the city of Mobile also experienced considerable migratory movement as many workers came there to work for war-related industries. Despite all this, agricultural areas kept holding their power for as long as they could.

1.1.1.2. Louisiana and its New Orleans

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Governor Huey Long, who held the power in Louisiana for part of the Great Depression, provided support to education and many jobs for poor whites, although his autocratic leadership was criticized. Many black people abandoned Louisiana during the Second Great Migration (1940s–1960s) in search of better job conditions. Those remaining continued to experience restrictions in their human rights, particularly in their right to vote up until the 60s. The

Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution that recognizes women's vote right became a national law in the 1920 but it was not ratified in Louisiana until 1970.

New Orleans had suffered several epidemics until the beginning of the twentieth century, when medical and technological advances started to make a difference in people's lives. As an example of the complications that the tropical weather or New Orleans might have cause, Hellman's Berniers sisters in *Toys in the Attic* constantly make reference to the heat and how lucky they are they can refresh with their fan. Even though New Orleans had been considered as one of the leading cities in urbanization, by the mid-twentieth century cities like Atlanta or Houston were bigger than New Orleans. The port kept having the most traffic but its economy was not as much successful as that of other southern cities.

New Orleans bloomed from the late 1890s with jazz clubs, saloons, gambling, and prostitution was legal here (contrary to the rest of the United States). On a funny note, we can mention that the young Leo Hubbard seems to be particularly keen on the later, although he has no option but to approach it illegally since the Hubbards home is set in Alabama. Women working in this area were powerful in New Orleans, they had connections and they could even have something to say in politics (Powell). After the shutdown of the business by the federal government in 1917, drinking and prostitution prevailed and vice kept the city "vibrant" illegally. Without getting deeply into this aspect, we can however get a feel of the New Orleans jazzy atmosphere in some scenes in *Toys in the Attic*.

1.1.2. Chronological historic-economic progression

Considering that money is the main trigger for the action to take place in the works under analysis, and as one of the major drives of many of the characters, we must introduce the economic landscape according to the full setting of the original plays as well as their filmic versions. After having explained the most relevant spatial characteristics of the South in the previous part, we will here present four main historical periods of time: Reconstruction, Gilded Age, Progressive Era, and Great Depression.

Table 1. Historical setting in the movies

Plays and Movies	Space	Time
Another Part of the Forest	Alabama (Bowden, fictional)	Reconstruction (1880)
The Little Foxes	Alabama	Progressive Era (1900)
Toys in the Attic	Louisiana (New Orleans)	Great Depression (1920s)

1.1.2.1. Reconstruction

With the Industrial Revolution, the discussion of the link between social class and politics became more entangled, since the separation of classes had changed into new variations and the material interests of the different groups were also varied. The system of parties during the antebellum period had succeeded in containing regional differences, that is to say both Northern and Southern Whigs, more numerous in rich plantation areas and in towns, were in opposition to their Democrats counterparts, mostly farmers, in both North and South. After the war, the new system showed a more marked regional character. The Republican Party emerged around the 1850s from the remains of the Whig Party. Byron E. Shafer claims that "from the

1870s to the 1960s, the United States had what might actually be described as a 'three-party system,' featuring northern Democrats, southern Democrats, and national Republicans" (191).

After the Civil War, even if slaves became freemen, they were not really free, as we have already explained, but they were especially meaningless with regards to politics. The Industrial Revolution had boomed in the nineteenth century in the Northeast and Midwest making one of the main concerns to develop a society with an organized working class and policies were made for a social order to be established. However, the South did not experience the industrial revolution at this early stage of history and consequently, social stratification was not following the same rhythm, or even route, as in the North. Actually James Henry Hammond, South Carolinian planter and politician, claimed that the existence of a labor class that could not participate of politics worked in the benefit of the stability of the region. That is to say, decisions should be taken by white people, independently of their position in the social ladder, be it as rich planters or yeomen, while black people were supposed to work only (use their hands instead of brain). This meant on the one hand that white southern elites had the absolute power, and on the other hand that free black southerners were still thought as slaves, or at least, could not be grouped together with white laborers. From this we can say that Civil War itself did not meant a big challenge to the real reorganization of social class, and hence the South remained closed to change, as the "progression" to the Jim Crow, tenancy, and sharecropping clearly proved, not to mention the violence that spiraled from a strong resistance to change: "From the earliest days of Reconstruction, violence played an important part in white resistance to Emancipation and Union victory. Freedpeople who attempted to demand wages, attend school, exercise the right to vote, or even simply claim children from former masters all risked violent reprisals from reactionary whites who interpreted their actions as illegitimate assaults on the social order of the South" (C. Jones 233).

However, despite the rough environment of resentment, denial, and self-justification, despite all the struggle and the more than bumpy road to the transformation of the southern social system, new economic interests emerged during the Reconstruction period and the racial distinctions that had been maintained for so long started to eventually fade, becoming a real challenge for the white southern elites, who at this point needed to accept that social stratification was no longer simply based on skin color. Labor mobility, once slavery was abolished, became the main tool for freedmen to use against their white employers, so they started prioritizing their wish to keep their families together and to have an economic freedom. Catherine Jones summarizes the political and class evolution as follows: "Made up of former slaves, recent northern transplants, and native whites (both longtime unionists and recent Republican converts), the derisively labeled "Black and Tan" conventions themselves were a vivid demonstration of transformed political possibilities. The new state constitutions they produced demonstrated a broad challenge to old racial and class hierarchies" (232).

1.1.2.2. Gilded Age

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, democrats had put an effort to create state constitutions that were unaccommodating for the progress of business and industry, traditional agriculture persisted particularly in areas like Alabama and rural elites had the control, and there was not much access to credit for an easy industrial development. By the end of the century Texas had expanded its railroad network and Dallas had become the largest city. Other major new cities like Dallas were progressing, for example, Atlanta, Houston or Birmingham, where mining proliferated. Also contributing to the economic expansion, the oil boom would

happen in the western states of the South. Some quite critical disasters nonetheless would come to tarnish the southern expansion, such as the boll weevil, which completely destroyed the cotton production.

Northern cities like Detroit, Los Angeles or Chicago, among others, received massive black immigration but also white, since they had new industries prospering and hence they could offer a variety of jobs for those interested in them. Chicago is constantly referred to in *Foxes*, since it is Regina's dream city, her goal. She desperately wants to move to the North, probably in search of more rights, which, as a female, had been denied to her, but also escaping the South, which contrary to what might appear at first sight, probably represents for her no more than a bunch of frustrating memories of her youth and the suffocating atmosphere of the present —she has always been trapped by patriarchy.

The Gilded Age of the USA is related to the North and West mainly and it is a period that comprehends the three last decades of the nineteenth century. It overlaps with the Reconstruction of the South and it is coincident in time with the Victorian period in Britain. During this period, the North and West experienced a remarkable economic growth, and the salaries of workers were also proof of it for they were being increased much faster than in Europe, what caused an influx of immigration attracted to the factories of the North and the mining and ranching of the West. The South in the meantime was experiencing a different panorama, under a "re-construction" that was finding a cultural and social barricade difficult to deal with for a fast development, and immersed in poverty since the end of the Civil War. Sharecropping, political corruption, racial segregation and the violent atmosphere existing in the South prevented it from welcoming modernity at the same time as the rest of the nation.

The Great Migration was the most significative and economically meaningful movement of the first decades of the twentieth century, for millions of black southerners fled to the North in search of their rights that were constantly attacked in the South with segregation laws, poor access to education, denial to have a political voice, and in addition, a violent atmosphere that was even heightened with persecution and lynching rituals. But despite all the social ills, the poverty and the delay in advance that the South might had been immersed in, progress would eventually be made.

1.1.2.3. Progressive Era

The progressive era, well known for its political and social reform intentions and enthusiasm for modernization, would come to push the South to modernization from the 1890s up to the 1920s. Focused on fighting the political corruption and issues that were supposed to have derived from industrialization and urbanization, this progressive activism started at local level expanding later throughout the nation with supporters from diverse social fields: businessmen, lawyers, professors, doctors, etc. They wanted to improve life conditions and they focused their efforts into deleting vice from society, something they considered as not only their objective but also their mission: "Overwhelmingly Protestant, progressives were informed by an evangelical zeal to perfect human society. They wanted to purify southern society by rooting out vice and prostitution, and their most determined efforts focused on eliminating the manufacture and distribution of alcohol" (Link 251).

Prohibitionism was consequently especially relevant during the Progressive Era since the social reform was concerned with putting an end to the uncontrolled drinking. Laws for the control of distribution and ingest of alcohol, and limitations for saloons as well as brothels, were among their first approaches to the social issues of the moment. The progressivists intention of

eradicating vice was, as aforementioned, not unique to the South, since it met similar objectives in the North; however, issues or race and white supremacy as well as those related to a mostly rural poverty were particularly distinctive of the South. Reformers took also an active role in attempting to make of politics a fair practice, confronting corruption and paying attention to the civilians. Hence muckrakers' job was to expose the corruption existent in politics and corporations, and to point out to vice and any social troubles. The progressive era in Alabama, setting that we find in *The Little Foxes*, was mainly focused on education improvement and the banning of child labor, in addition to railroad regulations, even though they were way behind the North. The reformers also put an effort in creating a better health system. In conclusion, progressive methods had an effect on the South that scholars such as William A. Link would describe as "mixed": "The Progressives' reforms promised change, progress, and expanded opportunities, especially for women, for new forms of public involvement. Seeking far-reaching changes, in many instances Progressives encountered resistance from a powerful tradition of community control and localism" (252).

1.1.2.4. The Great Depression

After the first blooming years of the new century, a big economic blow would come by the hand of the 1929 Wall Street Crash, when unemployment would become a serious issue:

> In October 1929, stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange plummeted. Business began to try to reduce their inventories. Cutting production, they laid off workers. Banks and individuals who had lost money scrambled to cover themselves. Slowly, the impact of the crash rippled out of New York to the rest of the country. Banks closed, taking depositors' savings with them, and business went bankrupt, putting more and more people out of work. (Keith 124–25)

The South received the recession intensely even if southern businessmen had reassured people about the contrary. In fact, the very same year of the crash some southern businessmen took their lives, and the same happened not much later with bankers, who after losing people's money considered that "death was the only honorable recourse" (Keith 125) for them. By the beginning of the 1930s, the recession had created such a depressive mood that people started to use the word "depression" to make reference to it. *Toys in the Attic* is set during the period of the Great Depression in New Orleans, Louisiana. During that period Governor Huey Long was holding the power and he was concerned with the creation of employment as well as education, but people's livelihoods were lost by huge numbers and, as Atack and Passell claim, "millions of Americans eventually [lost] their self-respect" (p. 585), something that also happened to the male protagonist of this play. The impact of this crash, although it is not in its strongest form, is reflected in the play as well, as money issues are at the center of the Berniers family's distresses. Keith summarizes the effect of the Great Depression in the South as follows: "For middle-class southerners, the Depression meant a curtailing of dreams: no college, no house, no car, delayed marriages, smaller families, sharing living quarters with relatives. For the southern common folk of both races, however, the Depression was catastrophic, pushing them over the edge from poverty into destitution" (125).

Toys in the Attic, set in the 1930s, introduces the remaining of the Berniers middle class family, three siblings whose dreams have been paused because of their economy. The sisters are unmarried and the brother just recently married but has been having trouble to set his finances.

Economy is somehow the igniting power shaping characters and triggering actions; although characters' drives are diverse, money plays a very important role in the development of their lives.

By 1932 most of Americans hated the Republican president Herbert Hoover and his attempts to get through the Depression and instead many southern politicians looked at Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who would win the election in November of that year. Roosevelt clearly admitted that he had no solution in his mind to solve the effects of the economic crash, but the promised to put in motion a "New Deal", something that in fact would prove effective for the take-off of the southern economy making of him "a hero to the southern common people" (Keith 129).

During the Depression years, prices of southern products dropped and so did the employment rate, becoming the employers unable to pay their workers. Black people were the ones to first lose their jobs, then women, and finally white men. Some mill owners decided to keep their workers and lower their salary to an minimum amount, but this did not prove to be a good solution either. Cotton industry declined to almost unbelievable levels and so did other southern commodities that tenancy and sharecropping could not save; only the tobacco company stayed strong, as people found in it the distressing effect that they desperately needed in their depressed situation.

Moreover, natural adverse conditions would increase the already bad situation, as it happened with the Texan drought that affected all the southern plain, which would then acquire the name "Dust Bowl", forcing people to move to the West Coast for their survival:

> For years residents of the Plains had overplowed their fields, creating a layer of loose topsoil. Then the rains stopped. By the early 1930s parts of Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Kansas had been given a new name: the Dust Bowl. Prairie winds scoured the plains, sending choking clouds of dust high into the sky and piling dust up in drifts like snow. Old people and children died of respiratory failure. (Keith 126)

Therefore, this South that had recently transitioned from an Old South ways to the New South ones, could not fully reach a blooming progress and it was in severe need of help during the Great Depression period, as president Roosevelt had claimed and attempted to save himself by promoting modernity and development in the region.

WWII came to Louisiana with the chance of defense jobs for both black and white farmers, however by 1940 thousands of black employees would leave the state during the Second Great Migration, in search of better work and life conditions in the North or the West of the country. World War II would ironically come to end the depression by creating new industries and the establishment of military bases in the South. Farming did not perish, but it shifted from cotton to rice and other crops. As it had briefly happened before with the New Deal, now WWII would make a considerable effect on "nationalizing" the South, that is to say, liberating it from poverty and raising it to the levels of development and commodity of the North. In support of such a claim Dewey W. Grantham wrote that the war "brought an abrupt departure from the South's economic backwardness, poverty, and distinctive rural life, as the region moved perceptively closer to the mainstream of national economic and social life" (179).

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1.1.3. Beyond myth, one too many Souths

As Griffin and Thompson clearly stated, there has always been not only one but many Souths, "rural and urban, cosmopolitan and provincial, moral and immoral, radical and reactionary, rich and poor, brown and red, yellow and black and white. And they are all ours" ("Enough" 85). Here we will introduce the southern myths briefly as they serve as background information and they

are directly related to the changing and reshaping of the southern identity throughout history. On the one hand, there are people who celebrate the richness of the South and even participate of it: "[they] dress up as Confederates to reenact Civil War battles, take tours of antebellum mansions, and watch *North and South* every time the miniseries plays on television" (Keith 8). On the other hand, there are others whose focus is not in the "magnolias" but in the "darkness," violence, and oppression of the South. A negative or a positive perspective can generally be connected to different southern myths, although not necessarily.

1.1.3.1. The Southern Frontier

The first European settled in the eastern coastal area of the contemporary United States, later expanding to the west from Atlantic to Pacific, and all over the continent. This geographical area has also been called Anglo-American frontier (Billington and Ridge).

The myth of the Southern Frontier was built upon the imagination or desires of the Puritan settlers of the South, who promoted an individualistic perspective of the world and planted the seed for the growth of a strong religion in a land that they perceived as God's present, hence making the myth arise: the South as some type of Eden. In Patrick Gerster's words, "[w]hether articulated in verse, fiction or sermons, or borne ultimately at unconscious levels, myth pictured the region as a new Garden of Eden" (160).

However, southern settlers had to fight a wild nature in order to survive, starting the socioeconomic benefit to come from fur traders, cattle traders, trappers and miners before the frontier farmers could successfully manage the harvesting of crops in a rough land. Later would come mining and a wealthier farming industry together with the establishment of small towns. Strength and masculinity became therefore key characteristics and "the essential frontier process of wresting a stable foothold from a hostile environment" (Cash 11) contributed to the settlers' growth in assertiveness and with an individualistic mindset. It was a type of individualism that made you "responsible for the welfare of you and yours" (Reed, *Minding* 23). Coming from this, the South has shown little belief in institutions since one should be dependent on his/her own actions instead of depending on society. The South then seemed to have a preference to believe in a minimal intervention of the government and a maximum of individual rights. Religion, since the Puritans, proved itself as a strong force and made of the South a deeply religious place. The question remains though, how do individualism and a libertarian choice in politics match with southern hospitality and the relevance of family, care for neighbors, giving to those in need, and attention to the opinion of the community? If the South is so much caring of others, wouldn't it be accurate to say that the North is more individualistic than the South?

1.1.3.2. The Old South

The myth of the old South, that powerful image that we became familiar with through the reception of different texts, be it in the form of books, theater performances, the small or the big screen, resonates with the description that Cash had long ago provided: "Cotton would end stagnation, beat back the wilderness, mow the forest, pour black men and plows and mules along the Yazoo and the Arkansas, spin out the railroad, freight the yellow waters of the Mississippi with panting stern wheelers—in brief, create the great South" (9–10).

The Old South is the South of the plantation, "a body of tales, legends, and folklore defining the antebellum plantation" (Pyron 139), markedly hierarchical and ingrained with the rules and manners of a patriarchal society. Therefore, provided with a leading socioeconomic role in

the story of the South, the plantation myth became prominent and set roots in our minds. On the base of the plantation system there was a hierarchical order established where the family was a central element being the plantation owner and his sons on the top of the pyramid, followed by his wife and daughters and on a lower scale his white workers or dependents, and finally the black slaves on the bottom, where some layers could also be identified: house servants coming first and plantation workers second, having the later a slightly higher position if they were fair blacks or possessed any craft, and the simple dark slaves being placed at the very bottom. Concerning the typology of characters of the period, Jack Temple Kirby talks about "no middle class, [but] only courtly-but-tragic ol' gemun, dashing beaux, beauteous belles, and loving, loyal darkies" (*Media-Made* 41), altogether contributing to an idyllic and nostalgic image emotively portrayed in classic blockbusters like the adaptation of Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind* (1936).

After the Civil War, the Lost Cause myth emerged in order to put emphasis on the idea that it had been not the issue of slavery but the wish for constitutionalism of the North that had started the Civil War. As Gaines M. Foster explains, "[d]efeat therefore became the inevitable result of northern power, not a judgment on the South" ("Lost" 240). As a consequence, white southerners who had been at the top of the plantation system pyramid, considered a romanticized view of those old times necessary for their identity to survive and so, stemming directly from the English cavalier tradition, the noblesse and gentility of the chivalric southerners became emphasized, especially in order to protect and take care of the "asexual paragons of virtue" (King, "Romanticism" 164) embodied in the white southern belle. The old South was then reminisced as "too novel, good, and bright to survive the onslaughts of industrial, middle-class capitalism from the North" (Pyron 141). To a certain extent, the plantation myth reinforced the myth of the Lost Cause. The support of women and black soldiers during war times was praised, and the defeat of the South was mythologized for a long time, since the 1880s until well after WWII, period when southern writers such as William Faulkner decided to share with the world their view of the South, which for them was not "just" or not "mostly" such an idyllic one, full of magnolias in bloom and a beautiful moonlight for the genteel atmosphere, but instead, one full of ghosts, scary or uncomfortable in a higher or lower degree: "No doubt there were real antebellum white people to substantiate the characters of Scarlett, Rhett, Melanie, and Ashley [cf. *Gone with the Wind*]. Novel readers and moviegoers may, but probably do not, thoughtfully contemplate the use of stereotypes. They are entertained and go on their way, never tidily segregating history from vivid written and/or pictorial imagery" (Kirby, *Media-Made* 72–73).

The values once considered as such in the past of the South, did undoubtedly contribute to reshape the region as well as they did influence the southerners' minds, consequently having an effect until the present, something that again brings to mind Faulkner's words, "the past is never dead" (*Requiem for a Nun* 73).

1.1.3.3. The Solid South

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As a reaction to the wishes and rules of the North, the post-war South turned into what we know today as "solid South," a unification of the southern states in order to make an ideological front against the North. This was reflected into politics as the win for the Democratic vote in the South for almost a whole century, in opposition with the Republican North. In direct relationship with the Reconstruction period image that reached to us, the solid South experienced the radical influence of the North in their territory, their society and their ways of

life. The abolition of slavery gave place to the Freedman's Bureau as one of the many examples of control imposed by the North, and characters like the "scalawags" or the "carpetbaggers" emerged as the negative figures of the new southern society.

Since the turn of the century onwards the southern states were under the rule of conservatives understanding "control by the 'white supremacy Democrats' as the only road to salvation for their society" (McCrary 152) at the same time Reconstruction was *broadcasted* as a big evil for the South. In this solid democratic South, by the year 1915, Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, an example of attempt of an "intense historical didacticism directed to the nation" (Kirby, *Media-Made* 6), achieved great success in the big screen, and the efforts of the southern white supremacy in order to preserve their beliefs on major issues as that of race, proved successful in fighting the innovative changes brought in with the northern rule. As a result, up until the 1950s "blacks were excluded from party leadership and their interests largely ignored in party policy" (Roland 59). Every means or manner possible (electoral corruption, exclusion from politics, and political violence) was valid in order to counterbalance the intentions of the North. Therefore, organizations like the KKK or the South Carolinian Red Shirts allowed the democrats to use "beatings, assassinations, and armed bands of horsemen at the polls" (McCrary 153). We must bear in mind though that violent doings were only the resource of a few white southern supremacists and most of southerners disagreed with violence being their only wish to reinforce white supremacy without resorting to such aggressive methods (Waldrep 141). The result of this opposition of groups' ideology (South vs. North) gave place to racial segregation, which inevitably reinforced the image of the South as undeniably and strongly racist.

By mid 1950s segregation was declared unconstitutional and black southerners started to make their voice sound, arising the figure of Martin Luther King as one of the most powerful against racism until the culmination of the black struggle with the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. Not long after this punch to discrimination, racist reactions against Martin Luther King would be recorded in the North and as a consequence the South would definitely lose its exclusivity as the owner or racists traits once those were extended to the whole nation. In fact, the South positioned itself as less racist than the North in some aspects, as it was the process of abolishing segregation (by the beginning of the 1970s, southern schools were actually much less segregated than northern schools). Overt racism was no longer accepted and attitude towards blacks was changing, the South had opened up to industrialization, urbanization was becoming more than noticeable, and illiteracy had been decreasing little by little; however, covert racism was still present and strong enough as to keep evolving in reduced and private spheres of daily life.

As Winthrop D. Jordan precisely summarizes, "racial attitudes in the South ha[d] been peculiar not for their existence or their content but for their virulence, saliency, pervasiveness, and the predisposition of white people to overt action and of black people to fear, accommodation, resistance, and retaliation" (151). Notwithstanding, the solid South with a strong democratic ideology and especial emphasis on regional issues acceded to give place to a different point of view in politics and to welcome development, hence reshaping itself.

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1.1.3.4. The Sunbelt South

The conservative view of the post-war solid South opened up to a new understanding of progress and thus the Sunbelt South was born from the optimism towards change and the wish to welcome development, although it would soon find a scission in ideology: on one side, we could find those who welcomed the benefits of capitalism whereas, on the other side,

a minority resorted to the defense of a local South advocating for the rural. Those who felt defeated and wanted to abandon the old ways, decided to "pursue commerce, industry and the almighty dollar with the same avidity and finesse as the victorious North" (Rubin, *American South: Portrait* 6).

In spite of this positive wish to prosper, notwithstanding, the 1929 Wall Street crash would soon take place, merely appalling the South as it was "already on familiar terms with history's great negative lessons of poverty, failure, defeat and guilt" (Minter 204). Roosevelt's economic reforms with the New Deal in the 1930s contributed massively to the progress of the South and its transformation into a modern culture breaking the poverty cycle and levelling it up to the nation's development. In James A. Hodges words, "the New Deal nationalized southern culture, and the South became by the 1940s not the nation's number one economic problem but its ever-growing, ever-Americanizing region" (231). Yet, being as it was rooted in tradition and embedded in its own cultural patterns, the old face of the South did not get erased easily: "racial segregation, dire poverty, and rural and small-town control kept the South looking more old than new. The New Deal, with its host centralizing agencies and its nationalized political ideology, changed the Old South but did not destroy it" (231).

The envisioned prosperous South with bustling cities and industrial power wouldn't be perceived as such, therefore, until almost the very ending of the twentieth century, when it finally reached a pick in its economic advance presenting itself to the world now as the Sunbelt South. For many, trust in such a big change was regarded as a sort of disloyalty to the roots of the South and its agricultural origins, and consequently some southerners resorted to the emphasis on an agricultural society and the attachment to the land and the local. This localism defended as especially valuable the relationships with family and local communities that could not be replaced (A. S. Rubin 33). Agrarianism emerged in Tennessee as a stronger form of localism against the corruption of industrial and urban development, a call out to the harmonious rural life, failing at achieving successful results despite its intellectual stance since it was unable to provide specific economic plans.

Industrial progress during the 1930s did not get to delete the negative meanings associated with the South: a poor, intellectually crippled, slow, and aggressively racist region. This popular image has stayed imprinted in our minds until the present days despite the Sunbelt South times of prosperity. Although there were periods in time when the southern cities were rising and prospering with industry that did in fact lead to a temporary prospective of southern wealthiness, the imaginary that is most vividly reminded is that of a South that up until the 1940s had been described repeatedly as "an economic backwater of the nation typified by tenant farming, rural poverty, and economic stagnation" (Mohl 277).

Nonetheless, the term "Sunbelt" would come to describe the South decades later during the 1970s, in contrast with a new term, "Rustbelt," when the media started to use both in order to describe the economic differences showing in diverse regions. Federal investment contributed to the growth of the South with the funding of military bases, nuclear energy plant, and the construction industry or the NASA. Under the Sunbelt South legal racial segregation met its ending, since providing separate facilities for black and white people was contributing to financial loses as well as it looked unattractive for investment. Areas like Charlotte and Atlanta were centers of commerce and banking, with an increased level in technology and education. At that point, the South was "under the sun" but Northeast and Midwest areas were experiencing a "rusty" situation. The term "Rustbelt" was then coined to refer to the deteriorating industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest whereas "Sunbelt" designated the series of flourishing urbanized areas from the Southeast across to the Southwest to California.

1.1.3.5. The Benighted South

In the nineteenth century, the South had been perceived by both North and South in a romantic way as a heavenly place, albeit being some sort of Eden doomed to fall. This unaltered and wild South that had conversely been referred to in negative ways by writers like Frederick Law Olmsted, William Lloyd Garrison or Harriet Beecher Stowe (Hobson, "Benighted" 27) would resurface again much later in the 1920s as a Benighted South with harsh images associated like that of the Ku Klux Klan lynchings, violence and religious bigotry. This adverse image of aggressive impulse, ignorance, and decadence resonated in the media and in the arts, particularly in literature, with the works of authors like Erskine Caldwell, T. S. Stribling, Thomas Wolfe, and William Faulkner. It is worth noticing that this was not an imaginary created out of nothing but based on the reality of the region. As Fred Hobson summarizes, "[t]he new image of the Benighted South was a result partly of actual events in the South during the 1920s and partly of the writings of social critics and novelists who focused attention on the dark side of the contemporary South. The writers did not, as traditional southerners often charged, invent the negative southern image: the events did that" ("Benighted" 27).

Authors portrayed the dark South in different ways adding to the strong reaction against a South of violence where intolerance represented by the Ku Klux Klan and religious forces had caused much suffering. These realities together with some violent strikes and the Scopes Trial among other events attracted the attention of journalists and sociologists who were eager to contribute to the demythologizing of the romantic view of the South.

It would not be until the end of the Civil Rights movement that the new vision of a Sunbelt South more open to industry and less open to racism would come to slowly erase the enduring one of a Benighted South, still a topic not easily forgotten by media and literature where it had resonated more strongly.

1.1.3.6. The Bible Belt South

Southern novelist Flannery O'Connor wrote about a South that was "Christ-haunted," full of religious enthusiasts, crippled with visions, or atheists (R. C. Wood). Believers thought they could experience God in many new different ways in their lives, they could speak languages, heal the sick and make predictions. There are many reasons for the religiosity of the South, however, their faith in giving to the community and praying can be perceived as well in a contradictory manner. On the one hand, we could think that religion and poverty are indeed directly related and, since the South had been mostly poor, faith in God would definitely help to make it bearable for those who had no other support in life but God. On the other hand, the southern white supremacy's strong belief in God is not so easy to explain since they adhered first to slavery and not wanting to let it go, they resorted to the Jim Crow, not particularly moral indeed. The concept of morality is supposed to be one leading our lives and to a certain extent universal so, independently of culture, there are certain beliefs in the South that cannot be perceived as morally acceptable, or at least desirable. Religion somehow could help to mask this by allowing people to pretend morality in a region where appearance was one of the most important things. Nonetheless, we should be conscious perchance of the value of their belief since, as O'Connor reasserts in her essay "Some Aspects of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction": "almost anything you say about Southern belief can be denied in the next breath with equal propriety" (818).

Charles Reagan Wilson claims that the South "is the Bible Belt, an appropriate image to suggest that religion has created its own mythology" ("Myth, Manners" 3). In fact, religion

has proved to be a major issue in the South and as such, definitory of its character and identity, as it has influenced southern moral code and lifestyle in different fields such as family life, community relationships or politics. Religion stayed therefore strong in the South even though it was crumbling in the North, and "[t]he camp meeting, the summer revival, the fire-and-brimstone preacher, the river baptism — all [came to] suggest powerful images of religion's role in the South" ("Myth, Manners" 3).

According to Roland, southern religion had been distinctive and contributed to shape the region in a unique way after the Civil War even if new social practices meant a challenge for the traditional theology of the region:

> Liberal stirrings among a minority of church members threatened the tranquility of every denomination and caused rifts in some. Yet religious orthodoxy remained largely triumphant; the South in the 1970s was perhaps as much as ever the nation's Bible Belt. Observers agreed that southerners continued to practice their religion in distinctive ways and with an intensity that exceeded that of other regions. The South remained the mot Protestant section of the country. (119)

Religion was first brought to the South by puritans, followed by the heterogeneous colony settlers who perceived the land as a gifted paradise. Later slavery would be interpreted as related to a mission and a purpose of the white supremacy to control and "moralize" blacks, ideology that was expanded after the Civil War into the mythologization of the South as the rightful participant in a holy war, what would evolve into the creation of a strong bond of Protestantism with the contemporary South. On the other hand, for black people religion was undeniably part of their lives, and black protestant worship would even have stronger vibrations than white worship, more emotional and energetic ones (Roland 132). Scholars like Hall and Wood point out to religion as a powerful controlling element of society, since "[t]hough Christianity was born with Paul of Tarsus, for God-fearing southerners it was truly born in the Great Awakening and reborn in the Great Depression" (Hall and Wood 16). Between the 1920s and the 1960s the focus on religion however was believed to be linked to economic worries of people and their anxiety or distress. Nowadays scholars like Sam Hill for example, link religion to the past of the South, to those original beliefs so deeply attached to the southern character.

To sum up, southerners more than the rest of Americans have relied on religion as the solution to their troubles as well as for the shaping and reinforcement of their moral codes. Southerners strongly believe that they should follow the doctrines learned and play their role in their local church, being religion a key element in their identity.

1.2. Industrialization of the South: resistance and eventual change

James C. Cobb quotes the words of textile magnate William Gregg, who had clearly stated that poor people, ignorant of the world they were living in, would be happy to find a job "at half the compensation given to operatives at the North" ("Industrialization" 136). This was actually quite an accurate prediction of what was about to come to the South with the process of industrialization.

The antebellum South is generally perceived as a plantation society, a community whose economy was fundamentally based on agriculture. Commerce and industrialization were understood as an attack to the rural and traditional culture of a territory which had lived on its fertility as well as on the hard work of slaves. As we can read in the *Encyclopedia of Southern*

Culture, it resulted in "a society obsessed with land and slaves, and lacking in the labor, markets, money and human energy needed to stimulate industry and commerce" (715).

Before the Civil War, the South was very rich —thanks to plantations and black slaves— so it could have supported a great industrial activity, but the majority of planters did not want to surrender to industrialists. They feared their social status would be threatened by the northern industrialist classes, but there was no other impediment for the development of the industry in the South; it was the result of an attempt to maintain tradition, as well as the fact that there was an inevitable fear of the new. From this we can conclude that southerners believed in their conservative system more than in the modern society because in spite of the fact that conservatism would be less profitable, it was definitely safer than risking in the big business industry. Investing capital into producing cotton was the preference up until the boom of textile industries in the 1880s, when the number of textile laborers went from ten-thousand in the previous decade to hundred-thousand in the 80s. However, most of the capital invested in industry was brought from the North, as southern investors were not much comfortable with taking the risk as much as they were uncomfortable to go against their values and traditional beliefs about the land and farming, an activity associated with masculinity that they refused to abandon for it would mean a failure or at least an attack to their male egos (Cobb, "Industrialization" 137). Another of the most important values was family, so married men were particularly reluctant to work at mills, the steel industry, or at railroad jobs, since it would mean the separation of the family unit. In addition, "mill workers" were to be considered in a negative way, observed with prejudice within a southern society that was holding to tradition. Therefore, the textile industry, independently of "all the chances for economic advancement that it offered, becoming what local town residents called one of the 'mill people' often put you on the wrong side of a social divide that was nearly as unbreachable as the one between blacks and whites" (137). In summary, the South had a great wealth of raw materials for the establishment of industries, but it was the North that offered dynamism, technology and, above all, a warm welcome to modernity without the prejudices hold by southerners.

After the war, planters were still influential and they resisted industrialization at the same time they tried to maintain their hierarchy by means of defending the traditional black labor in the plantations. By upholding tradition and making northern businessmen promise to them they would not take their plantation workers, plantation owners slowed down the industrialization in the South, so that at the beginning of the twentieth century "only 18 percent of the work force was employed in pursuits unrelated to agriculture, and per capita income stood at 51 percent of the national average" (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* 716).

1.2.1. Holding on to the roots: southern resistance

The general standpoint in the South was one of a deeply rooted traditional thought: they believed that the agrarian benefits were superior to any other economic system. The trouble with commerce overseas helped to the expansion of industrialization in the North. However, southerners kept on thinking that it was possible to make the same profits investing on land and slaves than manufacturing. Moreover, they defended the idea that factories would cause significant social problems: with industrialization labor discipline would diminish and there would be more possibilities of upheaval; at the same time, if industrialization came, white poor people employed would be separate from black labor considering themselves a different —superior— class; it was also thought that factories deprived people of humanity and turned any society into a more mechanized one, therefore, worse. Therefore, a tragedy would take

place: the past would die with its heroes, bringing an uncivilized present, a present that Donald Davidson perceived as follows: "Something (call it civilization) crept / Across the mountains once, and left me here / Flung up from sleep against the breakfast table / Like numb and helpless driftwood. … A man was killed / On this historic corner the other day / For failing to look while civilization crept / Upon him with rubber wheels and a stench of gas" (118).

In the antebellum period, the plantation owner was the ideal, the beau, the desired man, therefore, he was unlikely to leave his dominion. However, as time went by, this view of the plantation owner changed and he only remained as a figure of a romantic past. The new successful man was the merchant and the industrialist, that is to say, those who dared forget any natural bond with the land and decided to take advantage on modern times and benefit from technology. As Hellman's play represents a period of change (1900), we will find both sides of the question, that is to say, characters representative of the past as well as modern characters, hungry for economic success. Nonetheless, there is a negative aspect in the modern man that had never been present in the plantation owner; he has lost the direct contact with nature, thus becoming the epitome of the industrial city, a dehumanized being, a machine.

The ideal of the Edenic South was paralleled to a money-oriented national culture, so the Populists of the 1890s were unable to reverse the New South policies. They had challenged the capitalism of the recently achieved Gilded Age (1878–1889) by claiming that the benefits new industrialists received were not too high by 1900 industrialization was already fighting to conquer the South definitely: even though the number of factories had increased, but economy was still based on agriculture. The rural South would have to wait until the 1960s to see the traditional way of thinking really transformed into a new cultural and economic perspective; in this decade southerners did not own the best factories in the nation or the greatest benefits, but they truly wanted to make the best profits. Thus, twenty years later in the 1980s Dixie was completely industrialized, and those attached to agriculture were just a minority.

1.2.2. White minds and black labor

In the South, the dominant pattern of white supremacy had long been a vertical one, slavery. They used their power and influence on a series of individuals that were totally under their control by law. Those who dominated had influence and force to do it, and they exerted their dominion in a cruel way, as we have learned from the myth of the South. However, black people developed their own religion and culture in an independent way. It has to be pointed out that only a few capable planters had slaves, not every white man.

By 1865, the slavery system in rural areas was replaced by a new mode of dominion, sharecropping. With the new methods, the ruralism and poverty of the region prevailed, and so did the paternalistic treatment and the exploitation. A wealthy planter provided the land to the "sharecropper," any tool or fertilizer needed, and a credit for food and clothing or other living necessities in exchange of half of the harvest. On the other hand, tenancy was, in Paul E. Mertz's words, "a response to the disorganization and poverty of southern agriculture following the Civil War, becoming widely established by about 1880" (242). While share tenants were likely to own mules and seeds in order to provide some materials for the laborers and they would receive a portion of no less than two-thirds of the crop, sharecroppers were likely to have no possessions at all and their contribution was uniquely work, "receiving no more than half the crop" after the corresponding deductions for the furnishings provided. Mertz notices that "[a]pproximately two-thirds of southern tenants were white, although among croppers, the lowest tenure group, the numbers of whites and blacks were about equal" (244). Tenants worked under

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insecure conditions, merely by a verbal agreement with landlords who could easily get rid of them because of the labor surplus existent. Both tenants and sharecroppers were perceived by southern society as unskilled people with no worth or will to work their way up in the social scale for a better life. In rural areas, cotton and tobacco were consequently managed by unskilled laborers, under the dominion of a system established as a clear reflection of the lack of mechanization and agricultural technology (Mertz 243). In the city, it was more difficult for white supremacy to maintain their dominion over the labor, since city blacks had more access to education and they were starting to be less dependent on whites.

The form of dominion that followed the Civil War would be segregation, the final stage of white control. It emerged in the 1890s, a period of change and socio-political turmoil when the Populists challenged the Democratic Party, and everybody started to notice the arrival of the industry. Legal segregation was a social system that provided minority groups with separate facilities. As a reaction to this unfair state of things, black people started to be assertive by means of increasing their vote in spite of the polls, or participating in strikes. In a sense, segregation was equivalent to the African apartheid, embracing all aspects of life: work, leisure and even death. Also known as the Jim Crow Law, segregation operated from the 1890s until the 1960s. Relegating African Americans to a very low position in the social scale and an erased participation in the politics of the country, Jim Crow established that only manufacturers had all the privileges, without taking into account poor white and black workers' rights, so, according to McGill, "Even it could hardly be called 'a citizenship.' Few [white workers] were registered to vote. (A poll tax had been designed to make it too costly for them and the Negro.) Nor could it be said they were good advertisements for the Southern system of agriculture, of state government, of education, which had produced them as they were" (196).

Segregation affected the southern negro landscape at different levels: in personal life, white females and black males were not allowed to meet or work together; in education, only separate schooling was possible; in economics, black people were not allowed to work in the southern factories where they had worked during the antebellum period. They were excluded from cotton manufacturing and restricted to low paid jobs in the coal mines or the tobacco industry; in politics, each state created its taxes combining them with fraud and fright so as to maintain white supremacy. In fact, as McGill points out, they were relegated to an inferior rank, considered ignorant and dirty, until the moment when "[d]isfranchisement, while not literally total, was virtually so. Nor was it thought necessary to offer the Negro much education. The white man was to provide the labor for the jobs in the new factories" (202).

The Plessy vs. Fergusson court case (1896) was one of the most famous and early cases of segregation, a reflection of an openly racist attitude: Homer Adolph Plessy —a light-skinned man, but dark enough to be recognized as a Creole of European and African descent— had boarded a car reserved for whites in Louisiana, causing his own imprisonment. He was accused of wanting to enjoy the same privileges as white men, violating the 1890 state law that had established racially segregated facilities, that is, The Jim Crow Law. Unfortunately, Plessy went to court in a period of scientifically-based racism, when black people were believed to be physically inferior to whites. He claimed that segregation violated the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments, but Judge John Howard Ferguson declared him guilty anyway, justifying disenfranchisement of blacks on the basis of their animal nature. This is then an example of the invisibility of black people, given that society, in the best of cases, ignores them so that they could not even think for themselves. Fortunately, there is always an epiphany, and they are allowed to perceive the truth when, as the protagonist of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) did: "And my problem was that I always tried to go in everyone's way but my own. I have also

been called one thing and then another while no one really wished to hear what I called myself. So after years of trying to adopt the opinions of others I finally rebelled. I am an *invisible* man" (573). In this quote, the narrator was not himself and did not live his own life, but rather lived the way others —those in power— had imposed on him. He was limited by social expectation and intolerance, following the ideology of the masses and without allowing his authentic 'I' to develop. But now he has discovered something: even if he has no autonomy and he is under the dominion of others, he does not want to keep on living like that. He has been silent so far but, for the very reason of voicing his invisibility, he is now claiming his rights and calling for attention in order to become actually visible for the rest of the community. As in Ellison's novel, the play under analysis in this brief study of the South, *The Little Foxes*, introduces a social landscape where black people, in spite of being dominated by white supremacy, seem to be starting to think for themselves and to voice their personal opinion, as we will comment on throughout the analysis of the play and its film adaptation.

Briefly back to the topic of sharecropping, the whole country would put the attention on this issue with the explosion of the Great Depression. During the 1930s it declined mainly because landlords had no option but to abandon sharecropping and join the laboring waged people. Because of this situation, agriculture underwent a relevant development in the following decades thanks to mechanization and the termination of the sharecropping system.

In conclusion, white supremacy had been endowed with the power of dominion, but it was neither easy for them to maintain nor easily irrevocable acceptable for the dominated people. Black southerners had to suffer the consequences of this domination for a very long period of time. Even nowadays, they keep on carrying their past of harsh submission, and being subject to racist manners. That is to say, there is usually a fluctuating and ambiguous situation between change and immobility, of present and past, of modernity and conservatism, which make us understand that it is extremely difficult to break the cycle, as difficult as it is easy to long for change.

1.2.3. Conflictive labor organization from North to South

When the age of industrialization started around the 1880s, labor conflicts became especially violent. Bloody altercations took place which ruined the railroad and the mining industries. In the early years of this period there were around five hundred strikes a year, and at the beginning of the 1890s the number had ascended to a thousand. By that time, most of the conflicts took place in northern mills and mines, but there were also many incidents in the South, whose process of industrialization was beginning to reach its expansion and splendor, though slowly and with reluctance.

Thus, we can talk about bloody confrontations in the sea fronts of New Orleans and San Francisco as well as in the mines of Colorado and Idaho. Conflicts obviously started later than in the industrialized northern states, but they certainly did start.

For free white men, the American society of the antebellum period was made up of independent producers and proprietors. After the Civil War, however, they changed their minds since they feared the wearing down of their status. Whereas in Europe there were working class parties, the American more conservative working class did not create their own political party of masses. The American economy between the Civil War and World War I was subject to cyclical phases of boom and stagnation. The salary of the average worker was not enough to support a family, so children under sixteen had to contribute to their common income. Moreover, a massive influx of European immigrants saturated the labor market, paralyzing the growth of the workers' earnings.

Due to the traditional slavery system, especially long-lasting in the South of the United States, American workers feared that great businessmen were imposing a new form of feudalism so that free men would immediately become wage slaves. Another fear of the native laborers was that immigrants, who accepted lower wages, would be preferred instead of the local workers and that they would also have to accept low wages and more working hours, or they would lose their jobs. Debate arose around the democratic system in a modern industrial America, around the creation of whole industries and the organization of craft unions; nevertheless, the establishment of rules that would guarantee the workers' rights was not possible until the 1930s, when the textile industry still faced trouble to create labor organizations and kept living with a ruthless treatment inflicted by the labor management, also reinforced by the existence laborers surplus steaming from the mechanization of agriculture. To this respect, we must bear in mind that the society introduced by Lillian Hellman in her play represents a moment of change but it also foresees more change, particularly concerning cheap or underpaid black labor. We will see how northern and new southern manufacturers try to take advantage of black people in the South, because blacks did not know anything about the industry so far —since it was a rural community— and they might accept lower wages without any protest, not like in the North.

Some of the most famous strikes in the United States involved the railroad. In fact, the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 was one of the first general strikes nationwide. Northern railroads were still suffering from the Financial Panic when the reduction of salaries prompted workers' violence and strikes broke out everywhere in the northern states. In addition, hostilities in the coalfields —which had started during the Civil War growing in intensely during the 1870s, and were directly related to the immigrants— evolved until 1873, when the Molly Maguires joined the fight in order to take revenge on anybody they did not like, and they rejected the union in the coal field.

The basis of American labor was definitely established much later than the industrialization in the North. Its slowness was parallel to the industrialization of the South. It was not until the 1880s that workers started to create unions to negotiate with big corporations. Founded in 1869, one of the most important and earliest organizations was The Knights of Labor. Demanding the abolition of child labor, and an eight-hour-a-day work schedule and safety in the factories, they favored the creation of cooperative stores, which soon disappeared, however, because of the many riots that took place during this period.

The Pullman industry meant another motif for complaint and dispute. The Pullman Palace Car Company, which led the production of cars for the national railroad, dismissed thousands of employees and reduced the salaries. In 1894 workers went on strike, and it spread all around the nation when the Railway Union decided not to move trains with Pullman cars. President Grover Cleveland ordered strikers back to work but they did not comply and the strike became even more serious. Thirteen strikers were killed and fifty-seven were wounded after the army forced the end of the strike.

The Homestead conflict arose at a time when the fast-changing American economy had stumbled and conflicts between workers and administration had burst all over the country. Manufacturer Andrew Carnegie installed open-hearth furnaces and electricity to improve the plant's effectiveness and, at the same time, he tried to reduce the amount of skilled workers, but all this only provoked a confrontation at his steel plant in Homestead (Pennsylvania).

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1.2.4. Re-conquest of the South: big business set up

The persistent myth of the recent origin of the South dates back to the end of the nineteenth century, that is to say, to the economic rise of the South after World War II but, as we have

already explained, there was industrial presence in the antebellum period coexisting with the plantation system. Antebellum southern cities were centers for the transportation and marketing of the products cultivated in plantations. The fact that plantation owners had slaves restrained the growth of domestic markets for manufactured products, although some mass-produced goods, as was the case of cheap clothes, were highly demanded. Moreover, planters decided to build some textile factories to work the cotton around the 1830s. Without delay, slaves were used as the labor for these factories, a fact that at the same time increased the planters' worries, since they feared the industry labor competition with the agricultural labor, and social disorder. In effect, the organization of labor was one of the main difficulties for the development of the New South.

In spite of such a social landscape, the process of industrialization was not paralyzed. One of the most rapid phases of industrial expansion in the South corresponds to the beginnings of the 1860s, because southerners decided to build ironworks, machine shops and munitions factories to fight in the Civil War. They lost the war, but they gained industrial experience, an experience they would resort to in order to expand the industrial system after the conflict. Whereas cotton continued being profitable in the Deep South and planters refused to adapt to modern times, in the Upper South agriculture was starting to decline and impoverished white farmers accommodated industry. The initial black labor system of the South gave birth to a modern industrial capitalist sector. Although there were small individual plants, textile mills with white labor became the engine for an industrial society, but in spite of all these changes the South could not compete with the North. As they allowed the existence of unskilled labor —including children—, racial attitudes and isolation, and imposing long working days paid with low salaries. As they were able to achieve greater profits than textile industry, tobacco manufacturers employed black workers —and so did the coal industry in Alabama— with slightly higher wages.

To come to a conclusion, it took a long time to the South to adopt and adapt to the industrial world, but they eventually achieved it, and it is worth mentioning that since the 1950s the economic expansion of the South has been above the national average.

1.3. The birth of the city: building a modern America

The end of the nineteenth century marks the beginning of modern America. It is surprising how in just a few decades, from 1890 to 1920, the country underwent such a massive series of changes, changes that would in the end define quite much what America would be in the twentieth century, and what it is today. The depression of the mid-1890s ended in the first years of the twentieth century and established a traditional dominance of the Republican Party at the polls which lasted until the Great Depression. This is the era that marks the start of the great American firms and the "big business." At the same time many transformations swept the country. Swarms of immigrants came to America, bringing their culture and religion. These years mark also the dawn of a new scientific era. Communication, mass media, transportations changed dramatically as well. Above all, people were also changed by the new social realities.

1.3.1. The birth of a modern culture

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This period is normally regarded for the immense economic transformations that changed the country, with the rise of corporations, the transition from an agricultural model to an industrial one and the creation of a new economic model for America based on capitalism. However, many people fail to realize how all these transformations brought the birth of modern culture along with them. The Victorian period and its ideology, still at work in the last years of the nineteenth century,

emphasized a society based on a life of self-denial, restraint, moral strictness, "correctness," a world with separate spheres for men and women, a world centered more on the domestic than on the social sphere. All this changed with the new century. The Victorian morals were substituted by the desire for self-fulfilment, the new emphasis on leisure and sensual gratification. The term "Victorian" became synonym for old-fashioned and restrictive. All the new immigrants that came to the country, differentiated by religion, gender, ethnicity and culture, became united by a new standardized culture of entertainment and information.

The beginning of this new culture can be seen, for instance, in the great passion that began to develop for sports and athletic competitions. This came to be the reflection of a society that prized vigour, strength, determination and winning. Besides the already existing baseball, new sports became extremely popular, such as boxing, football, golf, wrestling, and basketball. The country developed a sudden passion for outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, or fishing. Popular music also changed, and the country danced to the sounds of ragtime, jazz, and military marches. Sports and music represent the triumph of a new model of virility and nationalism, fuelled by America's victory in the American-Spanish war of 1898. The image of women also changed. From the stereotype of frail and submissive Victorian woman, there would be a shift towards a tall, athletic, and strong-willed woman.

The new shape of towns can sometimes account for the changes that took place in America. In the nineteenth century, urban reformers thought that the growth of cities required the construction of places of retirement, where one could find the adequate values of sobriety and peace. The main symbol of this idea was the construction of huge parks in the middle of big cities, Central Park being the most famous example of this philosophy. However, people got tired of self-control and "correctness," and businessmen saw this. Thus, in the 1890s, a number of amusement parks opened their door in Coney Island in New York. These two opposed realities —Central Park vs. Coney Island— exemplify the contrast between a culture of retirement and sobriety and one of leisure and amusement. Coney Island came to represent for New Yorkers a world of adventure, full of exotic pleasures, a land of freedom. Both sexes experienced surprisingly degrees of freedom in Coney Island, and men could even take off their coats and their ties, something surprising in the previous era, as well as in this one. The rides in the parks were designed to create illusions and transform reality, so people could find distorting mirrors, spinning circular car rides, and moving platforms. Although this passion for Coney Island can be attributed to the desire of physical experiences and leisure, the main factor in this sudden rage was the desire to have new experiences and, above all, the feeling that, by doing so, one was breaking free of an old-fashioned culture, and being part of a new, exciting, and amusing new and fresh one. People wanted to form part of something new.

1.3.2. Infrastructures and leisure time

The last years of the nineteenth century were very important for the development of modern American mass culture. In those years emerged the modern elements of mass communication: the newspapers increased their numbers for mass distribution in the biggest cities and a new market for best-selling novels appeared, as well as one for magazines. These years also saw the birth of national advertising campaigns and the radio became the most popular source of entertainment.

The shift from a culture which valued retirement and small number of attendants, essentially elitist, to one which involved mainly commercialized forms of entertainment was extremely shocking. Victorians tended to associate popular forms of entertainment as dance

halls, circuses, and sports with vice, gambling swearing, drinking and other shapes of immoral behavior. During the first years of the new century, the attendance to sport stadiums doubled. Many forms and places of entertainment that would have been considered immoral in previous years became immensely popular, such as vaudeville, singing, dancing, comedians, magicians, amusement parks and dance halls. When movies came into the scene, they quickly became one of the most popular forms of entertainment of the whole nation.

These new realities changed social practices. In the nineteenth century leisure activities were segregated by gender, class, and race. Wealthy people were only seen in their own exclusive theatres, restaurants, and clubs. The working people also had their own private sphere of leisure, mainly dictated by their ethnic origins. Men and women attended different types of entertainments. This ended with the coming arrival of the new century and new forms of entertainment: people of different classes and genders could go and enjoy the same places. The novelty was that women and men could attend the same shows and activities. Young people had the possibility to experiment mixed sex relationships that could not have been possible before. The new economic and social realities at the beginning of the century made this possible.

The informality and excitement that these new forms of entertainment meant for many people were huge, and everyone was eager to explore and participate in this new culture, one that had joy and amusement as its main component.

1.3.3. High learning

Colleges also underwent very deep changes in this transition towards the twentieth century. Before the Civil War most subjects relied exclusively on memorization skills. There were not such things as "practical" subjects. However, as soon as in 1862, the Morrill Act, which granted land for higher education in each state, changes this situation. The institutions were forced to teach branches of learning related to agriculture and the mechanic arts. There was an idea behind this change: what was taught in the higher degrees of education should be useful in the future occupation of the students, in industry and other professions.

This led to the creation of modern universities, which became the major intellectual institutions in modern America. Their task was to prepare students and give them professional training in law, engineering, medicine, etc. Sciences became equal to humanities, in previous years the only disciplines taught. New universities emphasized their own value to investigate social problems and train public leaders. Not all the knowledge imparted was, however, purely practical. Some of the courses imparted dealt with knowledge such as astronomy or archaeology.

The major change that the turn of the century brought to universities was the development of a business-like organization. Universities came to be organized and administered like firms, with academic hours, students' organization, and university presidents, in what would later become the style of modern universities.

1.3.4. Urbanization: the rise of the cities

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Cities were considered by most historians as the side-effect of national settlement or the late products of the process of urbanization, both facts especially true for the South, the most rural region of the American nation. Cities are different from towns both in terms of greater importance, legal status, and bigger population. Towns "grew up alongside the farm as necessary links in the patterns of regional and international trade, at first around along the coast and the

rivers and later across the sprawling interior" (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* 1435), so in the South the building of cities started along the Chesapeake and the Tidewater. After that, towns were built everywhere, but they did not last long. Most of the southern towns would echo the varied national inheritance of their origins. However, cities would play an essential role in the transmission of culture, from high arts to fashion. The early cities of the South, such as New Orleans, were administrative and economic centers, connected to the trade of the Old world and channels of European culture.

Generally, there is a distinction between antebellum cities and the urban areas built up during the Reconstruction period, since it makes the difference between North and South clearer. Most of the northern region was already urbanized before the Civil War, basically with the aim of providing "crime prevention; fire and police protection; installation of water systems; street lighting, paving, repair, and drainage; … parks and city beautification" (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* 1435), whereas the South still remained mostly rural. Regardless of this fact, there was already a certain interest in the urbanization in the South, where antebellum urban areas provoked a debate on the reluctance of the towns to chattel slavery. Cities attracted free blacks, who escaped from the rigidity of the rural areas and the hard work in plantations, where they could get a job in more urbanized regions, thus becoming cheap free labour.

The transition from an old city style to modern cities as we know them today can be best symbolized by the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Nearly the whole city of Chicago burnt for thirty hours. It is usually said that the fire started due to a cow kicking a lantern in the barn of an Irish woman, but this is possibly a legend, told at the time to channel the people's anger towards Irish catholic immigrants. The fire leaped from house to house and devastated four and a half square miles of Chicago. It was extinguished after much struggle by the fire-fighters, thirty of whose members were injured. About 250 died in the fire, 200 were declared missing and about a hundred thousand people were left homeless. The army was forced to declare martial law in order to prevent looting. The whole business district of Chicago was destroyed. Chicago, like most old cities, was almost exclusively built of wood, including buildings and even sidewalks. That a city as important and huge as Chicago could be turned into ashes by fire was a symptom that even the physical shape of towns needed to change with the turn of the century.

Thus, the expansion of the city would really take place during the postbellum period, when the full impact of the Industrial Revolution became a reality. After the Civil War over 24 million people moved to the cities: some of them came from the countryside, and others were European immigrants. Urban population in cities saw their numbers increase seven times. The modern American city was not a larger version of the old ones. With the establishing of electric transports like the streetcar, the boundaries of cities could be farther from the city center, and by the turn of century (1900) "every large city in the South boasted a functioning streetcar system" (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* 1437). Each different space in the new cities had a certain function. For example, the manufacturing and commerce were in city centers. The big factories tended to be located in the outer border of cities. Wealthy and middle-class people could afford to live in well-to-do districts far away from the city center thanks to the development of public transport. The sudden growth of the cities' population caused the proliferation of slum quarters where poor people could live, usually located in the same sector of cities, establishing, thus, social borderlines within a city. With regards to the urban politics in the South, we must not forget that New Orleans, the largest southern urban center, had established a powerful political system (Regular Democratic Organization), which dominated local affairs by means of violence and fraud.

In the cities, the immigrant and poor people had no other option than living in overcrowded and unhealthy blocks of brick apartment buildings. These tenements had no furniture and up to

18 people could live in them. They had a wood burning stove and a bathtub, which also made the function of a dining table when covered up with planks. These apartments had hardly any windows, so they were hot and suffocating places. This situation was quite common in the American cities, and it is easy to see how cities had changed over the years, to the point where buildings were regarded, in many cases, as places where to stuff human beings who worked together to get the city alive and in expansion.

The new city grew in height as well as in extension. It was with the turn of the century that the skyscrapers became a reality in the biggest American cities, being the best example of these the city of New York. Buildings made of brick, like those made of wood, could not be very high, but new buildings made of steel could be extremely high, as the whole weight of the building could be supported on an iron frame. The experience of the Great Chicago fire contributed to the understanding of the necessity of having steel frames and to advance in the fireproofing technology. At the same time, buildings like the Eiffel tower show the architects how to brace a metal frame against the winds. The skyscrapers were technological wonders that forced the development of many other machines and instruments to get them working. Such is the case of huge elevating systems based on electricity or ventilation systems to keep them warm in winter and cool in summer based on pressurized radiators. The biggest skyscraper of the first part of the century was the Empire State Building, opened in 1931. It quickly became an icon of the city, as is showed in the film *King Kong* (1933).

Unfortunately, big cities came to be identified to many people with public corruption, as the possibilities to make money from public affairs were tempting to many people. In small communities there was a different shape of corruption, as citizens knew personally those people who ruled them, and could ask responsibilities of them if something went, or looked, wrong, if they felt inclined to do so. In huge cities like New York the only ones who could exert some degree of pressure against corrupt public figures were the emergent new mass media, and their communication apparatuses. In the minds of many people, public affairs and the spheres of power were linked to corruption. For this reason, at the start of the twentieth century, the urban reformers would seek to redeem big cities by beautification campaigns, better city services and a certain degree of city planning. In the face of these facts, we must take into account W. R. Brock's words: "It is easier to generalize about this triumphant civilization than to understand it. It placed a high value upon material success, but it believed itself to be thoroughly idealistic. It admired business efficiency but accepted government which was usually inefficient and often corrupt. It tolerated the flamboyance of wealth but retained a strict moral code" (170).

In *The Little Foxes*, the South seems to be starting to adapt to these urban areas. Although it was just the beginning of a new period for the southern states, it is obvious that urbanization came together with industrialization, thus changing the rural landscape of twenty years ago into a different setting. As a consequence, in Wyler's adaptation we will find few background shots reflecting rural areas such as the plantation, and instead we will see several images of diverse shops, Horace's bank or many cars on the roads.

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1.4. The South on the media

1.4.1. General notes

Some general characteristics of southern literature as well as in other media, and that might be well worth observing in Hellman's film adaptations, are the following:

- The glorification of tradition in southern literature presented white male supremacy as chivalrous, honorable, and elevated, being the female counterpart gracious and innocent, and after forming a family they both lived in old big houses with a especial charm where previous generations had already lived their stories.
- The family is a key unit and the relationships among its members are deep and relevant, independently of being good or bad.
- The physical space, the land, is important for southern characters, for it affects their mood and thoughts, and even the way they perceive the world.
- Southern literature tends to pay attention to description.
- The southern gothic, the bizarre, the decay, and even insanity, are constant elements in southern literature.
- The religious imagery is constantly present.
- "Peculiar," in the sense of different, is definitory of the South.
- Some literary characters tend to dwell in the sweet memories or comforting fantasies of past times that exist no more.
- The exalted South of the past gives way to a not so sublime recent one.

On a more specific note, and from a focus on cultural and social identity we could mention a few well-known examples from different media: the issue of ace as well as the nostalgic feeling of the South is introduced by TV series like *The Andy Griffith Show* (1960–68) and *The Waltons* (1972–81); a portrayal of the rural life of poor whites is provided by works like Caldwell's *Tobacco Road* (1932); the sharecroppers experience can be found in James Agee and Walker Evans' media report *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. As we can see, there is a whole array of personalities involved in the diverse socioeconomic situations of the moment to which their behavior is directly related to, since their identity depends on their life experiences and how they choose to adjust to them at a given moment. Class and hierarchy in relation to money (control or lack of) dictate the evolution of characters as well as of events, a Marxist perspective that Michael Kreyling stated as obvious in southern literature —and that we can clearly identify through the adventures of Hellman's southern characters. The power to make and control money defines the levels and changes in the social hierarchy: "There is no more fertile field for studying the operations of class than southern literature. From the colonial era to the 21st century, southern writers have continuously represented a full class array. The classic Marxist hierarchy still serves: classes are defined by the means of production they own, control, or lack" (Kreyling, "Literature" 163).

1.4.2. The South of the Classical Hollywood

Classical Hollywood cinema is the name employed by film critics to denominate the period of film production when the studio system was at its peak, from the advent of sound at the end of the 1920s to the late 1950s —some analysts extend it to the beginning of the 1960s. Film production in the United States was determined by economic, social, and cultural factors. If we apply the terminology employed in film studies we would say it is "overdetermined," which means that films are the collective result of a specific artistic ideology, a political environment, industrial practices, and the accessible technical and financial resources.

The South was one of the favorite topics of the first Hollywood films, to the point of helping to create a southern identity, an image of the South that would mix up the view southerners had of themselves with a non-southerner vision of the South. Nevertheless, Hollywood created a

stereotypical image of the South and the southern "character," which varied depending on the period of time the different films were produced.

American productions prior to the Second World War with a pleasant standpoint of the South were definitely altered in the postwar period. Before the war, everything was usually represented as positive and beautiful, and there was no place for other thing than happiness and peace, in spite of all the real suffering. In the year 1941, there were still some romantic productions, for instance *Virginia*, with Fred McMurray and Madeleine Carroll, or *Lady from Louisiana*, starring John Wayne and Ona Munson. However, the evocative and homesick perspective of the South was beginning to decline in benefit of the postwar films. At this moment, the glorious South was no longer so magnificent, and new themes, such as the poor economic situation of the farmers or the destructive greed of a corrupted upper class, became the new focus. William Wyler's version of Lillian Hellman's famous play, *The Little Foxes*, is a very good example, for the reason that this movie introduces greed as a destructive force, powerful enough to destroy and (re)build: on the one hand, it destroys a family, but on the other hand, it also helps in the reconstruction of a damaged South.

Edward D. C. Campbell claimed that, "[f]or business reasons, past films of the South had been uniformly a vehicle of conservative sentiment" (146). In our opinion, it was not only for business reasons, but precisely because the conservative sentiment was too deeply rooted in the American minds to present a different view that would challenge the traditional social system of the South. Although it was not allowed to show to the world a negative image of America, the general tendency with regards to the presentation of the southerner divided into two opposite forms: on the one hand, the southern character was nostalgic and gentle and, on the other hand, he was an ominous and dark being.

The films of the Depression era tried to preserve the traditional image of the South as a prosperous and glorious territory by means of making the audience believe that there was not racial injustice at all there. To a certain extent, they confronted the attacks on their violence and unfairness towards black people stating that slavery was part of the social system, emphasizing that slaves should remain as slaves because so they wished. Nevertheless, from 1945 onwards the change was radically introduced. In 1947, *The Foxes of Harrow* presents a slave mother who kills her newborn child in order to prevent him to grow up as a slave. In 1957 *Band of Angels* has as protagonist an ex-slave trader who adopts a black child and, once the child is grown up, he gives him responsibilities in the plantation, at the same time he has a relationship with a woman of mixed blood. In 1965, *Shenandoah* introduces the disagreement of a family of farmers against the socioeconomic system established in plantations and slavery.

In addition to the problem of slavery, movies dealt with many other realities of the southern postwar South. *Pinky* (1949) showed the Deep South racist problems, as well as other later films, for example, *The Young Ones* (1961) or *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962). *Hot Spell* (1958) observed the sexual and psychological deficiencies of the white racism, ambitious politicians appeared in *All the King's Men* (1949) or in *Bright Leaf* (1950), and dangerous rage was the motor of action in *Cape Fear* (1962). These were the new American realities of the South, completely opposite to the harmony of the prewar southern world, and these films are the materialization of the studios decision to re-present a real situation to the detriment of a happy South.

The romantic view which impregnated the films set in the Old South was very successful for many years. From the 1920s to the early 1940s, the plantation was the favorite landscape in films. This kind of films was the channel to maintain tradition and reinforce the defense of a conservative southern life. Nevertheless, they were also successful because they provided

entertainment and an escape to a glorious world which made southerners feel proud and dream about the romantic past times. This escape was necessary in the antebellum period as well as in the postbellum times, since the South was suffering instability and it had to face the arrival of modernity. Basing his words in the opinions of the South scholars, Cobb makes reference to these difficult changing times in the following way:

> Agrarian-industrial conflict has been a favorite theme among scholars from a variety of disciplines who have studied the South's history and attempted to diagnose its problems. In the eyes of some, the antebellum South was a premodern agrarian society bludgeoned to submission by a northern industrial behemoth and reduced thereafter to little more than an agricultural colony for the nation's industrial core. Largely discounting this disadvantageous relationship, others saw the postbellum South as its own worst enemy, clinging to discredited, plantation-bred traditions that were wholly incompatible with efforts to build a northern-style industrial economy in the region and to bring it into the nation's social and cultural mainstream as well. (*Redefining* 5)

Whereas in *Another Part of the Forest* we can observe the lingering effect of the war in the defeat feeling of some characters and how others made profit through a rapacious attitude during the conflict, in *The Little Foxes* we will deal more in detail with the aforementioned atmosphere: the *attack* of northern machines and methods, the coming of a new socioeconomic system that finally reaches the South. There is confusion and an ambiguous feeling of acceptation and rejection, there is a welcoming curiousity but there is also inadaptability, there is the remembrance of the past and gentility as well as the praise of the new times and bourgeoisie. In short, Hellman and Wyler managed to show us the ambivalent atmosphere of the change of century; on the one hand, in relation to southern economy and society, and on the other hand, reflected on individual's feelings. Similar circumstances will be depicted in *Toys in the Attic*, where the changes introduced by the Great Depression met a "not-so-ready" Southern family struggling both with money and emotional issues.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND SCOPE OF PURPOSE

In this chapter we will first introduce the main voices of the South and how Lilllian Hellman came to claim her place among them. Next, we will provide a review of the literature attending to the interest that the playwright's works have sparked in different fields of study, paying especial attention to those containing themes related to the South or with a major focus on her southern plays adapted for the big screen. Once outlined the subsequent and more recent studies, we will point out to the gaps in the existing literature and introduce the purpose of the present study.

2.1. Tellers of the South

Eudora Welty had insisted that "*feelings* are bound up in place" (118). Not far from this idea is the one of memory as attached to what makes us feel and hence express. Southern stories are told, as Lewis P. Simpson claimed, coming "out of a contact the writer has with the remembrance of memory"; they talk what they know about, they "render the remembrance of memory, or, of the memory of memory" (89). Once and again the past manifests itself in the present and it never dies, making it possible for people to get attached to the symbiosis of place and time, a new South that is only redefined from its essence of the past. In Allen Tate's words, "(t)he simple truth [is] that the future and the past are a part of the same passage" (545). Similarly, in Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust*, Gavin Stevens also talks about a never-ending yesterday and a tomorrow with an ancient start: "For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's still not yet two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863 … and it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet" (194).

Also related to Faulkner's presentation of the South, Richard J. Gray claims that, when cultural disorientation and personal displacement come together, "awareness of myth could then develop into a creative absorption in the mythmaking process, while a concern for rhetoric and an interest in ritual could be translated into, in turn, an imaginative analysis of speech, its limits and possibilities, and a dramatic inquiry into the nature of codes" (*Writing* 216). Other authors like, for example, novelist Ellen Glasgow, chose to present a vision focused on what was really happening in the contemporary South without the illusions or the decorations allowed by the myth, and hence portrayed the region in her works from a southern perspective pointing out to the social changes it was undergoing. Another example could be Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* since it reflects on class and race, and characters seem to be entangled in and representative of those social issues as much as are those in the plays by Hellman that we intend to analyze here.

The postwar nostalgia would be mourned by the voices of the Lost Cause, whereas racism would be condemned by authors like Kate Chopin, Grace King, or Charles Chesnutt, among others. Southern Renaissance, however, would give birth to many of those authors who up to the present we keep identifying as major tellers of the South, most of them particularly concerned with the relationship of the southerner with its community and the burden of the past (King, *Southern*). Critic Fred Hobson even mentioned that the South was in people's minds as some

type of disease, becoming this especially noticeable since the 1940s as a good number of writers felt the need to express their feelings and tell their own stories about the South, be it in a positive or a negative way (*Tell* 127). Southern Renaissance made names like William Faulkner, Allen Tate, Eudora Welty, Katherine Anne Porter, Robert Penn Warren, Flannery O'Connor, or Richard Wright extensively popular and deeply linked to the South. Particularly, Faulkner's influence would later clearly show on authors like Reynolds Price or James Dickey, while others such as Alice Walker, Dori Sanders, or Ernest Gaines voiced the South in their own way.

Playwrights, on the contrary, were not so easily recognized, but there were yet some names that would reach recognition, including Lillian Hellman, who became "the sole woman considered a major playwright during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, an era when Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams reigned" (S. Burke 104). Particularly for female writers, drama was in a secondary place leaving the privileged position to the novel and poetry; even Marsha Norman and Beth Henley could not get a similar place in literature as male did. Lillian Hellman, however, achieved success from the marginal position of a female playwright and writing about a marginalized place. Hellman's contribution and social involvement in her works did not go unnoticed: "Hellman's life and written works make a significant difference between what people think and what responsibility they have for what they think. Hellman's written works and life reveal her beliefs and her social responsibility for beliefs as a duty in the world community" (Joo 251). Under the heading "galería de damas curiosas (e insumisas)," Lillian Hellman appears in Rosa María Ballesteros García's revision of female writers whose works were adapted for the big screen. She presents Hellman as a successful writer who suffered the American 1930s moral crusade because of her tendency to leftist ideologies and she introduces the different adaptations of her plays, except precisely William Wyler's *The Little Foxes*, which is our major text under analysis here because of the multiple-perspective readings that it allows to study the southern character and the South itself, both as particularly unique and universal.

Regional culture became linked to tradition, while capitalism, modernity, and advance were considered in relation to the nation itself. Because of this conflict of values, Leigh Anne Duck believes that in the first half of the twentieth century the liberal and modern ideology of the nation made an attempt to clearly distinguish itself from the southern conservatism, and thus "romanticization of the southern past served to retain white supremacist conceptions of a national people as a prominent trope in U.S. nationalism" (20). Therefore, plays with stories set in the South might continue to be identified as southern instead of national.

Gabriela Dumbrava notices that postmodern southern writers turn to "questioning myths and dismantling stereotypes" (2), and so the South is perceived in a more realistic way, distant form the near sublime South of the past. Brinkmeyer also points out to this change: "Southern writers have more and more been striking out on their own, moving away from the imaginative shape of 'classic' Southern literature that is so secure in regional place, history, and memory" (*Remapping* 26).

2.2. Interest in Hellman's works, themes, and characters

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Charlotte Headrick remarked the persistence of Hellman's works a few decades ago, accurately predicting their success in years to come: "Hellman's plays have continued to hold the stage; they have, as we say in the theatre, 'legs.' They have and will continue to 'walk' into the future on stages around the world. There have been major revivals of Hellman's plays in London, New York, and at regional repertory theatres, and they continue to be produced all over the United

States at colleges and universities" (2). Agreeing with her predictions, *The Little Foxes*, the central work of this dissertation, has precisely been one of the most represented in the recent years, which speaks for the fact that the Alabama's playwright's works are still of interest for modern audiences and admired by critics. As an example, we can mention its 2017 Broadway adaptation for the Samuel J. Friedman Theater directed by Daniel Sullivan, received with several awards, among them Cynthia Nixon's Tony in the category of Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Play for her role of the main female characters in the play, Regina and Birdie, which she rotated with the also Tony nominee Laura Linney.

Research conducted about Lillian Hellman's work has been biographical, philosophical, and critical, covering a varied range of topics. As an illustrative example of the variety of topics chosen for articles or dissertations we can mention the following: autobiography (Alves' "Talvez o Esboço de Retratos"), gender (Anderlini-D'Onofrio's *The "Weak" Subject*), rage (Schneiderman's "Lillian Hellman: The Uses of Rage"), escape (Alves' "The Escape Theme in Miss Hellman's Plays"), morality (Taavila-Walters' *Moral Questions in the Life and Work of Lillian Hellman*), and drama itself (Booker's *Lillian Hellman and August Wilson*).

Among the most current studies there has been a particular interest in approaching Hellman's plays attending to gender rhetoric (White) or from a feminist perspective (González Crespán, *Desafío*, "Mujeres"), as well as some specific attempts of analyzing the playwrights' social and political commitment in her works (Marcinová). Rollyson's *Critical Insights: Lillian Hellman* seeks to collect some critical comment about Hellman's life, her literature, and some film adaptations of her plays. Among the contributions to Rollyson's book, we can mention here some of especial interest for our study, such as Geraldine Thorsten's chapter "Lillian Hellman: The Critical Reception" (since we are concerned with the reception of characters), Ritchie D. Watson's "Lillian Hellman's *The Little Foxes* and the New South Creed: An Ironic View of Southern History," and Randall Fallows' "Gentlemen's Games and Witches' Brews: Lillian Hellman's *Another Part of the Forest* and the Emergence of the Cold War Culture" (because of their direct analysis of two plays by Hellman whose film adaptation are the object of study in this dissertation), Kenneth Holditch's "Another Part of the Country: Lillian Hellman as Southern Playwright" (which provides a southern perspective), or Jacob H. Adler's "Miss Hellman's Two Sisters" (directly related to some of the characters in Hellman's *Toys in the Attic*, characters that we will analyze in the filmic version).

Lillian Hellman's life influenced deeply her works (Headrick; Recknagel), especially her economic and political perspective as well as her understanding of the family and southern identity, so much so that she got inspiration from some of her relatives, and she recreated some of their personal features in her characters. On the other hand, Hellman's autobiography, *An Unfinished Woman* (1969), gives recount of her childhood, her trips to Europe or Russia, or her personal relationship with the writer Dashiell Hammett. In *Lillian Hellman: Playwright* (1972), Richard Moody provides even more detailed information about her friend's personal life. As for critical studies, we can find information about Hellman's works in different publications related to American drama: Joseph Wood Krutch's *The American Drama Since 1918: An Informal History* (1939) pays attention to the social implications of her plays, and Gerald Rabkin also attends to the social dimension in his book *Drama and Commitment: Politics in the American Theatre of the Thirties* (1964). Finally, we have noticed that, in recent years, critics and writers continue to show attention to Hellman's life (Ackerman; Gallagher; Kessler-Harris; Meade; Pleasants; Toperoff), whereas others like Casey Kayser call for recognition of the woman playwright in a field where mostly men have succeeded. Secondary sources about the reception of the plays back in Hellman's time as well as in the present, about her life, or about some

revivals of the film adaptations of her plays are to be found in periodicals, newspapers, and different scholarly publications.

In addition, Hellman's name keeps coming up in general studies related to the South of the United States, a region that has been of particular interest for some scholars from varied disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, or feminism, among others, although southern issues have noticeably been most actively discussed in the field of southern studies. *The Southerner as American* (1960), edited by the historian Charles Grier Sellers, contains essays dealing with issues such as southern prejudices, hostility, or myths, as well as essays on southern history or politics. Allison Davis et al. provided a sociological perspective of the South in their book *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (1941). The South was also observed from a literary angle in works such as *South: Modern Southern Literature in Its Cultural Settings* (1961), edited by Louis D. Rubin and Robert D. Jacobs.

On the other hand, we are also presented with works more concerned with the identity of the South as an ideal of the past, a complex feeling, or a contradiction. In "A Northerner Views the South," cultural anthropologist Ruth Landes pointed out to the fact that the South was "gilded with some sentimentality," noticing the "beguiling picturizations of the antebellum South as some country" (375) and stating that northerners did not know the South at all because of those magnolia myths that shaped their idea of the region. With a similar discourse, T. J. Jackson Lears talks about "feelings of unreality" during the *fin-de-siècle* period, in order to show the contradictory situation of the American society, experiencing a fast industrial and economic development but somehow trapped in the pastoral illusion. With a different focus, historian Robert H. Wiebe talked in *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* about "dislocation" and "bewilderment" (12) in the American society of the turn of the century. He believed that amidst the rapid industrialization of the North and Midwest, Americans developed an "ethical value of agricultural life," which he describes as "peculiar" (39).

Both the sociological issues and the idea of nostalgia of the past in an agitated turn of the century can be analyzed through the observation of Hellman's characters, although sociological topics are the central concern, together with "just some people" in charge of introducing them. Similarly, in more recent years, we can notice that historians interested in the study of the South and its popular culture tend to resort to the work of sociologists, such as John Shelton Reed, who has been studying southern identity and regionalism since several decades ago. Back in 1972, when his work *The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society* was published, Reed claimed that the South was using mass media to preserve regional values, even though he considered that it was not the South that had spread mass culture but the North.

Literature and film studies scholars have shown interest in the South and its relationship with popular culture as well. Among some of the most popular studies in the last decades, we might mention the following: Leigh Anne Duck's *The Nation's Region: Southern Modernism, Segregation, and U.S. Nationalism*; Tara McPherson's *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South*; Allison Graham's *Framing the South: Hollywood, Television, and Race during the Civil Rights Struggle*; and Karen L. Cox's *Dreaming of Dixie*, which intends to approach culture from a historical perspective analyzing southern identity perceptions in different fields (mainly music, advertising, radio, film, and literature). Taking up the line of other scholars (May; Sklar), Cox comments on the relevance of movies in relation with the reception and understanding of a culture, putting the emphasis on the fact that southern characters from the big screen had a big role in the shaping of the southern image:

> Most scholars of film agree that motion pictures, from their inception, have had a critical impact on American society. Movies revolutionized how different

> communities of Americans perceived one another and influenced their opinions on race, class, ethnicity, and even different regions of the country. Early on, movies became an influential form of cultural expression that helped to reinforce as well as reflect the deep-rooted values and attitudes held by larger society. Films set in the South or ones that featured southern characters were most certainly expressions of the nation's perception of the region and were in line with other forms of popular culture in their construction of various images of the South. (82)

Object of study in this dissertation, and listed in order of importance, are the following films: William Wyler's *The Little Foxes* (1941), Michael Gordon's *Another Part of the Forest* (1948), and George Roy Hill's *Toys in the Attic* (1963), all of them adapted from Hellman's plays under the same title and published in 1939, 1946, and 1960 respectively. Although William Wyler's *The Little Foxes* achieved a great success gaining the nomination for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actress, among others, and both the filmmaker and Bette Davis as leading actress continue to be acclaimed nowadays, the academic attention received by the adaptation cannot be paralleled to that received by Hellman's original play, which keeps having revivals on theaters once and again all around the globe.

A similar situation is found with regards to other Hellman's film adaptations —with the exception of the two adaptations of *The Children's Hour* (1934), also adapted by Wyler, not only once but twice, as *These Three* in 1936 (Hayes) and as *The Children's Hour* in 1961 (Sinyard; Stubbs)—, even though to a much greater extent, since they did not achieve the same popularity as Wyler's ones, being consequently less unknown and having been less explored so far. There is no doubt, however, of the impact caused by *The Little Foxes*, which was presented in *The New York Times* back in 1941 as a portrayal of pure evilness masterly adapted to the big screen: "Lillian Hellman's grim and malignant melodrama, 'The Little Foxes,' which had the National Theatre's stage running knee-deep in gall and wormwood the season before last, has now been translated to the screen with all its original viciousness intact and with such extra-added virulence as the relentless camera of Director William Wyler and the tensile acting of Bette Davis could impart" (Crowther 19).

At an interview with Lewins Funke (1968), Hellman commented that in her plays she intentionally wanted to deal with social issues, but she also wanted to portray "just some people" (101) an objective she clearly succeeded at, according to the original reception of the film at its release. Reviews emphasize however the "foxiness" of her characters and described Wyler's film as "one of the most cruelly realistic character studies yet shown on the screen" (Crowther 19).

Due to the continuous adaptations of *The Little Foxes* for theaters, and the interest it keeps have for drama workshops, audiences have had the chance to observe Hellman's South once and again, but also that "viciousness" of her characters, which is not so clearly emphasized in other plays. As Amy Stumpfl noticed in her review of a recent ACT production where Helen Shute-Pettaway takes the role of the despiteful Regina, "tales of greed and familial intrigue never go out of style." Whatever it is that attracts the audiences more to *The Little Foxes*, its Broadway productions are proof of its success, particularly in the last decades. Whereas *Another Part of the Forest* was produced in 1946 and *Toys in the Attic* in 1960, *The Little Foxes* counts with numerous productions, which furthermore seem to be in an increasing trend: 1939, 1967, 1881, 1997, and 2017. After all, we must remember that *The Little Foxes* is considered to be one of the best plays of the twentieth century transformed into another success for the big screen with Bette Davis among its stellar cast.

2.3. Scope of purpose

Analyzing fictional characters requires an insight into human behavior as well as reflection in order to activate tools for moral assessments about their whole persona, beyond their actions. That is, in order to make a judgement of the ultimate consequences of characters' behavior, we need to look closely at their psychology, goals, drives, motivations, their social identity, their (dis)connections within groups, and their perception of the world they inhabit in connection with those. Although characters are fictional creations, there is a suspension of disbelief that makes the audience perceive them as real, but this connection of fiction and real life is also a complex one full of meaning and with different entangled shades leading to a particular perception of the audience.

In the 1960s, William John Harvey claimed that criticism had "relegated the treatment of character to the periphery of its attention" (192), an opinion that Seymour Chatman would share years later: "It is remarkable how little has been said about the theory of character in literary history and criticism" (107). Even though characters have become more and more the object of interest in recent years, especially in film and audiovisual media (Eder, "Understanding" 17), the necessity of a comprehensive model of character analysis seems to remain nowadays.

We believe that characters and action go hand by hand, and on many occasions characters are expressing and transmitting multitude of meanings non-action related. As Suzanne Keen claims: "How indeed can we think about characters without discussing their actions? (We can't!) How can we judge a set of actions in a plot without referring to the agents we come to know through those actions? (We shouldn't!)" (56). Throughout a comprehensive and detailed study of eighteen characters, the main objective of this dissertation is to examine the southern issues in three plays by the playwright Lillian Hellman that were adapted into movies (see Table 2). Therefore, we will observe themes of crucial interest for Hellman that were transferred into the film adaptations of her plays, such as money, family, social relationships, or gender issues. We also aim at showing that in most of cases, if not all of them, the action is triggered because of the struggle for some type of power, a conflict illustrative of an attempt to adjust to a specific period of time in a specific place where distinct social issues can be identified. Characters actions are therefore to be analyzed within a particular society, within groups inside a community and in (dis)connection with other groups, as well as individuals with their own distinctive traits and inner drives.

Reflecting on the strong identity of the South, taking into account that Hellman's social topics seem to be timeless and universal, and considering the fact that characters' influence on audiences beyond their fictional worlds seems to be expanding now more than ever, the gap we attempt to fill with this dissertation attends to the following reasons:

1) Although the distinctiveness of the South keeps being an ongoing topic of debate for scholars, and there are studies about the portrayal of the South in Hellman's plays, an analysis of characters specifically concerned with southern identity has never been provided.

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2) Although there are some works concerned with the analysis of characters in Hellman's plays —mainly *The Little Foxes*, a detailed analysis from a variety of angles has never been provided.

3) The prequel to *The Little Foxes*, *Another Part of the Forest*, has been included together with the central play of the Hubbard saga in diverse works exploring the

South. In spite of this, *Another Part of the Forest* characters have never been analyzed independently but merely observed in connection to the younger generations depicted in *The Little Foxes*.

4) *Toys in the Attic* received a poorer acclamation compared to previous Hellman's works, but it was yet considered to be among the best productions of the season, with great "opportunities for some extraordinary acting" (Atkinson). The movie adaptation, on the other hand, regardless of its several Tony nominations —including the Tony Award for Best Play, and some wins— it has hardly captured scholarly attention. Similarly, despite having cast popular stars, it remains somewhat unknown to the general public. *Toys in the Attic* represents nevertheless a southern family portrait, depicting characters in an unremitting battle with their own identities in varied ways, and certainly a reminder of southern —and universal— mayor topics (money, struggle for power, racial issues, family bonds, etc.), only in different times and tainted with different shades of "greed".

5) Although there was a good reception of some of Hellman's film adaptations, they seem to have received little attention for scholarly analysis.

6) There are hardly to no studies about Hellman's characters on the big screen despite having achieved big success, as it was the case of Wyler's film, or counting with stellar interpretations like that of Bette Davis in *The Little Foxes*.

7) There is no extensive analysis attending to the different dimensions of characters like the one we are here proposing.

From our point of view, Hellman's characters on the screen are complex, ambiguous, realistic and representative of the period of time they are placed in, at the same time they are universal and likely to captivate a wide range of spectators. The topics in her plays are also deep, full of significant content, and an excellent source for reflection, about both past and present major social issues. Therefore, an analysis of Hellman's characters on the screen seems to us a valid and comprehensive approach to a deep and meaningful study of the South —as perceived by the playwright— at the same time it enables us to connect with universal issues connecting with the topics of the past from a modern perspective of the present.

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Table 2. Main characters analyzed

Film	***Another Part of the Forest***	***The Little Foxes***	***Toys in the Attic***
Director (Year)	Michael Gordon (1948)	William Wyler (1941)	George Roy Hill (1963)
Character	**Marcus** Hubbard		
Actor	Fredric March		
Character	**Lavinia** Hubbard		
Actress	Florence Eldridge		
Character	**Ben** (Benjamin) Hubbard	**Ben** (Benjamin) Hubbard	
Actor	Edmond O'Brien	Charles Dingle	
Character	**Oscar** Hubbard	**Oscar** Hubbard	
Actor	Dan Duryea	Carl Benton Reid	
Character	**Regina** Hubbard	**Regina** Giddens	
Actress	Ann Blyth	Bette Davis	
Character	**John** Bagtry		
Actor	John Dall		
Character	**Birdie** Bagtry	**Birdie** Hubbard	
Actress	Betsy Blair	Patricia Collinge	
Character		**Leo** Hubbard	
Actor		Dan Duryea	
Character		**Alexandra** Giddens	
Actress		Teresa Wright	
Character		**David** Hewitt	
Actor		Richard Carlson	
Character		**Cal**	
Actor		John Marriott	
Character		**Addie**	
Actress		Jessie Grayson	
Character			**Julian** Berniers
Actor			Dean Martin
Character			**Lily** Berniers
Actress			Yvette Mimieux
Character			**Albertine** Prine
Actress			Gene Tierney
Character			**Henry** Simpson
Actor			Frank Silvera
Character			**Anna** Berniers
Actress			Wendy Hiller
Character			**Carrie** Berniers
Actress			Geraldine Page

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3. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Centering around the relevance of Lillian Hellman's complex characters, framed within the cultural studies approach as a whole, and particularly centered on southern studies and sociology, this dissertation aims at providing a comprehensive and, at the same time, organized analysis of characters of the existing filmic versions of the playwright's southern characters. For that purpose, we will take four interconnected approaches from four different fields of study: sociology, identity theory, southern studies, and film character analysis.

The first section of this chapter seeks to address the analysis from a sociological approach, paying especial attention to the perspectives on social order, social interactions and associations, and the hierarchical organization of societies. According to sociologist David M. Newman, sociology has a task consisting in helping us to "view our lives as the intersection between personal biography and societal history and thereby to provide a means for us to interpret our lives and social circumstances" (9). How individuals contribute to the general structure of society, how others influence our everyday life, and how social structure impacts our everyday decisions are all relevant aspects to take into account for the formation of our character and identity. We expect to obtain both knowledge of the world and the individual through the study of characters from a sociological approach, together with some other interconnected approaches within the field of cultural studies, from which we will additionally select specific trends of study, and some major concepts.

Therefore, the identity theory approach selected for the second section, and closely related to the previous, will attend to general issues concerning social identity and self-identity, as well as stigmas and stereotypes that come together with a strong influence of the past. Similar subjects will be looked at throughout the third section, however addressed from the lens of southern studies, hence examining very specific southern themes and concepts such as those of the southern inferiority or the southern masculinity feeling.

The final section of this chapter will provide an outline of the instruments and aspects of interest chosen from the intersection of film and narratology studies attending to the analysis of characters. Henceforth, we will introduce Jens Eder's "clock of character" —specifically attending to filmic texts—, to conclude with a brief description of the OCEAN —from the field of Theories of Personality— as the model of analysis that will enable us to zoom in for a particularly trait-detailed study within one of the most relevant quarters of the "clock of character."

3.1. Sociological approach

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Newman defines society as "a population living in the same geographic area who share a culture and a common identity and whose members are subject to the same political authority" (20). Therefore, the individual cannot be understood without being placed as part of society since people's identity is formed through the interaction with "the interpersonal, historical, cultural, organizational, and global environments they inhabit. To understand either individuals or society, we must understand both" (6).

Perceiving the relationships between individuals and society is not always easy, since they might be complicated and contain many variables and layers hard to unveil. We tend to take for granted that we are free to make our own choices in life, be it with respect to daily minimal situations or to major events. However, it seems also obvious that these choices are conditioned by the society we live in, which establishes boundaries for us in many aspects, such as race, background, beliefs, age, or gender, among others, although not everybody is conditioned by external facts in the same way or with the same intensity. Therefore, we must pay attention to the influence that the fictional characters under analysis receive from the society they live in, how they are capable or unable to cope with it, and how they adjust to their contexts in relation to sociological variables as the above-mentioned ones, or others such as government politics or economic trends of the moment.

3.1.1. Perspectives on social order

For our analysis of characters from a sociological approach, we need to start by introducing the three main perspectives on social order that focus on different aspects of society: the structural-functionalist approach, the conflict perspective, and the symbolic interactionist oriented one. According to the structural-functionalist theorists Parsons and Smelser, a society is like any living organism that needs all parts to work together to stay alive. The functionalist approach therefore perceives society as a whole composed of many parts, and social institutions help to organize those for a better functioning of the unit. Robert Merton classified social institutions according to their manifest functions, the particularly designed for an intended goal, and their latent functions, those that unintentionally somehow contribute to the good sustainment of the system. In this perspective, all those social aspects that fail to positively contribute to society are destined to fade away, remaining only those that are clearly positive for society or that despite appearing disruptive are somehow advantageous for the survival or development of a community.

The conflict-oriented approach, on the contrary, perceives mainly the inequalities emanating from the social structure, which works by making some groups benefit from the effort or exploitation of others, hence "order arises not from the societal pursuit of harmony but from dominance and coercion" (Newman 47). For conflict theorists, "social inequality is neither a societal necessity nor a source of social order," it is rather "a primary source of conflict, coercion, and unhappiness" (323). Therefore, those who do not have anything of socially acknowledged value feel unhappy in their condition subsequently making of the chase for social status their main life quest. The conflict-oriented is the approach that we will follow in this dissertation since the major themes of the plays put an emphasis mainly on power control conflict and social struggle. In addition, we intend to observe how institutions such as government or the family privilege some groups over others.

Karl Marx, by far the most well-known conflict sociologist, believed that those in control of the means of production were the ones holding the power to create and manage social institutions and hence control society by handling the economy, the politics, and the education as well as other societal systems. In a world with limited resources, Marx claimed that conflict was inevitable between those who have accessibility to them and those who do not have it, consequently manifesting the necessity of an order that those in power would enforce. He stated that rather than primarily being based on greediness, this system was encouraged by those who, holding the power, wanted to keep their benefits despite of, or thanks to, the inequality it promoted. This is clearly reflected on the plays we are studying, as we can see different groups constantly trying to benefit from others: for example, the middle class aiming at obtaining

money easily from lower scale groups (*Another Part of the Forest*), northerners attempting to get profit from establishing mills in the South (*The Little Foxes*), shark loaners getting benefit from those who need their money (*Toys in the Attic*). Despite being all this set in a particular historical context, it can be perceived as a current issue of interest since the social conflict has not ceased to exist. In this sense, Hellman's plays easily call to audiences and enable them to understand the situations represented without difficulty no matter how long ago in time they were supposed to have happened. This Marxian perspective of society with a primary focus on economics is particularly relevant for our analysis; however, other power struggles such as gender are of interest as well as part of modern conflict sociology main concerns.

We also share Newman's opinion that this focus, being exclusively interested in social struggle, "tends to downplay or overlook the elements of society that different groups and individuals share" (48). It is our belief nonetheless, that Hellman's plays as well as our everyday reality, clearly introduce societies where the struggle for diverse —yet mainly economic— powers is the main motor or trigger for social development. Focus on conflict therefore is necessary, although we also intend to briefly observe institutions and how opposing groups work together resulting in the intended or unintended benefit of the unit.

Symbolic interactionism, the third aforementioned perspective, attends to the symbols created by members of a society to interact with one another. This approach might be minimally brought up in our analysis to complement the Marxist one by attending to interactions at a microlevel where the symbolic stands out, like for example a gesture whose meaning might be different when one character uses it in one context or another.

As Guy E. Swanson noted, people are not simply "robots programmed by social structure" (94) and, although society is a big unit, the way individuals communicate within it has a certain role in its development. Despite agreeing that we do indeed have an effect on the big unit that is society, we find the power that sociologist Newman gives to the individual quite unlikely to happen in some societies, but we will observe if some of the characters under analysis here have the potential to stand as an example of Newman's claim: "We as individuals can affect the very social structure that affect us. We can modify role expectations, change norms, create or destroy organizations, revolutionize institutions, and even alter the path of world history" (49).

3.1.2. Social interaction and associations

According to philosopher Auguste Comte, we can consider that all societies have both "social statistics," elements of stability, as well as "dynamic forces," mobility forces. On the other hand, communication has a key role within societies since people should be able to interact for their construction and growth. While living in a society, we make an influence on the environment we inhabit, at the same time we are influenced by it, and depending on our different reactions we can cause a variety of modifications (House). However, as Coulson and Riddell pointed out, social life is more than just individual people affecting one another's lives; it is a puzzle made up of many pieces put together in specific ways resulting in a particular interconnected unit. Newman also refers to the different elements that constitute a society but pointing out to the role of culture in holding up social units: "[s]tatuses, roles, groups, organizations, and institutions are the structural building blocks of society. Culture is the mortar that holds these blocks together. Although society is dynamic and constantly evolving, it has an underlying macrolevel structure that persists" (26). Therefore, although there are constant changes in the everyday experiences of individuals at a microlevel observation, there is also part of the past somehow persisting in the present in terms of broad social forces. Concerning our analysis of characters, we aim at

observing interactions and communication patterns to find out if successful communication or miscommunication prompt the characters' choices and their development.

With regards to communication, there are "typical patterns of interaction based on the relationship between their roles and the roles of others" (Newman 27). Therefore, we might find what is called role strains, which happen when we are unable to fulfill the demands of a given role, and role conflicts, which take place when we struggle to make different roles compatible. For our analysis, we will comment on both the ascribed and achieved statuses of characters, since both are relevant from a sociological perspective: "they all come with a set of rights, obligations, behaviors, and duties that people occupying a certain position are expected or encouraged to perform" (27). Role strains and conflicts will also be noticed, for they might be the trigger of certain actions and significantly relevant for character development.

Within societies we can distinguish different types of association. Newman defines a social group as "a set of people who interact more or less regularly with one another and who are conscious of their identity as a group" (28). Although Hellman focuses on individual characters instead of groups, we can however observe how those characters belong (or not) to a given group and how this might affect their identity. Accordingly, we need to point out to the difference between in-groups and out-groups, being the first ones those related to a sense of connecting, feeling included, and wishing or having the need to feel loyal to, whereas the second ones are those which with we do not feel any relatedness to or we can even perceive as antagonists. For example, some of the members of the Hubbard family need to feel the sense of appertaining to a group whereas others do not seem to have this need. We will explore characters' in-group and out-group interactions as part of their identity, as well as the expectations that society puts on them given the fact that "[a] person's actions within a group are judged according to a conventional set of ideas about how things ought to be" (Newman 28). We will also attend to smaller aggrupation types such as dyads, triads, and coalitions. The dyads are, according to Georg Simmel, one of the strongest and most relevant relationships we can establish. Newman points out notwithstanding that "dyads are by nature unstable" (28). Being this a very limited group, if one of the members leaves, the group immediately disintegrates. That's why this type of relation is reinforced by social norms and systems, in Newman's words, by "a variety of legal, religious, and cultural restrictions … that make it difficult for people to dissolve them" (28).

Societies need socialization to function; learning how to behave during social interactions as well as how to perceive the world we live in is fundamental. Social life patterns are reinforced by social institutions; family, education, economics, politics, and religion are some of the main ones. Different societies pay more or less attention to each institution, but it appears remarkable that "the institution of family, whatever its form, remains the hub of social life in virtually all societies" (Newman 30), and so it happens in Hellman's fictional societies. Related to both wealth and honor, status has proved to be especially important in the South, as it is the main concern of those who want to look well in the eyes of the community they are a part of. Regarding status, we must distinguish between ascribed and achieved status, being the first the one we are born to, or we involuntarily fall into, and the second the one we aim (or struggle) to acquire in our lifetime. On the other hand, communities are organized in hierarchies, usually stratified from low to high, making the existence of inequality an undeniable reality. The system of stratification, however, is supposed to be flexible and allow certain mobility, which has increased with time although not dramatically. Regarding class mobility, one of the issues of the three plays under analysis, Newman claims the following: "[t]heoretically, all members of a class system, no matter how destitute they are, can rise to the top. In practice, however, mobility between classes may be difficult for some people" (321).

The structural-functionalist perspective on stratification and the conflict approach to this issue are quite opposite: the functionalist view defends the idea that there is a need for order in society and inequality is necessary to establish and maintain that order for a smooth living of the community, being its members valued according to their contribution to society, and hence their skills to perform those roles or tasks considered more important. There is still the ongoing dilemma in this area about how much esteem and reward should each class receive from its work as compared to people who perform roles that are considered less relevant. It is believed that those who have major talents should get the leading positions in the stratification ladder so that all the society can benefit from their work. However, there is a tendency to undervalue those jobs that being manual and considered simple, do not seem to contribute a lot to the general being of the society. A renowned thinker of our times, psychology professor Jordan B. Peterson, has discussed this issue extensively stating that as stratification goes, those who have more talents should be on top in the social scale (that is, inequality is unavoidable), although we should bear in mind that everybody has a role and everybody is important and necessary for society. We agree entirely with this perspective, but we feel the need to mention that on many occasions tradition clashes with stratification, hence placing on top those who had already by birth or in other circumstances —by tradition— achieved a social position; notwithstanding, they are not always as skilled as some others who are trying to escalate there, something we can see in the films under analysis in this dissertation.

3.1.3. Hierarchical organization

In all hierarchies there is a very comfortable spot on the top and a very unfortunate one at the bottom. Considered in a broad spectrum, with white supremacy on top and black slaves at the very bottom, for southern society slavery was the most extreme form of social inequality, since it allowed people to make a product of other people, to the point "[t]heir lives [were] owned, controlled, coerced, and restricted" (Newman 318). Despite this fact, the upper white class of the Old South brings to mind a romanticized view of the period and an ideal of gentry, honor, and elegance that are still imbued in people's minds in the form of a nostalgic perspective of the past. The identity of the Old South upper class, of which we have some representatives in Hellman's plays, is however a complex one, not only depending on those idealized features but also on many others such as education, politics, gender roles, or economic profit. Slave owners were the richest class before the Civil War and by 1860 "the nation's 12 wealthiest counties were in the South, and most of these counties boasted large concentrations of slaves" (Grivno 288). Those in possession of the major amount of slaves and lands constituted the upper class and, according to Grivno's observation based on historian Gavin Wright's calculations, "the average slaveholder was more than five times wealthier than the typical northerner and more than 10 times richer than a southern yeoman farmer" (288).

The northern capitalism has been opposed to the paternalism of the South, which allowed an ambivalent vision of profitable economy with no limitations in its way to keeping the stability of the "best possible profit." Planters got most of their profit from working the lands, but they were also not fearless of business and advances, as it was the case of John Tayloe III, who "owned more than 700 slaves, but he also operated mills and iron furnaces, dabbled in commercial real estate, and invested heavily in the Bank of the United States and several internal improvement projects" (Grivno 289). By expanding his father's business and thanks to his "investments in city lots, horses, banks, internal improvements, transportation lines, and hotels and taverns" (S. K. Smith 92) he succeeded in building up a profitable city life. This is however the opposite

case of Hellman's honorable Old South family, the Bagtrys, as they appear to be unable to adjust to the new times, something that Ben Hubbard with his ready mind for progress will perceive and state as their major demerit.

Ben Hubbard, together with his siblings, would fit in the "middle class" tag, one that most of southerners have identified with, yet a wide term that we can perceive both as full of meaning and as too wide-ranging. It is not clear how this social category is useful to refer to the nineteenth and early twentieth century South (Wells 172), since it was basically related to the yeoman farmers of the slave South until *Plain Folk of the Old South* came to light in 1949. Historian Frank L. Owsley had however already made people a little more conscious of the fact that the relevant number of common whites outnumbering the rich planters in the South was to be taken into account, for they played a meaningful role in the politics and economics of the region, a fact Oakes would put emphasis on later in the *The Ruling Race*. Most of slave owners had only a small number of slaves, so they came to be known as middle class slave holders.

Apart from these middle class men, scholars believe that other group of white middle class southerners engaged in commerce or with professional skills also contributed significantly to shape the South: "The formation of a southern middle class before the Civil War shaped the region's economy and society, as professional and commercial southern whites pushed states to modernize their economies and cultures, from investing in railroads to expanding efforts in public education" (Wells 175). Despite this, the war would bring an end to the middle class until its resurgence by 1880s, when we already meet the Hubbard family in *The Little Foxes* in their progression to becoming "foxes" —economic predators— later by the turn of the century. Since this moment, the newly emerged middle class will rapidly grow and benefit from the work of poor people, both black and white, thanks to new labor systems such as sharecropping, tenant farming or even prison labor (Wells 175).

The reasons that had led to the Civil War, as well as the procedures of the subsequent Reconstruction of the South, have been extensively discussed by scholars and historians who point out to one direction or another as the main cause; still it is an undeniable fact that North and South were divided by their differing ideology on systems of production as there was an ideal of liberty. At the same time, however, slavery was the "machinery" used to achieve economic profits; that is to say, the ideal of free market was contrasting strongly with the immoral reality of slavery. After the war, southern states should adhere to the law supported by the Union, and slavery was supposed to exist no more once Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves. Despite the good wishes to renew and modernize the South, the reality of the Reconstruction period was quite different, to the point that we could even say that slavery prevailed at the core of other economic systems as aforementioned, yet existing segregation as a quite *far-from-genuinely* moral reform. Racial discrimination and racial relations have consequently been of the most discussed issues of American history.

To conclude, it is necessary to mention that, among the main modes of sociological research —surveys, experiments, field research, and unobtrusive research—, our analysis will be conducted through *unobtrusive research* as understood by Newman (88), hence through a reflection of evidence about society that has been provided for us in the form of drama and film. For this, we will consider certain analysis of existing data and some historical exploration, but we will primarily focus on content analysis. Despite the subjective influence that our particular cultural and ideological background might have in our interpretations, it is our goal to analyze the characters from different angles in order to provide a wide and comprehensive view inclusive of their multidimensional aspects in case they might present them.

3.2. Identity theory approach

In analyzing characters, not only individual isolated traits but the ensemble that makes them a whole identity should be one of our concerns, especially because in this dissertation we depart from categorizing characters' identity as "southern" *a priori*. Identity, as the personality and a set of beliefs and characteristics that make a person what he/she is, has been defined and explained from many different disciplines. From the fields of social psychology and sociology, the focus has been varied, in general paying major attention to race, gender, and social identities, among others. The aim here is to draw from different fields of study in order to analyze as extensively and in detail as possible fictional characters that we expect to be representative of a southern regional identity. Following, we will introduce the theories and concepts more relevant for our study as well as the methodology used for their interpretation when applied to the characters.

3.2.1. Social identity

Focusing on its social relevance, psychologist Kay Deaux defines identity as "those aspects of a person that are defined in terms of his or her group memberships" and oneself's perspective "in contrast to others who are members of another group" ("Social" 1059, 1063). However, identifying the group an individual belongs to and those who are considered as out-groups is not enough (Ethier and Deaux) for, as Deaux claims, "[k]nowing how important or central an identity is to the person is necessary in order to predict how much the identity will influence the person's beliefs, emotions, and actions" ("Social" 1064).

Deaux classified identity into two big groups, personal and social, stating that both are, as we could expect, interconnected since "[p]ersonal identity is defined, at least in part, by group memberships, and social categories are infused with personal meaning" ("Reconstructing" 5). Among the different categorizations of social identification, Deaux et al. distinguish five general types: personal relationships, vocations/avocations, political affiliations, ethnic/religious groups, and stigmatized groups. Ashmore et al. presented a detailed categorization of social identification into seven components: self-categorization, evaluation, importance, attachment and interdependence, social embeddedness, behavioral involvement, and content and meaning. Feitosa et al., for their part, identified three dimensions: categorization, sense of belonging and positive attitudes.

Concerning *southern identity*, the South has been extensively studied from a historical and cultural perspective. However, some issues, most of them related to southern identity and its *exceptional* traits (Ayers; Degler; Griffin, "Southern"; U. B. Phillips, "Central"; Reed, *Enduring*; Woodward, remain a point of disagreement (Carlton; Lassiter and Crespino; Shafer and Johnston) —which in this case also implies a point of interest and ongoing discussion— for scholars worldwide.

It is a well-known fact that whenever we think about the South, slavery is most probably one of the first things that comes to mind, and with it, the oppression that it caused, and even the resistance to abandon it over the course of time as the Jim Crow law proved, that is to say, its persistence in time. There is notwithstanding the possibility that we think instead about the so called "the mythic South" with honorable and charming men and lovely belles and ladies, all on the top of the scale of a society full of values as reflected in movies like *Gone with the Wind* (1939). Finally, there is another type of new, or let's say renewed, "mythic south" that we have been seeing portrayed non-stop in popular television shows, a wild South, full of magic and creatures such as those in *Trueblood* (2008–2014) or *The Originals* (2013–2018)

spinning off from *The Vampire Diaries* (2009–2017) and spinning off to *Legacies* (2018–present), particularly interesting not only for the persistence of wild but also for their focus on family covering several generations in their transmission of customs and traditions. Sharing background, beliefs and folklore, even history, but being at the same time quite distant to this popular magic South in terms of contents and imagery, we cannot but wonder how audiences would receive nowadays characters and stories like those in Lillian Hellman's *Another Part of the Forest* (1946), *The Little Foxes* (1939), or *Toys in the Attic* (1960) if they were to be revived right now for the big screen.

Sociology professor Larry J. Griffin ("American") clearly stated that the South exceptionality was in its "poverty, cultural backwardness, and religiosity" (7). However, if we simply check the examples mentioned above, we could say that culture stands as a strong and resistant force, poverty does not appear to be the main concern and religiosity, although clearly outstanding in most of cases, might be not easy to understand for the general audience, especially outside of the American borders. In addition, food, celebrations, customs, rituals, traditions, and music appear as strongly distinctive southern features of the South as well.

From perceived images or from comparison with the South, non-southerners have imposed certain images to the South therefore creating a vision that stays in their minds and might even have really affected the southern identity by causing a reaction of such group, that is, of the individuals following into the category of "southern". As not all images have been particularly positive, the negative ones have contributed to a stigmatized view of the South, making of it a social problem for the nation (Griffin, "Why"; Griffin and Doyle; Killian), an idea that has been recently emphasized from an economical point of view. Among the most commonly cited as negative aspects of the South, it is necessary to mention the following: racist (Ayers; Griffin and Thompson, "Appalachia"), poor, stuck in the past, and lacking education (Ayers) or "benighted" lacking culture (Hobson, "Benighted"), illiterate, corrupted, and full of social sickness (Tindall, *Ethnic*), defeated (Woodward), and un-American or opposed to the national identity (Griffin, "Southern").

Southern identity used to be described as related to white southerners (Brattain; Cash; Cobb, *Redefining*; U. B. Phillips, "Central"; Watts, *White*) and this somehow might have remained imbued in our minds, an imprint that Catsam perceived and accurately referred to as a baffling feeling: "Why is it that when almost all of us, even the most self-professedly enlightened, think of a southerner, we think of a white man?" (237). This is undoubtedly pointing out to the relevance of race as related to the identity of the South, and as such it is something that we must not oversee in our study despite being most of characters under analysis white, and racial issues not extensively addressed. Lilian Hellman is mostly portraying the white southern character, but black characters' appearance is fundamental in clearly showing the economic and social drives of the main white characters, and consequently their morals and identity.

Furthermore, it seems pertinent to emphasize at this point that in the contemporary South black people claimed their identity as southern in high numbers, even over white southern numbers (Griffin and Thompson, "Appalachia"; Griffin et al.). For example, the Jim Crow Law represented the white resistance to give up the plantation system and so it was presented to the world as the effort to preserve the old ways of life, the tradition, the purely southern lifestyle. Southern implied "white," and black people were though as "black" instead of southern, therefore being excluded from this *category*. This was a white perspective of "southern identity" (Coski) with which most probably black southerners did not agree, therefore not experiencing the need or wish to feel southern. At the same time, as sociologist Killian points out, white southerners had a perception of themselves as a reduced group in peril, a minority who felt the

need to fight against any out-group aggression in order to preserve their group distinctiveness (Hackney, "Southern").

Woodward and Degler would soon provide a definition of southern identity explicitly unrelated to race, even though it would remain implicit since the feelings of guilt and defeat Woodward attaches to the southern character are mostly those of white southerners, and Degler fails at introducing the black perspective of religion and politics while elaborating on the needs of white southerners to defend the slavery system as the seed for their conservatism. Ayers would include both black and white as two groups sharing southern identity despite having a different moral vision of southern history and a different emotional connection with the region: for example, blacks worked the land and contributed to the shaping of the South even though they lack any official symbol of their labor, or as Ayers would put it, with their "sweat and sacrifice" (64).

Despite the history that the two —racially defined— opposite groups in the South share and the white supremacist view that we have been receiving and learning about as the fixed one, being southern does not mean just having been given birth in the South, living in the region, having a southern accent or positioning oneself in defense of southern ways as opposed to northern perspectives. To claim a southern identity, people, white or black, need to feel southern, belonging to the group, connected to other southerners, and sharing the same cultural ways of life. According to Griffin ("American") data has been collected that proves that in fact it is somehow a matter of volition. Consequently, we can say that southern identity is not imposed as slavery had been, it is to a big extent a choice.

The definition we have of ourselves as members of a group (Hogg and Williams) and the comfort we get from the environment surrounding us and about other people's attitudes are part of the reason why we develop a social identity. Therefore, it seems expectable that we feel more attracted to those who are similar to us (Byrne), as it permits us to stay in our comfort zone with members within the same group, people whom we find easier to understand and correlate with (Brewer). However, if we hinge too much on the group that we consider ours, and we distance ourselves from others whose characteristics do not match the ones we are used to, this distance might lead us to *othering* the different groups.

Concerning social identity, individuals have, according to Brewer, two needs: on the one hand, they need to experience similarities with others while on the other hand, they ambition keeping some distinctive traits for the maintenance of their genuine uniqueness as well. Belonging to a group increases the individual self-steam of the members as they value the group's characteristics in a positive way and there is "an emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 255). The group is not only understood in itself but also as compared to other groups (that is, out-groups) which can lead to group conflict, stereotyping and other negative issues in a world that gives room for certain choice (Griffin, "American"), which usually was inexistent in a past where most of things came imposed as it was the Old South.

Among others, Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (Tajfel; Tajfel and Turner, "Social") contributed to point out to the study of social level identities. However, studying the group while ignoring the individual might result inaccurate for a meaningful analysis of identity. In other words, it wouldn't be a recommendable choice to pay "attention to the existence of simple group boundaries while ignoring their internal meaning" (Huddy 130). On the other hand, the fact of identifying with a certain category alone does not comprehend an individual social identity either (Ashforth and Mael). For example, black liberated men becoming paid workers might identify with others within the category of workers (white low wage), but this is quite distant from defining their social identity. A fusion of personal and social identity has also been

considered for the study of identity (Swann et al.), which seems more comprehensive although not easy to implement.

Methodologically speaking, here we will pay attention to the feeling of belonging or not to a group, but we will also aim at observing if characters feel themselves as southerners, if they represent southern values or if they reject them, if they feel "at home" in the South or if they feel constricted by it, and if they show some stigmatized identity traits, following Goffman's understanding of stigma as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (3), a mark of disgrace that leaves a stain on those who carry it. At the same time, despite our initial hypothesis expecting clear regional traits, we also believe that they might be evocative of universal themes. Such being the case, we would like to explore if their *southern-ness* influences their most global characteristics as well or if they are completely separated and clearly identifiable as non-exclusively southern.

3.2.2. Self-identity

In philosophy, the focus of identity is the "being," the "who am I?" not only now but overtime, in other words, the persistence of a person in time. From a psychological perspective, personal identity (Deaux, "Personalizing"; Hewitt; Hitlin) is concerned with to the individual's self-image, his/her values and the perception of his/her appearance to the world. The background and experiences lived through time make a person unique and authentic (Heppner and Kernis; Burke and Stets; Waterman).

Ellemers et al. or Horowitz focused their attention on the analysis of the self, British social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner ("Integrative") paid attention to the concepts individuals have of themselves within a society where behaviors are attached to customs, roles, and norms, consequently pointing out to the influence of the group's behavior on the individual, an opinion also shared by Stets and Burke: "The self influences society through the actions of individuals thereby creating groups, organizations, networks, and institutions. And, reciprocally, society influences the self through its shared language and meanings that enable a person to take the role of the other, engage in social interaction, and reflect upon oneself as an object" (128).

According to the explanation provided by Hogg et al., identity theory focuses on the relationship of self and society defending a "multifaceted notion of self" (256) while social identity theory "is intended to be a social psychological theory of intergroup relations, group processes, and the social self" (259). Even though we will not follow any of the theories systematically here, we will take into account major concerns of both since we consider them useful for the social analysis we aim at providing. The study of identities, their formation and changes might prove helpful to understand characters' roles within groups, as well as their relationship with members inside and outside the group. As Leonie Huddy notices, the processes that individuals go through and the choices they make are key in their formation of identity. On the other hand, not only observing the individual choices and progress, but also the group's processes inside its boundaries and in contact with other groups, might prove especially helpful for the analysis of southern identity in the observation of its exceptional characteristics as well as the non-exceptional ones that have been brought up with the expansion of globalization. Therefore, we will point out to changes in identity of individual characters, as well as to the social competition with out-groups, which may or may not contribute to the alteration of social structures. We expect social movements taking place when a group attempts to change negative meanings associated with its identity (Britt and Heise). In a similar way, groups perceiving their traits as positive might also react against the "threats" of out-groups (Tajfel and Turner, "Social") in order to preserve their positive status, that is, their social comfort.

The meaning of southern identity has been a challenging one to explain for sociologists, psychologists, and historians. In the old South it acquired a meaning mostly related to white southerners who wanted to maintain their old lifestyle. In present times, there is a conflict of feelings around the essence of *what should or should not be considered southern*, as the wounds of the past seem to remain, making of symbols a matter of interpretation or a subjective reading of history —this keeping in mind that history might always be recounted from its subjective lens to some extent, no matter how much objective it attempts to be. White southerners felt their identity challenged by all the changes that put an end to the plantation system and their old ways of life, thus holding onto symbols like the confederate flag (Wilson, "Myth of the Biracial South", Cobb, "'We'") and providing room for myths such as the Lost Cause, which might be perceived in different ways even though it was originally created by southern whites as a reassertion of their southern identity. In a similar manner, black southerners would also feel the need to reassert their identities after the collapse of the Jim Crow laws (Wilson, "Myth of the Biracial South"). In short, the way characters perceive their own identity is basic for our understating of their behavior and role within the stories introduced, and so it is the reception of characters by the audience, which might greatly differ (or not) from the moment it first came to light to the present days.

Therefore, aiming at a brief yet comprehensive analysis of characters' identities, we should observe the southern as an ethnic identity, a racial one, a stigmatized one, or a much discussed regional one, among others. As for ethnicity, we could reflect on who are the "real southerners," what are their most common cultural practices and how they transmit their culture from generation to generation. With a focus on race, we should explore the relationship and behaviors of the black-white binary, the racial consciousness —or unconsciousness— of both sides, its origins and history and the (in)moral component of its practices. As a stigmatized identity, we must consider how the southerners are perceived from outside the South, how they perceive and interact with their own group and others, and how they feel the effects of stigma. Pretty close to the ethnic perspective, taking a regional approach, we should as well find the interconnection with all the previously mentioned foci, but we would specifically pay attention to the commonalities of the group that made of the South a distinctive region. Finally, concerning identity traits, and as psychologists such as Unger et al. or Johnson et al., or philosophers such as Whitehead (*Function*, *Modes*) and Pepper have agreed in distinguishing a static and a dynamic dimension of reality, so will we, particularly given the fact that *Another Part of the Forest* and *The Little Foxes* give us the chance to observe the same characters overtime, which is expected to allow a more accurate analysis of characters.

3.2.3. The past, stereotypes, and stigmas

In order to achieve a better understanding of the southern identities, historians like Edward L. Ayers, U. B. Phillips (1928), John Wilbur Cash (1941), C. van Woodward (1960), Carl N. Degler (1977) and sociologist Lewis M. Killian took a historical approach to the study of the South examining its past. Throughout history, perspectives about southerners as well as southerners themselves have changed and been redefined. For example, one of the main traits commonly assigned to southerners —southerner here understood as white supremacy— had been their shielded behavior, often expressed as a defensive reaction (Hackney, "Southern"; Killian), in order to maintain their identity unaffected by external groups, which was in a sense a defense of their economic system first based on the use of slaves and later modified into a low paid labor. Historians like Woodward, Tindall (*Ethnic*, *Natives*) or Griffin ("Why") adopt a

social constructionist approach to the study of events in the past of the South, therefore opting for the observation of different cultural images of the South coming from both inside and outside the region through diverse media, as well as the actual historical experiences of southerners. Griffin particularly emphasizes the sectional conflicts and the fact that the South lost against the American (Northern) perspective of events. Therefore, the South, racist and backwards, stands as the stigmatized "other" in opposition to the North, the social understanding and prosperous part of the nation.

Degler would search for the origins of southern exceptionalism in the rural character of the South with its plantation system, which he considered the base for the development of a political and religious conservatism of the region. The racial perspective of the South was abandoned by Woodward, who perceived and first introduced southerners as a defeated and guilty society, something that also Griffin ("Southern") would notice later.

Literary approaches to the study of the South have explored the fictional and non-fictional works of southerners. King (1980) as well as Hobson (*But Now I See*) noted the psychological effects of the construction of a southern identity which somehow trapped southerners into an ambivalent feeling of love towards the South and the need to escape from its past, something that would be translated to southern literary works. In Hobson's words, "the Southerner, more than other Americans, has felt he had something to explain, to justify, to defend, or to affirm" (*Tell* 3). A different position to this ambivalent one would take the southerner to one extreme or the opposite one: on the one hand, some authors chose to express their feeling of the South as a glorious land that experienced the struggle of becoming a benighted region in the minds of people, whereas on the other hand, others adopted a negative perspective of the South as a sinful place that brings to mind the memories of a burdensome past. And so the past became the interest of many of the well-known names of the Southern Renaissance, such as William Faulkner, Lillian Smith, Allen Tate or Robert Penn Warren, to name a few. And it is at this point when we need to remember that Faulkner's never dead past is latent in the South and a good remembrance of it are the stereotypes and myths that have been spread through different media and from generation to generation.

Stereotypes, as harmful as they can be, might trigger the reaction of an individual or group experiencing them, but they are likely to be dealt with at short term or without major effects. They might die at a given point or they might remain while being under some alterations, noticeable or subtle, but being mostly linked to the views that some group has about another, they are unlikely to become deeply harmful for the minds of the stereotyped group. However, stigmas, also originating from the views of an external group, have a different effect on the group being stigmatized, since its members adopt that negative view as accurate and it tends to remain deep rooted, hence making a remarkable effect on the identity of those who carry them. In fact, some scholars like Link and Phelan (2001) see in stigmatization a clear element of discrimination, and southern accent for example, might serve as an example since according to Ayers, it "is often understood, inside the South as well as beyond its borders, as a symbol of poor education, low ambition, and reactionary politics" (71). Because of the impact of stigmas on one's identity, some psychologists emphasize the importance of observing and studying the responses of both those who are being stigmatized and those from an external group perceiving them as such (Biernat and Dovidio). A stigmatized identity though might be reversed, since there is a possibility that the stigmatized group reacts with motivation to change its negative identity into a positive one (Tajfel and Turner, "Social"), as for example happened with he working class whites (Kirby, *Countercultural*; Cobb, "'We'") who sang their redneck, hillbilly or country pride with the help of country music.

O'Brien, who believes that the South is complex and has diverse faces conforming the whole, pointed to the fact that literary works might not exactly express the sentiment of common southerners. Such a concern is easily understandable, but we would like to disagree since no matter the level of intellectuality they used for their portrayal of the South, they are also —yet— southerners. Perspectives, foci and interests might be different to some extent, but they are undeniably *southern perspectives of the South*.

Social psychological approaches to the South look at the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs of southerners. Sociologist John Shelton Reed is one of the main scholars following this approach, and the one whose work we will be drawing from for our analysis of characters. Reed conducted several surveys for his studies and reached his conclusions after calculating the public opinion data he had gathered. In his book *The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society* he concluded that, even though the South was starting to be assimilated with the rest of the nation with regards to industrialization, urbanization, income, and attitude towards race, cultural differences remained clear: southerners seemed to be more committed to their homeplace, more religious, and with a tendency to the use of force privately as they considered fit. Being these characteristics well established in their cultural programming, southern institutions were formed with them as base, therefore contributing to the maintenance of the dissimilarity with northern institutions of the same sort, for example churches or schools, which would consequently be there reinforced through education. Despite the fact of containing data provided by white southerners only and unfortunately lacking in the recount of black data, Reed's study is one of the few that does indeed get information about southern identity directly from southerners, reaching to the conclusion that the South is clearly distinctive, an opinion we also share.

3.3. Southern studies approach

Thomas Jefferson had claimed in 1785 that northern men were "cool, sober, laborious, persevering, independent, zealous for their own liberties, and just to those of others, interested, chicaning, superstitious and hypocritical in their religion" while southerners were "fiery, voluptuary, indolent, unsteady, independent, zealous for their own liberties, but trampling on those of others, generous, candid, without attachments or pretentions to any religion but that of the heart" (qtd. in Peterson 387). Even though America would soon unite North and South through religion, Jefferson's characterization of northerner and southerner stated what would be known as the "yankee" and the "cavalier." In *The Enduring South*, Reed provides the results of his polls showing that southerners come out as distinctive in the following aspects: they tend to think in local terms, they choose local people as those they look at or admire rather than people from other areas —which emphasizes a focus on the in-group—, they are more likely to be Christian (mostly fundamentalist), they rely on their own actions instead of outsourcing, they keep strong moral beliefs and pay close attention to the distinction between right and wrong, and they are likely to engage in a fight rather than letting others solve the issue in a peaceful manner (for example, by calling the police). The adjectives that came up in order to describe southerners in the polls were conservative, tradition-loving, courteous and loyal to family, as opposed to the northerners' related ones: industrious, materialistic, loving pleasure and progressive.

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3.3.1. The South as "the other"

In the South, there is a particular "cultural imagery that came to represent the region's values and worldviews, nurturing a sense of difference between the South and other American

places" (Wilson, "Myth, Manners" 1). In his book *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said had introduced the term "orientalism" to denote the perception and depiction that the West has of the East. Said pointed out to the "other" or the "alter ego" that a given culture identifies in other cultures, therefore influencing its self-image at the same time it contributes to constructing an image of the "other," a situation that we can apply to the North and South of the USA. In fact, the "other" is also how history professor Orville Vernon Burton refers to the South, understood from the perspective of the North as the "different one." Braidotti explains that "the concept of difference has been poisoned and has become the equivalent of inferiority: to be different from means to be worth less than" (4). In a sense, the "other" marks the boundaries to the "self" and hence the differences in identity, exactly what seems to have happened to the South.

Some scholars agree that a region within the nation is considered as an internal Other (Jansson, "Internal", "Race", "Racialization", "Work"; Johnson and Coleman). Jansson, who elaborated extensively on this topic, explains his view of internal orientalism as follows:

> As an identity discourse, internal orientalism produces a binary where the nation constructs an exalted national identity in part through representing a region as an inferior Other. [Othering] The asymmetrical political relations are expressed in part through the desire and attempt to remake the region in the image of the nation, politically, socially, and culturally. [Reconstruction] The exploitative economic relations are characterized by the disproportionate benefitting of economic interests outside the region through a kind of colonization of the region. [Internal colonialism] ("Work" 135)

Jansson decided to call the three steps mentioned in his argument above as *southering*, reconstruction and internal colonialism (bracketed). This applies clearly to the New South, and we consider Jansson's differentiation accurately illustrative and very helpful to understand the forces in play and the role of characters in the works under analysis in this dissertation. With this in mind, we will consider Jansson's internal colonialism as part of the reconstruction process, since the economic exploitation provides the ground for the North to bring its socioeconomic ways to the South, not only with the purpose of getting economic benefit but also to impose their values and culture, which they believed to be the "correct" ones to follow. Although in Hellman's *Another Part of the Forest* and *The Little Foxes* the othering and the internal colonialism might not be explicitly emphasized, they are definitely there in direct relation with the Reconstruction process.

Both the "Southernization of America" and the "Americanization of the South" are terms emerging from the needs to observe and state the differences, influences, and evolution of North and South as part of the same unit but at the same time retainers of specific characteristics which placed them apart, resulting both terms however into unsatisfactory ones. On this aspect, Richard J. Gray emphasizes that "Americans, and not just southerners, react to the blanding of America by subscribing to cultural values that simultaneously register their anxiety about change and measure their difference from the corporate ethos" ("'Maybe'" 4-5).

James McPherson ("Antebellum") reflected on the fact that we should consider if it was not the North that was different from the South, as it had followed a different historical line diverted from the mainstream, what could clearly be considered exceptionalism. At the same time, Hackney believed that the southerners inevitably had to define themselves "in opposition to a presumed American norm" ("South" 287). These two different views discussing the singularity of the North and South of the USA, as well as the fact that it seems an unfinished dialogue, are actually evidence of the differences existing between both sides.

If the North considers the South as a "non-similar Other" and the other way round, they both end up being "the other" in ¡a symmetrical way (Humphries and Lowe). In this line of perceiving others as separate and dissimilar from us, making them "they" as apart from "us," we could also reflect on the fact that the slavery issue has a double direction therefore following both sides, northern and southern, and their own vision of the "not-us," giving place for a disagreement that puts emphasis on the values and the undeniable power that the culture we learn and breathe daily has on us. If there is a different cultural programming in a society, then the moralities growing from that would be diverse from others where the programming had not been the same.

As for the feeling of "Southernism" in modern times, Christopher A. Cooper and H. Gibbs Knotts followed up Shelton Reed's study on southern regional identification coming to the conclusion that the use of the word "Dixie" dropped its popularity considerably whereas "southern" kept its position as a regional label to identify with.

3.3.2. Honor, slavery, and violence

Topics such as slavery, backwardness, or honor, have constantly been discussed in relation to the South. In some aspects, the prejudice was more evident than the stereotype, as it was for those who believed that the southerner was lazy and there was no point at all in southern leisure or southern manners, which rotated in the opposite direction the world was moving, that is, backwards. Modernity was finding a big obstacle in the South to conquer, much to the chagrin of those who had put their eyes in the South for modern business with a thirst for success and driven by material benefits.

On the other hand, violence was related to slavery and the general social system established, as it first was focused on using blacks as work "tools," and later it promoted the separation and even antithesis of groups, dividing blacks and whites (racial distinction) as well as yeomen farmers and planters (degree of poverty as indicative of social rank).

And related to slavery was as well, in an unfathomable sense, honor, since slaves were supposed to be under the protection of their master and it was expected from slave owners to be righteous and unselfish, considerate of the people depending on them. But even honor, supposed to be one of the values to steer up the pride of the region, has sometimes been attached to a not so positive meaning. In the rural South of slavery, honor had a positive value, but it also contained a certain stressful power, first to achieve recognition and position through it, and second, not to lose it. Honor gained with what was considered honorable behavior, and it provided a reputation. Honor —or the lack of— is quite relevant for our analysis since it remarkably influences the characters.

In cultures of honor, interpersonal threats are perceived more strongly and so is social pressure to maintain one's reputation and appearance, since "what others might think" is of major importance. Therefore, we can understand how duels played a relevant role in protecting one's credit and honor. Any response to insults or attacks that could erode one's image was not only understood but also completely legitimized. In addition to the feeling that southerners might experience when feeling their honor attacked, there is an economic reason for the allowance of violent solutions, meanwhile harvesting and the sale of crops depended directly from the credit of the seller. If a southerner's name was stained inside the community, he could not succeed in his business. The same would happen if he had the need to ask for a loan, since it would also be approved or not depending on the credit he had inside the community. In a highly hierarchical world, where elders were considered over younger generations, male over

female, and white over black, honor was directly related to power and wealth, be it attained by inheritance or achievement.

In addition to the pressure of keeping that status of honor within a community, and also in relation to this, there was another burden for those holding such a high status. Eugene Genovese mentions in his study of slavery that slaves were considered as a responsibility by their masters, and in that sense, they could be all the more perceived as burdensome despite the fact that they were unpaid labor working for the sole benefit of their master. Regardless how badly pressured they must have felt, slave owners held the power, and they were free to use it when and how they considered convenient; hence, making use of violence was not only allowed but regarded as normal and understandable. Greenberg's description of a southern abstract society might help us to get a certain perspective of the situation:

> Masters compelled their slaves to work on plantations and sought to profit from their labor. In governing this work force, masters were sometimes harsh, but they were also often kind and affectionate. In a sense, these masters led a strange double life. Although they sought power and a position of honor, which was both cause and consequence of power, they justified their right to govern their slaves by denying their power and their greed and by emphasizing the paternal bonds that united them to their slaves. (*Masters* 3)

Wyatt-Brown considered that the South stayed stuck in the old ways precisely because of its emphasis on honor, a European relic of medieval times, whereas the rest of the nation was getting modernized (67). In fact, honor was leading the southerners to live by violent codes by which they could show a manful stout attitude: "Southern men differed according to class, number of slaves owned, but shared, to a considerable extent, a sense of 'honor' that bound them to restricted and often violent codes of 'manly' conduct" (Pinar 321).

Although not exclusive to the South, according to Wyatt-Brown, this culture of honor was more present in the South than in other societies. The historian believed that the South was undeveloped rather than exclusively different or unique. Whereas the North had much earlier abandoned the values of honor as it was still understood in the antebellum period, the South still remained uninfluenced by the changes happening all around, hitherto alien to the flow of urbanization and the rapid take off of modernity. Apart from the fact that since the nineteenth century "[d]uels, feuds, bushwhackings, and lynchings [were] more frequently reported in the correspondence, autobiographies, and newspapers of the South than of the North," in their study of southern violence and honor, Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen also noticed that the South seemed to continue not only expressing violent behaviors in confrontational situations, but also maintained its fondness of some fighting games that involved brutal practices, remaining at the same time comfortable with daily violent practices in the household (1).

Wyatt-Brown's view in favor of the distinctiveness of the South as a society following the culture of honor in contrast to the North, seems pretty accurate to us. Although both North and South applied honor codes in different periods, we consider that it was more relevant and it stayed distinctly deep-rooted in the mind of the southern people. Southerners were not willing to easily abandon the traditional ways and they kept their belief and defense of old values as the best lifestyle for them, feeling at the same time proud of their faith and endurance in tradition, what ended up inevitably becoming an exclusive trait. In the sense they pervaded and the fact they tried to strongly associate this persistence to their identity, we do believe that in fact, it could be understood as distinctive of the South. For us, the gentleman, the lady, and the belle,

among other identities catalogued as southern, are related to the code of honor in one way or another, and they are undeniably definitory of the South.

James M. McPherson ("Antebellum", *Drawn*) also believes that the South is indeed exceptional in its defense of traditional values and staying strong in their claim for the rights to preserve them. As already emphasized, during antebellum times the North welcomed a rapid industrialization and urban lifestyle whereas the South remained agrarian and happy with the traditional ways. The North received many immigrants from Europe and the community became more heterogeneous whereas the South stayed mostly homogenous with two main groups: white natives of the South and blacks. The North decided to establish order adjusting to the modern times while the South was contempt and quite comfortable with resorting to violence for such need. J. M. McPherson claims that it was the North that was exceptional in the sense that it was challenging history cycles with the rapid change it experienced, an opinion supported by many other scholars.

In the same direction as J. M. McPherson, Nisbett and his colleagues argue that the southern culture of honor emerged as a need for social order. Since government was lacking a strong power to avoid crimes like theft or to punish the perpetrators of such bad deeds, honor was required to show power and control the situation as well. However, this is a very old scenario that was not maintained in the New South, so we must infer that the reasons for its prevalence might lie elsewhere. Despite all, in the South there was a higher social pressure and more competition to achieve a certain social position within a considerably poorer region. This situation probably contributed to make of southerners a community more sensitive and reactive to social tensions, more prone to hostility and violence; hence honor became key in order to maintain order.

Since men were the head of the family on a primarily herding culture in the South (in contrast with a northern agricultural one imported from East Anglia and East England), and they were the ones who principally earned the bread, research about topics such as southern honor has been focused mostly on examining the male behavior. However, Nisbett believes that there might have been some female influence in the perpetuation of the southern culture of honor, although not as remarkable as men. On the other hand, "non-white men [were] not expected to participate in the southern culture of honor, which demand[ed] past participation in the earlier herding economy of this region" (Shackelford 383). Ironically, honor might be however defended and promoted in Hellman's works by characters like Addie, a black female servant.

Left behind the old South culture of honor, this still remains a major topic in relation to the South. According to the results obtained with the studies by Richard E. Nisbett and his colleagues, male individuals' reactions to interpersonal threats such as insults, in honor cultures are more prominent than in other cultures, and both their testosterone and cortisol levels are increased more rapidly. Although nowadays it would appear that the relevance of such culture of honor in the South has dissipated, "[c]ulture-of-honor norms are now socially enforced and perpetuated because they have become embedded in social roles, expectations, and shared definitions of manhood" (Cohen et al., "Insult" 958). Therefore, we could conclude with Anthony Appiah's words: "we need to reckon with honor. It draws on fundamental tendencies in human social psychology. And it is surely better to understand our nature and manage it than to announce that we would rather we were different … or, worse, pretend we don't have a nature at all. We may think we have finished with honor, but honor isn't finished with us" (Appiah xix).

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3.3.3. On southern inferiority feeling and masculinity

The culture of honor that represents the southern United States is one directly related to respect and strength, according to psychologists Nisbett, Cohen, and others (e.g., Cohen, "Law",

"Culture"; Cohen and Nisbett, "Self-Protection", "Field"; Cohen et al., "Insult"; Cohen et al., "'When'"; Nisbett; Nisbett and Cohen), and in this sense it is also directly related to masculinity. If one's honor is attacked, it is important to defend it fiercely, as well as repairing it well if it gets damaged. For this reason, some violence might be excused in order to salvage one's reputation; "[t]o maintain credible power of deterrence, the individual must project a stance of willingness to commit mayhem and to risk wounds or death for himself" (Nisbett and Cohen xv). Therefore, "mannerly behavior has cloaked violent instincts" (Wilson, "Manners" 99), something that has been repeatedly emphasized in southern narratives. As honor was connected with the racial issue and the expression of violence, generally considered some of the most clearly definitory traits of the South, there are other topics already hinted at, such as southern masculinity and the feeling of inferiority, that we need to add to the equation. Nakayama and Martin defend the idea that "[a]s a social construction, whiteness gains its meaning from its encounters with nonwhiteness" (vii) so these encounters are therefore to be understood as the reason for masculinity (hence, honor) to be manifested so that there is a recognition (Hegel's *annerkennung*), a manifestation and a feeling of respect.

On the other hand, Angie Maxwell emphasizes on the idea that the South became known oppressing the "other" (blacks) and being itself the "other" of the nation:

> … southern whiteness is unique in the sense that it is constructed by oppressing a black "other," while serving paradoxically as the "other" in the larger construct of American identity in the twentieth century. Over time … southernness becomes associated with anti-intellectualism, religiosity, and massive resistance to civil rights, compounding the very nature of whiteness itself. What began and continued to be a nonblack identity became, in effect, a nonnorthern, nonliberal, nonmodern, and nonscientific overdetermined southern whiteness. (22)

This "non-identity" could be interpreted as a reaction against perceived threats, which would be influencing the white southerner reaction and modeling his identity basically on those two sensitive areas: his feeling of inferiority and his masculinity.

3.3.3.1. Southern inferiority feeling

One of the first scholars to pay attention to the inferiority feeling of southerners was sociologist Howard W. Odum, who perceived the Solid South as homogeneous under the following circumstances:

> There is a like-mindedness of the region in the politics of the "Solid South," in the protestant religion, in matters of racial culture and conflict, and in state and sectional patriotism, much of it tending to take the form of loyalties to the past and to outmoded patterns rather than faith in the future and confidence in achievement. There is therefore an apparent dominance of a general inferiority complex and defense mechanism alongside widely prevailing inner and outer conflict forces of race and manners, of tolerance and conservatism, and of pride and work, which constrains and constricts the whole person. This conflict and constraining from within has been greatly accentuated from without by attitudes, criticisms, and actions of other regions. (13–15)

This conflicted mind in constant struggle with auto-identification could perfectly explain the southerner's propensity to alertness and his consequent emotional reactions to anybody

or anything perceived as a possible identity menace. In her work *The Indicted South*, Angie Maxwell focuses on this feeling of inferiority of southerners, especially of white supremacy, a concern that deeply impacted their identity and, for men, also directly their masculinity. Also supporting this opinion, historian Fletcher M. Green claimed that "[t]he overwhelming and crushing defeat of the Confederacy in 1865 left the people of the Southern states with a defeatist attitude, an inferiority complex, a tender skin to criticism, and a fear of ridicule" (225), all of them sentiments and postures that seem to find representatives in many of the characters in Hellman's plays.

Maxwell has a clear perspective about this southern feeling of attacked and anguished identity, pointing out to the fact that southerners are very conscious of —and hence preoccupied with— how they show themselves to others, since this is basic for their status within the community. For this reason and their wish to avoid a social critical perception, after the defeat in the war they felt the need to resort to "regional mythologies such as the Confederate Lost Cause and the post-Reconstruction New South" in order to someway keep their heads up. However, these myths were not strong enough to salvage their attacked pride (Maxwell 3). This is also an important identity trait to be taken into account in relation to the southern white elite when defining the South, as much as it might be the racial issues. Consequently, southerners cannot be defined in simple terms, but we must consider them as the result of a complicated history where many factors combine and restructure themselves in order to create a distinctive identity from that of the North. In Maxwell's words,

> … over time the structure of southern whiteness became, in effect, an intricate web of inseparable strands, a web that extended beyond a commitment to racial segregation and oppression to rigid stances on religion, education, the role of government, the view of art, an opposition to science, and any other topic that comes under attack. It envelops a community and covers everything. When viewed in this way, what arises is a new sense of just how intimately and productively southern white identity has allied itself with the unifying sense of inferiority. (4)

Sharing a similar perspective, journalist John Temple Graves claimed that the war contributed psychologically to the southern defensive attitude leaving in southerners "scars and memories and the introspections that came of them" (15).

Lewis M. Killian, on the other hand, believed that discrimination contributed to the unification and fortification of the discriminated groups, and for the sociologist that is the reason why "in spite of its changing social structure, the white South could remain solid and could be as defensive as a genuinely persecuted minority" (25).

Narratives of superiority and conservative attitudes proved necessary for a defeated white supremacy in order to salvage their identity. Directly related to this issue and not distant from Cash's "savage ideal," "the patriotic will to hold rigidly to the ancient pattern, to repudiate innovation and novelty in thought and behavior, whatever came from outside and was felt as belonging to Yankeedom or alien parts" (319), we must also introduce Fred Hobson's "rage to explain" and Sheldon Hackney "siege mentality," all of them related to a feeling of wounded pride, a sort of "loss of face" to the world (particularly to the northern neighbors) and a consequent sense of inferiority complex. The "savage ideal" refers to the tendency of the southerner to defend the moral exemplarity of the South (Cash), therefore indulging in a romanticized perspective of the South and incapable of self-analysis. On the contrary, acknowledging failure causes in the southerner a "rage to explain," that is, the need to justify the actions and the causes those brought together, subsequently manifesting "as well a perverse and defiant pride in the

southerner, a sense of distinction, or superiority stemming from this inferior status" (Hobson, *Tell* 11–12). The "siege mentality" leads to a "social, political, and physical environment as hostile and casts the white southerner in the role of the passive victim of malevolent forces" (Hackney, "Southern" 924), but precisely regarding these feelings, Hackney pointed out to the fact that southerners proved themselves to be more conscious of their southern identity when they join together as a group against external forces to the region. This in turn, has caused the critical reaction from outsiders and the consequently need of southerners to overlook or justify any of their liabilities, attributing instead any negative aspect related to them to powers beyond the control of the region (*Magnolias* 18).

3.3.3.2. Southern masculinity feeling

Also in connection to the southern white inferiority feeling, Maxwell points out to the complex feeling of southern masculinity as social construct. According to Watts, and as Angie Maxwell herself states, southern superiority over the North was emphasized by "two core values, mastery and independence" ("Introduction" 8).

When talking about masculinities, we are not only referring to manliness, usually a gender indicator in direct connection with physical characteristics, but to a broader set of characteristics that make up masculinities as a whole. The term "masculinities" is a relatively recent one —being Raewyn Connell among the first critics using it— keeps the relevance of individuality. The plantation owners of the Antebellum South represented the ideal of a white hegemonic masculinity, but they represented a small minority of the southern males (Friend and Glover xi). Therefore, other masculine representations are to be taken into account since this early period of the American history. On the one hand, the majority of men in the southern community frequently begrudged the traditional social and political structures subsequently creating alternative ideals of manhood that rejected the old values of the plantation, as L. Diane Barnes explains in her study of Virginia. Therefore, as John Mayfield claims, southern males had to put a great amount of effort "at resolving their ambivalences and fashioning new modes of manhood" (xv). On the other hand, as the New South was getting shaped, the archetypes of the southern belle and the lady were predestined to decline in the New South, and so happened to the gentleman, who apparently suffered the wounds not only in an emotional way (as the female identities seemed to have undergone), but also mentally experiencing a damage in their pride, directly triggering some sort of breakage in their identities, no matter how desperately they strived to salvage it as it originally was. Particularly those who had represented the ideal of masculinity, the cavalier figure of the myth, distinctly felt their masculinities attacked as a new emerging middle class was gaining power (Friend and Glover xii-xiii).

After the defeat of the South in the war, "the defeated" not only saw their position lost but they also felt their values being crippled, consequently facing the need to reassert their masculinity. It was therefore not only an issue of race, even though that could have been the origin of the struggle. As Maxwell puts it, "southern whiteness must be understood as a constructed identity that begins with race but develops well beyond the purview of race" (24).

As a sort of escape constructed to deal with a damaged pride, southerners could resort to what Lewis Way would call "life lies," ideas that we repeat like a mantra until the point of interiorizing them and creating an illusion of "something" that despite being unreal starts to coexist with us. Some of the characters under analysis in this dissertation seem to find solace in life lies, be it in the form of auto deception or (also) with the purpose of deceiving others. The use we make of lying is important both for interpersonal and intrapersonal life, and it is

expected to be found in both weak and strong characters, in both those with more positive traits and with a tendency to neuroticism and those with more negative traits and a propensity to narcissism or sociopathy. In one of the chapters included in *Lying and Deception in Everyday Life* ("The Development of Deception"), psychology professor Michael Lewis explains that in lying and deception there are cultural and historical differences, and some attitudes of southerners, such as the mythologization of their actions, symbols, and traditional values, are proof of it. The basic motives for lying, as listed by Lewis, are the following: to protect one's feelings, to protect the feelings of others, to avoid punishment, and pathological lying. Taking this into account, we will pay attention to lying and deception in our analysis in relation to the morality and interpersonal behavior of characters, mainly attending to self-focus, authenticity or fabrication, and good manners in order to care others, without leaving aside the link it might have with a wounded identity directly connected to the history of the South.

The patriarchal system had changed and as Friend and Glover notice: "[t]he rise of consumerism, which transformed not only the American economy but also the nature of families and society, further complicated masculine values in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the North, economic changes led to industrial growth, wage labor, and an erosion of localistic perspectives" (xii). With the turn of the century, those men who used to be part of old upper and middle classes could perceive how the new economy was alienating them from the successful lifestyle they had been enjoying, leaving them now unable to find productivity, and hence feeling their power and masculinity hurt (Silber 167). Regarding this feeling, Kathleen M. Brown points out to a patriarchal anxiety, to the fact that men strived to keep entitled to their privileged position in society as well as in the family and they compensated their lack of security with material goods such as luxurious clothes, grandiose houses, or costly interior decorations, visible images that they could show to the rest of the community.

3.4. Film character analysis

The salience of characters in contemporary media culture seems undeniable. As consumers of a variety of fictions, we must consider the key role of characters for the transmission and reception of those contents, particularly in films where the empathy link established between characters and audiences might even be stronger. As fictional beings or actants with a "human-like existence," created by humans for the consumption of humans, characters appear to be increasing their influence beyond their fictional worlds now more than ever. They are somehow endowed with the capability to expand their existence past their original realms, hence receiving the attention of the audiences, calling for our sympathy, and failing or succeeding at becoming *something beyond fictional figures* —for example, "cultural icons" (Brooker), "popular heroes" (Bennett) or "transmedia characters" (Thon). However, despite the relevance they have acquired, Thon agrees with Eder (*Figur im Film*) on the fact that there is still a long way to go regarding the existence of tools for the interpretation of characters, for although many critics have briefly explored this field of analysis, only few of them have done it extensively and in depth.

Major scholars concerned with film character analysis are Murray Smith, Lloyd Michaels or Jonathan Cohen. Among the most recent studies conducted for the research of film characters we would like to give particular relevance to two works that far from a simplified and reductive perspective, provide instead models for a deep and exhaustive analysis of characters: Eder et al's *Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film and Other Media*, where the "clock of character" is introduced in detail as an instrument for

analysis, and "Metodología del Análisis del Personaje Cinemátografico: una Propuesta desde la Narrativa Fílmica," by Pérez Rufí, who after reviewing the works of scholars such as Chatman, Egri, Seger, or Bentley, among others, presents a multiperspective model particularly attending to the audiovisual nature of the cinematographic character.

"Characterization" is defined by Thrall and Hibbard's as "[t]he depicting, in writing, of clear images of a person, his actions and manners of thought and life" (74-75), a depiction that becomes even more evident in movies. According to Eder, "films are considered to be instruments of *communicative games of the imagination*" ("Understanding" 18). In the different worlds we are presented there is always a game in which the audience is allowed to participate by establishing a dialogue with the characters, *whom* we are supposed to connect with in one way or another, but do not trust as part of our world and hence do not recognize as real. Both viewers and filmmakers, with their previous knowledge of the world and their imagination put to play, contribute to the formation of the characters, processes that will eventually play a role in our individual perception of characters and their growth.

However, character reception is never totally subjective. The mental models developed by the audience might differ, but they will still lead us to some statements about the characters that are to be understood as correct. Mental representations of characters constitute an intricate web of signs, as they suppose the activation in the brain of our perceptive skills for network and pattern creation. Our perception of the real world in different levels, situations, and contexts will be reflected in those models we create for the reception, interpretation, and final readings we make of characters. Models may vary and change with time and as a consequence our reception of characters may change as well, depending on the other hand, on the dynamic nature of characters.

There is a certain unavoidable ambivalence in *what a character is*, since characters are both imaginary and somehow real, as the worlds they live in have been created from human experience of the real world in varying degrees. Characters are "sophisticated artifacts springing from intersubjective imagination" and "products of a social praxis" (Eder, "Understanding" 18). Taking this into account, Eder defines characters as "identifiable fictional beings with an inner life that exist as communicatively constructed artifacts" (18). Despite existing in both the text and the audience's imagination, characters are neither merely textual signs nor mental representations but "constructs with a normative component" (18).

In addition to the mental models introduced above, there are other relevant aspects contributing to our reception of characters, which Eder classifies into five levels of character reception: basic perception of sounds and images, configuration of mental character models, inference of the character's indirect meanings, hypothesizing about real external elements in relation with the characters, and esthetic reflection about character presentation.

Therefore, the audience perceives the character's "form," that is to say, the external appearance, and the voice and movements that accompany the image we observe. We must first pay attention to what we see and hear, to the first information we receive about a character, including the one coming from the observations that other characters make about the one we are focusing on. This first perception causes an immediate activation of our previous knowledge of the world at different levels and triggers the comparison with old exempla or schemata in relation to the new information received. At this moment, all our memories stored, our preconceptions and out understanding of the world play their role in the contribution to the formation of mental models. Therefore, depending on our knowledge of the world, background, and interests, we could be drawing patters for the character from very different schemata in our minds. Once our models are formed, we try to find hidden meanings and we start inferring

information about the character that has never been explicitly revealed, we resort to discourse analysis and we try to identify symbols and themes in relation with the character. We constantly make hypothesis about the character's behavior and so our character's model keeps changing throughout the movie until the projection ends and we leave with an ultimate idea of the character as a whole. This, according to Eder ("Understanding" 21), only happens after making a reflection about the aesthetic intentions of the movie production team and all those behind the movie story. It is at this point when we eventually reach a communicative level within the real world, and we are allowed to establish a dialogue with other people, namely filmmakers, producers, and other spectators.

In other words, our whole reception of a character requires a first step of input reception, which would be followed by a period of processing in order to create models as second step that will later enable us to make inferences about the meanings implied in the text, be it play or film, and so infer real communicative contexts as well finally reaching a deep analysis of the textual and aesthetic elements associated with the characters.

3.4.1. Eder's "clock of character"

For a thorough reflection about the perception of character, Eder ("Analyzing", "Understanding") advocates for the "clock of character," an analysis design based on four aspects: artifacts, fictional beings, symbols and symptoms (Figure 1). Although Eder's proposal for the analysis of characters is basically a reception-oriented approach, we consider that his "clock of character" could also be a useful tool for a detailed analysis particularly centered on sociocultural topics.

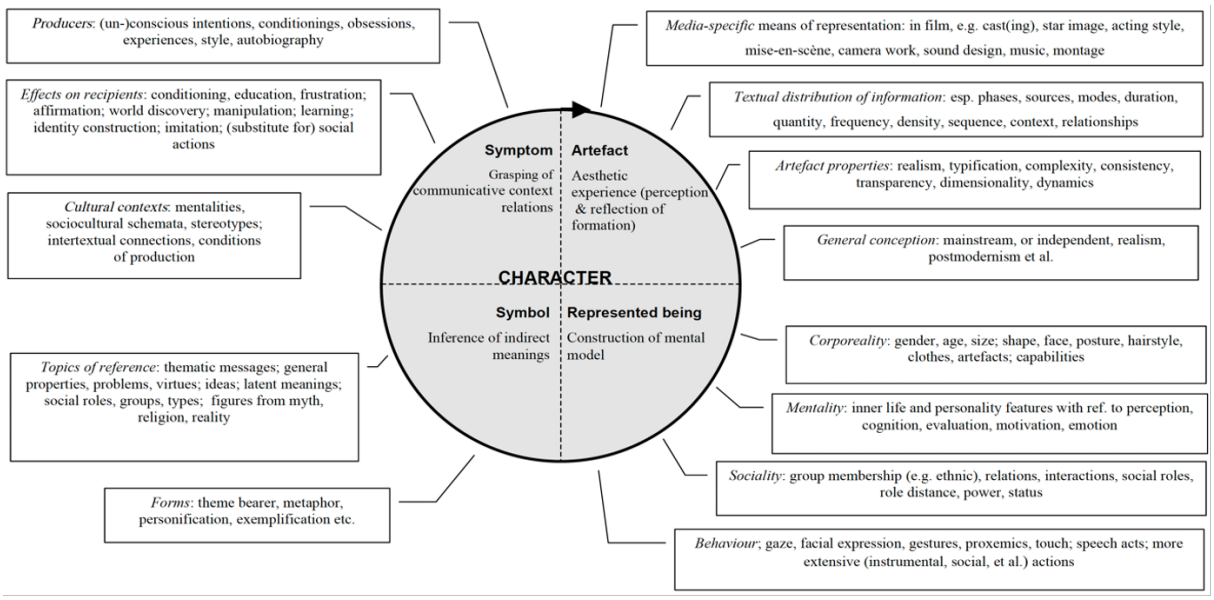


Figure 1. The "clock of character" and ist central categories (Eder, "Analyzing" 79)

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3.4.1.1. Characters as artifacts

According to Eder, when analyzing the characters as artifacts we should be concerned with the mode of representation as well as to narratological modes of information distribution. This will enable us to perceive an information related to the character that has been arranged in

images and sounds, all put together in a particular way by those participating in the production of the film, that is scriptwriters, directors, and actors. Therefore, we will observe closely or, depending on their relevance, comment briefly on several of the following aspects of the films under analysis: the cast, the star image, the performance style, the mise-en-scene, the camera work, or the sound. On the other hand, by focusing on structural cues and diverse filmmaking techniques we will point out at the specific effects they might cause on the viewer.

3.4.1.2. Characters as symptoms

As symptoms, characters represent the foundations and effects characters might have in the real world, hence becoming the link between production and reception. Therefore, symptoms call attention to the reasons why characters were created and the reactions they cause in the audience. For the purposes of this dissertation we will consider the cultural contexts (conditions of production, stereotypes, and mental schemata) of a general audience.

3.4.1.3. Characters as symbols

We perceive them mainly as symbols through the themes they introduce, identifying implicit meanings and indirect information. In addition, characters make us reflect, but most importantly, they make our emotions arise. They trigger our feelings and make us establish a certain connection with them. Therefore, we might share a character's perspective or have a different one, we might identify with them or not, we might feel sympathy for them, empathize with them or the opposite; in either case, we are not indifferent to them. Relying on emotion research, Eder comes up with three different "perspectivized appraisals" ("Understanding" 35) objective, subjective, and empathic. Our analysis will be done from the objective perspective, which attends mainly to a "what" (characters' corporeality, personality, and social behavior), a "how" (intersubjective criteria, such as morality) and a "reaction" (ethical observation).

3.4.1.4. Characters as fictional or represented beings

The analysis of characters as fictional beings is one of the main objectives of this dissertation. Attending to the methodology, observing the characters' features at this level (fictitious creations endowed with human characteristics) will undoubtedly help us to reflect and understand southern culture and society, especially those aspects that Lillian Hellman focused more on and were transferred to the filmic versions of her original plays.

As fictional beings, characters exhibit certain features, behaviors, and attitudes towards life and the situations they find themselves in. In addition to this, they also establish relations with other characters, which must be considered and analyzed. What characters feel, think, and do, as well as how they relate to others within the fictional universe is basic for the understanding we make of them, or in Eder's words, it is "in many respects the most important aspect of their reception" ("Understanding" 23). After observing the characters as artifacts, the fictional beings will take form in our minds. When dealing with movie characters whom we can observe on the screen, we are usually provided with more information than when reading a play, but we are still expected to infer social and emotional aspects from our perception of explicit information of various types. As our knowledge of media activates, we can distinguish the fictional character from the real actor and we are still capable of thinking about the character's meanings, their implications and the effects they cause, at the same that we can perceive, as Eder notices (23)

how much the level of what is represented (the characters) takes from the level of representation (the actors themselves).

Eder ("Understanding" 24) suggests three anthropological categories for a characterization focused on fictional beings: corporeality, sociality, and mind. Throughout the observation of corporeality, we perceive certain nuances of characters that despite being subtle might be relevant for the interpretation we make of their actions, and eventually for our general perception of them as beings. On the other hand, as social beings in the fictional world, characters are members of a group, they establish (dis)connections with in-groups and out-groups, and they play a role within their community. Different group formations, positions of power, social status, or religion are some of the aspects to observe within this category. The last of the anthropological foci, mind, deals with the characters' mental faculties, such as perception, cognition, evaluation, motivation, and emotion.

Concerning motives, Eder ("Understanding") distinguishes two types whose analysis we consider of special interest for our study: personal motives, which directly connect characters and plot; and social motives, which show the characters' connection with other characters, with the "fictional society." Personal motives such as needs, drives, emotions, values, wishes, plans or goals can be analyzed from a philosophical, psychological, or literary studies perspective, among others. It is rather obvious to say that characters with opposite or non-compatible goals or needs might show a conflicted personality or find themselves in complicated situations. Jeff Newman (qtd. in Eder, "Understanding" 30) talks about three main personal motives: want (external goal), need (inner drive), and key flaw (central weakness). Social motives are related to the term "constellation of characters" as referred to by Eder et al. (26), the different relationships existing among a group where characters are connected in a variety of ways. In this social web, some characters shine over others as there is a hierarchy depending on the aspects we want to focus on. For example, if we want to analyze their position in connection with social values, we might have heroes or villains, antiheroes and antivillians; if we want to measure their actions towards other members of the society, they might be protagonists or antagonists, they might receive more attention or less, they might be paralleled with other characters or compared with them, and so on.

Another relevant aspect for analysis is the feeling of sympathy and empathy we experience towards characters, as well as the techniques used by the filmmakers to lead the audience in one direction or another in this sense. In terms of space, we might feel close to characters thanks to close ups, for example, or far from them by means of observing them through long shots, which imply a much less focus on the character. Concerning time, slow motion makes us feel somehow closer to the character because we can feel his/her movements somehow synchronized with ours, but at the same time we might perceive them very far away in time. On the other hand, cognitively speaking, we compare ourselves with characters: their appearance, their life, their likes and dislikes, their actions, etc. We also compare our life with characters' situations as members of a social group. Having in mind our own experiences, we observe character's behaviors and the effects their attitude and actions have on others. Eventually, we identify with characters' emotions or not. Typically, in mainstream realism, the protagonists tend to be conceived as characters who should cause the maximum degree of closeness with the spectator.

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3.4.2. Theories of personality

For the analysis within Eder's "clock of character" we will mainly draw from the field of Personality Theories, particularly focusing on the Five-Factor Model (McCrae and Costa,

Personality) but we will occasionally refer to other mainstream and widely used theories or concepts in case those can provide a more detailed analysis about a specific aspect at a given point.

From a psychoanalytical approach, Freud's well-known trilogy of the ego, the superego and the id or the unconscious is the classic theory that immediately comes to mind as related to the interpretation of the subject. Freud emphasized the fracture of the self in different parts that unite in a whole by identifying with others within a society so that we can create an illusion of the self. Since these fractured personalities can be clearly identified in the in Hellman's characters, we will sometimes make mention to Freud's traditional categorization of character into erotic, obsessional, and narcissistic, attending to id, superego, and ego respectively. After considering the limitations of Freud's study, Carl Gustav Jung concentrated on four sets of two opposite psychological functions: extraversion vs. introversion, sensation vs. intuition, thinking vs. feeling, and judging vs. perceiving. In his book *Psychological Types*, Jung established 16 personality types that would later develop into the currently widely used MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) created by Isabel Briggs-Mayers. Although the MBTI is not a tool used in this dissertation, and Jung's psychological functions are basically comprised within the OCEAN, we might sporadically bring them up to clarify a given aspect of a character's personality within Eder's clock.

Like Jung and Freud, Alfred Adler understood personality in relation to defense mechanisms, such as projection, denial, and reaction formation. However, and as previously mentioned when introducing the concept of inferiority, Adler was expressly concerned with the social urges or human being, therefore directing his observations to the individuals' behavior within society, their need to be recognized, and their struggle for superiority. Influenced by Adler, and even a step further from traditional psychology, Karen Horney, was also convinced that social forces play a key role in shaping personality; thus, she focused her interest on interpersonal relations, which she believed where at the core of character formation. For Horney, people interact basically moving toward, against, or away from others depending on their needs of affection, power, and self-sufficiency and personal boundaries. According to these interactions, she initially stablished ten neurotic trends connected to three primary modes of relation to others: compliance, hostility, and detachment. Drawing from Adler and Horney's theories we will observe more closely social relationship patterns as well as the neurotic traits of characters when necessary.

Born from many diverse studies since Gordon W. Allport's Trait Theory (1937), the Five-Factor Model (FFM) (Goldberg; McCrae and Costa, "Five-Factor", *Personality*, "Validation") is a psychological trait approach based on five distinctive and universal personality dimensions: Openness (insightful vs. unimaginative), Conscientiousness (organized vs. careless), Extroversion (sociable vs. reserved), Agreeableness (friendly vs. unsympathic), and Neuroticism (stable vs. neurotic), known as the "Big Five," OCEAN, or CANOE. Each of the wide categories of the "Big Five" is comprised of six facets that can be examined with the NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R). The most recent version of the NEO PI-R is the NEO-FFI-3, which McCrae et al. present as a 60-item tool for the measurement of the aforementioned five domains of personality or OCEAN. There are numerous studies that prove the universality and validity of this model for its application in different fields and with a variety of purposes, as they remain constant independently of cultural differences (John and Srivastava; Terracciano et al.; Rentfrow et al.). Although the OCEAN has not yet been widely used in relation to the study of fictional characters, there are supporters in favor of this idea (McCrae et al.; Crysel et al.) who believe that it is of value for such a purpose, since there is a need to observe the psychological traits of characters and those should be credible for a meaningful experience

of the consumers. A similar model of personality worth mentioning as an alternative to the Five Factor Model is the HEXACO, developed by Michael C. Ashton and Kibeom Lee, who suggested a restructuring of the facets ("Empirical") and keep their research going on in recent years (Ashton and Lee, "Oddity"; de Vries et al.). This model adds a six category to the five in the OCEAN, that of "honesty/humility," and contains variations in the facet structure of traits. For our analysis of characters, we choose to follow the Five-Factor Model for the following reasons: it has been extensively discussed; as DeYoung et al. claimed after his extensive study of the Big Five domains and their facets, it "remains a promising and widely used model" (895); and most importantly, because McCrae himself pointed out to its valuable use for the humanities, as works such as that by Flekova and Gurevych, Maslej et al., Liu et al. (2018), or Pizzolli and Strapparava. We are conscious of the fact that we are here introducing an instrument mostly used for the analysis of quantitative data; however, we consider the OCEAN to be an excellent means to perceive characters in depth with the aim to obtain detailed qualitative data. Therefore, it will be considered as important within our general methodological scheme. In addition, we expect it to enhance our analysis of characters by contributing to a more objective and multi-layered observation.

Character analysis research conducted in relation to the issue of morality called particularly our attention, since Lillian Hellman had described herself as an "often too moral a writer," and several of her major characters have been considered immoral, or appear to be morally ambiguous to a certain extent. In fact, some of them, as it is the case of the Hubbard family, have been perceived as vile predators. However, once we get into a deeper analysis, they might be closer to "morally ambiguous" rather than clearly evil incarnate or outright villians, as they have recurrently been described by critics or generally characterized on Broadway. Among scholars concerned with this topic we must at least mention Noël Carroll and, specifically focused on film characters, Carl Plantinga ("'I'", *Screen*, "Ethical").

Finally, also attending to the reception of characters as well as to their complexity and ambiguity from the perspective of disposition theory, we will refer to studies like those by Daalmans et al., Eden et al. ("Disposition"), Eden et al. ("Morality"), Eden et al. ("Perceptions"), Janicke and Raney ("Exploring How We Enjoy", "Exploring the Role"), Krakowiak and Tsay-Vogel ("Role", "What"), Raney and Janicke, or Shafer and Raney. Interest in the reception of characters has been varied, with an increased tendency in recent years to the observation of their moral ambiguity and its effects on the audience. Therefore, we can choose to draw from studies with a focus on perception, interpretation, and engagement (Eder, "Ways"; García Martínez; Krakowiak and Oliver; Mellmann; Salgaro et al.), as well as from studies centered on the characters as embodiments of immorality (Black et al.; Frazer and Moyer-Gusé; García Martínez et al.; Jonason et al.; Oliver et al.).

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4. *THE LITTLE FOXES*

In this chapter we aim to observe the changes that are taking place in the South by the year 1900, the time of the story of the text under analysis, William Wyler's *The Little Foxes* (1941) through the analysis of characters from different. By the turn of the century, the South was experiencing an advance in the reconstruction of the region after the Civil War, moving at a good pace towards a progressive era. At the same time the economic evolution was advancing into modernity and boosting the capitalism, hence making of the South a new and renewed place, the venturous New Southerner would advance with it. The Hubbard family represents this new class, enthusiastic about progress, perhaps with the peculiarity of having personalities especially predisposed towards obtaining financial benefits. The Hubbard siblings, Ben, Oscar, and Regina, show a high adaptability to the new times, they feel enthusiastic about the possibility of being able to obtain larger economic benefits with the technologies of the new world, and do not hesitate to take risks by getting involved in new businesses. From a Biblical perspective these are "the little foxes that spoil the vines" (*Song of Solomon* 2:15), whereas from a social view they are also new social forces that will promote change (Figure 2).

On the other hand, a minority of southerners will remain stuck in their sentiment of the past, either because they felt nostalgic for an Old South that they loved, or because they do not have the capacity or the will to adapt to the new times. Thus, although we are already in full swing of the new cotton mill economy, there are still remnants of the Old South to pay attention to, especially with aims to observe how they react to the new social and economic forces brough to the South during the Reconstruction period. As an example of those who find the transition to the new world too difficult or negative, we can look closely at the case of Birdie Hubbard. Originally the heiress of an aristocratic family of the Old South, the Bagtrys, Birdie has married into a bourgeois family and, unable to find her own place in this new life, she constantly hides in her memories of the past.

Apart from those two main antagonistic perspectives, other major topics and points of view will also be discussed through the observation of characters such as the young Hewitt or Addie, representatives of two different social classes that contribute to providing social critical opinion; or Mr. Marshall, the Northern tycoon, who brings his cotton mill to the South to rebuild it while helping to destroy it.

According to Murray Smith (Engaging Characters: Fiction), "[c]haracter structures are perhaps the major way by which narrative texts solicit our assent for particular values, practices and ideologies" (4). Therefore, aiming at exploring those social values, we will carefully analyze the characters in The Little Foxes following the multi-perspective methodology introduced in Chapter 3, hence approaching the characters from the point of view of sociology, identity theory, southern studies, and film character analysis, and paying

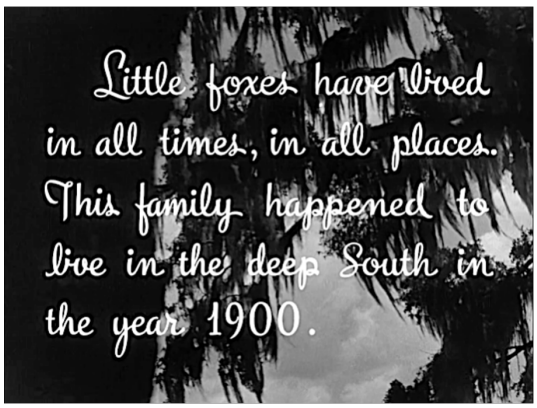


Figure 2

especial attention to their most significant traits as individuals as well as members of society. On the one hand, we will pay attention to the study of their values and beliefs, their motives and goals, and their main personality traits. On the other hand, we will be able to draw meaning from their own self-categorization as much as from the opinions that other characters have of them; we will observe their sense of belonging within the community and smaller social groups; and we will discern their positive and/or negative attitudes towards others.

4.1. The Hubbard family: the fall of a complex social institution

According to the second entry of the *Oxford English Dictionary* for the word *family*, this social institution is defined as "the body of persons who live in one house or under one head, including parents, children, servants, etc.," that is to say, it is a group of people gathered together under the same roof, generally connected by blood, similar ideas or fellowship. Observing the definition closely, there seems to be two key words that stand out. On the one hand, the allusion to the "house" as the natural place for the existence of a family introduces this place as a symbol of what we can consider a *reduced community* —therefore hinting at camaraderie, since the members of a group usually support each other. On the other hand, the fact that the family is said to be "under one head" is clearly emphasizing the leadership of one of the members, something that brings the patriarch, here inexistent, to our minds. Focusing on these two aspects and applying them to the southern family system reflected in *The Little Foxes*, we will begin our analysis with a general characterization that shows the Hubbard clan as possibly a group of self-interested and materialistic people who seek to benefit from each other, but no longer as a family.

4.1.1. The meaning of family and the Hubbards

As an expression of culture, family exerts its influence on and it is influenced by the time, the place, the arts, the economy, and the political ideology surrounding it. As previously discussed in the theoretical framework, for most southerners the sense of family depends on the sense of place. Therefore, place becomes a historical continuum instead of a simple geographical point. Traditionally images of the family deal with the middle- or upper-class white people. Although there were different ethnic and religious groups, the myths of the family in the South rest on the experiences of white people living in the rural areas or in small towns. In the 1930s sociologists studied the power of the family in the South and they discovered that this power was centered on the home, where a high expectation of affection and mutual support were expected. In *The Companion to Southern Literature*, Robert O. Stephens emphasizes that "[t]he homeplace, the farmhouse and its surroundings in the country or the house in town to which the family has moved and kept its country ways, becomes a virtual member of the family" (249). In other words, in the South, house and family are joined in marriage.

Ben, Regina and Oscar Hubbard are three different branches of the same family tree, and they represent the corruption and subsequent decay of one of the most important social institutions of the South, the family. We can see how they come to break their bonds completely and how they act as selfish individuals without thinking about the group's needs or welfare. The initial disintegrating part of this tree is precisely the most important one, the trunk, the one that, in a sense, leads the food to the branches: the patriarch, Marcus Hubbard, who no longer lives but who seems to have deeply influenced his offspring. In other words, it was Marcus who first felt the attraction toward money and got involved in shady business, thus falling into corruption

because of this thirst for money and recognition. After Marcus' downfall, the bonds this clan could have been endowed with are no longer ties for its members, even concerning distrust, betray or blackmail, as their relationships are characterized by those negative symptoms.

The deeply rooted sense of family of the Old South has vanished and the group is destroyed in order to achieve an individual economic development, and what's more, the individual benefits from the mistakes of the other members of the group. It is clearly a jungle where the strongest *fox* is the one who will succeed, submitting the weaker foxes of the herd to his/her orders. We make reference to this animal because the movie, as well as Hellman's original play, as their identical title anticipates, deals with *little foxes*. Foxes are small but smart, and they hunt for their prey. Here, the word "fox" is a term used to define materialistic people who do not care amassing a fortune by means of corrupted methods. This is particularly emphasized in *The Little Foxes*, but the deterioration of the family is already present in *Another Part of the Forest*, the prequel where the family ties, based on the submission to the patriarchal power, seem to swing, as the following diagram (Figure 3) shows:

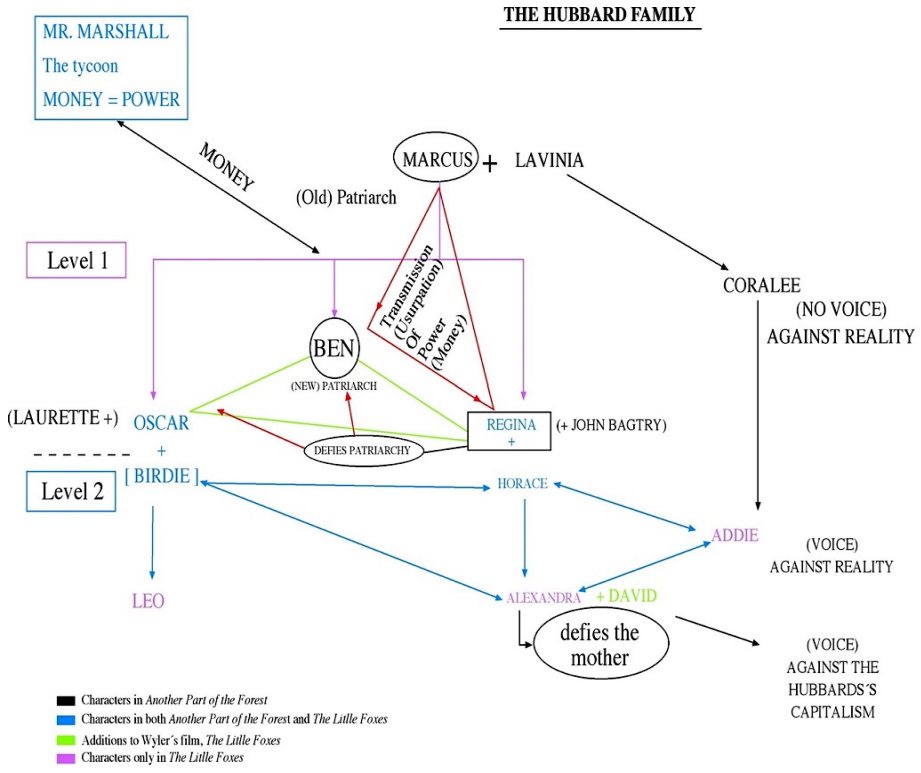


Figure 3

This figure represents the evolution of the Hubbard family, an involution that calls to our minds that of other well-known Southern American sagas, like William Faulkner's Compson family in *The Sound and the Fury*, bringing back the reality of a re-construction period whose base was assented on corruption and decay. Starting with a general presentation of the Hubbard family, we will easily establish the links between all its members, as shown in the above figure.

At the first glimpse, we can perceive two major levels of relationship or interaction within the family. Ben stands out in the center concentrating the major amount of power, an in direct connection with his siblings, Oscar and Regina (level 1), who in turn will lead to a second level

with their respective offspring. At an original level that we could call level 0 (not marked here) are the parents of the clan, Marcus and Lavinia, whom we will be able to know in detail later through the analysis of characters in *Another Part of the Forest*.

According to James Parrish, "[a]ll of them, the Hubbards (with the exception of the mother, Lavinia), are egocentric, grasping creatures truly interested in no one but themselves" (2). As we can see in the image, although the vortex of the main triangle —position representative of power— is Ben Hubbard, the origin of the family's erosion inevitably goes back to Marcus. He is the ancestor, the head, the patriarch, in short, the father figure.

4.1.2. The influence of ancestry

Marcus is a very important character for our study because the more we get to know about him, the better we will understand his descendants' behavior since, as Stephens noticed, "the southern family participates in an awareness of generations who lived earlier than the family described in a particular time or circumstance" (248). As we will learn about Marcus Hubbard in depth later within the analysis of *Another Part of the Forest*, here we will only advance the information necessary to show the influence he exerted on his family.

Married to Lavinia, an underestimated wife who submits to his orders and whom he does not seem to love, Marcus became the father to three children. Ben, the first-born, seems to have grown up devoted to the family business; nonetheless, his father belittles him. The second, Oscar, is ignored not only by his father, but also by his siblings. He could have received his mother's love; however, taking as example his father's attitude, he treats his mother as if she were a fool. Finally, there is young Regina, the beautiful daughter who *apparently* loves her father, but in reality her love happens to be anything but genuine. Undoubtedly, there is something wrong in this family, and it will keep on growing up until the moment blood bonds lose any importance and eventually fade.

As he was not a member of the aristocracy —hence, neither the benefactor of a great inheritance—, the scion of the Hubbard family, craving a wealthy life, had no other possibility than making a fortune by himself. However, in spite of the fact that he succeeded in this accomplishment, he had to face other losses such as the respect of the community, something that diminished following a rhythm parallel to the rise of his fortune, a fortune made out of law and disregarding social order. Thus, the big setback was that he made his fortune through smuggling during the war period, therefore by means of *stealing* his own people, who bought the salt he sold at exorbitant prices because they could not get it otherwise. He then not only betrayed his neighbors by not helping them, but he contributed to get them deep in poverty during such hard times. Leaving aside the immorality of his deeds, it might seem admirable that he worked tirelessly to become a successful self-made man, and from total poverty he managed to fill a house with all the commodities. His sons, Ben and Oscar, could enjoy these commodities only to a certain extent, since his father's greedy character would not allow it. Once they start working at his father's store, the young boys become underpaid employees, hence lacking means to pursue their independence. Marcus is the biological father of his sons, but he is also their (exploitative) boss by choice. As a consequence, the Hubbard brothers were raised under the tyrannical figure of their father/boss, who took advantage of them, both as father and boss, in diverse manners.

It is important to notice that Marcus affection is something that Ben and Oscar can never have. If Marcus does not love Ben, whom he somehow must take into some consideration because of his proactivity and brain to meddle with his business; he absolutely ignores Oscar,

who is not only artistically ignorant, but also practically unaware of the family business. Consequently, despite knowing everything about his son's illegal and immoral activities within the Ku Klux Klan, Marcus does not really care. Oscar has no obstacle to side with the Ku Klux Klan, the secret terrorist organization founded in the United States during the reconstruction period that followed the civil war (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* 1023). The members of the clan believed that black people were inferior to white people by nature and, as a consequence, they should not be treated in equal terms. On the grounds that they could not allow blacks to spoil *their* South, they became an illegal aggrupation committed to fighting the republican ideology —an ideology that defended the rights of black people— and maintain the white supremacy. Thus, dressed in white and with their heads also covered with white hoods, they began first to burn crosses next to the houses of their victims, to proceed with mutilating them and even with killing them. The Ku Klux Klan disappeared officially in the 1869 because the local organizations, known as klaverns, became too fiery and uncontrollable. During the 70s the Klan's arrests were numerous, but the original ideology kept alive, as Oscar's raids in the 1890s (mentioned in *Another Part of the Forest*) prove and, although it is no longer reflected in *The Little Foxes* —where Oscar has become a capitalist—, there would be a revival several years later that would result in a great amount of crimes against blacks, Catholics, liberals, trade-unionists, and foreigners. Paradoxically, the Klan was bringing in destruction in a moment of re-construction.

On the other hand, Oscar's connection to the Klan can be understood as a *change of clan*, since by becoming a member of this Klan, Oscar completely forgets about his original clan, his family, a social institution that does not make him feel included as a member. He feels displaced and undervalued by his family, but he feels comfortable showing himself superior to those he persecutes together with the Ku Klux Klan, a force that provides him with the power he needs to terrify the town during his youth. In the same manner Marcus does not stop his son's activities with the Klan, he also does not stop his advances in a love relationship with the town prostitute Laurette Sincee. Constantly disregarded or mocked by his father (as well as by his siblings) because of his ignorance, Oscar grows up alone and displaced until the moment the power play shifts to fall into Ben's hands.

The new order, originally embodied by the eldest Hubbard, is representative of the maturity of a new generation and the decay of the old one. To a certain extent, Ben usurps his father's power by accusing him of being involved in an illegal deal, which brought about the death of twenty seven southern soldiers during the Civil War period. Once he has got hold of his father's money, he becomes the family head and tries to increase the family fortune, therefore obliging Oscar to marry Birdie, the heiress of the Lionnet plantation, and telling Regina to marry Horace Giddens, a successful banker.

Regina had always been the apple of Marcus's eyes but, when he loses his property, he also loses Regina, something that makes us wonder if young Regina's love for her father has ever been real. By changing sides, she demonstrates that, like her brothers, she does not care Marcus in the least. On the contrary, she will show certain disgust towards him when all his fortune is placed in her brothers' hands and nothing is left for her, especially when she had been working on it by means of professing —or performing— a special affection to the patriarch. The key aspect of this whole argument is the fact that the father figure seems to have created a sickly household environment for his children to grow up. Even Regina, detached from the business sphere, seems to have been influenced by her father's values, as she used to spend much time with him, adjusting as best she could to his father's hobbies and beliefs, so that he would be happy with her performance.

To a certain extent, the excessive exhibition of power could be understood as an attempt of ridiculing the wealthy plantation owner, of showing him how non-aristocrats —like Marcus— can achieve a similar social position, only deteriorated by the immoral resources employed in getting there. Ben will emphasize this idea (loudly) in one of the first scenes of *The Little Foxes*, centering his speech on the fact that aristocrats are unable to adapt to modern times. Both Marcus and his son Ben perceive themselves as different southerners, modern and capable of adaptation. And they have, in fact, a down to earth and very realistic identity, the contrary to the typical rich families of the South, which lack determination for facing change.

4.1.3. Branching and outgroup connections

Going back to the previous figure, we can contemplate how the triangle on the top represents the usurpation of power, and it oscillates between Ben and his sister (Figure 3). The oscillation might be ambiguous, but it certainly exists: Regina is the favorite of Marcus, so we may think he would probably favor her, economically speaking. However, Ben is the wittiest of the *foxes*, this time showing himself as superior to Regina, and consequently "stealing" her the power she was convinced she could achieve for herself. At the opening of *Another Part of the Forest*, the main vortex of this triangle is definitely Marcus, but it will finally move to Ben. Oscar does not count here, given that he is busy with other issues such as the Klan and he is most definitely still out of the battle taking place in the forest. The second triangle represents again the oscillation of power and, in this case, at the vortexes we find the three little foxes. Oscar has gained his place by basically getting hold of Birdie's inheritance; Regina maintains her position, reinforced by her marriage to Horace; and Ben is in possession of the crown, but he rules in a more moderate way than his father had done. Being at the major vortex of the triangle, Ben plans the two arranged marriages for the general benefit of the family, apparently unconscious —or rather pretending not to notice— of the unhappiness it could bring together with the long-awaited uprightness the family had never had. With the marriage of Oscar and Birdie, Oscar does not increase his fortune, but he achieves social status for his family, something very important that the Hubbards lacked. On the other hand, with her marriage to Horace, Regina did mot marry money —although Horace was richer than Birdie— but, in turn, she married respectability, since Horace was one of the most well thought-of men in the town and the nearby towns.

Ben had decided Regina and Oscar's future; nevertheless, in spite of the appearances, Ben's privileged position is not so privileged, as Regina is constantly and patiently waiting, ready to dethrone him. In fact, she will become the next usurper, coming to emphasize the patriarchal system's downfall. The power is no longer directly and solely related to the male figure, but to money, and thus the gender of the moneyed person is not relevant. In fact, Regina's fight results in victory, she had always understood advantageous positions in society were related to money, not to men, and she was right. After having always been forced to remain in the periphery, this amazing victory places her in the middle of the family space since she becomes the queen and new regent of the Hubbard family.

The characters at the secondary level are those who remain out of the forest: Birdie, unable to cope with the immorality and tricks of the capitalist ambitions of the Hubbards; Horace, a reformed man who has recently escaped from his capitalist ambitions, and who does not want to destroy anything else —after having already exploited many blacks together with the Hubbards—; Alexandra, the sweet and gentle daughter; Addie, the black servant who plays the surrogate mother and stands for Alexandra's maternal support; and Leo, Oscar's annoying

son, who tries to find his place in the world, but inevitably gets lost. The arrows in Figure 3 establish direct relations here, which are not related to power, as happened with the triangles. The double arrows point to the heirs of the Hubbard fortune, to the new generation, a generation that seems to bring in both despair and hope. On the contrary, two-way arrows indicate the special relationship among those characters who seem to empathize and, consequently, form a group of their own, a sort of sub-family represented in the figure with a rectangle. In the former cases, the triangles joined characters who based their bonds in distrust and betrayal, but in this case they connect actual friends who share not only mutual respect, but also mutual love. Thus, Horace and Birdie are the outsiders, who are never really accepted in the family, and remain completely alone and isolated from the rest of the characters, except for Alexandra and Addie, who feel worried about their sad situation and try to take care of them.

Finally, there are two external characters who, in a sense, become temporary relations of the Hubbard clan in *The Little Foxes*. One of them, the northern tycoon, Mr. Marshall, might represent Hellman's intention to convey the northern industrial invasion of the South. The other *alien* to the Hubbard family is David Hewitt, together with his mother, a seamstress who sews Regina's and Alexandra's clothes, both of them characters added by William Wyler to Hellman's play. David can be understood as the director's attempt to make certain specific criticism on the capitalist intentions and proud of the Hubbard sons, hence on the attitude of the post-bellum southern *nouveau riches*. In addition, he starts a relationship with Alexandra that will help her to develop as a person with independence of thought.

4.1.4. Aggrupations and (in)morality: good vs. evil

Among all this "constellation of characters" (Eder et al. 26), there are numerous social groupings that will be progressively introduced throughout this chapter. However, it would be worth introducing at this point two major aggrupation at play, giving the fact that this will help in understanding all the characters' interactions, and also because they stand out for the universal binary "good vs. evil." On the one hand, we have those considered as *the good ones*, standing for moral values (Horace, Birdie, Alexandra, David, Addie, and Cal); on the other hand, the group of the *evils* would be constituted of Ben, Regina, Oscar, and Leo. In her attempt at delivering a vivid moral message, Hellman created these two very clearly distinguished groups, somehow balancing the scales so that the viewers could draw their own conclusions (despite the easy Marxist reading of the work). This is transmitted to Wyler's film giving rise to a certain imbalance with the inclusion of new characters (the Hewitt) who, endowed with a powerful voice and strongly siding with the "good ones," contribute to facilitate a Marxist reading by raising a voice against social exploitation. In both groups we have representatives of a second generation with experience of the Old South and the New (Horace and Birdie vs. Ben, Regina, and Oscar), as well as a new generation that only has knowledge of the new world (Alexandra and David vs. Leo). Whereas the second generation of Hubbards might present a stronger front than Horace and Birdie, the new generation is balanced (Leo vs. Alexandra) up until the moment that David comes into play. Finally, there are the servants (Addie and Cal) who, endowed with thoughts and a voice of their own, also clearly position themselves with the group of good guys.

Focusing on Wyler's perspective of the southern character in Hellman's 1939 play, we come to realize that Regina unquestionably emerges out of the woods as the most outstanding manipulator, as the only Hubbard endowed with the power to reign within such a family, and thus a *regina* in power.



Figure 4

This image (Figure 4) is one of the most impressive shots of the scene that follows the dinner with Mr. Marshall in the house of the Hubbard family, and it presents three different levels of activity. There are three settees, which give us the impression of sharing a similar mood so, taking into account the fact that the title of the film is *The Little Foxes* we immediately identify the three Hubbards as the foxes. This is emphasized with the topic of their conversation, given the fact that in this scene they are talking about the profits they will make and dreaming about a consumerist future. Regina is exactly in the center of the frame, with a very happy expression and in a comfortable and victorious position, which shows her as the one who is managing the action. We can see Regina, played by actress Bette Davis, with a smile on her face and adopting an attitude of delight in victory, similar to that of her old brother (interpreted by Charles Dingle), although in Ben's case, we are only provided with a view in profile, something that may denote he is an important character, but not as central as Regina. The other brother, Oscar, characterized as the least intelligent of them all, has his back turned to the audience, therefore indicating he is not a very relevant fox within the Hubbard territory, although he is on his way to capitalism.

Apart from the emphasis on the foreground, there is also a perspective of a momentarily unused background, the stairs, and in between the settees and the staircase there is another level —of inaction— where we can find, over Regina's right shoulder, Birdie (Patricia Collinge) sitting alone in a chair right against the wall. Her expression contrasts with that of the characters in the foreground, since it is of a desperate sadness and resignation. Wyler focuses on the lively conversation among the foxes, in contrast to the silence and isolation of Birdie. There is scarcely ever a close-up of her face and a following cut returning to the conversation among the brothers, tries to point out at Wyler's objective, that is Birdie's alienation from the Hubbard family, an alienation that nevertheless is not absolute, for the reason that there are some other characters she keeps in contact with, as we can see in Figure 5.

In this case, Birdie is talking very lively to her niece, Alexandra, who is about to play the piano. This coverage shot which precedes the one previously analyzed, also shows three quite different planes of action, for all the characters are perfectly visible in their positions and allow Wyler to maintain the deep focus without specifically centering the attention in one of the groups. Regina still remains in the center, but now she is in between Ben and Mr. Marshall, appearing the last one opposite to the audience and Oscar Hubbard in a profile, stood up behind his son Leo, who is sitting down in a chair a little separated from the three main characters occupying the center of the scene. The foreground now corresponds to two sympathetic characters, Alexandra and Birdie, more interested in culture —particularly in music— than in the art of business. There is no



Figure 5

activity in the background, as it happened in the previous shot; however, the stairway will be very relevant in other occasions, especially in the last scenes of the play. Whenever the action takes place inside the Hubbard house, rare is the time when we cannot perceive the stairs from some angle. To a certain extent, the staircase is transformed into the witness of all the conflicts within the Hubbard family, and perhaps that is the reason why it is always present. In addition, it can be understood as anticipatory scenery for the tragedy to take place.

Summarizing and in order to close this section, it is worth recalling that the Hubbards share a dangerous self-indulgence, on top of an easy adaptation to the new world and an interest for modernity as defining family features, and Alexandra is the only one who liberates her mind from greed, searching only love and peace. The loyalty to the family of the southern tradition has died and the Hubbards no longer have an actual sense of family ties. However, we hope for change and redemption through some of the characters. Alexandra, the only member of the family who does not seem prone to corruption, might be interpreted as the anticipation of a better future, especially in Wyler's adaptation, where David Hewitt has the courage and the determination to escape corruption and, as Alexandra's lover, he seems able to save her from falling in it.

4.1.5. Fictional characters born from real life

Hellman's inspiration for the characterization of southerners, mainly from the New South but also from the Old, comes from her own family, both maternal and paternal, as well as from her own experiences in the South, a fact that we can learn from numerous biographies such as, for instance, Doris V. Falk's. Demopolis, Alabama, was the base for the setting for *Another Part of the Forest*, where the events happen in a fictional town called Bowden, and also for *The Little Foxes*, which still takes place in Alabama although there is no fictional name for the location of the Hubbard residence. Lillian Hellman herself had not lived or even visit Alabama; however, she claimed to have a broad knowledge about it from what she had heard.

Her mother's family was the source for the creation of her capitalist characters, who clearly ambitioned money and were moved by their materialistic drives. According to Charles S. Watson, the playwright's great uncle, Jacob Marx was "a successful banker" and he became her model for Ben Hubbard's character; on the one hand, because of his cynical understanding of people and, on the other hand, because of his intent for business (134). Hellman's grandmother Sophie Marx was, according to Falk, her inspiration for Regina (50), the strong woman who wants to take part in trade. Like Hellman's grandmother, Regina ambitions getting involved in business, but she is constantly put aside by tradition; in other words, pushed away by male dominance. She is representing a situation that many women experienced after WWII, when they were working in silence in the big cities, yet as mere shades although expecting to come to light to the main scene. Hellman's mother, Julia Marx, was a woman of sweet and gentle character who felt comfortable among the middle-class, and so she became the model for Birdie, the innocent wife of Oscar Hubbard (*The Little Foxes*), as well as for Regina's mother (*Another Part of the Forest*), whose relationship with blacks looks to be closer than with the members of her own family.

On Lillian Hellman's paternal side of the family, we find the opposing forces to capitalism. Her father, Max Hellman, was a bourgeois who felt sympathy for the proletariat, a feeling that the author would inherit. The Marxes ridiculed Max Hellman's business failures (Watson 135) but, in exchange, he despised the way they ran their own businesses as well. In his opinion, they lacked ethics and they were fast at mistreating the black labor force, owing that they did not

care to pay them adequately for their work and they were instead obsessed with getting profit from it. Hellman's paternal grandfather, Bernard Hellman, was her model for Regina's father Marcus Hubbard, the patriarch figure. Hellman's black nurse Sophronia gave her inspiration for the black character Addie. In addition, Hellman shows great respect for blacks in her plays as she did in real life. She even recognized that she received good advice from Sophronia's wisdom as much as Alexandra Hubbard receives from Addie in *The Little Foxes*, so the author felt inclined to add "another scene in the film to reveal more of Addie's charitable nature" (Dick, *Hellman* 62).

4.2. Hubbard Sons & Co.: the expansion of a new empire

Ben and Oscar Hubbard are Regina's brothers, owners of the company "Hubbard Sons," where they employ cheap black labor (Figure 6), one of the reasons why they became to be the richest men in town. Marcus and Lavinia's sons, they are inheritors of a crumbling family's legacy. The typical southern sense of unity lost its meaning long ago for the Hubbards, giving way to self-interest and greediness. Oscar and Ben are siblings who share now the same ambitions, although they have quite different personality traits and minds. Whereas the former is married, the latter is single; whereas Oscar is quite a troublemaker whom nobody likes, Ben is an intelligent man, admired by those who appreciate his business skills. In the 1900 South it was the men who were in possession of the money; therefore, Hellman created male figures endowed with the controlling power to shape their lives and the lives of those who depend on them, generally women, and servants in case of wealth. They misuse their power and exert their dominion in an oppressive manner, and this kind of corruption is especially relevant in *The Little Foxes*.

According to Kenneth Burke, materialism and idealism are opposites, as one reduces all that exist to matter, the other idealizes what is material and thus transforms it into spirit or symbol. Materialism is concrete and real, whereas idealism is abstract and illusory (200). Therefore, we can say that many of the characters who were idealistic in the 1880s have developed into materialistic beings at the turn of the century. In *Another Part of the Forest*, the Hubbard siblings are to a certain extent still moved by ideals rather than by a materialistic attraction: Oscar fights for a relationship with the ill-reputed Laurette and Regina's intention is to fly away with the ex-Confederate soldier John Bagtry. In contrast, Ben Hubbard would represent a peculiar case: yet in his twenties, but always correct and concentrated on trading in order to make more and more money, he seems to be already caught by the financial flow. He has no other dreams or ideals rather than making money, and he puts as much enthusiasm on it as he puts effort in making good business to please his father, who seems to prefer Regina to him. Oscar is not a rival, because he is considered good for nothing, but Regina had already found her methods to become Marcus's favorite. Whereas Regina and Oscar are infatuated with the idea of love, Ben is already centered on making money.



Figure 6

On the contrary, in *The Little Foxes* we can see how they all are moved by the power of money and they clearly contest each other in order to achieve the best profits. Regina and Oscar share the misfortune of having formed a family of their own by means of marrying

people they did not love. Thus, their unhappy marriages evolved into two broken families on the brick of reaching their definite decay. The illusions and dreams of their youth have vanished, and they now have a different and single ideal: money. The wealthier they can get, the better. Ben does not have a family of his own. He is alone, because he has directly married money, so he has become a great businessman, an expert on the arts of trading, and he does not mind in the least the cunning techniques he has used to get where he is.

Idealistic people believe in humanity, in the possibility of change. They believe in the great ideals of Love, Freedom, Beauty and Good because there is something inside them that keeps their enthusiasm alive. They are positive and optimistic because they have something to fight for. This was the typical atmosphere which surrounded the rich white southern plantation owner, when everything was happiness and joy and cotton was a blessing for all. Social order was immovable, and everybody believed in this order. But the antebellum period was followed by a war that the South lost, and consequently the southern social order was also vanquished. Moreover, the change of century, as it is reflected in *The Little Foxes*, brought with it confusion and social turmoil, so the optimism and the romantic view of the antebellum period were lost. Now people have a different view of the world, they realize that the individual is not powerful enough to establish anything because it is the environment that dictates the rules, and thus, they engaged in a fight for class and wealth, discrediting the glorious past and believing only in the power of money. As Janet Brown claims, "Materialism, because it supposes a natural cause to everything, is allied with determinism, or the idea that whatever happens is dictated by the environment, out of the control of the individual. Idealism posits the opposite, a theory which seeks the explanation, or ultimate *raison d'être*, of the cosmic evolution in the realization of reason, self-consciousness, or spirit" (16). As a consequence, it is not strange that materialism became the epitome of the modern society, and it is understandable that Ben, Oscar, Regina, her husband Horace Giddens, and almost all the characters in Hellman's play felt attracted to it. In her youth, Regina already defended and believed in her family of merchants —a new powerful social class— over aristocracy, and Ben reminds the audience of the very same idea twenty years later. He emphasizes the fact that merchants can sell and buy plantation owners out and everything they own, that is to say, materialism is not only more profitable than idealism, but also the only means of survival in the modern society. Acquisitiveness and greed are the only successful choice within the jungle of the 1900s, because, according to Cobb:

> If the South was not a region whose economic development was thwarted or compromised by its own leaders, be they planter or industrialist, it was a society in transition, one whose governing elites could not ignore the needs of a still powerful agricultural sector, but one where aggressive business and industrial interests, with momentum on their side, were beginning to make themselves felt. The complex relationship between economic, social, and political conditions went beyond the simple question of the relative influence wielded by planters and industrialists. (*Redefining* 14)

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Taking Cobb's explanation into consideration, we can easily understand the reason why Ben and Oscar have focused their lives on achieving mastery in business-making. Aiming to get the highest profit possible, they bought several plantations and made great profit —helped by their brother-in-law Horace, who was as interested in making money as they were. Ben and Oscar, or, as the young reporter David Hewitt calls them, "the big bear" and the "medium-size bear" respectively, are the proud owners of the company "Hubbard Sons" and well-known riches in

town. It is worth noticing that they chose to refer to themselves as "Sons" instead of "Hubbard Brothers," perhaps because, regarding business, Ben had always silently admired his father. Regina, however, is not allowed to get any benefit from her brothers' business, given the fact that she is a woman and money business is just allowed for men. But, although excluded, Regina has always been part of her brothers' plans nonetheless, due to the fact that they have been taking money from her husband Horace through transactions that Regina herself gladly facilitated. In this sense, we could say that so far Ben and Oscar have had in their sister Regina and in Horace two good allies.

But they now have decided to make their most ambitious investment. The time has come for them to grow much bigger, at least as much as their greed. Encouraged by the spirit of novelty, and excited by the enormous benefits that a more developed capitalism can offer them in the new South, they make the decision to invest money in the cotton mill, an industrial system already known in the North although still new for the South. With this purpose, they have been in touch with a Northern tycoon, Mr. Marshall, who wishes to bring the mill to the South, where labor will be much cheaper. For their new enterprise, they must ally with someone outside their family group, thus expanding their (yet very reduced) circle of allies. This means that they primarily need their sister to help them succeed in negotiations with her charm and with her intelligence, as well as with her husband's money. Ultimately, Regina is their true ally, and the one in charge of convincing both Mr. Marshall and her husband to join the new business. Together, while living their respective lives, the Hubbard siblings have become the symbol of the prototypical *nouveau riche*; yet, increasingly thirsty for money, they are now directing all their efforts to climb to the top of wealth.

4.2.1. Ben Hubbard: the lonely fox and his thirst for money

Observing Ben as an artifact within the first quarter of Eder's "clock of character," it is necessary to say that there is enough information about this character evenly distributed throughout the movie, although there is lack of reference to his inner feelings or emotions concerning any other topic unrelated to money. Ben is an intelligent, self-assured, and confident man, proud of his business and his achievements in life despite having no family of his own. He lives next to his sister, and his younger brother is also in town, but they both are members of their own family units whereas Ben is alone. A centered and an arrogant middle-aged man, the first born of the Hubbard clan seems to be happy with the lifestyle he chose for himself. With his first appearance in the movie, he is introduced as a grumpy person easy to anger, but equally flexible to forget and forgive if it is convenient for him. In Figure 7 we can see from a high angle shot how Ben sticks his head out the window. Immediately, Regina's daughter, who was playing the piano with her aunt Birdie, comes out from her house to kindly explain to him that they are getting ready to play during dinner for Mr. Marshal. At this point, Ben gladly withdraws his complaint, openly admitting that if they were practicing for such an important meeting, then the noise is welcome. This shot allows us to witness Ben's authority and self-centered nature, as well as the closeness of



Figure 7

Ben and Regina's homes. In the distance, through the open window, we can get a glimpse at Birdie, who is still at the piano. In this way, the three units of the Hubbard family are connected from the beginning, giving us to understand that they maintain a close relationship. It is worth noticing, however, that whereas Birdie as Oscar's wife, and Alexandra as Regina's daughter, are here standing as members of the new families they formed, Ben has no option but to represent himself, as he is the only member of his mono-unit family.

For Regina, Ben is her older brother, a person whom she admires for his intelligence and business skills, even for his malice. At the same time, he is the man who took control of her life, since all her father's money ended up in his hands, leaving her without inheritance. In addition, he planned for her a marriage to a person with whom she was not in love, but whose social position and money Ben seemed to like. From this perspective, she could have perceived him as an oppressor, but since he indirectly provided her with a comfortable life, she does not seem to resent him for that. However, she thinks that Ben's tricks are not as good as they used to be in the past, and although there is a certain camaraderie between them, sometimes she finds Ben excessive, bordering on annoying.

For Oscar, Ben is a father figure rather than a brotherly one; he is the one who controls him and to some extent uses him to get the most out of his business. In this sense, Ben is to Oscar what Marcus was to Ben. In addition, Ben also arranged to marry him to an aristocrat girl, in order to raise the level of the Hubbard name by joining it with the name of the Bagtry family. Oscar also appreciates his brother's intelligence, but for him Ben is a more oppressive force than for Regina. For the rest of the family and his neighbors, Ben Hubbard represents the figure of the wealthy businessman in the New South. However, among his community there are some more openly critical voices such as that of his brother-in-law, Horace Giddens, for whom Ben is a purely greedy man with no other desire than to make money. Another example is David Hewitt, a young man who writes for the local newspaper, who humorously refers to Ben as "the big bear," thus highlighting his greatness in relation to his fortune as well as his opulence (in addition to conforming to a certain extent with what could be his physical description).

It is precisely David Hewitt the one who first hints at Ben's business immoral practice while reading about his meeting with the mill owner Mr. Marshall on the newspaper. Following his drive to make more profit with this new type of business, Ben has arranged a dinner with the northern tycoon at Regina's house hoping this would facilitate the negotiation and the closing of a good deal. Aware of the importance of money and the pleasure that materialism can provide, Regina does not hesitate to take part in her brother's business, challenging male power. Hence, she tries to please Mr. Marshall because she knows that she can benefit from the deal. The smiling Mr. Marshall we can see in Figure 8 is enjoying a dinner that Regina has organized for him with much care. She put all her effort in appearing a perfect hostess and a wealthy and polite woman. In this mid shot, the candles, the exquisite decoration, the food, and Regina's beauty and manners conquered this man who, in spite of not being an aristocrat himself, appreciates nobility and immediately recognizes Birdie's good manners and education. When he praises the Lionnet heiress, Oscar interprets it as his opportunity to feel proud of his wife's origins. In Wyler's film,



Figure 8

Leo emphasizes his mother's past as an aristocrat, making clear that —for once— he has paid attention to his father's recommendation at breakfast: "good names are always useful."

Notwithstanding, Ben does not agree with the direction the conversation is taking and, interrupting it, begins to redirect it towards a critical comment that openly reflects his ideology and his position with respect to social class. Therefore, he destroys his brother and nephew's argumentation by claiming that money is more worthy of admiration than names; that is to say, those who have money are to be admired above those who once had names. In other words, drawing from David M. Newman to comment on social status, we could say that Ben believes that ascribed social status is less meaningful than achieved social status. This way of thinking is the engine that gives strength to the raising classes while dethroning the aristocracy, whose value of nobility is now none other than being born with a name. This opinion is clearly representative of the new ideology of the turn of century: the traditional thought was starting to disappear for the benefit of a more modern world, basically concerned with making money.

The values of the past are fading and that glorious times give way to a mechanized world; conservatism is no longer the norm; modernism has dethroned this old power. Ben is greatly conscious of this, and he does hesitate to frankly praise modernity. He has both his values and his goals clear, and for him everything is centered around money (and how to get it). When it comes to showing his ideology, he feels no qualms, and he can talk incessantly, as it happened during his business dinner with Mr. Marshall at Regina's house, so much so that his sister interrupts him a few times to deviate the conversation to other topics, fearing he could make Mr. Marshall bored or uncomfortable. The following over-the-shoulder shot (Figure 9), which stands as technically one of the most impressive ones in the film, represents the moment in which Ben arrogantly enjoys his capitalistic monologue in defense of the new classes:

> Ben (*To Birdie*): But that isn't the tale I am telling, Mr. Marshall. (*To Marshall*) Well, sir, the war ends. … Lionnet is almost ruined, and the sons finish ruining it. And there were thousands like them. Why? (*Leans forward*) Because the Southern aristocrat can adapt himself to nothing. Too high-tone to try.
>
> Marshall: Sometimes it is difficult to learn new ways. …
>
> Ben: Perhaps, perhaps. … You're right, Mr. Marshall. It is difficult to learn new ways. But maybe that's why it's profitable. *Our* grandfather and *our* father learned the new ways and learned how to make them pay. (*Smiles nastily*) They were in trade. Hubbard Sons, Merchandise. Others, Birdie's family, for example, looked down on them. (*Settles back in chair*) To make a long story short, Lionnet now belongs to us. … Twenty years ago we took over their land, their cotton, and their daughter. (Hellman, *Little* 157-58)

With absolute coldness, Ben reiterates his point of view and continues with his speech without the slightest qualm and without any restraint, even though the atmosphere is disturbed, and everyone realizes that he is attacking his sister-in-law mercilessly. The discomfort it causes Birdie is obvious to the viewer, as is Ben's cruelty. Consequently, Ben is clearly perceived as a morally ambiguous character, and he may already lose the chance to get the viewer's sympathy for the rest of the movie.

An atypical dinner table shot, this one extracted from the dinner scene, takes advantage of the introduction of a big mirror —device largely used throughout the film. The mirror is placed on the wall behind the table at the dining room and it allows us to perceive the different and special relationships among the characters, as well as their reactions to Ben's condescending verbal abuse of Birdie and her aristocratic past. With their face directly toward the audience,



Figure 9

we can only see Birdie and Ben, in this scene the main representatives of the importance and power of old and new values, respectively. Reflected in the mirror, there are these two characters, Regina on profile, and Alexandra and Mr. Marshall in front. Taking their positions into account we must not forget that "frontality constitutes a very important cue for the viewer. When characters have their backs to us, it is usually an index of their relative unimportance at the moment" (Bordwell et al. 52). Thus, in this scene Regina's daughter and the northern tycoon share the leading role with aunt Birdie and Ben. Alexandra seems to be as vexed as Birdie, and her face inevitably shows pity for her aunt. Mr. Marshall tries to seem concentrated on Ben's words, but his expression represents surprise and a certain feeling of rejection toward Ben's unkind speech. Regina, in contrast, does not fix her gaze on Ben, but looks down to the table. She might not be really worried about Birdie's feelings, but she is very much concerned with Ben's wrong behavior because it might bother Mr. Marshall and consequently threaten the deal. Therefore, she stops the conversation by asking Birdie to play the piano, something she knows that will please Mr. Marshall, for he is a cultivated man.

During the piano recital, Ben, Oscar, and Leo —once again clearly disrespecting Birdie, who is more visibly starting to be perceived as victim of male abuse— look wholly unenthusiastic about the music performance. In the meantime, Regina struggles to prevent Ben's impatient gestures and his attempts to interrupt in order to restart a conversation (about the same topic) with Mr. Marshall, ignoring the fact that he is enjoying the music. His unsophisticated behavior contrasts with Mr. Marshall's refinement. Ben does not appreciate music at all, and he seems despicable and ridiculous with his previous verbal abuse on Birdie, while, on the contrary, Mr.



Figure 10

Marshall congratulates her for her musical skills and for her aristocratic exquisiteness. However, Regina manages to avoid her brother's blunders and Mr. Marshall finally accepts their share in his business. They will undoubtedly serve him as a valuable asset to bring his business of the cotton mill to the South, so the dinner is a mere stage which serves him the purpose of knowing more about the Hubbards, as well as a way to introduce himself as a serious and intelligent businessman. Ben tries to do the same, although not by following his manners. He invents a new southern tradition and asks Mr. Marshall to join them —southerners— and have a drink to put an end to the dinner and seal the deal with it. The eye view shot on the left (Figure 10) shows how the three Hubbards join in to have this last drink and how Mr. Marshall accepts to join their *new tradition*, a lie made up by Ben in his mischievous manipulation to make pressure on the northerner to close the deal "over a glass," which has even more value than a signature for some businessmen. For the shot scene, they are staged to form a sort of geometric figure within which Regina and Oscar look at each other, while Ben is directly looking and smiling at the man opposite him while he drinks at the same time. Mr. Marshall pays more attention to the cup in his hand, but his attention is also focused on the Hubbards' first born. Although Regina and Oscar are very greedy, it is clear who knows more about making business, who is more directly connected to the cotton mill and who is the perfect example of "the clash between traditional and modern cultures, with the refined order of traditionalism giving way to the rapacious forces of cultural modernism" (Brinkmeyer, "Southern" 151).

Now money is the object of desire, and the buying-and-selling process is the most profitable one. The Hubbard brothers make business and they "speak the lines that ironically serve to offer a Marxist analysis of early Capitalist expansion" (Wiles 99). They interpret and praise their usurpation of the land and the women of the plantation owners as the inevitable evolution from the old feudalist system to a new social order where they are the motor of society as part of the emerging bourgeoisie. They dismiss anything that is not material, or they use it only when it is convenient for them: for instance, they resort to feelings when they can help them to get what they want, as is the case with Ben and Regina. Both admire and praise each other in order to get the other's confidence and they join in a single force; nevertheless, they always think only of the individual's benefit. Despite their cunning attitude, the Hubbards' wit and skills might get the respect of the audience given the fact that they are great gamblers. In fact, the whole story presents the gambling within the family: the Hubbards enroll in a game where the victory will be for the most intelligent, the fastest and, probably, for the greediest.

Thus, they need to have enough skills not only to survive, but also to destroy those who surround them. It is the law of the jungle: only the strongest survives and only the wittiest succeeds. In this respect, one of the most important arts in *The Little Foxes* is blackmail, one of Hellman's favorite topics. They all try to be good manipulators and, for this reason, according to Jacob H. Adler, "[b]lackmail is simply part of the pattern, a part that works best on your own family, if only because they are scoundrels and because it is less likely that you will know anyone else well enough to blackmail. In *The Little Foxes*, indeed, it is almost cozy" (35).

From the observation of the Big Five personality traits taxonomy suggested by McCrae and Costa in their OCEAN model, introduced in the theoretical framework, Ben's personality stands

out as extremely conscientious, with a balance in openness, certain tendency to extraversion, and outstandingly low in terms of agreeableness and neuroticism. That's the reason why his ambition, his stubbornness, his selfishness, and his controlling skills are particularly noticeable throughout the whole film. Although Ben is undeniably skilled at manipulating people, the queen of blackmail is his sister, as much as Ben may regret having such a powerful rival. The fact that she is a woman prevents her from having an easy access to business, but in this occasion, with the motivation of achieving enough money to escape to a new life in the North through the business with Mr. Marshall, she will manage to take part in her brothers' business, "Hubbard sons and Marshall, cotton manufacturers," despite her name remaining out of the (public) equation again.

Apart from material wealth, Oscar and Regina are everything that Ben has in the world. Ben, in his role of leader of the Hubbard clan, managed to maintain a stronger connection with Regina and Oscar forming a very reduced group with each of them separately, a type of social aggrupation known in sociology as a dyad (Simmel). However, although the three of them engage in small fights caused by their egos and their eagerness to increase their wealth and show power, we can still perceive the Hubbard siblings as a unit or, expressed in sociology terms, a triad. According to sociologist Georg Simmel, a triad (three-member group) is a social structure that offers greater stability than a dyadic aggrupation (two-member group) for a variety of reasons. Interactions within dyads require a more individual and emotional involvement and they are easily threatened by disruption, as it constantly happens in *The Little Foxes* with the dyad Ben-Regina as well as with the dyad formed by the brothers. On the contrary, within the triad, balance is more easily achieved, as there is always a mediator and the idea of the unit is emphasized over individuality, hence resulting in greater cohesion. As Yoon et al. concluded in their study about the exchange and cohesion in dyads and triads, "[w]hen individuals confront the risk of exclusion equally, as they do in the triad, they must coordinate subtle two-against-one pressures in the interaction dynamic" (1465). Therefore, although the three siblings do not have a particularly good relationship, and mainly think about how to take advantage of each other, the fact that the three of them stay together as a unit, with certain values and objectives in common, aids in the maintenance of the order within the triad as much as it helps them to make a common front against outside groups (out-groups) when necessary.

Considering himself a man of clear and fixed ideas, in addition to being authoritarian and stubborn, the eldest of the Hubbards does not have a particularly rooted feeling with the South. Therefore, contrary to other characters who show a deep attachment to the South, or a big influence of the South in their identity traits, Benjamin Hubbard would not identify with practically any of the southern parameters collected by John Shelton Reed (*Enduring*) after conducting a series of surveys, as previously introduced in the theoretical framework, in order to observe how southerners identify with the South. In fact, he tends to be quite disrespectful about southern values without even noticing, as it happens while toasting to seal the deal with Mr. Marshall, since he invented a tradition *of his own* while trying to convince the northern industrialist of the seriousness and importance of this tradition. Thus, he lies for his benefit, without hesitation, and takes pride in it, for he sees no error in his performance. When Oscar asks him where he got this tradition from, his older brother, proud of himself, replies: "the Lord forgive those who invent what they need."

As a symbol within Eder's "clock of character," Ben would stand for the dangers of capitalism. A strong supporter of free market, he also symbolizes the destruction of the old values and the traditional manners of the South. Ben develops as a character and comes to the top of the pyramid thanks to his authority, a power that he had originally usurped from his father. His

dictatorial character allows him to make decisions about both his own life and that of others; and certainly this emphasizes the ease with which those in power can exercise their will over others.

Once he takes the place of the Hubbard patriarch, Ben has the authority over the family and so they should follow him even if they disagree with his decisions, given the fact that they depend on him as the family head, as well as economically for their upbringing and subsistence. Hence, Oscar Hubbard is ordered to marry Birdie Bagtry, and he cannot deny this to a family authority that he considers he has to obey, since he absolutely lacks authority himself, something that shows from the beginning of the events in *Another Part of the Forest* and continues until the end of those in *The Little Foxes*. The characters who are in possession of authority are usually strong characters who can provide the economic means and/or lead others as they choose, as it is the case of Ben, a clear example of how "[r]ulers often maintain their position in society by ordering or forcing people with less authority to do things that benefit the rulers" (Newman 325). Regina's situation in her 20s is quite similar to that of Oscar, since once her father leaves her without inheritance, she has no choice but to depend on her brother Ben, who will lead her to her marriage to Horace Giddens for his own benefit rather than for hers.

The discussion here is raised however on how Ben has earned this authority, for what reasons he is allowed to have it while others are not, and how much right does he have to cut on other people's freedom rights by giving them orders as he pleases. In this case, he inherited the patriarchal —hence economic— authority as the elder brother after dethroning his father in a stroke of luck triggered by his mother's knowledge of Marcus' shady business. Either way, he received the entire inheritance and control of the Hubbard family with it. Although we might think that he did not need to make that much effort to get it, we have to acknowledge that he is smart enough to keep it and make *good use* of it for his profit. It is unfair though that he does not seem to make any sacrifice by marriage like his siblings were demanded to do, but instead he seems to have the authority to sneakily control their lives as he sees fit, even though he is obviously not the patriarch in his siblings' households. Decades ago, Ben had all the social circumstances (hence, economic) in his favor, but now in the new world not everything will be so easy, as long as there is a rival at his level. Regina, full of resources and with the same thirst for power as her brother Ben, looks now like a threat, always challenging her brother with her smart brain and all the conditions to be a great leader. Harmless as long as she lacks the economic power, she will fight for it with all her will and her brainpower.

Ben stands as the symbol of an aggressive capitalism, as well as that patriarchal authority that, despite having lost some intensity, is still in control of the power. The exploitation of poor people under the rich people's domination is more than evident in the play and continuously referred to in the movie as the dangerous force that might end up harming everyone and everything in the end, for as Ben claims: "this is just the beginning." Undoubtedly, things will get worse when the cotton mills are not only the aspiration of some tycoons, but the actual source of money for those who already have power enough to make of it a business. The following is an example from *The Little Foxes* of how self-conscious the wealthy despoiler is of the triumph of his class over those who have no weapons to fight against him:

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> Ben: *The century's turning, the world is open. Open for people like you and me*. Ready for us, waiting for us. After all *this is just the beginning*. There are hundreds of Hubbards sitting in rooms like this throughout the country. All their names aren't Hubbard, but they are all Hubbards and they will own this country some day. Well get along.
>
> Regina (*Smiles*): I think so. (222-23; emphasis added)

4.2.2. Oscar Hubbard: a harmful second fox

The second son of the Hubbard clan, Oscar, is introduced as a greedy, unintelligent, proud, haughty, and aggressive man. He believes —and wants— to be a respectable gentleman, and he values money and social appearance above all things. He thinks his siblings consider him inferior, and he dislikes this situation, but he still feels respect for them. He shares his greediness and selfishness with them and, although he is not such a smug as his brother Ben, he is still a narcissist, and the agent of a highly unethical and violent behavior as a fictional being within Eder's "clock of character" model, his mentality stands out as highly oriented to obtaining money, which is his major motivation. His weak character comes from his major flaw, his ignorance; and, in order to make up for it, he finds no better manner than constantly resorting to aggressivity, hence acting neurotic (he whines, gets excited, raises his voice, even reacts with physical violence) to alleviate his lack of manipulative and efficiency skills, in which his siblings excel.

While for Ben Oscar is a kind of henchman and for Regina he is more impertinent than anything else, for his new family unit Oscar is the undisputed leader, the head of the family who enjoys all the power and executes it as he pleases. Therefore, even when he is always the one who loses the power game within the Hubbard triad, overpowered by his brother or his sister, he always wins at home, where he can use violence to maintain control and show his superiority. In this way, his authority is balanced: while he is losing power to his siblings within the original Hubbard triad, he enjoys total authority within another triad, the one formed with his wife Birdie and his son Leo. For Leo, Oscar is an approachable and close father figure, almost like a friend, although he respects and obeys him without question. For Birdie, Oscar is one of the main reasons she hides in alcohol. He is not simply her husband, but also a dictator and abuser, whose only love is money. Unintelligent in certain situations, but cunning enough in others as long as it is for his own convenience, Oscar's wealth is well-known in the town, and he is perceived by the community as a very wealthy mean. In the same way that he feels in the background with respect to his siblings, it is probably that this is how his neighbors perceive him as well, something that we can infer from reporter David Hewitt's mention to him as a "medium size bear," while Ben is referred to as the "big bear," a nomenclature that can point to both their age and their fortune.

When he makes his first appearance in the movie, Oscar is at home accompanied by his family. At this point, the viewers have already been introduced to his siblings and his wife Birdie, who was at Regina's house with Alexandra in her first appearance. In this over-the-shoulder shot (Figure 11) we can witness how Oscar is sitting at the table with his wife and son. This might look like a typical breakfast scene with a totally normal family; however, the viewer can immediately observe and infer data that indicates otherwise. While Birdie, back turned, is trying to talk to both men, they seem completely indifferent to her words and distracted with their own thoughts. While Leo, in profile view, is focused on his food on the right, Oscar, in the center of the frame and his frown caught by the camera, is entertained with the social news in the newspaper. Both son and



Figure 11

father have unpleasant expressions on their faces, tense and irritable, contrasting with the lively attitude of Birdie, who smiles constantly. However, nothing Birdie says interests them, until she recalls her past and Oscar suddenly raises his head from the newspaper to instruct her to be gracious with Mr. Marshall during his visit. Seconds later, it will be his son who receives the instructions from his father for the dinner with Mr. Marshall, where his mother's single name, symbol of the Old South's honor, will become worth mentioning. Putting emphasis on this, Oscar orders Leo to remember that "good names are always useful." In just a few moments, the viewer can notice that, while what Oscar appreciates the most about his wife is her maiden name, Leo is not interested in anything at all. The young man seems distracted and only attends to his father's orders, preferably if given to him clearly and emphatically. Although neither father nor son seem in a bad mood, they are both apathetic and unfriendly, acting without the slightest courtesy towards Birdie, whose attempt at conversation was ignored and who will abruptly be left alone at the table minutes later, without even a goodbye.

From observing closely the Big Five personality traits of McCrae's OCEAN model in Oscar, as part of his fictional being mentality, we obtain information that highlights his low level of intellect, since he is a philistine, unemotional, and apathetic character with no desire to attain knowledge and lacking creative skills. On the other hand, he is stands out as highly neurotic, as his anxious and impulsive reactions show once and again, showing a lack of control and a noticeable tendency to aggressiveness. He is moderately conscientious; he shows little agreeableness, and he has low levels of extraversion. Markedly self-centered, Oscar shows no particular sympathy for anyone, except maybe, occasionally, for his son, who might recall him of his youth. Without being particularly paternal with him, he does approach to his son showing a good dyadic connection whenever there is the possibility of getting some benefit from him —an attitude somewhat similar to the one he receives from his brother. He lectures, he advices, and he orders conscientiously, as long as it is beneficial for him rather than for Leo. In fact, it is for that very same reason that he also shows no qualms about giving poor advice, or even leading his child into problematic situations (such as when he encourages him to steal money).

Since the very beginning of the movie, Oscar appears especially concerned with business, as much as his brother Ben. In fact, he seems focused on the deal with the northern capitalist Mr. Marshall, and he is impatient for the investment to be completed successfully. He seems genuinely thirsty for money and looks comfortable handling business, despite lacking the skills of his elder brother. He acts proud, even daring, when he tries to negotiate for his convenience, but he candidly swallows his self-steem and follows when Ben gives the orders. Thus, he is always relegated to a lower position than his siblings, as both Ben and Regina treat him disdainfully and make fun of his attitude, in their opinion somewhat stupid and ill-mannered.

Because the Hubbards, led by an industrious and self-absorbed Ben, have struck a deal with Mr. Marshall, now they need to put their share of the money to invest in the cotton mill business. Mr. Marshall has put up forty-nine percent for this new venture in business and the Hubbards are supposed to invest the remaining fifty-one percent. Lacking economic power, Regina needs to ask for money from her husband to be able to participate in the business with her brothers. Since her husband is admitted to a hospital out of town, Regina sends him letters telling him about the cotton mill business, but he never responds about it. When Oscar and Ben pressure her sister for not getting a response from Oscar, she makes the obstacle an advantage and seizes the opportunity to negotiate a larger controlling share for Horace, who she assures to be holding out for it. Faced with this maneuver by Regina, who asks for seventy



Figure 12

percent for her husband, Ben accepts forty percent and immediately the smart imposing dyad decide that the extra seven percent of the control would come from Oscar's share. This attitude of his siblings, who always look down on him and make jokes at his expense, makes Oscar furious. Brusquely, he first reacts angrily towards his brother, finally holding himself back. However, he is more defiant towards Regina. Ben tries to calm him down by suggesting a future benefit for Oscar through a wedding between Regina's daughter and Leo. The matriarch, who does not consider the young wild man a good match for her daughter, evades the subject. Once again, Oscar, feeling attacked and wounded, as he fears losing the game, continues to insist on the subject, like a spoiled child, until his sister conclusively raises her voice at him, making him shut up instantly.

In the eye view shot above (Figure 12), we can see the triad locked in a fight that focuses fundamentally on two of its members: Regina (head-on) and Oscar (with his back to the camera) directly confronted and as close to each other in space as they are distant in opinion. Ben remains close to them, observing the situation with a circumstantial expression, after having tried to mediate (without really positioning himself precisely in Oscar's favor). Regina, in the center of the frame, looks at Oscar directly in the eye, in a bold attitude that exudes security and authority. At this moment, Regina's intense words, along with her defiant gaze, take effect and silence ensues. While the fight takes place in the foreground, with all three Hubbards standing, Birdie remains in the background, sitting and not moving or speaking throughout the dispute. She is an outsider, and she stands as such. Despite her inferior and usually weak position, in this case Oscar seems even inferior to his wife, given the fact that she stays calm out of the fight while he is unable to deal with his crafty and selfish siblings.

Despite of his lack of authority compared to that of his siblings, Oscar is a cynical and very unethical person, much like Ben. He lacks principles and he is totally unconcerned with human values. From a sociological point of view, he was allowed enough flexibility to move from his ascribed social role as the son of a merchant to his achieved status as successful businessman, with which he feels comfortable, although he ambitions a more respectable social position. He is only attracted to money and that, together with the honor he lacks, are the only valuable assets that he sees in his wife. In fact, he married money, and he would like his son to marry money too. In Marxist terms, we could consider Oscar's marriage to Birdie, the same as Regina's marriage to Horace Giddens, as choices made with exchange value, since their spouses can provide money for them, and hence a life they could not achieve without previously getting this "utility" for their benefit. We could say, nonetheless, that Oscar is more purely focused on materialism than his sister, owing that he wants to achieve benefits that he can transform into more benefits (use value) as a means of showing power over others, but mainly because of his own greed. Regina's intentions, as already mentioned before, are not that clear since her focus is not on the value of money itself, but on the sign value that she can get from it to appear higher into the social ladder and to achieve certain independence.

Concerning class struggle, the three Hubbards, and especially Oscar and Ben, show a total indifference towards other people's well-being, which is evidence of their lack of ethics and immorality. Their enrichment through exploiting black workers is a good example of how the



Figure 13

system of capitalism progresses through human labor: labor power becomes a commodity that can be exchanged for other commodities, that is to say, the human aspect is out of consideration, every*one* has a value uniquely as a product to be sold in exchange for material benefit. Hence, labor power is required to have a value smaller than the commodities it produces in order for the bourgeoise to get advantage of the production (Valentine). Therefore, the Hubbards, who intend to get the maximum benefit —the same as businessmen coming from the North, and here represented by Mr. Marshall—, do not doubt to exploit the proletariat. In turn, the plebs are understood as no more than a machine that needs a minimum of fuel in order to *produce what it is supposed to produce*; in other words, a *commodity* that as such, does not need to be connected to basic human rights.

Oscar and Ben are only concerned with money; they do not care about anything else and they are equally willing to exploit the black labor and their own family as convenient. That's the reason why they do not pretend to be worried about Horace's health once he comes back home from the hospital, called by Regina. This fact is emphasized by their behavior after the welcome party they give to Horace, when they strengthen their dyadic bond against her sister. Once people have left, they wait just to tell Regina that they will not be waiting any longer for her husband's money. They want to make her feel weak and as the loser of this battle, having failed to convince her husband to invest the money. With an insolent attitude, full of self-confidence and haughtiness, they point out at her as a weaker ally that they should not have trusted. The shot above (Figure 13), an example of symmetry, represents this moment. Opposite to the audience, Oscar (on the left) and Ben (in the central position of the frame), face their sister side by side with a challenging gesture. Both are dressed in dinner jacket and wear a white chemise, each casually hides one hand in their pocket, the legs slightly separated and with a threatening look, they try to intimidate Regina and force her to give them the money she had promised for the deal with Mr. Marshall immediately. Regina, in contrast, with her back to the audience in the right corner and dressed in white, occupies a peripheral position and is surprised by her brothers' attitude. Maybe "it is true for most of us, that anatomy is destiny—because of our culture's self-fulfilling prophecy that it shall be so" (Cornillon, "Fiction" 113), but Regina does not submit. On the contrary, she asks for more time without showing any kind of preoccupation about her brothers' warning. Certainly, Oscar and Ben have no other option than admiring her will and determination.

The Hubbards' impetuous effort in taking part of Marshall's business is not only logic because of their ravenous nature, they are influenced by the times they are living in. According to Cobb:

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> Regardless of who ruled the late nineteenth-century South, the prevailing core of reactionary, socially insensitive policies that characterized the era was far more likely to please than to put off the industrialists who were choosing southern locations. As for more dynamic enterprises, it was not the South's social and political structure but the distribution of labor, markets, capital, and resources within the national economy that kept them out of the region. (*Redefining* 13-14)



Figure 14

Therefore, the necessary conditions for the new riches to succeed were propitiated in the South of the 1900s, where all the circumstances were positive except for the industrial development, which was obviously more advanced in the North than in the South. The capital, the technological resources and the most important markets, as well as the organized labor, were in the North. However, the South was a flourishing economic source as the region's reconstruction pressed forward. And the Hubbards' ambition is justified because "the making of selves is not simply personal: it is deeply social, conditioned by our cultural and material milieu, the very geographies we inhabit" (T. McPherson 255).

Consequently, the triumph of a modern family whose beliefs are based on a patriotic sense of making business seems easy to achieve, especially when the core of society also considers that they are reconstructing the South with their new industries. For this reason, once they have decided to take part in a new business, and everything is favoring them at the social level, the Hubbard brothers do not want Regina to spoil their re-conquest of the South, something that will be inevitable if she fails to persuade her husband of providing them with the rest of the money they need. Hence, they insist more and more in her advances, alleging they are invisible for them, and at the end Ben says that he and his brother Oscar will no longer need Regina's help. Regina does not understand it, but she thinks it might be one more of Ben's moves, the evidence of his skills at blackmailing people. In fact, as we can see in Figure 14, Ben's behavior is somehow unexpected, and he certainly feels amused. He has sided with his brother Oscar, the one who had the idea of how to get the money he needed; hence, the one to respect right now. With Oscar already out of frame, and the staircase directly behind them, Ben and Regina are the protagonists of this scene. Both slightly on profile, Ben is turned toward the audience while Regina is looking straight at Ben. With his black hat on as he is getting ready to leave, Ben puts on his coat and smiles, or even laughs, at Regina. By using Oscar for his win, Ben believes he has reached his goal, and he presents an attitude of superiority and mockery that highlights his wickedness in his treatment to people.

Surprised with his cheeky attitude, Regina asks for an explanation, which she will not get until later Horace explains the change of situation to her. Encouraged by Oscar, his son Leo, had stolen Horace's bonds and Oscar gave them to Mr. Marshall. When Horace tells her what happened, she does not understand the situation immediately, but later she concludes that while on the one hand she must acknowledge her siblings' wit and courage, on the other they seem ridiculous to her, as their actions were likely to be discovered. In this case, Oscar had shown initiative, stimulated by his desire for wealth, as well as by his wish to show his power to his siblings. In the end, it will be neither Oscar nor Ben who win the power game, but Regina.

Unlike Ben and Regina, Oscar seems to be more attached to the South and more likely to identify with it according to Reed's southernness parameters. He finds Birdie's name "useful" and he is conservative, and he admires southern people and manners over those belonging to the North. The same as his elder brother, Oscar symbolizes the enriched bourgeoisie but, in addition, he stands for violence. He is an exploiter of black labor and an abuser within the household. As much as Ben might seem repulsive because of his lack of qualms when doing business, so might Oscar for the same reason and, moreover, for mistreating his wife. His

behavior is most likely to be disapproved or condemned, as he is immoral and has no redeeming qualities that the spectator can use as sympathy activators.

4.3. A New South also for women

Patriarchy might have submitted women in diverse ways and contexts (social, economic, personal, etc.); however, at the turn of the century, the first feminist movement started to challenge the traditional perspectives of women. The protagonist of *The Little Foxes*, Regina Giddens, stands as an example of woman who decides to challenge male rules. On the other hand, traditional social norms have been maintained for a long time, and breaking them is difficult, not only because of the lack of physical and financial means, but also because of the lack of emotional preparation to challenge an oppressive system. Regina's sister-in-law, Birdie Hubbard, is an example of female who, lacking the will and strength to stand up to patriarchy, has no option but to remain subject to its rules. In this section we will focus on analyzing the situations of these women, their reactions to their environment, and how this influences, as well as it reflects, their identity.

4.3.1. Regina: time has come for a queen to reign!

In *The Little Foxes* the main protagonist is, unquestionably, Regina Giddens —Hubbard at soul—, a woman in her late thirties who is decided to fight against tradition and find a place for herself in the world, without having the need to submit to superior powers. In fact, Regina Hubbard is one of the most famous characters created by Lillian Hellman, and proof of the fact that the southern playwright was mainly interested in depicting women, actually charismatic women who, according to Timothy J. Wiles, were set

> at a time when the struggle between the affective, nurturing role, and the rationalizing, self-gratifying one was more clearly divided in our culture along gender lines, she makes us feel the tragedy of the social crisis as it destroys the best representative of a given age, a woman who ironically has won out on the surface and who appears to have succeeded in destroying or thwarting almost all the others in her family. … Hellman does this not because she is a woman or believes her sex to posses superior virtue, but because she can use the woman issue as it exists in her culture to display a truth about mankind or humankind. (99)

In this section we will observe Regina's social interactions with a focus on her relationship with male characters, so that the most relevant sociological characteristics of her character can be extracted by concentrating on the analysis of her social roles and conflicts and paying special attention to her reaction to patriarchy. In the second subsection we will be concerned with Regina's roles as wife and mother, two aspects of the personality of the protagonist understood as key within her identity, owing that they shape her overall personality at the same time they might influence the viewers' perception of her character.

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4.3.1.1. New southern woman against patriarchal rule

A beautiful woman about to turn forty, with an elegant figure and a lively expression on her face, Regina Giddens makes her first appearance from the balcony of her house, with a vitality and a presence that cannot go unnoticed by the viewer. She just got up and is still fixing the

last details of her hairstyle. She comes out upon hearing the voice of her brother Ben, who lives next door to her, and was talking to her niece from the window. Regina's neat appearance instantly contrasts with her brother's matutine untidiness, just as their intentions differ: while Ben suggests having breakfast together, Regina claims she prefers silence in the morning. In this low angle shot (Figure 15) we meet Regina for the first time, with her face illuminated by the early morning light and framed by a set of lights and shadows produced by the sun's rays that pass through the trees next to her house. Her haughtiness, that she shows both in her gestures and in her words towards her brother, is reinforced by her straight posture and the energetic tone of her voice. All the elements of the shot come together to introduce her as she perceives herself, and how she usually acts towards others, in an absolute display of power, like a queen.



Figure 15

In addition to her prideful and overconfident attitude, Regina is the bearer of traits quite similar to the ones already found in her brothers' personality, particularly in Ben's one. She is greedy, money-oriented, calculating, sharp, focused, and cold-hearted. In addition, she is rebellious, daring, resolute, and persistent. Her elder brother perceives her exactly this way, as a very intelligent woman, whom he admits to admiring. For her other brother, Regina is too selfish and daring to be a woman. The trait that Ben appreciates the most in his sister is precisely the one that Oscar dislikes the most: her intelligence. The fact that Regina is so haughty and powerful is greatly upsetting for Oscar, owing that for him she is a rival to fear. For her husband Horace, Regina is now a sort of platonic love; once the real love he failed to retain (if he ever had it). Horace also admires her intelligence and beauty, but their marriage relationship is badly damaged. For her daughter, Regina is a person to listen to and obey. Her relationship is not a particularly close one, like that of the young woman with her father, but it is not bad either. For Birdie, Regina is not as fearful a Hubbard as Oscar and Ben, but she is still a Hubbard, hence the symbol of her oppression.

At the opening of *The Little Foxes* the Hubbard parents are already gone, and Regina has become a mature woman who finally got to free herself from her most immediate patriarchal ties, remaining only active in the fight for her freedom against other secondary male forces different from his father. Now in 1900, Regina is still a dominant and talkative character, as she was twenty years earlier, but together with her less pleasant traits she has also retained her intelligence, her affability, and her beauty. The only difference is that at this point she has gathered an experience and is even wittier and more perilous. Following Griffin and Thorsten, we could conclude that she is the incarnation of the graceful southern woman, as she shows herself at the very opening of the play, when she tries to seduce the tycoon, Mr. Marshall, with her good looks and her feminine obsequiousness, employed to achieve her own (economic) benefit: "She flatters Marshall, steers the conversation away from perilous topics, smooths over awkward patches, and exerts her charm and sexual magnetism to assure Marshall that he is not only welcome but personally attractive to her" (53). Regina may not reflect the southern belle prototype, but it would appear possible to consider her as even more charming than this old southern figure sometimes. As we can see in Figure 16, where her looks and her smile seem to captivate Mr. Marshall, Regina is a resourceful and eye-catching woman, whose gaze and smile endow her with certain persuasion skills over people.



Figure 16

This over-the-shoulder shot captures the moment when Mr. Marshall invites Regina to visit him in Chicago. The lighting effect enhances face and chest and makes her appear in all her splendor. Her dark dress contrasts with her white skin, her fragile looks contrasts with her strength and her illuminated figure opposite to Mr. Marshall's half figure in the dark — on the left and with his back to the audience. Judging from this capture of Regina, she seems to possess the power to manipulate anyone she wants. It is one of the first instances in which Regina appears not far from a mirror but, for once, she is not reflected in it, probably because her attention is not focused on her exterior appearance, that is, on her own looks, but on her inner feelings instead, that is, on her wish to go to Chicago and the pleasure that Mr. Marshall's invitation produces in her, adding to her already strong motivation.

Unlike Birdie, who is neither the ugly duckling of the town, nor a significantly attractive woman, Regina is in fact very beautiful and she openly uses her sexuality to have men wrapped under her little finger as much as possible: "En tanto que *encantadora* que *engaña*, es también el prototipo de mujer fatal. Una *apariencia seductora* que es *atractiva* para los hombres, genera su polo opuesto, un *interior* que es *dañino y peligroso* para el hombre" (Mulvey 69; emphasis added). Nobody seems to resist Regina's sensuality and sexuality: Marcus, John Bagtry, Horace, and even Ben, surrender to her fatal loveliness. But the fact that she is a charming creature does not necessarily mean that she represents the horrible mask of evil, in view of the fact that we can also find an example of a determined beautiful and sassy woman whose aggressiveness is unnoticeable, the young Alexandra Giddens, also called Zan by those who are closer to her. Her appeal is not as evident as her mother's, but she is perceived as attractive, at least in Wyler's film, where both mother and daughter interpreted respectively by Bette Davis and Theresa Wright are stunning in all their different outfits of the 1900s period. Alexandra's feminine magnetic effect is especially emphasized by the director, who presents a young Alexandra able to succeed in seducing David Hewitt, the boy she likes, tenderly.

Regina's aggressiveness is evident throughout the play, although it slightly —maybe unconsciously— vanishes for just a moment at the end, in her confrontation with her daughter. She has, as a consequence, showed herself as a *femme fatale*, that is to say, "a tantalizing, aggressively beautiful, perverse, and without conscience, women who lure weaker men to their ruin and wield the upper hand" (Davies 131). After Horace returns home, Regina strongly tries to convince him to invest money in her brothers' business with Mr. Marshall. She uses her feminine charms, but she does not succeed. If she finally persuaded Horace to lend them the percentage they needed for their business deal, the result would probably end up being Alexandra's sacrifice, since Regina had discussed with Oscar, however vaguely, that Zan would marry his son Leo (Zan's cousin). On the other hand, we can understand it simply as Horace's attempt to punish Regina —who has never loved him— with his denial, at the same time he wants to remind her of his male power. Even if he is sick and lacks the energy for confrontations, he is still the one likely to win a fight, fundamentally because of the power that is given to him within the patriarchal system.

Regina's personality traits, as observed from within McCrae and Costa's OCEAN model, show her as an extremely conscientious character, with a tendency to high openness, and a

very low level of neuroticism and agreeability. Therefore, outstanding traits in the Hubbard disinherited heiress are her ambition, efficiency, self-discipline, callousness, and resilience. Consequently, the protagonist of *The Little Foxes*, Regina Giddens, can also be seen as a warrior, mainly due to her strength and endurance in the struggle for power —money—, but also because she presents an amalgam of features which is typical of the amazon —race of warrior women— and has been defined as follows:

> A *woman who likes to be equal*, *protests against male superiority* and *does not recognise any authority*. The notions of rivalry, envy and revenge are seen firmly constellated in her. She likes to be taken seriously and spurns personal attention or remarks from males. She *values efficiency and success* and deals with personal complications in a *"masculine" way* or represses them. Such a woman *might contract marriage by appraising it in terms of social, public or financial gains* —something which will further her *ambition*—. She has *no patience with children* … she would not shrink from *using her femininity* to brighten her career or business prospects. (Kataria 98; emphasis added)

Taking this definition into account, we realize that Regina had considered her father's authority only up to the moment when Ben began to have the control of the money, that is to say, once Marcus loses his economic power, Regina does not acknowledge the patriarchal authority any longer. She does not acknowledge her brother's authority either, but it is undeniable that he runs the family business, and she has to side with him, because it would be very difficult for her to fight against gender inequality, a cultural situation determined by the social system established. As a southern woman experiencing the change of century, she has the chance to see how the social system adjusts to new times; yet, it would not be easy for women. As a woman under these social circumstances, she will need a very strong will and an even stronger brainpower. She is the bearer of both these personality traits, so she will use them to patiently scheme a wicked plan based on blackmail.

Aristocracy cannot easily adapt to the New South, they lag behind in the glory of the past, thus giving way to the advent of bourgeoisie. Regina belongs to a family of traders, a frail force when her father was the patriarch of the family, but already a considerably stronger social group in 1900, when the Hubbard foxes are given a better chance at "eating the earth," as Horace Giddens claims. Regina knows that her brothers will never treat her as an equal, so she fights to have the same opportunities from the very beginning with all the strategies within her reach. She aims to go to Chicago, she wants to be free from the Hubbard family. She has her own dreams and she is definitely convinced of her ability and strength to make them real. Her self-consciousness and her regular, though subtle, attack on male authority, allow her to be not only equal to men at the end, but even superior, as she will finally achieve a victory over both her husband and her brothers.

Regina, a haughty and self-centered woman detests Horace and her brother Oscar, but she values efficiency in Ben; she admires his intelligence and malicious moves in the game of making business, his way of facing life, and the cunning form in which he trades with other people's life. She probably has a high regard for Ben since the moment he had the courage to defy his father and occupy his place, and she admits she admires his intelligence and his firm decisions —a manifestation of his dominion in the art of making business, though humiliating and submitting for Regina. In the first scene of *The Little Foxes*, Regina allies with Ben against Oscar, and she asks for a bigger share of the benefits. Ben admires her courageous attitude as she is now in her way to achieve a victory over her brothers, and her pleased expression seems

to show her disposition after the dinner with Mr. Marshall and the subsequent business deal between the Hubbard brothers and the northern tycoon.

Putting emphasis on the idea that female character should not be aggressive but gracious, Ben constantly reminds her sister to smile instead of acting defensive or daring in order to achieve her goals. One of the characters that most reinforces the idea of the power of patriarchy in the film, Ben, wants to teach everyone with his authority, including the rebellious Regina. However, she clearly replies that she prefers to do things "her own way." It is important to emphasize that this is her decision, what somehow empowers her, since she is aware that she could impress anyone with her beauty, her intelligence, and her know-how, and she decides when to use this for her advantage, or who to dazzle and who not. In fact, throughout the film we can see how she treats all men with indifference or superiority on different occasions. Her brothers, her husband, her nephew, and even the young Hewitt, all have interactions with the Giddens matriarch in which she acts haughty or even callous towards them. The only exception is the industrialist Marshall, probably mainly because what interests Regina most in the world is for her business relationship with him to succeed. Notwithstanding, it must be no coincidence that the northerner shows a remarkable courtesy and empathy towards everyone. In direct contrast to the rest of the male characters in *The Little Foxes*, Mr. Marshall has no desire to demonstrate his superiority (either financial or of knowledge) with respect to women (or men, for even the greater worth of his person). Considering that he openly appreciates Regina's intelligence, Birdie's upbringing, and Alexandra's piano performance, never acting arrogantly during his visit to Regina's house, the northerner wins as much empathy from the female in the play as probably from the movie viewers.

As we can see in the following low angle shot (Figure 17), while Mr. Marshall seems hypnotized by the piano performance of Birdie and his niece, Ben is totally disinterested and keeps obsessing with closing the deal. In the middle is Regina, now absolutely charming, all the while trying to control the impatience of her noticeably less polite brother, who was interrupting the recital. In the center of the frame, with her face lit up from the left side as she hands Ben a cup of coffee, the audience is allowed to notice that her expression is not one of anger or disapproval, but of encouragement to patience and camaraderie towards her brother. Therefore, ironically, she is now acting as Ben had constantly recommended her to do; the point to keep in mind is, however, the fact that she does it not because of Ben's advice but because she knows it is the option that would work best for her in this situation. This is a subtle though relevant example of Regina's defiance of patriarchy, since it undoubtedly empowers her, making it clear that she has the capacity to change her attitude and her register as it suits her, and with whom it suits her.



Figure 17

Always trying to get into business and, consequently, confronting men, some scholars claim that Regina deals with her problems in a masculine way, since she fights them with all her weapons and without fearing a defeat, that is to say, she prefers to act than to remain silent, as southern women were expected to do. If we want to take this opinion into consideration, we must briefly reflect about a certain shade of ambiguity in Regina's identity: on the one hand, she is very feminine and attractive for men but, on the other hand, she dreams about becoming rich and getting in touch with city ladies in Chicago.



Figure 18

Regina's manners are very feminine, since she uses her beauty as a tool to beat the male power, and she is very fussy about her appearance. For instance, when Mr. Marshall visits the family she receives him in her very best clothes, and she is constantly keeping an eye on her looks, especially on her hairdo, as we can see in Wyler's film, where Bette Davis (as Regina) slightly —and sensually— arranges her hair several times during the dinner. Still, whenever a woman dares to think, speak, and/or act with the freedom that men have always done, her attitude tends to be inevitably understood as masculine, and so it is portrayed when Regina states that she is very interested in meeting "lovely women —Very lovely women" (154). From these words, W. David Sievers (*Freud on Broadway*) infers that "[s]he has identified herself so completely with the male Hubbards that she expresses a hint of lesbianism by her curiosity over the lovely women in Chicago" (113).

A possible perception of the viewer could be that of Regina as a mixture of sensual femininity and masculine bravery —the perfect embodiment of the amazon or simply a resolute and indomitable woman. However, from our exhaustive observation of the character attending to the different parts of Ede's "clock of character," there is no conclusive evidence of any lesbian feature in her. Maybe she wants to be among ladies because she is tired of always being surrounded by men, maybe she wants to feel like one of them, or maybe it is just a comment. Regina's disgust with sex can be seen as a result of her being trapped in an unhappy marriage and that is the reason why she does not want to have any physical contact with her husband. Moreover, she is very feminine and stylish and, from our observations, there is no reason to think she has homosexual tendencies.

On one of the first images of Regina reflected in a mirror (Figure 18), she appears splendorous after the dinner —and the successful deal— with Mr. Marshall. Mirrors are used in the film especially to represent Regina's personal development, her progressive loss of humanity and her complex personality. She is difficult to identify, even for herself, because, although she is sure about her desires, she is also uncertain about her future. In this case, the intention of the filmmaker is to show her in a glorious moment: attempting to look like a lady, she chooses an elegant dress that enhances her beauty. She usually wears the same hairdo on every occasion, but now she has adapted it to the situation by means of adding an elegant brooch. Occupying the center of this medium shot with her back to the audience, Bette Davis shows us her nude shoulders as well as her hairstyle, which receive an intense light from the left, while the mirror allows us to share her own vision of herself and contemplate her expression, as her face is, curiously enough, framed by two candles which only appear reflected in the mirror. Surrounded by all the small porcelain figurines, she looks like the queen, and not even the sophisticated inert ladies in porcelain can compete with her.



Figure 19

Contrasting with the previous splendorous image, Figure 19 presents us with a worried Regina. In her bedroom, she focuses her attention on her own reflection, after having remembered her youth through some pictures. She observes the changes in her appearance and, although she does not seem to reject her maturity, she fears the passage of time. She dislikes the vision of wrinkles on her face, the decay of her elegant expression, the fading out of her brightness. She does not want to abandon her youth and liveliness, but at the same time her appearance is not as relevant as it was before, as she is rather focused on gambling —against her brothers— in order to achieve a wealthy future modeled by her wishes. On the other hand, and precisely because her main objective is to make business, we can think that she also looks surprised, to a certain extent, by such a discovery. Perhaps she looks at the mirror in the precise moment she feels changed and it is then when, by chance, she realizes she is not so young. As this is something difficult to accept for her, her concentrated expression —with her knit brows and her lips tensely closed— reflects her preoccupation. Once again, the light enhances her face, so we can clearly perceive her gestures and speculate about her feelings but, contrary to the previous image —where her head was exactly reflected in between two candles—, here she is framed by darkness, the darkness of the room and, possibly, by her own darkness. For her, this room, where she is suddenly attracted toward the mirror, is dark because it was her husband's room, so it reminds her that she is married to a man she cannot even bear sleeping with. In spite of everything, she decides to continue with her plan and hurries as much as possible to be ready to receive Horace, who had been admitted to a hospital for a long time and, although yet sick, is now (cunningly) called back home by his wife Regina.

When Cal, the Negro coachman of the Hubbards, arrives without Horace and Alexandra, she doubts for the first time about the future development of the events. She had blackmailed Oscar, but now —although just for a moment— she is not sure that the self-confidence she had in her possibilities to manipulate her husband will really give the result she expected. However, when her brothers, always ready to overpower Regina, come to ask her for an explanation about Horace's delay, she recovers her decisiveness and she tells them not to worry because Horace might have stopped for some reason and will surely arrive the next day. This conversation among the Hubbards takes place at the staircase where we can easily perceive their struggle for power, as shown in the sequence of shots in Figures 20 ("They didn't come on the 6 o'clock, Regina."), 21 ("Well Horace has that cousin… Maybe they stopped off to see him."), 22 ("Hmm, Regina... That cousin of Horace's has been dead for years.") and 23 ("My Ben, you are always remembering about people dying! It is so bad for your health.")

There is an extensive use of the staircase to emphasize the power game in Hellman's plays in general, and *The Little Foxes* is not an exception. Considering this meaningful space for the movie, Wyler decided to shoot numerous scenes with the protagonists on the staircase. At a first glance, the staircase serves two functions: on the one hand, it shows the position (spatial and of power) of the characters and, on the other hand, it is revealed as the favorite place for the development of important events. Although most of the plotting and general family interactions take place in different places in the Giddens' house (the living room, the bedroom, the porch, etc.), the staircase is the place where the viewer can truly observe how Regina moves her chess piece in the game of power in which it is involved.

Upon his arrival, Regina feels happy, not in a love outburst but because Horace's presence was necessary for her to participate in and benefit from Mr. Marshall's business (since, as a woman, she was not allowed to manage the money by herself). Thus, she feels relieved because it seems things are going right for her again. Ready to receive him, Regina runs to the boudoir and puts on her make up, and it is before she abandons her room that we can see her again



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

reflected in the mirror (Figure 24). In this occasion she is dressed in white, she is in a hurry, and she has no time to look at herself in the mirror attentively, but she appears reflected nonetheless. Although she is not conscious about it, the audience is allowed to see her back in the mirror while Regina is moving. Far from her interest in looking pretty —interest shown in the making up scene—, the mirror is now introduced by Wyler perhaps as an anticipation of the following sequence, where Regina will try to convince her husband with an artificial tenderness. The reflection presenting her back and not her face might be seen as a sign of her hypocrisy, of her two-facedness. She hates Horace, but she smiles at him and speaks persuasively to him anyhow, in order to get what she wants. Her duplicity immediately comes to light, however, when, as she does not reach her objective easily, she gets crossed and shouts at Horace. Therefore, she starts her first fight with him after his arrival from the hospital and her nerves lead her to move all around the room until, once again, she approaches a mirror while she is trying to calm down, as we can see in Figure 25.



Figure 24

Horace is sitting down on his armchair and shows to the audience an expression of pity and tiredness. Trying to be patient, he does not want to argue with Regina. Calculatedly rather than genuinely, Regina begs his pardon and insists on talking about business again later. For



Figure 25

second time, she is pretending to be nice with Horace, and once again we see her back instead of her face. Moreover, we cannot see her even indirectly because we cannot get a glimpse at her reflection in the mirror in spite of the fact she is looking at it. A possible reading of this situation might be that, while Regina is trying to reassure her identity through the mirror, she is not allowed to do so given the fact that at this moment she is feigning to be the nice and serene wife she is not. Therefore, that image is a fake one and the mirror refuses to reflect it.

When Regina calms down, her brothers make their appearance to *welcome* Horace with the intention of getting straight to the point, that concerning Mr. Marshall's cotton mill business and Horace's share in it. Overwhelmed by the situation and feeling very weak, Horace starts to breathe with difficulty and, once Ben offers him his help, he asks for a glass of water. Immediately, Regina takes up her feigned role of caring, devoted wife again and she decides to give him the water herself. Thus, she approaches to another mirror, but this time we see her half-frustrated, half-aggressive look perfectly captured occupying a central position in the eye view shot below (Figure 26). When the viewer might have been excepting her to show some sympathy for the ill Horace, her gaze, full of contained feelings, yet cold, evidences her displeasure with the situation she is experiencing at the moment.

Once Horace rejects Regina's proposition, Ben immediately sides with Oscar and abandons her. Thus, she puts pressure on Horace in order to save the situation and, as the play advances, Regina seems to achieve mastery in her art of blackmailing, and she will try to make the biggest profit possible out of her brothers' theft. Her husband is now dead, without having had time to make real his threat of changing his will. She did not allow him to do it because, behaving like a goddess, she herself decided his death and she inherited his money. Now, in spite of —or precisely because of— the fact that she is a woman, she has the power, only because she has the money. She had always had the self-confidence, intelligence and ambition to ascend in the social ladder and live a comfortable and fashionable wealthy life, although she lacked the money to do it. She lacked the power to really *manipulate* men without having to submit for any reason; in other words, she had the intention, but she did not have the means. Now that she has the intention and Horace's money, a more dangerous blackmailer is born, similar to those portrayed in Ibsen's plays. Regina had always blackmailed those she could cajole by means of using her sexuality, but she had not succeeded in defeating traditional roles. With both will and means, she is now unstoppable.



Figure 26

Regina's art goes farther than that of most of Ibsen's characters such as Nora Helmer or Gedda Gabler, since she now blackmails her own brothers asking them for a seventy-five per cent of the shares in the cotton mill that Mr. Marshall is supposed to be building. She also reminds them that in case they do not like her new pro-position, they will go to jail for having

stolen Horace's bonds. Obviously, Oscar and Ben have no other option than submitting to her will. The queen of beauty and intelligence immediately ascends to the throne now that she has money, and she will not hesitate in struggling to get a bigger sum, as she explicitly confirms to her brothers:

> I shall also tell my story to Mr. Marshall, who likes me, I think, and who will not want to be involved in your scandal. A respectable firm Marshall and Company. The deal would be off within an hour. (Turns to them angrily) And you know it. Now I don't want to hear any more from any of you. *You'll do no more bargaining in this house*. I'll take my seventy-five per cent and we'll forget the story forever. That's one way of doing it, and the way I prefer. You know me well enough to know that I don't mind taking the other way. (Hellman, *Little* 221-22)

Notwithstanding, in spite of how evil Regina may seem, I share Adler's opinion with regards to blackmailing, owing that Regina's blackmail to her own brothers seems of less importance if we take into account the fact that "no one can really be called a victim since the blackmailed would readily become the blackmailer should the opportunity present itself. To the Hubbards blackmail is a natural business tactic" (J. H. Adler 35). In addition, in the fierce battle for power, the submitted gender might find it necessary to resort to stronger tactics and strategies in order to have a chance at succeeding. In her analysis of desire and power, McKinnon parallels Marxism and feminism as theories with similar characteristics and both focused on the control of power: class marks the social structure being those in power the ones who hold the control of the work (*and workers*) that leads (*who lead*) to production and the raising of capital. In the same way, gender is the social structure that differentiates men and women being those in power (male) the ones who hold the control over sexuality, being the desire a value for the interaction of people. MacKinnon believes that gender can be understood as "a matter of dominance, not difference" (108). Since women subordinate and men are occupying the position of supremacy, McKinnon wonders if "there is anything *other* than the reality of the world men make; whether there is *any* sphere of the world that responds to our will, our thought" (113). Be as it may, the queen will be going to Chicago. In this sense Regina is certainly admirable for having achieved economic independency in the end and finally being able to start her reign.

4.3.1.2. Giddens on paper, Hubbard at soul

As a member of society, Regina is now living her life with her married name, but her identity and sentiment of belonging has remained Hubbard. Looking closer at her social identity from within the second quarter of Eder's "clock of character," we must mention that, from her ascribed social status as the disinherited daughter of a merchant (hence lacking economic power), she came to achieve economic independence, therefore, succeeding at social mobility. In order to get to that point, she first married a relatively wealthy banker whom she did not love and, after many years of marriage, she will let him die in order to get his money. As Mrs. Giddens, Regina maintains a good relationship with her community since everyone seems to like her husband. Therefore, Horace does not only provide the money, but he also contributes to Regina's social status.

As a mother, Regina is always serious and authoritative. Her relationship with Alexandra is not a close one, but they communicate with each other without major issues. Despite her cold character, there is enough evidence throughout the movie of the fact that Regina cares

for her daughter, in her own way. She does not want her to marry Leo, knowing that he is a "wild boy." She wants to educate her and make her stronger so that she can live a better life; and she wants to get her the world that she always wanted. In one of her interactions with Mrs. Hewitt, the seamstress who sews both her clothes and her daughter's, Regina shows her concern with Alexandra's relationship with the seamstress' son, David. Since they are so close, Regina worries that David might be courting her; yet, she confesses to the seamstress that she always tries "not to interfere with Alexandra too much," considering that other people meddling with her issues bothered her when she was young. From this reflection of the Giddens matriarch who, despite her usual lack of empathy, is at this moment considering Alexandra's feelings, we can infer that she attempts to be a good mother. In fact, she seems preoccupied with it. However, it would not be an exaggeration to say that her major preoccupation is getting the money she needs to make her dreams come true and run away to Chicago.

Regina married Horace because Ben, who was in possession of the whole Hubbard fortune, had forced her into doing so. Although she was infatuated with ex-Confederate soldier John Bagtry, she gave up on love and she focused solely on money. However, despite that initially being Ben's idea, she soon realized that Horace could mean a certain freedom for her: first, he had money, so she would become richer; and second, she would liberate herself from a life with her brothers. Thus, she made use of her femininity to conquer a heart she was not really interested in winning.

Marriage is a social institution which usually establishes a bond not only between husband and wife, but also with the couple's respective family. In *The Little Foxes*, the outsiders establish a relationship with the whole of the Hubbard clan, so we can see how they try to be accepted and respected by all of them, but social conflict arises within both family subunits, Regina's and Oscar's. In both households, women seem to be struggling within their marriages in a different way. According to Fox-Genovese, in the South —as all around the world—, women were not completely defined until they were defined in relation with men, because it was the only way which society understood them as part of it: "Gender relations constitute the foundation of any society and lie at the core of any individual's sense of self, for gender relations map the most fundamental relations between any individual and the other members of society. We do not experience our gender in the abstract, but in relation to others: to be a woman is to be a woman in relation to men" (29).

Marriage is generally a symbol of love and union, but Regina makes of hers a symbol of money and disgust. The fact that she has been required to marry a man she did not love seems to have been a guarantee for an unhappy life, given her rebellious character and her predisposition to pursue independence instead of simply submitting to authority. As she herself confesses to her husband in a moment of rage, when she was obliged to marry him, she was expecting a life of wealth and comfort. She admits to wanting a life with Horace with the purpose of escaping *loneliness*, but that word has an unusual meaning for her: "Not the way people usually mean. Lonely for all the things that I wasn't going to get" (Hellman, *Little* 211). Yet in a house full of people, this feeling of loneliness comes to Regina stronger after having lost her inheritance to Ben. She refers to loneliness not in the standard emotional terms but as lacking in material wealth, which emphasizes her lack of emotion as well as her extreme need for money, almost nearing the pathological. We can perceive her greed from this conversation she has with Horace, but it could be also understood that Regina was trying to escape some sort of depressive state, since lacking the wealth she so intensely craved was causing a permanent unhappiness in her, that particular *loneliness*. However, after having been married for some time, she realized that craving was still there, nothing had changed. She was still lonely. So she

started to refuse having sex with Horace alleging headaches and making excuses as she started to dream about a stroke of luck which would allow her to become wealthy and free as soon as her husband died. She did not like Horace since the beginning, but the more she got to know him, the less she wanted to be with him. Yvonne Shafer's words summarize Regina's feelings very accurately: "she hoped her marriage would bring her wealth and happiness, but she grew to loathe her husband because he did not have the strength and greed which could bring her all she wanted in material terms" (127).

Regina also confesses her disgust with Horace as a partner, which adds to the bad sentiment she has mistakenly brought to herself with her pursue of wealth.

> Regina: No. No, it wasn't what I wanted. (*Pauses, leans back, pleasantly*) It took me a little while to find out that I had made a mistake. As for you—I don't know. It was almost as if I couldn't stand the kind of man you were—(*Smiles, softly*) I used to lie there at night, praying you wouldn't come near.
> Horace: Really? It was as bad as that?
> Regina (*Nods*): Remember when I went to Doctor Sloan and I told you he said there was something the matter with me and that you shouldn't touch me any more?
> Horace: I remember.
> Regina: But you believed it. I couldn't understand that. I couldn't understand that anybody could be such a soft fool. That was when I began to despise you. (Hellman, *Little* 212)

This explains not only that her relationship with her husband was quickly deteriorating, but also the fact that her dislike for him was increasing at the same rate. Therefore, when judging her vile actions with respect to her husband, it would be helpful to take into account this state of the couple's relationship, and the meaning that Horace has for Regina: on the one hand, it is a reminder of her mistake in marrying him (self-blame feeling); on the other hand, she perceives him in a sense as her oppressor since he keeps her in a situation that displeases her both physically and mentally (resentment feeling), and for this she does blame him. Another addition to the disenchanted wife's negative feelings comes curiously from Horace's empathic attitude. When Regina refuses to have sex with her husband, he believes everything she tells him. But far from interpreting his tender reaction as an act of love, she understands it as weakness and gullibility, which contributes to her dislike for her husband, a person in whom she cannot see anything positive anymore. Be as it may, it is the viewer's decision whether to consider Regina's state of mind as a mitigating factor for her actions or not.

At a first sight, Regina's attitude reflects cynicism, but we must not forget about the environment which surrounded her. She had already felt the oppression of the male rule, and now she was trapped in a marriage where she felt oppressed again. In the nineteenth century it was generally believed that "some women might have lessened fertility simply by limiting sexual encounters. [And] such behavior likely affected the marriage and might have increased husbands' interest in extramarital affairs" (Censer 90), but Regina clearly rejected Horace because she could not stand him. Then Horace felt legitimized to have extramarital affairs, something that would cause even greater rejection from his wife. On the one hand, she accused her husband of having sex with other women and, on the other hand, Horace somehow left Regina apart as he was involved in his own activities, in addition becoming busier once he allied with Regina's brothers. These facts do not justify either Regina's rejection towards Horace nor her hostility; however, they certainly help to understand Regina's possible feeling of entrapment, even of a certain inferiority as a female, as well as her ensuing desire to evolve

—both as valuable member of the family and as a social being— and reach equality, or even superiority to men.

4.3.1.3. Ascension to a *reign* of evil

As the beautiful and dangerous Pandora, as the charming Helena of Troy, the young Regina of *Another Part of the Forest* was a trap both for the young banker Horace and for those who surrounded her. She was sweet and charming, but "[s]u apariencia encubre su esencia. Su topografía es una oposición binaria, una separación entre un interior y un exterior, entre superficie seductora y peligrosa profundidad" (Mulvey 68). When Horace married her —for her beauty, and probably because she was also daughter to a wealthy family thanks to her father's shady dealings—, he undoubtedly believed she was a harmless creature, but twenty years later, in *The Little Foxes*, she will appear as an unscrupulous and merciless woman. Notwithstanding, luckily for her, her dream will become true as Horace, very ill, will die at a young age.

The story of the wife who refuses to save her husband —or, rather, who leads him to death— reminds us of *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), by a well-known predecessor of Lillian Hellman, Eugene O'Neill, who in his trilogy takes us back to the Greek mythology. The protagonist of the three plays, Christine Mannon, would be a clone of Clytemnestra, the same role Regina Giddens represents. On the other hand, Ezra Mannon could be compared to Agamemnon, the ill husband, thus being the counterpart of Horace Giddens. There is a crime in each case —in the Greek myth, in O'Neill's play, and also in Hellman's— given that the merciless wives watch their husbands die and, thus, in this sense contributing to the murder. Apart from this possible reading, we could also consider a different one where Regina is not understood as a murderer but as a sociopath. In this situation, being devoid of moral principles, she would feel no responsibility to save a person from a death that she could easily avoid. In *The Little Foxes* it is a coincidence that it is her husband who is dying and that his death is beneficial for her; but the way in which she would react if the person in need of help was someone else, remains to be seen. Given her usual coldness, her reaction may not have been entirely different. This would not excuse her morally, but it would amplify the conflict beyond a gender-based assault in which Regina is perceived as a ruthless black widow and therefore as the absolute villain of the story.

For Mary Lynn Broe, "despoilers" are those who start an evil action and bring destruction with it, whereas "by-standers," on the contrary, are those who remain passive to evil (79). Drawing from Broe, we could say that, for once, these women —Clytemnestra, Christine, and Regina— abandon their roles of active *despoilers* suddenly becoming passive *bystanders*, that is to say, reflexively contributing to the men's death. On the other hand, we can also consider them active *bystanders*, since the act of observing and doing nothing is voluntarily, hence active. In the Greek mythology, Clytemnestra is known as the queen of Peloponnesus, married to Agamemnon. Protagonist of Homer's poems and many other Greek plays, she is Helen of Troy's cousin and a symbol of passion. Furious because her husband had killed their first born, Iphigeneia, she decides to murder him. For Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, Evil in the private space, that is, in the family and the household, is epitomized in the character of Clytemnestra as a woman, wife, and betrayer. Aeschylus compares her domestic evil with public social wickedness, and he understands her murder as her ascension to power. For Sophocles, Clytemnestra is not an evil being, but she is a threat for the family and the whole city.

In O'Neill's trilogy, General Ezra Mannon, a Civil War hero, returns from the battlefield and is murdered by his wife Christine. Mannon's daughter, Lavinia, who loved her father,

swears to take revenge on her mother for her father's death. Lavinia convinces her brother Orin to take part in her revenge. Thus, Orin kills his mother's lover and, finally, he commits suicide, remaining only Lavinia in the gloomy Mannon house. In *The Little Foxes*, also set in the years of chaos after the Civil War, Regina Giddens, in a sense, also murders her husband. She knows he is very weak, but she puts all her effort in upsetting him (not before he had upset her). With outstanding coldness and painful revelations about their relationship, in the end she has the opportunity to let him die by denying him her help, and she decides to choose her freedom over Horace's life. She actually wanted him to die, as she had already let him know in a previous discussion: "I hope you die. I hope you die soon. (Smiles) I'll be waiting for you to die" (199).

Like Christine, she had abhorred her husband and the relationship with her daughter has deteriorated. While Christine is the evil character in *Mourning Becomes Electra*, adulterous and incestuous, James Durbin considers Regina one of the "great bitches of the modern drama" (qtd. in Erben 129), a standpoint which Bette Davis' performance in the film probably contributed to emphasize (Dick, "Tallulah"). Christine and Regina, like Clytemnestra, are unhappy in their marriages and they are greedy and materialistic, but their husbands are not mere victims. On the contrary, they are most likely to blame too. These wives are dangerous, but the reason for their evil deeds might be their exclusion from the symbolic order within the family —institution in which they feel supported by some members, but alone in the end— and their exclusion from what society has catalogued as purely male spheres —that is, from anything related to money.

Representative of loneliness and an indomitable rebelliousness against the norm is Antigone, another figure of the Greek tragedy, whereas a famous example of a woman who wants to control her husband's fortune is Shakespeare's great and avaricious Lady Macbeth. In Sophocles' tragedy, Antigone —daughter of Iocasta and Oedipus— receives punishment for burying her brother, a forbidden mercy given that he had rebelled against his own city. Antigone says she prefers to follow the divine law than the human one. Macbeth's wife in Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth* (1607), by her part, encourages a hesitant Macbeth to kill King Duncan and to finally become obsessed with the idea that there is blood in her hands. She is strong-willed and intelligent and, like Regina, she is wicked in her attempt to achieve success and always be herself, without the threat of any rival. Like Regina, Lady Macbeth uses all her persuasive methods in order to get what she wants, although the protagonist of *The Little Foxes* resorts to blackmail while Macbeth's wife directly plots the murders she deems necessary.

Regina wonders why women and property seem to be irreconcilable opposites, and what will be her own, as Jane Turner Censer does in her work *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood*, where she writes a whole chapter under that title. Until the last decades of the twentieth century, historians usually believed that the nineteenth-century women hardly ever owned property or had anything to do with business, even if they belonged to well-off families. Until Mary Beard work on equity law (1946), nineteenth century women were considered to be "covert," that is, economically covered by the marriage relationships. But with the time, this perspective changed and, as Censer notices, the prohibition of entering the business world for women "was neither complete nor permanent" (99). Moreover, we cannot forget to mention certain opinions emphasizing a feminist aspect in the changes that women's space was about to suffer, as the following interpretation of Finney: "The prominence of female characters in the drama of the period had everything to do with the situation of women at the turn of the century, a time when the first feminist movement was challenging the traditional view that women are fundamentally different from and subordinate to men" (76).

Quoting Janet Brown, "in Burke's terms, a feminist drama is one on which the agent is a woman, her purpose autonomy, and her scene a society in which women are powerless"



Figure 27

(15), but here Alexandra comes to re-assert this statement by becoming an autonomous woman at the very end of the play and film, when she confronts her mother, making her own decisions voiced as well as respected. On the other hand, Regina's decision to let Horace die is one of the most intense moments in play and film, and is representative of her determination. She really struggles for power, and she definitely becomes a heroine in the sense that she is capable of achieving her goal, despite her means being completely immoral. She becomes a true villain, but there is certain (malicious) heroism in her struggle concluding with achievement. The close-up above (Figure 27) shows the moment in which she refuses to help Horace, when "Wyler y el camarógrafo decidieron centrar la cámara sobre el rostro cruel e imperturbable de Bette y dejar al marido en el fondo, más desenfocado" (Spada 172), making of it a memorable image.

Her gaze contains both horror and courage. Courage to fight for a dream and horror of the monster she knows she is becoming so that she can fight for it. She does not feel horrified of Horace's ending, she is frightened because it is her who is leading him to death. If afraid, she is only afraid of herself. When Horace has his heart attack, Regina remains calm, immovable, while Toland, the film's director of photography, switches from deep focus to shallow focus, subjectively deriving the attention of the audience, not to the figure of Horace struggling up the stairs to find his extra bottle of medicine, but to Regina's face and her reaction to her husband's great effort at fighting for survival, something that is presumably taking place right behind her. On the right angle, Horace tries to reach the stairs to get hold of his medicine, but he is too weak to make it upstairs. After the great —and last— discussion he has had with Regina, he realized how much hate she had harbored towards him and what a difficult rival she was. However, as already mentioned, she is not the only villain of the story —as she is not only a villain. On the contrary, she is a victim too, in as much she has been trying to defend herself from what she perceived as hostile in an unfriendly environment. The only problem is the fact that she has to sacrifice too much in order to defeat her rivals and she ends up losing her humanity in the process. Yet, despite her dehumanization, we must bear in mind that "Regina's deviousness, manipulation and domination are not necessarily inherent female characteristics, as society usually believes; they are acquired traits, and they serve as the means of Regina's self-defense and survival in a hostile, patriarchal world which is not only indifferent to her actual needs but prevents her from expressing her talents creatively" (Georgoudaki 76).

In conclusion, Regina was fighting for her freedom and for her right to show her capability and her worth to the world. Having no other experience than a life shaped by the men of her family, she wanted to be considered valuable and stay dynamic outside the household. She wanted to feel part of a society and be called a materialistic person, the same as male citizens could be called. She wanted a life of her own and, in this light, she is admirable despite her being evil. She had only two alternatives: either to submit to an unhappy fate and become a victim like her own mother or her sister-in-law Birdie, or to become manipulative and scheming to change her future. As both were demoralizing, she decided to confront the world and build a better future for her once having threatened the male system and finally achieving *another part of the forest*. Vile villain, driven only by greed, without any right to redemption, or yet despicable villain, but made by society and driven by her desire for liberation, is in the viewer's

view. And it is also the viewer's decision to conclude if there would be any difference between these two cases or if, otherwise, the attenuation is not possible in an action like that of Regina.

4.3.2. Birdie Hubbard: a belle's nostalgia of the past

As Birdie in Wyler's *The Little Foxes*, Patricia Collinge made her debut in film, and she earned an Academy Award nomination as Best Supporting Actress for her great performance. She endowed Birdie with all the tenderness, sweetness, and naivety which made the character sympathetic for the audience, contrary to Hellman's predictions. Genteel, sweet and polite, when Birdie Hubbard is presented to us for the first time in the play, it is defending herself from the attacks of Ben, who claims: "To make a long story short, Lionnet now belongs to us. Twenty years ago *we took over their land, their cotton and their daughter*" (emphasis added). Birdie, for Ben, is only another of the Hubbard family possessions, that is to say, she belongs to the family but instead of being considered as a member, she is treated as a mere commodity.

She is dehumanized as she has been reduced to an object ever since she entered the Hubbard family. Once all the values of the Old South that Birdie stood for (class, honor, respectability) have been devaluated and are no longer necessary for her (already enriched) husband, she becomes nothing at all, and she will not be accounted for as a person. She is insignificant for everybody, especially for Regina, who does not want any kind of sisterhood with her, in spite of the fact that they share a similar situation of entrapment in a patriarchal world. Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, claims that in societies ruled by the patriarchal system, "humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being" (xvi). Maybe our *heroine*, Regina Giddens, escapes this situation when she finally achieves autonomy, but Simone de Beauvoir's words, indubitably, serve us to summarize Birdie's life: she has become what Oscar made of her, she is precisely what Oscar thinks she is. In other words, he has reduced her to nothing, and she adapts to being nothing without uttering a single word of remonstrance. This is efficiently reflected on the screen by Wyler, who —as a director, he was very keen on this technique— avoids using deep focus for some specific scenes, as for instance, when Birdie is seen in the foreground playing the piano and Horace is in the background (Figure 28). Presenting both at the same time without focusing on one at any moment, Wyler portrays the neglected Horace and Birdie as isolated beings, with a special emotional connection between them; paradoxically, characters who are alone and allied.

Birdie Hubbard is submissive and compliant, a modest female character whose wish is to please those who surround her. According to results obtained from Costa and McCrae's OCEAN model, Birdie presents a very low level of conscientiousness, scoring high in the rest of the domains, which can be perceived in a sense as an unbalanced personality. Her very high levels of openness and neuroticism, together with her high tendency to extraversion, except in the assertiveness facet (for which she scores a minimum low), correspond perfectly with the fact that she has been deprived of her own voice within the household, and she does not dare to take any decision by herself, hence increasing her anxiety, her lack of confidence, and her fragility. Her modest (even meek)



Figure 28

personality is revealing of her high degree of agreeableness (OCEAN maximum high), a trait she has in abundance as she is extremely humble, generous, forgiving, merciful, honest, and trusting. She is meanly mistreated and she assumes she is an inferior and useless being, to the point that she asks forgiveness almost for anything she does and says. Therefore, we can say she is as diffident as Lavinia, Regina's mother, who was constantly neglected by her husband and who even apologized for her own existence. Like Lavinia, Birdie is unperceived by the Hubbard family once he becomes a member of this clan.

Watching Birdie act, we could say that we do not find a tinge of malice in her, she seems to be too unobtrusive, too kind and caring to deal with wicked people, too naïve to live among *foxes* without being harmed. Before her marriage, Birdie's rival for the love of Oscar was a prostitute, Laurette, a woman without culture or any formal education, who could not even distinguish the sound of music as such —she called it "noise." In the end, it is Birdie who obtains the *victory*: she marries Oscar, but he is not a real profit for her, on the contrary, he will contribute to her gradual degradation with his ill-treatment once they get married, as the young Hubbard is the one who reaps economic benefit —together with "a name," the honor and respectability of the Bagtry family— and Birdie the mocked one, who gains nothing at all.

Birdie might be submissive, but she is not silly; her weakness prevents her from confronting male authority, although it does not mean she does not realize how mistreated —and ill-used— she has always been, in her own words: "Ben Hubbard wanted the cotton and Oscar Hubbard married it for him … Everybody knew that's what he married me for. Everybody but me. Stupid, stupid me" (Hellman, *Little* 205). By her laments, we can guess that she has finally realized that, when one lives in a hostile world, sometimes it is better to act than to remain eternally passive. But it is too late for her at present to change the past: her ways were too slow and the Hubbards were too fast; she could not think dishonestly, and they used to act immorally; she did not become conscious she was a trading object and the Hubbards were ready to use her as such. Now that she has been married for twenty years, she finds her circumstances immovable and, drawing a parallel between the character and the real world, we can say she has been reduced to what the American psychologist Jean Baker Miller, in her study *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, calls "the lesser person," because Birdie —as her name points out— is an encaged bird. She has been trapped in the patriarchal institution of marriage and she has neither freedom nor strength to untie her knots and fight for it. She is a good example of "how to be a good 'lesser' rather than how to make the journey from lesser to full stature" (5).

Birdie, as the belle of the fallen South, represents the decay of the old world, of the glorious past of fertile plantations and rich landowners. In *Another Part of the Forest* we meet her in a marriageable situation, although her family is already facing economic problems, something that precipitates her marriage, in fact, or in words of Kathryn Lee Seidel, we can say that "her short career as a belle ends with marriage" (xiii). For most of the belles, this early fall was due to the fact that once they became wives, women should remain at home, and balls, suitors and social encounters were over. For Birdie it was somehow different: on the one hand, she did not marry a plantation owner, but a new rich, a merchant; her territory was reduced to the household and even her skills in playing the piano were scorned. Unfortunately for Birdie, music and culture are not interesting for the Hubbards; money is the only important topic in any conversation, so she can be regarded as a sort of Eve expelled from Paradise and unable to adapt to the new world. Her name, *Bird*-ie, might also be representative of her personality, since birds are animals of a sweet nature, very different from foxes. As birds are usually identified by their singing, Birdie is related to music. However, it is not strange that those who are interpreted as foxes in the film (Ben, Oscar and Regina) dislike Birdie's music, because they are focused on

things they consider much more important. On the other hand, in the South, there is a parallelism between birds —who are always flying— and absentminded people. Thus, Birdie can also be read as a flighty character, a *not really serious* woman because she is frequently dreaming.

From all this, as well as from her addiction to alcohol, follows that Birdie Hubbard represents the fallen belle, that is to say, in a sense she embodies a tragic fate similar to the one of Blanche DuBois, the protagonist of Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*. They both dream with the past and, not being able to endure the harsh circumstances of their present life, they decide to resort to alcohol in order to remember their happy days. "[T]he traditional belle's lack of preparation for the corrupt modern world" (Entzminger 27) is emphasized by Hellman and Williams through naivety, a prominent feature in these two female characters. Birdie is unable to realize she is being *bought* in order to produce more benefits and she is completely unaware of the shocking greed of the Hubbard family. Similarly, Blanche is not capable of understanding Stanley's bad manners, so she mocks on her rudeness and his lack of culture, and he finally rapes her. Both women use alcohol to escape from reality; they share this method of escapism because both understand it as the only possibility to flee from a world they neither understand nor like. Thus, alcohol allows them to go back to the past in a subconscious state, dreaming of better moments, recalling the happiness of their childhood, the better social class their ancestors belonged to, in the end, recalling what for them is still the real South, the Old South which does not exist anymore. According to Seidel, "Blanche cannot reconcile her divided personality in the face of the violent passions of the modern world; consequently, she withdraws into a world of illusions and madness. She is thus an anachronistic representative of a moribund social order, whose dictates both cause her internal anxiety and make her unfit to cope with the modern world" (166).

We find Seidel's diagnosis easily applicable to the character of Birdie. Modernization is very attractive for everybody, even for Birdie, who also tries to explain her illusions when Oscar and the rest of the Hubbard clan are talking about the dreams they will achieve after the success of their business. Birdie is as excited as they are, but she is left apart. Consequently, her dreams vanish immediately, and she has no other option than keep on dreaming with the past, because she knows that a happy future will not exist for her. In Lionnet she can search for the peace and joy, and all the illusions the present has killed. However, despite drinking in order to go back to her past, she has not fallen into madness yet, although we can guess she would if her wealth turned into poverty, as was the case of Blanche. A rich southern belle in the age of commodities —"a moribund social order"— turned poor, with nothing of her own, must undoubtedly be something difficult to bear. As a consequence, "Birdie's only defense against the trials of the present is her preoccupation with her happy past" (Griffin and Thorsten 58).

On the contrary, Lederer reminds us of the ironic content of the play and she claims that "Birdie is not intended to be Blanche DuBois" (45), probably because she bases her comment on Hellman's intention. Thus, if the playwright's intention was to be ironic, she probably tried to present Birdie as an exceedingly weak and naïve woman who, despite her unhappy marriage, is still allowed to enjoy all the things she can buy with the money Oscar has managed to obtain. Unlike her, Regina, in spite of living within an unhappy marriage, has always been strong-minded and she decided to change her life using other means different from submission and tears. They are not extremely different, only regarding the fact that Regina decided to act —as the despoiler she is—, while Birdie decided to let her husband act —becoming a bystander— and she benefited from his business in the sense that, in spite of having lost the privileges of an aristocrat, she continues enjoying a comfortable life thanks to Oscar's money.



Figure 29

Perhaps there is certain irony in the fact that, unlike other female characters who decided to escape from the Hubbards, she remains with them, living emotionally unhappy but happily enough regarding her material necessities. Nevertheless, Birdie could be interpreted in a rather sympathetic manner, since she is a pitiful character, trapped in the Old South and unable to adapt to the modern world. She is representative of the fall of the southern values, she is no longer contemplated as a southern belle but, in a sense, she was admirable in *Another Part of the Forest*. In her twenties, she tried to deal with money, but as Gayle Austin notices, she failed because women were not allowed to trade: "Birdie tries to do some trading herself, when she asks for a loan on a property which is not hers to transact. In the end, Ben gives her the loan for his own reasons, but it is made clear that the only commodity that will successfully be traded will be Birdie herself, in marriage to Oscar, arranged by Ben" (65).

As she was once strong enough to humiliate herself and beg for money to the Hubbards to save her father's plantation, she now behaves like a heroine again, trying to save her beloved niece Alexandra from entering a life that would only bring her grief. Therefore, she warns Zan about the intentions Oscar has of marrying her to Leo. In return, this daring and nonetheless pitiable Birdie instantly receives a slap from Oscar, once Zan has disappeared from the scene (Figure 29).

Birdie's husband had been quietly observing her behind a curtain, in a position so straight that he seems a stone, god-like statue. In other words, Wyler captures Reid in the role of the cruel Oscar Hubbard as a tenebrous man, the aggressive patriarch who will not doubt in making full use of his power. It is a clear anticipation of the mistreatment that Birdie is about to suffer once she is left alone with him, a mistreatment that Wyler captured in the previous unexpected shot. The audience might expect Oscar's violent reaction to Birdie's comment on his private conversation about Leo with Ben and Regina, especially because it does not favour his son. However, such a direct aggression is not easily expected, regardless of Oscar's vindictiveness.

But suddenly Oscar's fury reaches Birdie's face and, paradoxically, it is now when she is perceived as a courageous woman. On the left of the image, she holds her head with her left hand while she hides her tears behind her right hand, closing the mouth she has, for once, dared to open. Even knowing Oscar well and being conscious of the violent reaction he would have, Birdie dared to warn Zan. Thus, in spite of the fact that it is Oscar the bigger figure in the center, contrasting with the smallness of his victim, Birdie's action achieves heroism and she wins the audience's favor. Moreover, this action is emphasized by its consequence: when Alexandra, who is in her room, hears the slap, and Oscar's shouting, she runs to the balcony in order to know what has happened. Immediately, Birdie tries to protect her once again and tells her a lie: she assures she has twisted her ankle instead of having been beaten.

The final scene of this sequence is then captured in the following high angle shot (Figure 30) whose function is to emphasize the previous scene: Birdie is downstairs, looking down, with her face hidden, while Zan looks at her, worried, holding the railing of verandah, and asking her what happened. The girl is on the right corner of the shot, with her back to the audience, but she is easily perceived as central instead of peripheral, because she stands closer to the camera. On the contrary, Birdie occupies a more central position, but we observe her from the distance, as a small

figure. Nonetheless, her words make her bigger and the camera will immediately approach her in close-up. In the end, although she has been punished, her heroic act remains loud and clear.



Figure 30

Birdie's problem is that she has been silent for too long and now it is too late for her to react against the life she has accommodated to. She is placed in the middle of a situation she does not know how to solve: supposedly, she is a wife and a mother, but she does not really love or is loved by either husband or son, and she most certainly wonders what Howe asks "What is there in life for women beyond pleasing one's grandfather, father, or husband? And looking forward to caring for children? What is there for women to love?" (259). The answer is Zan, Regina's daughter, the one she would like to have given birth to instead of her ungrateful, unkind son. She is her source of affection, and the recipient of all the love she can give. Her brother-in-law, an outsider adopted by the Hubbard family like her, is another support for Birdie. As we can see in Figure 31, she is very happy when he comes back home, and unlike Regina, she gives him a true warm welcome. In the foreground, a brightly smiling Birdie welcomes Horace, also with an expression of pleasure in seeing Birdie again. Birdie squats and holds Horace's hand after giving him a tender embrace. She does not want to bother him, since she is sure he will be tired, but she could not avoid running from her house, still in her bed clothes, as soon as she knew that Horace was already back. Regina and Ben —out of this shot, but still in the scene) are bothered by Birdie's irruption in the room, especially because they were about to talk business to Horace; however, it is Oscar the one who seems somehow infuriated. In the background we can see Oscar, standing up behind Birdie and Horace. The expression in his face is that of fury and contention, but his violence finally explodes and he tells Birdie off for coming in her nightclothes. We may even wonder if he feels jealous of the relation his wife and his brother-in-law have, mainly because of his male chauvinistic remarks, but nothing can bring Birdie down at this moment, she has recovered one of her few allies and she is too happy to fade out.

In conclusion, Patricia Collinge's abused, alcoholic and fallen Aunt Birdie made the actress be remembered for her memorable performance of this fallen southern belle, and she achieved for the character a great sympathy from the audience. Birdie represents the splendor of the past killed with the money of the present, that is to say, killed by the modernist times her husband has adapted too long ago. She is a victim, and at the same time, she does not do anything to stop the killers. She is a complex character, and we can certainly affirm that she is a symbol of the Old South, because, according to Seidel, "A traditional southern—and uniquely American—character, the belle figure has been a perfect vehicle with which to represent the flowering of the Old South in antebellum times, the 'rape' of the South during and after the Civil War, and the decay of the South in the glare of modernism in the twentieth century" (164).



Figure 31

4.4. Continuity and hope in the new generations

4.4.1. Leo Hubbard: cycle repeating

Leo Hubbard, Oscar and Birdie's son, is a disrespectful, foolish, lazy, gullible, and deeply ignorant young man. He is the inheritor of a family tradition as well as the product of a new society, that is to say, he has grown up imitating his father's behavior —hence, his grandfather's—, but he seems also fighting to find his own place in the modern world, in the capitalist jungle. For his father, Leo is *the Hubbard he can feel superior to* (unlike his siblings); thus, he feels comfortable around him, either lecturing him or using him for his own schemes. Instead, in Birdie's mind, Leo has exactly the opposite meaning in her life. For her, Leo is an unpleasant and emotionless person, whose company she does not understand in a positive way, either for herself or for other people.

In the 1880s, when Leo was born, there was a considerable racial attitude in the South. In Alabama law imposed severe punishment on illegal interracial intercourse and the Supreme Court states that Civil Right Acts of 1875 forbade discrimination only imposed by the state, not by individuals or companies. Consequently, intolerance was part of everyday routine, if not directly fed by the state, openly preserved by individuals and groups. Leo's father is a clear example of this racial attitude, so we must infer there is the possibility that his son will grow up thinking about black people as his father did, namely, like inferior beings, animals or, in Oscar's words, "niggers" (Hellman, *Little* 177).

At the turn of the 1880s, southern economy became more and more relevant, but poor people, and especially black people, were underpaid in their jobs. Leo's childhood is related to the economic growth and the reconstruction of the South, a South injured in the previous Civil War. However, reconstruction will only mean wealth for him, not work, because he is part of a family whose members are rich enough to pay workers instead of working themselves. Like most of the boys of southern bourgeois families, Leo is already a worker. He works in his uncle's bank, probably because Horace has facilitated him an easy access to the job, although he seems naturally prepared to deal with money. He has undoubtedly been trained for such a job, and Oscar has taught him to believe he is important. Thus, Leo can only foresee prosperity and a life full of commodities for himself, in spite of the fact that the reality for most of laborers was very different.

In 1890 Leo Hubbard is already a young man, and he has to face a different world from that of his father, when so much economic revolution and social change make him lose in his attempt to become part of the new southern elite. He appears for the first time in the film having breakfast with his mother and father the day of the great meeting with the Northern tycoon. From this very moment on, he is presented as a silly character, stupid rather than naive. He seems to live in a world of his own and he is not really conscious about anything that surrounds him, not even about the most trivial things; or perhaps he is conscious, but the fact he thinks about himself as the center makes him act in an irresponsible way and never take anything very seriously. For this reason, Leo could be considered a prototypical southern character. Many critics, like Orso, talk about the stereotype of the stupid young southerner, when he states that "[o]ne of the most insidious elements of the stereotype concerns the intelligence of southern folk which consistently is depicted as being lower than elsewhere in the United States. Indeed, stupidity appears to be one element in common in all intragroup ethnic slurs" (21). Leo, nonetheless, belongs to the class of the *new rich* and he has inevitably had access to a good education, and his good knowledge of the financial universe gives proof of this. But going deep

into Leo's nature, we must conclude that there is something wrong with him, since despite the good learning he has received, he appears undoubtedly depicted as a stupid individual anyhow. Thus, we could say that, to a certain extent, he has a split personality or, at least, he shows a duality: on the one hand, he is a quite accomplished banker while on the other, he is a silly person; he seems to be intellectually skilled, but emotionally clumsy.

In other words, he has knowledge of money (and probably a good idea about making business), although he is a socially and emotionally incompetent individual. This type of personality is perceived, from a psychological perspective, as a set of traits typical of socially incompetent individuals who see themselves as non-self-confident people, and who do not know how to behave during a conversation. For example, they do not know when to shut up, they spend all the time talking about themselves, they ignore any attempt of changing subject, and they are always ready to make thoughtless and tactless questions. Considering these characteristics as definitory of a socially unskilled person, in addition to the fact that Leo seems cold and unconcern about others, it is important to emphasize that it is precisely this unfavorable set of traits what explains his conduct: he tries to talk about himself any time (whatever it is the topic other people are focusing on), he does not care about anything that surrounds him or any relevant conversation his family requires him to get into, he ignores the family's black servants, and he is always disturbing other people.

According to Leo's OCEAN data, he scores very low in four of the domains, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion (being the latter a little higher than the former domains), and very high in neuroticism. All his personality traits combined contribute to his lack of skills to interact with others, which might be caused by one of two possible failures, even by both at the same time: the learner's collapse during the learning process, or the teachers' failure to transmit civism to the learner. Therefore, we cannot think so negatively of Leo, without analyzing his development from childhood to adulthood first. Notwithstanding, it is a fact that Leo's inability to behave correctly is recurrently emphasized: he seems to be blind to any kind of non-verbal messages, and he does not perceive his mother's sadness when he or his father ignore her. Thus, he contributes —maybe unconsciously— to his mother's unhappiness. In addition, he is indirectly harming himself, because in the end he becomes an isolated individual. In fact, his mother confesses disliking him, the same as his uncle Ben, and there is nobody who really professes love towards the young man. This provokes anxiety and confusion in him, especially when he is firmly convinced of his right behavior.

Everything Leo knows, he has learned from his father. Nevertheless, he is even more ambitious and less intelligent than him, what makes him, on the whole, a pathetic character. Oscar is his model and his idol, in contrast to Birdie, who is just a ghostly presence in his life. This attitude is clearly connected to other family relationships we have already introduced in previous sections, as for example the Giddens branch of the Hubbard genealogical tree. The family environment he was involved in since he was born was a particular one: son of a sweet and naive mother and of a rude father who married her just for money —following the Hubbard tradition first established by Marcus, he probably had to be witness to many arguments between his parents, what probably contributed to his identity being shaped as a *copy* of his father's.

The following shots (Figures 32 and 33) illustrate the likeliness between son and father by means of the mirror technique, an element introduced by Wyler in this case to convey a cyclical movement in the lives of the Hubbard family created by Hellman. The shaving scene in Oscar Hubbard's house is one of the most creative ones in *The Little Foxes*. Whereas in Hellman's play the dialogue between father and son takes place at the breakfast table over a cup of coffee, Wyler moved it to the bathroom in order to be able to make both men —young



Figure 32



Figure 33

and old generation— look away from each other. After a first establishing shot of the bathroom with Leo and Oscar in the center, Figure 32 corresponds to an aka American shot transformed later, by means of a slow zoom into a medium shot, which will finally become a close-up of father and son's faces in a shot subsequent to that in Figure 33. Wyler changes angles so as to capture their facial expressions better, and the zoom helps us gather that Leo does not only resemble his father concerning their physical appearance but also in their dressing and gestures. However, in spite of so much similitude, father and soon are out of touch. Juxtaposed mirrors in Figure 33 allow the audience to perceive the faces of both characters at the same time from a close perspective, but Wyler also plays with the characters' points of view, since he makes Leo and his father see each other in the mirror and the audience can see them in the same way they perceive themselves.

Contrary to Oscar, who shaves in front of a big mirror, Leo is using a small one. In view of the fact that his perspective of Oscar depends on the reflection in his small mirror, we must conclude that it is clearly more reduced than the vision his father has of him. On a more symbolic level, we might say that Leo's perception of the world is more incomplete than his father's, so his irresponsibility could be somehow justified by a limited view of the world he lives in, that is to say, by his helplessness to move further than his personal —individual— space allows him to do.

To a certain extent, the young Hubbard seems to be trapped in the past. He does not dream with the plantation times, as his mother romantically does but, in a way, he shows a tendency to think he is still living in the 1890s, the period of his father's youth; and maybe it is precisely his youth what Oscar gazes in the mirror when Leo is imitating his movements during the ritual of shaving. Oscar is giving his back to Leo, paradoxically giving his back to the past, a past which was not satisfactory to him but which has developed into a better present. Similarly, Oscar gives his back to Leo, which in a sense means he is closing his eyes to the passing of time, that is to say, to the present.

We might wonder, for instance, why Leo behaves as if he were superior to any black person —hence, why he is a racist boy— now that he is supposedly living in a period of freedom and equality. Notwithstanding, we must try to understand the actual situation he is experiencing rather than accusing him of turning to past times, when slavery was permitted in the South and blacks were no more than the mule of the white man. Although modernity brought many economic advances, social changes were tumultuous, and the South would need more time to truly adapt to those. By the 1900s, we can say that with the Reconstruction came the first hospitals, public schools, and asylums in the southern states. Moreover, it was the moment for the foundation of

the first black institutions of higher learning, so that it would mean the basis for the achievement of a modern black community in the South, together with independent black churches and a number of black landowners, clergymen, and merchants on the rise. The 14th Amendment had established equal rights for all citizens, and the 15th had forbidden that southern states would deny the right to vote because of race, so that the prospects for later attacks on discrimination had been set up. However, Reconstruction had also brought long-term negative consequences: racism became more deeply embedded in the American society, since the freedom of black people was still a utopia and it caused the rejection of a white supremacy used to be over black people. That is the reason why segregation became the more practical solution for a society made up of different peoples, cultures and traditions (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* 189), and it is precisely segregation one of the legacies Leo has inherited from his observation of his father.

Curiously enough, there is a reversal of roles in the film that Wyler arranged to make Leo appear inferior to those he considers the lowest beings in society. An example can be found in Figure 34, a perfect reflection of the promises in the New South, possibilities which allow mobility in the social ladder. Now black people are not slaves and, ironically, here it is Addie looking from the top, while Leo is shown in a high angle shot as the tiny character downstairs.

We see him from Addie's point of view and he is ridiculously small, as he makes the effort to raise his head because he needs to look up if he wants to have the servant in perspective. Now it is Addie who orders Leo (to shut up), and it is her body which is mainly captured by the camera, since she is closer to the eye —hence, also closer to the audience. Contrary to Leo, Addie is a well-developed character, an experienced woman and thus, basically, she represents Leo's antithesis. She is a perfect example of the individual with social skills: everybody likes her and she is always correct, she knows when she can talk and when she must keep silent. Moreover, she feels a special sympathy towards those who seem weak and she submits to the orders of her superiors (her master and mistress), behaving not only as a dutiful worker but also as a respectful woman. Leo does not like submitting to Regina's or Ben's desires —does not even like to have to obey his father's, not to mention his mother's; he underestimates everybody who is not a Hubbard; he never knows when to shut up and most people dislike him. Consequently, as Leo can neither be the master of black slaves nor the master of a submissive woman like his own mother, he sublimates his desire. Given that he needs to feed his hunger for superiority and he cannot beat a black servant or a wife, he furiously beats the horses. With this attitude, his wickedness, connected with an inferiority complex —inherited or not— are among his most definitory traits.

Still a young man, he tries to acquire and improve his social skills by looking at his father as the model to follow, so he decides it is well done to dislike those who are inferior to him and boast about his superiority over them. But as he fails in his learning process, he mistakes the real terms of inferiority and superiority and he tries to mock, for instance, his cousin Alexandra, or anyone in his social sphere that is not one of the three original foxes (Regina, Ben, and Oscar). Then, he troubles those who surround him and he inevitably appears as an unpleasant man. He has become a most fitting heir to Oscar's prejudices and bad manners —consequently inheriting his opinion about race differences— precisely because he has taken the head of the family not as his main referent



Figure 34

but as his only one. In fact, he clearly recalls a young Oscar who, failing to imitate his father, started to be despised by those who surrounded him until he married *a good name*, that is to say, until his union to honorable Birdie. Owing that Leo grows with a dislike for colored people like his father, and recalling the mirrors scene previously explained (Figures 32 and 33), Lederer's description could help to better understand Leo's attitude, which we perceive as a reflection of the past and a hint to a possible future as part of the same cycle of existence, a sort of *mirroring game* where father and son are one and the same:

> The notion of *parent and child as twin reflectors* is seen —literally— in … (in) the second act conversation between Oscar and Leo about Horace's Union Pacific bonds. … father and son converse while shaving. Visually, the effect is mesmerizing. The men are shaving back to back —Leo in a circular mirror, Oscar in a rectangular one. The result is a *double reflection*. It is almost surreal yet optically valid: a mirror offers a *reverse image*. However, part of Oscar's image is reflected in Leo's mirror, and part of Leo's in Oscar's. *Father intrudes on son, son on father*. (65; emphasis added)

Like Leo, Alexandra is practically surrounded by the same environment, given that both Regina and Oscar experiment a sort of parallel development in all aspects of their lives. At this point, we may wonder why the difference between the cousins remains so clear, especially when they live in the same social environment and they belong to the same family. With regards to the blood bonds, it is not difficult to find an answer since, as we have already explained, the family is fragmented. There are two small sub-groups within it and, in that of the foxes, there is distrust among the members. The difference is that Alexandra belongs to a unified group, whose members really seem to love her, and is respected by everybody, whereas Leo does not belong to any group and nobody respects him. In the Giddens's house, Alexandra was not obliged to get conscious of the coldness and the indifference existing between her parents. It was like that, probably because her parents seemed to have an equal and harmonious relationship, in spite of their disagreements. In addition, Regina lived her life —trying to avoid Horace— and Horace his —being rejected by Regina—, so there was no battering that Alexandra could overhear. On the contrary, Birdie was completely submitted to Horace, and he mistreated her without qualms. Consequently, Leo was clearly aware of the corrosion in the family whereas Alexandra had no idea about it.

Concerning the social environment, both cousins belong to a new rich bourgeoisie in the South; notwithstanding, gender may be relevant in this case, because the girl basically stays at home, while Leo is a working young man. Therefore, he is likely to discover the secrets of the world more easily than Alexandra, who remains in the precincts of the household. Although he is very lazy, he knows how to deal with money and he seems to be very interested in it. He is ambitious and his only interest is to enjoy life. On the contrary, Alexandra, being the daughter of one of the greedy foxes, does not feel any special interest in money or in having a life full of commodities. However, the most relevant unlikeness does not lie on the individual aptitudes but on the social competence of each of the cousins. Whereas Leo is unable to do anything right in the precise moment, Alexandra never deviates from the straight path and she always behaves in the right way —whether she is required to do so or not. The three following shots represent illustrative examples of how Leo is constantly annoying people with his nonsense and childish attitude.

Figure 35 reflects how, even at the most important moments, he is unable to behave like an adult and thus, when everybody should be paying attention to Birdie's and Alexandra's piano

concert, he seems to be much more interested in catching a fly. Once again, we can refer to his social inabilities: Leo is still in his learning process, he does not know how to really act or, if he knows, he is unable to transform the theory into practice. He is completely absent-minded when it comes to taking the important things into consideration, but he dominates his personal space, and from the moment when he is annoyed by the fly that invaded it, his intention is to kill the animal. In order to achieve this goal, he concentrates, as we can judge from his frowned expression, defiant of the poor animal who dared to interrupt his peace. This is one of the moments in which he shows to be more concentrated and active as he tries to defend himself from "exterior attacks" but, paradoxically, he is presented to the audience as a non-developed boy who deserves not only Regina's reprimanding look, but maybe an advisory voice or slap of the father.



Figure 35

Another of the most ridiculous moments of Leo is represented in the scene in Figure 36. In this case, Oscar calls Leo's attention to give him some orders. He approaches his father answering in a tone denoting superiority, and, at the same time, he treads on his mother's dress, without even uttering an apology. This is a fumy scene, with the fool in the center, but the fool turns to be a more unsympathetic character than the source of the comic tone. This is precisely because he forgets to ask for his mother's forgiveness. Nonetheless, we cannot simply blame him for such a behavior, especially if we interpret it as yet another of the legacies Leo might have received from his father —or rather, from his grandfather. Although this patriarchal abusive treatment of women goes back to the ill-treatment Marcus used to give to his wife, Leo is more likely to have inherited it directly from Oscar. Observing the way in which he has always treated his mother, Leo has learned —and in this case the learning seems to have been completed— to take no notice of Birdie, or even to insult her by relegating her to total oblivion. Obviously, he does not beat her like his father does, but his attitude is probably even more harmful for his mother.

Possibly, if he treated his mother as a tender and caring son, the tone of the previous scene, as well as his whole characterization, would be completely different, in spite of his mistakes, his inattentiveness, and even his covetousness. For example, here Leo is hated for ignoring his mother; if his attitude were the opposite, he would just be considered a comic, even hilarious character. On the other hand, the fact that in this particular scene he comes up to Oscar as if he were an important man and, out of a sudden, he transforms himself into an awkward child when he steps on Birdie's dress, rouses the laughter of the audience.



Figure 36

Finally, the eye view shot in Figure 37 serves us to summarize everything we have observed about Leo so far, more specifically to lay emphasis on his childish behavior. When he should be worried about his uncle's



Figure 37

health, he keeps on thinking of himself as the center of the world and is incapable of getting troubled. Thus, he does not show any sign of mourning and, instead, he plays with Horace's wheelchair. This is another image representative of Leo's entrapment in the past. He has not yet abandoned childhood, he has not grown up, his learning process has been interrupted for some reason and he has not adapted to adult society. Moreover, this shot also reflects Leo's loneliness: he is alone in his entertainment in the middle of a big empty room. The staircase in the background will remain majestically quiet until the moment when Regina appears, instantly bringing him back from his dreamed world, a happy land where he feels admired and important, a feeling he cannot experiment within the southern *fin-de-siècle* society he lives in.

Leo tries to attract people's attention, almost certainly because he would like to be recognized as a valuable man like all those he deems as such, that is to say, like his father and his uncle. However, he is rejected once and again. A clear example is one of the first scenes in Act I, when he is described as an arrogant man in presence of Mr. Marshall:

> Leo: I work for Uncle Horace. (REGINA *looks at him*) I mean I work for Uncle Horace at his bank. I keep an eye on things when he's away.
> Regina (*Smiles*): Really, Leo?
> Ben (*Looks at* LEO*, then to* MARSHALL): Modesty in the young is as excellent as it is rare. (*Looks at* LEO *again*.) (Hellman, *Little* 155)

Another example of the comic scenes with Leo as protagonist is precisely related to this aspect of Leo's personality: his conceit and its ensuing bad effects (Figure 38). Leo tries to appear useful, even indispensable but, as he speaks too much and cannot stop behaving like an insolent boy, he bothers his uncle to the point that he gives him a reprimand followed by a slap in the face. This slap, far from being humiliating, is very funny for the audience because Leo's attitude is also annoying for us. That is to say, the fact he takes a cigar and puts it in his mouth ready to start smoking, when his uncles are discussing an important issue, is a sign of his inattentiveness and irresponsibility that inevitably infuriates Ben. Thus, he breaks the cigar against Leo's lips in an amusing quick movement.



Figure 38

Unluckily, Leo is doomed to fail and, following the pattern he has chosen —the Hubbard's—, we could even say that he is probably doomed to deviate more and more from the right path. Socially incompetent as he is, and rude and greedy like his father, he is prone to continue enlarging the Hubbard empire, so it could be possible to foresee his enrichment as well as his personal downfall. In view of that, the cycle would be repeating and it

would not be a mistake to infer that "Leo will (most likely) become what Oscar is, just as Oscar was once what Leo is" (Lederer 65).

4.4.2. Alexandra Giddens: a hope for change

Alexandra Giddens, daughter of Horace and Regina, is described from the opening scene as a naïve and sweet young girl. For the audience, her kindness and politeness are her most relevant features, but for most of the characters she is basically the heiress of a big fortune. Played in the film version by a young Teresa Wright, Alexandra —familiarly called Zan— acquires a beauty and a sense of fragility that few actresses could have given to the character. In fact, she was probably chosen by Wyler because of her tender gestures and her beauty, although she soon became one of the most famous young Hollywood actresses of the 1940s, proving she was more than a pretty face.

In her first scenes in the play, the relationships Zan has with the different characters are fixed. We discover she asks for Addie's approval instead of her mother's, she praises her aunt's musical skills, and she modestly submits to the orders of her uncles. However, she seems to dislike Leo, or at least, Leo's attitude. When Oscar tells her to drive Mr. Marshall to the depot together with Leo, she asks for permission at once to drive the horses herself, because she knows Leo beats the animals, and she cannot avoid feeling vexed. It seems clear that she does not approve of Leo's aggressive behavior, and she tries to avoid it. But in a sense, her cousin is cynical, and he enjoys infuriating and worrying her.

If we classify Alexandra as a "dutiful daughter," it is simply because of the love and submission she professes for her dear father. Moreover, we must not forget that Regina also falls into this category herself, taking into account the fact that, according to Elizabeth Grosz:

> The dutiful daughter is the one who submits to the Father's Law. Her submission may take various forms: a submission to the oedipalization of desire, to the patriarchal denigration of her corporeality and pleasure, to a femininity defined as passive, castrated, superficial, seductive, narcissistic; or even a submission through what appears to be resistance to the oedipal law, i.e., the so-called "masculinity complex." (150)

Alexandra might be perceived as passive, and it is true that she also submits to her father's orders, however, to a certain extent, we must understand that she is a dutiful daughter with regards to her mother too. She does not present an appearance different from what she really is, she shows herself genuinely and she does not mind pleasing her parents. In fact, making other people happy —hence, pleasing them— seems to be one of the things that most pleases her. On the contrary, Regina had simulated a total submission to her father, becoming the perfect dutiful daughter Grosz talks about. Alexandra is under "the Father's Law" because she is always ready to take care of him and please him as much as she can, but there are no oedipal connotations at all, whereas in the case of Regina the oedipal sense seems clear, even materializing into an incestuous submission. But, as Grosz claims, there is also a submission which means to be resistance, and Regina adopts it when she submits, consciously knowing that she does it just to earn —the prize for submitting— her father's money. Thus, we can say that she was falsely submitting, or rather that she shows resistance but submits in the end.

On the contrary, we introduce Zan as a dutiful daughter in order to emphasize the love and admiration she felt for her father, and the efforts she makes in order to please both father

and mother, until the moment she realizes her mother is not as "ideal" as her father had always been for her. As her father began suffering from heart attacks, he was hospitalized at Baltimore, where he did not receive a single visit from his family. Zan would have paid all the money in the world to be allowed to spend some time with him and make his illness more bearable, but Regina said she did not want to leave the house abandoned and she prevented Zan from traveling without her. Thus, when the girl is sent to Baltimore to bring Horace home, she feels surprised, but experiments an immense happiness, in spite of the fact that she will have to travel alone. During Horace's return trip, we can see how tenderly his daughter takes care of him and, what is even more relevant, we become witnesses to the friendship that father and daughter share. In Wyler's adaptation, this friendship is emphasized because Zan confesses to her father her especial interest for one of her friends, David Hewitt. From a sociological perspective, is actively and well connected, since she can easily communicate with people, hence becoming a member of different dyads (Newman) in addition to being a member of the group of the "good ones" previously introduced. Presenting a great connection with her father, the dyad father-daughter is a strong one, and the first we need to observe. Even going beyond the role of the father, Horace is not defined as only the head of the family or the man who will endow her with a great inheritance, but also as the confident, listener, and supporter of his daughter. In exchange, Zan will give him back the same affection and support, especially once they arrive at home, where the environment is not a good one for an ill man like Horace. Then, as we can see in the following shot, the girl behaves as his father's solace, enduring a dreadful emotional pain when she sees his suffering.

As shown in the medium close-up below, Zan literally and symbolically holds her father (Figure 39). After a terrible fight with Regina, Horace staggers and his daughter is ready to hold him. Zan shows her sorrowful face to the audience at the same time she embraces her father. The scenery for this breakdown is the balcony upstairs, most times calm and deserted. In the background we can see a mirror without any image reflected on it. Bearing in mind the great amount of shots where we can see a mirror reflecting something, we cannot overlook this exception. In my opinion, the characters whose image appears reflected in a mirror are those who need to reaffirm their identity, or perhaps those who experiment changes in their physical appearance although never in their personality. In any case, we may think that there is a search of identity as well as the evidence of a hidden fear, the fear to confront the new, the unknown. That is the reason why we see Regina or Leo, for instance, constantly reflected, whereas characters like Horace or Zan are not. Maybe the reason for this to happen is that the latter characters do not need to search for their identity, because they have already reached it or maybe because they have always been conscious of it and it has never changed. Anyway, they know who they are and they seem to have accepted it. On the other hand, there is no need to reflect Horace's face in the mirror because there is a previous close-up which shows his fading look, a terrible image of pain and exhaustion, that could be interpreted as an anticipation of death.



Figure 39

Another of the characters closely related to Alexandra is her aunt Birdie, with whom she forms another dyad. Withing this small grouping, the connection is intimate and highly emotional, as they both care (and suffer) for

each other. She is a delicate woman herself, but she tries to protect Zan. When she overhears a conversation among the three Hubbards, she discovers they plan to marry Leo and Zan. Then, she immediately tries to warn her niece about Leo's bad-tempered nature. Leo is her own son, but she prefers to protect Zan rather than to benefit him. On another occasion, when Regina orders her daughter to travel to Baltimore alone, Birdie offers herself right away to escort her niece. Despite her failure, we cannot deny that Birdie is as protective as she can towards Zan. She also teaches the girl to play the piano and tells her about her childhood in Lionnet. In Alexandra she finds the daughter she never had and who gives her back all the affection her son does not give her.

On the other hand, Alexandra admires Birdie's musical skills and her manners as well as her gentleness and lovability, so she prefers to imitate her rather than her mother. In fact, Regina herself accuses Zan of looking like Birdie, quiet and passive: "Don't sit there staring. You've been around Birdie so much you're getting just like her" (Hellman, *Little* 223). Nevertheless, Regina is wrong, because Zan has rapidly developed into a young woman and actively entered adulthood, something which does not mean she has necessarily become a selfish and heartless person. Far from it, she proves to be a very nice girl, who gives comfort to all those she loves. Thus, Birdie becomes her confident and, once again, aware of her aunt's suffering, she aches for her.

In the following exterior scene (Figure 40), Alexandra is about to reach a certain degree of maturity, precisely because she witnesses Birdie's pain. After recalling the happy times of the past, Birdie confesses that she dislikes her husband and even more her son, and that she feels trapped in a lie as well as in her present unhappiness. Suddenly, she bursts out crying and her niece immediately holds her —exactly in the same way she had done with her father in the previously described scene. The moment captured in this medium shot is a very special one because, for once, Birdie occupies a central place. On the right of the frame, there is Addie looking at her with a clear expression of sorrow. On the left, we observe Alexandra, holding her aunt's shoulders in a tender cuddling gesture, while also showing a painful expression in her face. Both characters are standing, while Birdie remains sitting down, symbolizing perhaps a sad moment of glory in which she has reached the throne. In other words, she is the one who receives all the attention; she is right now the central character in spite of her suffering, or precisely because of it. While Zan utters affectionate words for her, Birdie tries to hide her tears, and at the same time she holds her head, a heavy and confused head because of the alcohol she has drunk. As she had done before, Zan will not remain passive looking at her aunt's pain. On the contrary, she will accompany her to her room in order to calm her down and help her to deal with her pain.

In Wyler's adaptation, there is another character who has reached Zan's heart, David Hewitt, with whom Zan forms another especial grouping (her third dyad), thus, at this point, making her social skills clear for the viewer. In fact, later it will be found that she is the character with the most varied interactions in the movie. Introduced as a *special friend* from the very beginning, David is for her an instructor. He opens her eyes to the real world and he gives her a great support. Through David, romanticism is added to the film, although maybe in this



Figure 40



Figure 41

way Alexandra's development loses relevance, since it is easier to leave home with a lover than to leave alone. Figure 41 depicts one of the most romantic moments in the film, which also means hope and the possibility of happiness, an option that is not explicitly given in Hellman's play. In this couple medium shot we observe how Alexandra and David are the protagonists of a typical Hollywood scene, an *accidental embrace* between the lovers while they look at each other's eyes in a tender and intense way. In this case, David (Carl Johnson) provides the intensity in his look, denoting desire, whereas Alexandra (Teresa Wright) offers the female purity and delicateness in a contented look typical of a southern belle.

On the other hand, this scene and the love relationship itself give insight to the character of the young Zan, since she is fighting in two fronts: first, she discovers the real situation within her family and she realizes that everything she believed in was a lie, and second, she falls in love for the first time and she does not know how to bear it, in part because she has never really seen a loving attitude between her parents or uncles. Therefore, David is also her connection with the outside world, a world she is determined to discover by herself once she has decided to abandon the Hubbards' realm.

Concerning the relationship that Alexandra has with her mother, they seem to get on well despite Regina's sour character, but we must start by saying that Regina does not behave as the typical southern mother with her daughter. In spite of the fact that white middle-upper class children were usually raised by Negro servants, white mothers used to be protective with their daughters. Nonetheless, Regina is an exception to the rule, since she merely educates Zan and tries to ensure a good inheritance for her because she wants to see how her own dreams become real in her daughter. An example of Regina's indifference with regards to Zan's development is the fact that she sends the timid girl alone to Baltimore. In the Old South, mothers usually travelled with her daughters, independently of whether the journey was long or short. However, Regina not only orders Zan to make a long journey alone, without her mother, but she also denies her a chaperon, or any other kind of company. Birdie offers to go with Zan, and Addie complains about Regina's *strange* decision, but it is Regina who categorically decides that Zan is to travel alone.

Apart from Regina, Alexandra has another mother, following the southern tradition: Addie, with whom she stablishes another strong dyad, probably the one with the strongest bonds and the most meaningful for her. The Negro servant does not only take care of her, but she also loves her. When Zan needs advice, she runs to Addie. Nonetheless, it is Regina who gives the orders concerning the girl's breeding. Thus, the girl could have suffered a psychological turmoil since, in a sense, has two mothers with very different opinions and views of the world. However, with Horace ill at the hospital, Regina represents the father's authority, while Addie represents the mother's affection. An example is the following shot (Figure 42). Addie is washing Alexandra's hair on the porch, and Regina, whom we can see, through the window, on the right side of the frame, standing straight inside the house while overhearing the dialogue from outside, and getting ready to intrude into the scene and in the conversation. This is relevant because the girl was making confidences to Addie and asking her personal questions when Regina decides to answer herself. For Zan it is not a problem of choosing between the two, she knows for sure

that her heart is as open to Addie as it is closed to Regina. Notwithstanding, the fears she transmits to Addie are very similar to the fears which Regina might be enduring in her thirties. Zan is not aware of her beauty and she wonders if somebody will like her. Regina has always been sure about her attractiveness, but now that she is getting older, she is constantly looking at her image in the mirrors, wondering if her splendor will soon fade. However, she gives a wicked answer to the girl, almost accusing her of having such dilemmas at an early age. On the contrary, Addie answers Zan in a friendly and affectionate manner, assuring her that there is always somebody for everybody.



Figure 42

Although Zan's soul has been trained by Addie rather than by Regina, Dick describes the young Alexandra as a girl very similar to her mother: "The scene in Mobile reveals an aspect of Zan's personality that does not come through in the play —a domineering quality she shares with her mother" (*Hellman* 64).

To a certain extent, Alexandra is both like Regina and very different from her. She has inherited paternal and maternal characteristics, and some have grown in detriment of the others. The hotel clerk seems to doubt if Regina's daughter is exactly like her mother, but he is convinced she is ordering in a very similar way to that of Regina (Figure 43). This is an undeniable fact, easily to perceive for the audience, but at the same time, we might doubt whether it is the girl's domineering nature or if her enthusiasm conditions her behavior. Zan is so excited for being of help to her dear father and she is so happy to have been successful in her trip so far, that she inevitably feels able to control the situation. Perhaps in her orders to the clerk, there is neither a tone of superiority at all nor delight in ordering; perhaps she is simply happy to discover she is not as useless as some considered her to be and she is consequently enjoying this moment, precisely because now she is not submitted to the rules, as she is always at home. However, we can understand this view of Zan and Regina as characters alike (worrying about appearance and enjoying a domineering position) as an attempt to emphasize their parallelism throughout the film: we have already introduced two male characters who appear to be a perfect copy of each other, Oscar and Leo; now we are dealing with a similar situation in the female sphere, while, at the same time, it is inevitable to establish the parallelism between Marcus' direct descendants (Oscar and Regina), as well as between the indirect ones (Leo and Zan).

After Horace's death, Regina is convinced that Alexandra will remain with her and that they will certainly move to Chicago, where they will live fashionably. Nevertheless, Zan surprises both Regina and the audience with a sudden and firm decision to leave home. Maybe it is more predictable in the film, because Horace and David have been trying to show her the way to adulthood, and David even suggests that she might leave with him. Moreover, she has been present several times when her parents argued,



Figure 43



Figure 44

and she started to realize that her mother did not love Horace at all. Ever since she leaves for Baltimore in the first scene, she has discovered more and more things which in the end lead her to abandon her mother. However, such a fast reaction is not so easy to explain: whereas on the one hand it could be a consequence of Regina's cruel attitude, which made the girl feel definitely disenchanted with her mother, on the other hand it could be the love and respect she feels for Addie and David which makes her tip her balance towards their perspective and choose to side with "the good ones" instead of with the foxes (Hubbards).

In Figure 44 we observe how shocked —bothered, or even worried— Regina appears, while her daughter justifies her choice. In the middle of the staircase, Regina stops to look down at her daughter. This low angle shot illustrates Regina's ascent to power and her emotional descent to isolation, perhaps alienation. As she goes upstairs, she moves triumphantly because she has succeeded but, in spite of all the money she will possess, she has lost a more precious treasure, her daughter. That is the reason why she stops in the middle of the stairs, symbolizing an incomplete success, since the benefits have also brought an important loss. Downstairs and looking up at Regina, a new Alexandra is defying her mother, who tries to convince her to remain at home. The surprised mother resorts to one of her most successful techniques and so she simulates to use (emotional) blackmail with her daughter, but she fails because when she threatens Zan with preventing her from leaving, the girl answers as follows:

> You couldn't, Mama, because I want to leave here. As I've never wanted anything in my life before. Because now I understand what Papa was trying to tell me. (*Pause*) All in one day: Addie said there were people who eat the earth and other people who stood around and watched them do it. And just now Uncle Ben said the same thing. Really, he said the same thing. (*Tensely*) Well, tell him for me, Mama, I'm not going to stand around and watch you do it. Tell him I'll be fighting as hard as he'll be fighting (*rises*) some place where people don't just stand around and watch. (Hellman, *Little* 225)

Alexandra's development is now completed: she has seen enough, she has heard too much, and she has finally understood. Now she knows that, in case she decided to stay with Regina, she would be as lost in the jungle as her aunt is. She knows her mother is not acting honestly and that her actions, together with those of her uncles Ben and Oscar, will provoke the prejudice of a great amount of people. Like her father, she does not want to participate in this business but, unlike him, she will not remain to watch them despoil. In other words, she is determined not to become a bystander (Broe). After the scene of Horace's hearth attack and Regina's indifference, this is the last moment of epiphany: Alexandra suddenly sees the light, the truth she had been searching for, while Regina finally realizes that her daughter is not as simple-minded and childlike as she had imagined:

> Well, you have a spirit, after all. I used to think you were all sugar water. We don't have to be bad friends, Alexandra. (*Starts, stops, turns to* ALEXANDRA) Would

> you like to come and talk to me, Alexandra? Would you —would you like to sleep in my room tonight? (Hellman, *Little* 225)

At this moment, Regina begins to respect her daughter, but it is too late. Alexandra is stronger and now, some or Regina's features awake in her. She seems to have inherited some power from her mother, but she makes it clear that she is not going to use it in the same way, consequently illuminating Regina, who might remain wondering about a different life if she had known how to use her power in a correct way.

From the approach of Affective Disposition Theory, concerned with why and how audiences experience and enjoy narratives through the connection they establish with characters (Raney, "Affective"), Alexandra is quite a likeable character. She is sweet and docile, almost too trusting, but she is smart and capable of evolution and growth. She is always kind to everybody, and she aims to please. With this set of characteristics and attitudes, it is easy for the viewer to find some sympathy for the young Zan, who finally dares to stand up to her mother. In his article attending to the feeling of sympathy for fictional characters, Víctor Aertsen pointed out to seven feelings that he considers fundamental in the establishment of such connection: approval, admiration, compassion, attraction, familiarity, homophily and intimacy. Whereas most of the characters in *The Little Foxes* seem to fall short on one or the other (maybe even all, in the case of the villains), it is not unlikely to connect with the young Giddens heiress through all of them. Thus, even though she is not portrayed as a heroic figure throughout the film, she will most likely be perceived that way at the end, especially for those viewers who choose to portray Regina as a ruthless villain since, to a certain extent, she ends up giving her mother a moral lesson.

4.4.3. David Hewitt: Wyler's critical note on the new southerner class

A young Richard Carlson, smartly dressed and with unquestionably social skills, frames the cast chosen by Wyler for his adaptation of Hellman's *The Little Foxes*. The appearance of the actor and his performance made of him a reliable character, worthy of the sympathy of the audience and, at the same time, he served Wyler the purpose to introduce an emergent social sphere in the New South that Hellman had not contemplated, journalism (Figure 45).

The end of the nineteenth century was directly related to the American mass culture with the advent of the metropolitan newspaper of mass-circulation, the best-seller, the mass-market magazine, radio and the movies, to name just a few. Popular newspapers were born to be very different from the upper-class partisan political newspapers of the nineteenth century. From 1870 to 1900, the total population of the United States doubled, urban population tripled and the number of daily newspapers grew immensely. Editorial staff grew and became more specialized, with the emphasis on reporting —as it is a period of change, there are many things to inform about— and newspaper publishing began to rise as a major business. In the South, the development was more gradual, but it certainly took place, as the character of David Hewitt reflects in Wyler's film.



Figure 45

During the decade of the 1870s, new magazines introduced readers to high-quality

literature, humor, and discussion on politics. In the 1880s the press develops and more copies of newspapers were ready to print in less time to serve more readers. Photographs start being included in newspapers and there is an increase of African-American newspapers. In the 1890s, sensationalism (yellow journalism) emerges as a method to catch the attention of a greater number of readers. Finally, by the turn of century we can already see political cartoons included in papers that offered commentaries on the news. It is also the moment of the emergence of a new kind of newspaper, the alternative paper. While mainstream journalism has often tried to comfort the afflicted people, alternative journalism has lived up to do so at the same time it bothered those who were relaxed. Throughout its history, alternative papers published the news that others would wish to keep in the dark. They have told the truth, confronting the status quo and thus became the voice of the everyday man, working for the public welfare. In short, they proved to be a social agent, daring to unmask corruption or ill business practices and echoing the problems of working people —even supporting strikes—, until they saw their demise in the 1920s.

David is a hilarious character who makes us laugh despite the tragic environment which envelopes the Hubbard family. Carlson had almost begun his career when he interpreted this role, although he would soon play different characters both in drama and comedy. Therefore, we might think that Wyler chose him in order to emphasize the comic tone he wanted the film to have —so that Regina's cruelty and bitterness would be softened.

He is a character added by Wyler to Hellman's play, obviously not necessary to explain the basic topics Hellman deals with in her play (family, greed, the arrival of modernism to the South), but very useful in his contribution to criticize the upper-middle class of the New Southern world. He also functions as comic relief, and contrast with the corrupt characters, especially with Leo, who belongs to the same generation. And finally, he introduces the love interest through his relationship with Alexandra.

Like any journalist, the young Hewitt usually wakes up very late, because he has been working during the night but, unlike the great majority, he has a special reason to do that. Thus, we might wonder why he has less free hours than other workers when all of them are supposed to have an eight-hour working day —at least white workers who are not classified as poor white, that is to say, those belonging to a low-middle class. Her mother gives us the answer: he has been writing "things they won't put in the newspaper." That is to say, he has worked during the day *writing things they* (his bosses) *will put in the newspaper*, the information they wanted him to write after ignoring the truth —or the mendacity— in it. But concerned with the real world he lives in, conscious of the false *truths* he wrote in the morning, he decides to write the real truths during the night, even if they will not appear the next day in the newspapers designed for most reading public. In the 1900s, David represents the beginning of a new journalism, the aforementioned alternative journalism. He writes for the mainstream newspaper, but he secretly writes for the working class too.

The fact he is in favor of the working people is easy to infer from his comments about the Hubbard family. He does not doubt to give his opinion about them openly, though tactfully, to Alexandra herself, the heiress of a fortune, daughter and niece of Hubbards. He also confesses to his mother that he dislikes them, and she asks him not to be so harsh in his accusations. In this scene, in which David becomes the voice of the working mass, there is no secrecy at all and corruption is clearly denounced. Whereas Ben Hubbard gets out to go for a walk, David is having breakfast rapidly before going to work. However, he does not care about Ben's leisure time, he does not reject him for the money he has earned or the social situation he has achieved. Nevertheless, he despises him for the manner in which he is gaining positions in the social

scale. Regardless of the low opinion he has of the Hubbards, he looks at "the big bear and the little bear" in a condescending way, and he even laughs at Ben when he observes through the window how the enriched trader puts on airs and walks straight as if he were the god of the region, the god of the South, the king of the world. Instead of getting furious, he employs his patience and intelligence, and tries to change a sad reality into a new, fairer reality, so that it is more adequate to laugh and act than to not to act and simply complain about social injustice.

Once his mother sits with him at the table, he immediately pays direct attention to her despite the fact that he had already begun to read the news. As we can see on the foreground of the following over the shoulder shot (Figure 46), occupying most of the shot and on the right, David is concentrated on reading the newspaper, while his mother, a minor character, is only half-captured by the camera lens, giving her back to the audience. The brightness which enters through the window filled the room illuminating the characters' faces, emphasizing their expressions, half of impotence against the situation, half of amazement for the injustices that are taking place in the South. On the background, the exterior world, indifferent to David's words, is represented by a middle-aged man who walks crestfallen, letting himself go with the flow. Inside the house, David creates his own flow, and is not influenced by the opinion of those who have the power.

Thus, he tries to introduce his mother into his world and explains to her the difference between the news written in the newspapers and the real news, in order to make her think for herself and not to succumb to the trends of the moment, the general indifference and the loss of humanity. He gives details to Mrs. Hewitt about the cotton mill the Hubbards are about to set up, so she understands that it is a lie, that it is only the perfect method for the rich to get richer by using cheap labor, instead of the blessedness that would bring the wealth back to the whole South, as it was described in the newspapers. This is the reason why David dislikes Ben so much, because he is conscious of his dishonest ways of making business. And contrary to others who know it and do nothing to prevent it, David will try to raise other people's awareness by writing and publishing the truth, though in a clandestine hush-hush.

This scene, where we can see David and his mother at the table, is markedly representative of a low-middle class family breakfast, as we can guess from the simple coffee pot on the table and the plain curtains on the window, as well as the hairdo of the female figure and the working clothes of the young man. It is another of the many *family-at-the-table* scenes of the film, and it considerably differs from that in which Leo has breakfast with his parents: David never stops answering his mother's questions and is always kind to her, while Leo, as previously explained, ignores Birdie. The opinion of Leo's mother is undervalued —independently on the subject under discussion— but David wants his mother to comprehend everything he knows —even about the most complex social and political issues— and to participate in his life. Both David and Leo belong to the same generation, both are intelligent and both are young workers, but despite these similarities, they are opposite poles. Whilst Leo's main interest in life is money and the pleasures he can achieve with it, David's interest is focused on people and the happiness a good humane conduct can provide. We must not forget the fact that, when Leo goes to the Hubbards' house, he usually waits in the



Figure 46

kitchen or anywhere where the servants are. He prefers Addie's and Cal's company rather than that of Ben, Oscar or any other member of the Hubbard family, except for Horace and Birdie. He enjoys talking to the black community, and he values their traditions and their humanity. That is one of the reasons why most people —the black community, Horace or Addie, among others— enjoy David's company, whereas Leo is avoided. The journalist's social skills, from kindness to empathy and even humor, are in noticeable contrast with Leo's carelessness and impoliteness. Finally, it is worth recalling that Leo is evidently depicted as a lazy boy —though it does not necessarily mean he is incompetent—, while David is undeniably a hard worker.

On the other hand, David is portrayed as the young and nice *special friend* of Alexandra Hubbard, her confident and her support, the unadulterated element when everything else that forms part of her world is corrupt. The first time David makes his appearance at the beginning of the film, it is precisely in the role of Alexandra's suitor, greeting her with a polite and amusing flirting tone when she returns home with Addie, once both women have bought the special food for the dinner with Mr. Marshall. David is in front of his house —his mother's shop—, dressed as a journalist, and his working clothes contrast with the dirty and ragged clothes of the black workers presented in the immediately previous scene. This difference is especially accentuated because it is presented in subsequent images, and the tired faces of the black workers differ from David's happy expression (Figure 47). From the porch, he approaches Zan's carriage in an interesting pose. He has a lively expression and he seems to be a bright young man. Tall, dark-skinned, good-looking, and very intelligent, he could be the perfect suitor. The only disadvantage is his interest in the working class and, especially, the fact he is a member of the working class himself. Alexandra does not perceive these disadvantages at all, but her mother does. Consequently, Regina will be depicted throughout the film as an obstacle in their relationship —interfering in their meetings, telling David that Alexandra is too young, talking to David's mother, etc.

Despite the impediments, David keeps on flirting with Alexandra simply because he seems to be in love with her. Regina is worried about this relationship, and she claims to be concerned about it because of Alexandra's young age, but it is not difficult for the viewer to infer that the truth behind those words lies in the fact that she considers that David is *not good enough* for her daughter. Probably, if Alexandra's suitor were to be a tycoon, she would most likely not have any objection. In any case, now she behaves as a protective mother and, for once, she decides to play that role and interfere in her daughter's life. But she does it in the wrong way, owing that she does not have a serious talk to Zan to give her advice or to get to know what her daughter's feelings are. On the contrary, always acting as the queen of blackmail, she tries to *convince* David and his mother that there should not be any kind of love relationship between the journalist and her young daughter. Consequently, the boy answers her defiantly, since he is the kind of people not prone to be convinced by means of blackmail or corrupt methods. Horace is conscious of this, since he has been more in touch with the journalist than his wife and, contrary to Regina, he has a conversation with him. At the beginning, David is puzzled but once he has confessed he is in love with Zan, he seems relieved and calm, since now he has Horace's approval.



Figure 47



Figure 48

In addition, as transmitter of energy and joy, David performs the function of the mirthful fool of the film. One of the most comic episodes of David's is when he accompanies Alexandra to the train station. The young journalist's lively and enthusiastic behavior corresponds to his personality traits revealed from observing him with the OCEAN model: despite being suspicious of some people's altitudes and not easily a trusting person, David presents quite a high level of agreeableness, scoring a minimum low in neuroticism, and practically a maximum high for the rest of the domains (conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion).

In this scene it is Zan who firsts shows affection to him when she asks Cal to stop the carriage to say goodbye to David, but follows immediately with his charming teasing and full of attention for the girl. She is conscious that she will miss him, as she will surely miss Addie and as she will not particularly miss her mother. Hearing Zan's voice in the middle of his sleep, David opens the window to greet her (Figure 48). Always in a witty tone, he starts flirting with her but, amazingly, Zan humors him, and his head beats against the window, causing Zan's amusement. Still undressed and with his hair messed up, as we can see in the image below (Figure 49), the camera captures him from a distance, although close enough to perceive his expression of delight when he looks at Alexandra. And it is precisely from Alexandra's point of view that we observe him. Thus, David's nature is once again reinforced by means of Wyler's decision to show him through her lover's eyes. In short, we are inevitably forced to see David as Alexandra does; in other words, our point of view about him is biased so we consider the young Hewitt as a very sympathetic character, a good-natured man who is always smiling and sharing his joy with the rest of the world.

This romantic atmosphere of the shy lovers continues when Zan says she is traveling to Baltimore alone and David decides to escort her to the station. In nightclothes, he gets out of his mother's house running towards the carriage. Zan is very pleased, but she reminds him he is still in night clothes. Immediately, David gets into the house and takes a hat and a coat before running again towards the carriage, which is now starting to move under Addie's orders.

All the characters look amazed at David, whose surprising looks provoke the immediate empathy of the audience. He bursts into the scene from the center, running from inside the house, all the eyes on him. On the left of the image, Mrs. Hewitt looks at her son in a desperate though affectionate manner, resigning to his sudden fits of enthusiasm and hyperactivity. On the foreground, Addie and Zan turn not only their heads but also their torso to him. The light falls on him from the left, illuminating his blissful face and causing a heightened effect of liveliness in his quick and funny gestures. He precedes the movement of the carriage, and he will finally succeed in catching it.



Figure 49

On a metaphoric level, we must say that this intense and strong-willed action parallels his



Figure 50

decisiveness in choosing his own future, letting his mind and soul, not the agents of power, decide. Observed as a symbol as suggested for the third quarter of Eder's "clock of character," David represents a new kind of journalists, a journalist who opts to tell the truth and denounce the hypocrisy and corruption of those who had the dominion, the southern foxes. Wyler was allowed to add this scene due to the fact that Hellman decided it should be Addie who would escort Zan instead of her mother. If Regina had been Zan's companion in this case, David's scene would have been impossible and the relief he provides with his amusing behavior, which contrasts with all the plotting and discussion at the Hubbards' house, would be lost.

Finally, in order to talk about his function as instructor, we will resort to two specific moments captured in the following shots. Once he has arrived at the station with Alexandra and Addie, David starts giving the girl advice, which, ironically, contradicts what the experienced Negro woman told her to do and not to do. As shown in Figure 50, Zan's nervousness is evident, as is Addie's preoccupation. Both are afraid of the unknown, of the obstacles Alexandra may find in her first journey alone. On the contrary, David is happy for Zan's departure because it will provide her with more knowledge of the world. Thus, when Addie had repeatedly told her not to talk to strangers, David advises her to talk to everybody. He tries to convince her that strangers are kind, and that they will help her if she needs it. As he usually does with his mother, David also tries to help Zan, to make her conscious of the real world she lives in.

The image in Figure 51 represents one of the important moments in the film, since it foresees Alexandra's epiphany: she is now beginning to realize there is something wrong in her family, although she does not understand it yet, and so she confesses to David. Once again, he encourages her to go on paying attention, if she wants to discover the truth. Horace had ordered Addie not to hide anything from his daughter, so she would acquire more knowledge and develop a stronger personality. At this moment, David is reinforcing this idea by telling her it is always very important for her to know what is taking place. In this medium shot of the couple, as they sit and get ready to enjoy a picnic, David takes on his role as a mentor, and tries to guide Alexandra towards an improved observant perspective and a more critical vision of reality. Alexandra and David look into each other's eyes, and they communicate with words as much as with their eyes and facial expressions. He is trying to make her aware of the existence of life truths that she doesn't seem to know yet, while she feels reluctant to listen, since *ugly truths* cause her sadness in addition to the fact that she does not know how to deal with it either. It seems obvious that David's role is key in shaping Alexandra's identity. Despite being almost as young as she is, David is another of the secondary characters that help her develop from a naïve girl to the decisive young woman who finally chooses to abandon the Hubbards after her father's death.



Figure 51

In conclusion, three different possibilities emerge with the new generation: first, there is the rotten branch, Leo Hubbard. He is the evidence of the cyclical genetic arrangement within families, of the repetitions in the history of society. He is the deviated young boy, prone to corruption and personal failure. However, he can also be interpreted the future type of new rich of the South, the corrupt man who, not being able to manipulate anything or anybody, develops into the worst of the despoilers. Oscar will establish the basis, but it will be probably Leo the one who reaps the benefits of taking part in the modernization of the South. Second, there is the sweetness of a young rich heiress who will not stand becoming a bystander. She has realized there are things she disapproves of and she will not remain there to spend her life contemplating them. She has been saved from corruption so far; however, we cannot know if she will maintain her simplicity in the future or if she will finally succumb to the attractiveness of the modern world. Finally, there is a third path, the one represented by David. He is a modern young man who still remains incorrupt, in spite of having adapted to the modernizations of the South. Responsive to the new world, active and determined, David means the hope and the salvation for the honest men, above the rules of dishonesty. Observed as a symptom within Eder' last quarter of his "clock of character," it is worth mentioning that, considering Hellman's perspective of the South, David stands out as a secondary character whose meaningful addition should be noticed as he represents the middle class perspective of society and provides social comment against aggressive capitalism, therefore in this way, placing himself in the group of the good guys and therefore aligning himself with the author's perspective.

4.5. The negro community: on the road to a new century

White people have defined all those who seemed to have an African ancestry as "colored", "negro" or "black" (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* 1118), and racial attitudes show a clearly pejorative treatment of the black community within the national context of the United States. There was a special distinctive feature for the South, that of the existence of a white supremacy ruling over the black community. Although this supremacy is nowadays regarded as a myth, it was an institutional reality in the past, however, as the long period of black slavery proves, followed by another period of 'false freedom' or social restrictions. According to Abernathy, "Americans speak of race as static and knowable, but we experience it as dynamic and inscrutable, ever shifting and ever elusive. In seeking to reconcile this dissonance between representation and reality, we turn to cultural productions that attempt to define racial identity as a mythic movement from white to black, as a journey toward transcendence" (1).

At this point, we must remember an extended myth concerning the relationship between whites and blacks in the American South, the myth of the *savage South*. Its beginning goes back to the colonial period and reached its peak during the prewar conflict between North and South, making the South appear, according to Wilson, as "backward, sexually licentious, irreligious, alcohol drenched, and morally suspect" ("Myth of the Biracial South" 4). Moreover, during the twentieth century the public lynching of black people, the Ku Klux Klan activities and the racial attitude just to mention some of the southern atrocities, contributed to intensify this general conception of a violent South.

In spite of a late and imposed abolition of slavery in the South (1865), the actual life of the black free man was not the same as that of any white southern citizen. From the 1880s to the 1960s Jim Crow laws enacted in all the southern states and also in some border ones, restricted the access to public facilities. Of the African-American people, that is to say, to the black

population, therefore inevitably causing social —essentially racial— segregation, the actual arm of white supremacy (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*).

In contrast to the myth of the savage South, a new myth emerged which supported a sympathetic and harmonic relationship between black and white people. This view of the South as a biracial community is presented by Wilson as one of the most stable myths of the southern societal narration, related to "the New South creed of the 1880s" ("Myth of the Biracial South" 4). As the peaceful environment of the biracial South was assented on the base of a hierarchical conception of the southern conservative society —where blacks were at the very bottom and whites on the top—, the idea of an amicable new South was built up thanks to the needs of the period. With the change of century, the American nation was beginning to prepare for many changes, the industrialization of the South being one of the most relevant processes, which demanded a "good business climate to lure Northern investment South after the Civil War" (5), and this is specifically the landscape portrayed in *The Little Foxes*.

4.5.1. The black community in Wyler's adaptation

The Black community in Hellman's play is mainly represented by Cal and Addie, the Negro servants of the Hubbard family, although in Wyler's film their presence is more visible due to filmic resources. The initial scenes, for instance, offer a general landscape of the black servants' daily activities, in most cases emphasizing their permanent work. First of all, we meet Addie in company of her mistress' daughter —her appreciated Alexandra— when, after purchasing the necessary food for dinner, on their way home they greet two black men who seem to be carrying some cotton from the fields. Once they arrive at the town, in front of the Hubbard Sons' Company, several black men are trying to deal with some more cotton while a child approaches, in order to steal as much of it as he can. This action reflects the undeniable reality of poverty among those who belong to the lowest social class, but it also gives a certain comic tone to the film, a tone that, in spite of being provided by different characters in the diverse scenes, will always be present.

As the camera moves following the carriage from a close distance, we can see Addie and Alexandra in a close-up. Later the camera moves backwards and we perceive them from a more remote distance at the same time we can see the fields. Finally the camera eye goes back to a close distance so we inevitably run after Addie and Alexandra and, at the same time, we are provided with a different perspective of the things they contemplate. The camera jumps from a medium close-up of the characters to a long shot, so that we are allowed to perceive much more than either of them do. For instance, it is possible that, although they see the scene (Figure 52), they do not even notice the daily routine of a black woman washing the clothes surrounded by children when they pass along the road, for the simple, only reason that they are not only used to such a view but immersed in the hierarchical social order it reflects. On the contrary, the audience is immediately introduced to a world of continuing work for black women, so it is not difficult to realize how important they really are, especially with regards to the family. They take care of the



Figure 52

children, they look after their husbands, they must have the control of the household and, in addition, they help their men to work the fields.

Accordingly, the following establishing shot, taken as example of what for this dissertation is, in our opinion, an admirable way of giving some general background to the spectator without the necessity of deep focus on different people and actions, something that would certainly slow the rhythm and perhaps cause a deviation of the attention in the audience's focus.

We can distinguish three different levels of activity: on the foreground, there is a woman concentrated on washing dirty clothes in a big washbowl with the purpose of reaching a completely pure whiteness. While she is working, she inevitably bends her back, a repetitive act that could be interpreted as a reflection of the enduring black submission to the white supremacy —especially in southern history— or of the submissiveness of the black woman to the superior social position of black man, even if old and decrepit, as the men portrayed in this shot seem to be.

Paradoxically, she is in the middle of a circle formed by children of different ages who spend their time looking at every little thing that surrounds them, and playing with "natural toys" like a log or a leaf of grass. The oldest child is dressed in working clothes and he is wearing a hat, as if he were already in contact with the hard laboring activities at the cotton fields. A little bit younger, the other two children are almost naked, sitting down on the grass, simultaneously alert to any movement that might come to their attention and immerse in the natural images captured by their eyes. In contrast with the woman's activity, the children remain static, probably paralyzed by a certain feeling of weariness that prevents them from actually playing, that is to say, running through the fields and enjoying themselves.

At a different level and in the central part of the shot, men are the performers of slow and *forced* action, or even of inaction. Paradoxically, the margins are occupying the center, since two black frail men appear in such a privileged spatial position. Both of an advanced age, they are most likely meant to symbolize tiredness, exhaustion and poor health, the effects of the hard work they have done in previous stages of their life. Therefore, we must wonder if the aforementioned child in working clothes is not representing these old men in their childhood period. He is young and, notwithstanding, he is already tired. Sitting down on the grass, he seems to be resting after his daily activities, which have nothing to do with those performed by white children. Obviously far from a real education like the one given to white children at schools, black infants were not given the possibility to accede to learning. On the contrary, they began to be adults as soon as they became old enough to be laborers, therefore confronting the harsh realities of the world since childhood and learning suffering instead of knowledge. When they reached maturity, they kept on working, as the black woman, who incessantly bends her back while she awaits the following state in her life. Nevertheless, in the end, they all become old enough to simply live and try to rest, in a world without any real enjoyment for those who have grown up just to be the mules of white man. Neither is there joy for those who, in addition, have been trained to serve as mules for their black men, that is to say, black women. As the Janie's grandmother in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* would explain it,

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> Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything as fur as Ah been able tuh find out. Maybe it's some plae way off in the ocean where de black man is in power, but we don't know nothin' but what we see. So de white man throw down de load and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up. He pick it up because he have to, but he don't tote it. He hand it to his womenfolks. De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see. (29)

Sitting down on a chair on the porch of a wooden house —which inevitably brings *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to our minds, one of the two old men spends his time contemplating the road, where he can observe the carriages pass while *tempus fugit*, that is to say, while his life is arriving to an end. Although there is movement along the road, he gives the impression of having surrendered to passivity and being just awaiting his doom. After a past of slavery, this feeling of inertia is one most likely to arise in a free black community whose freedom is not as real as it is pretended, that is to say, they like thinking themselves free, but they are not.

Another possibility is that represented by the second aged black man, a lame man who can only walk with the aid of a walking stick. His strength and vitality are lost, and he needs the aid of a lifeless object —a piece of wood— to keep on moving. This image of decay and need of support could be read as a reflection of a more general view of the society under analysis: the walking stick is for the black man what the black man is to his white master. Both are objects, since reified black men become the basis for the development of white society, like the stick, a real inanimate object, is not only useful for a lame man, but absolutely necessary.

Quite the opposite, we ironically find in the background a third level which portrays a different world, the world of the white privileged, represented by Alexandra Giddens. The routine and moral drowsiness of the foreground and the central part of the shot are connected with the liveliness of a self-made white family, by means of two borderline characters. On the one hand, Alexandra, unwitting heiress of a great fortune and unconscious feeder of her own *joie de vivre*, is the one member of the Hubbard family most clearly connected to the black world. She has neither an especially high image of herself nor a low consideration of the black man, and she is respectful and nice with everybody, although particularly affective toward the most fragile, and hence toward Addie. And it is precisely Addie who, on the other hand, behaves as a link between the illiterate black society and her white masters. She is one of the oldest servants of the Hubbards, and those members of the family who are more in touch with her, respect and certainly admire her kindness and her knowledge of tradition.

To end with the analysis of the coverage shot, it should be noted that the fact that Addie and Alexandra are driving a carriage, and that they certainly are in movement, could be understood as a sign of life, but it might also be interpreted in a negative way, as traditionalist writers used to do.

4.5.2. Harold and Cal: mixed thoughts of new black men

In the same sequence of shots of the opening scene, we immediately find another black servant —in this case, one of Horace's workers—, cleaning the bank plate at the same time as he introduces its motto, "the planters trust the company," to the viewers. This is relevant opening piece of information, and the plate will be a recurrent object in later sequences; however, we must not forget about the happiness with which this Negro man talks to Addie and Alexandra when he mentions his master, Mr. Giddens, as shown in Figure 53. This smiling man —in two extraordinary interventions— seems to be used by the director in order to recall the traditional idea that southerners wanted to maintain about their slaves: they were not free men because they loved what they did so much



Figure 53

that they wanted to remain being slaves. In spite of the fact that it is not explicitly staged by this Negro servant, such romantic idea of an old South is certainly in the air, though not defended; on the contrary, it seems to be introduced as false, especially when in such a world you must be intelligent and never trust anybody, because there are liars and blackmailers everywhere and any of them can be your enemy and lead you to the wrong way.

When he appears for the second and last time, during Horace's visit to the bank, Harold makes clear that he is devoted to the president of the company, but not to any of the other Hubbards. In fact, he makes of it a very comic scene, since first he puts all his effort in smiling to Horace and, when Wyler decides to show a close-up of his face for the second time in this scene, what we perceive is how drastically his expression changes while he is looking at Leo. He even dares to make faces to the young Hubbard, an action portrayed as comic and at the same time undoubtedly meaningful. We cannot know for sure if Harold's behavior is conscious or subconscious, but it seems obvious that nobody is forcing him to mock at Leo. In contrast, his exaggerated smile and his overacting attitude of servitude and fidelity to Horace might make the audience doubt whether it is a real devotion to his master or rather, a forced smile. In such a case, we can talk about a hypocritical conduct and wonder if he feels constrained to treat Mr. Giddens by constantly emphasizing that he feels happy to be his servant, something that could be related with La Boétie's classic concept of "servitude volontaire". It is a voluntary action with an involuntary source, imposed by society and accepted by the individual. Therefore, Harold's performance could be interpreted as the perfect mirror of an ambiguous thought: he acts simply as, according to social paradigms, he has been taught to and is expected to do.

A similar thing happens with Cal, the Negro male servant of the Hubbard family, performed in Wyler's adaptation by the American film and television actor John Marriot. He seems to live only to please his masters, but his submission might be a partial one, since he is genuinely happy with his life, and he considers that his social position does not meant servitude in the sense of submission, but servitude in the sense of a paid labor. In short, he enjoys his job, and all he wants is to do it well. Nevertheless, he does not show the same devotion to all of the Hubbards: he has a special affection for Zan, and he particularly admires Mr. Giddens, so he seems to be pleased whenever he does something they have asked him to do. When he serves them, he feels more integrated in the family, because their kindness prevents him from realizing that there is still a big gap between master and servant. His unavoidable inner thoughts lead him to experiment the sensation of pleasure, since he finds pleasure in believing himself close to those he, paradoxically, considers superior to him.

In the film, when Alexandra leaves for Baltimore in order to bring her father back home, she wants to stop for a moment at David's house, so she asks Cal to stop as if it were a favor and he immediately stops the couch in front of the journalist's door, with a smile in his face, knowing that it will make the young Zanny happy. Similarly, when he takes Horace to the bank in his wheelchair, he tries to entertain him with his talk. Later, once they get out and Horace gives him a message for Sam, Horace's right hand in the bank, Cal seems to feel happy with the responsibility because his master has placed his trust in him. The message, moreover, means a sort of challenge for him since he is convinced he has a poor memory, but the errand in direct connection with the world of his master and although it is a capitalist white jungle whose functioning he does not know at all, he is excited to get into it, even for a minute, since it means an approach to a higher social level and consequently his *real* insertion in the social system.

However, this insertion is imaginary, mendacity, and Cal can never equal Horace. That is the reason why, even after having learned the message by heart, he transmits it without being capable of using Mr. Giddens' language and changing it to the Negro dialect. He is interrupted

by Leo's questions, so he must start his speech every time from the very beginning if he wants to remember Horace's words, and even so, he is unable to make them his. According to Ross Holmin, Cal speaks his own language because "Miss Hellman is consistent throughout [the play] with the Negro dialect, even when Cal is citing a white man" (52), although there is no doubt it is also done in order to emphasize an undeniable difference, a disparity explicitly represented by Marriot under Wyler's direction. At the same time both actor and director agreed in tingeing it with humor.

In contrast with Cal's proximity to Mr. Giddens and his daughter, the mistress-servant relationship presented in *The Little Foxes* is quite different, probably due to Regina's strong personality, what makes the dominator-dominated dichotomy much clearer. When Cal obeys Regina's orders, he really acts as if he were following the rules established by an authority. Always in a hurry and fearing a possible unsatisfying result, he puts all his effort in pleasing Regina and he shows himself as submissive as he thinks he should be, but he does not give the impression to feel happy when he is doing so; he rather feels relieved. If things go wrong, he immediately worries and blames himself for not having done better, perhaps because he has adopted Regina's perspective of his own self. In addition, he employs the same attitude toward other characters, as for instance, Oscar, who gives him deprecatory pieces of advice, such as the following: "Cal, if I catch a nigger in this town going shooting, you know what's going to happen" (Hellman, *Little* 195). The word *nigger* is a pejorative word to name black people. Taken from the French *nègre*, in the United States it was immediately associated to slavery so, once Oscar is referring to black servants as niggers, he is directly considering and treating them as slaves. Cal knows it is a reality, since black people still consider themselves inferior to whites, and Oscar's intention is to make him realize that *niggers* are like animals for him, so that if they shoot their prey to feed themselves, he will consider *niggers* their new prey. Cal looks at Oscar from the perspective of a nigger, and he feels threatened. However, to a certain extent, he internalizes his feelings of anger because although he feels inferior, he knows he should not be so. There is certainly an ambiguity but, instead of making us get confused, it reflects human condition, prone to doubt in moments of change.

From all this, it follows that Cal's "servitude volontaire" is not general: we could say that he *voluntarily* serves Zan and Horace although he serves Regina without any kind of integral devotion. Cal is an example of lack of automatic submissiveness to the white ruler, a sign of decision —conscious or unconscious—, a feeling that many Negroes had at the turn of the twentieth century, the beginning of the end of the long-lasting desolation concerning the African Americans plight in the South.

4.5.3. Addie: servant and mother figure

Notions of hospitality, regional cookery and domestic customs are clear markers of the southern identity. But southerners feel this identity threatened by the arrival of capitalization. In popular culture and in literature the traditional stereotypes of the southern character persisted. In the antebellum period, domesticity was understood as a practical skill, but later it would be portrayed as coeval. At the end of the nineteenth century, domesticity was frequently related to humor in literature, but in the 1980s domesticity was integrated in the family saga. Some domestics, in fact, were especially relevant for the family because they maintained it together in spite of the personal differences its members had. Addie, the Hubbards' servant, could be classified within this group as a representative of the old southern values of honor and gentleness, but she is also a funny character and a woman who dares to voice her feelings. With

our analysis of this black character, we intend to prove that she represents a new type of southern servant, different form the submissive and always faithful servant of the Old South.



Figure 54

Interpreted by Jessica Grayson, Addie is the most relevant Negro representative in this story. She is introduced in the stage directions as "a tall nice looking Negro woman of about fifty-five" (Hellman, *Little Foxes* 159). She is a secondary character, but all her interventions seem to be crucial to understand the especial family relationships established within the Hubbards' world. She usually gives some explanatory notes on the behavior of her masters and, self-conscious about the value her remarks can have, she does not doubt in defending her own opinions. She appears to be a very kind woman, a sort of saint who only worries about other people's feelings or necessities, as it is the case with some poor black children asking for food through the window of the Hubbard mansion, a moment that Wyler presented to the audience throughout several shots, among them the medium close-up of these poor kids (Figure 54).

After observing them with their noses close to the window, and their surprised expressions looking at the food on the table of the Hubbard kitchen, Addie reveals her prophetic nature to the audience when she orders another servant to "feed the hungry," recalling Christ's words. This servant says she would like to, as "a lil' bit here and a lil' bit there, Regina does not mind," but maybe she would mind if she wasted so much food feeding black children. Nevertheless, Addie insists on it, supposedly resorting to the Bible in order to make her statement valid. Religion is, as we know, one of the pillars of black community, maybe due to the fact it helped them to maintain their faith and a devoted life and so, believing in the promise of a better future in a different world, they could submit more willingly to the difficulties and shortages of the present one.

Interested in the religious quote, Cal asks Addie where she found such words in the Bible, a moment we have captured in a slightly high angle shot that seems to confront two different positions: the one of a passive man basically satisfied with his own life of servility, and the one of a strong experienced woman who seems to have gathered strength enough as to voice her own thoughts and opinions and even assert them (Figure 55). Here we can see how the servants look at each other with a defying expression in their faces when they argue about the Biblical citation. Addie, although much shorter than Cal, is recorded by the camera in such a way that her figure is more clearly directed to the audience. We can see him on profile, whereas Addie, in spite of turning his face to Cal, is in line with the camera. As a result, her assertion fulfills a twofold purpose, as she occupies a significant position, both in space and with her voice. Her first statement about the necessity of feeding the hungry is thus reinforced with her second intervention in the servants' discussion when, with a challenging affirmation and yet in a louder tone, she claims that it does not matter



Figure 55

if these words are or are not in the Bible; even if it was the case that they were not in the holy book, they should be.

Addie is aware of the things that are happening around her. She knows that times are changing, and she seems to be always sensitive to any minor change. As she resorts to her own experience or to her knowledge of the world, she makes assertions of great relevance, like when in an exterior scene in the garden she makes reference to despoilers and bystanders. According to the terminology used by Doris V. Falk, despoilers are those characters which destroy everything in order to reach their aims; whereas bystanders are those which observe the despoiler destruction but do nothing to stop them. Therefore, Addie's speech will reveal us the key to understand the relationships among the southern characters of Hellman's novel. The following consecutive shots, only separated by a few seconds in time, illustrate such a moment, representing Birdie's focus the beginning of the argument (Figure 56) and Horace's focus the conclusion (Figure 57).

In this exterior scene, being Alexandra, Birdie and Horace gathered around a table, together with Addie —who is not at the table, but a little further on a chair, sewing—, the conversation begins with Birdie's attempt to convince Alexandra that she should be careful and never believe in men like her own son. In fact, in spite of the fact that Leo and Oscar are her family, she certainly dislikes them. While she is thinking about it, and about her mistake in marrying Oscar, some memories of the past come back to her mind. While she keeps on drinking alcohol —in this case, without hiding from anybody— Birdie begins talking about the idea that her mum had of the Hubbard family when she was a young girl: her mother disliked them because they took advantage of poor people. Nonetheless, Birdie fell in love with Oscar Hubbard, whose apparent kindness charmed her; consequently, she finally married him.

After listening to Birdie's version of the past, Addie starts giving her own opinion of the bad treatment that Birdie received since she married Oscar (Figure 56), relating her words to a biblical passage that equals bad people to the locust. Once again, it is worth mentioning that Addie's words are quasi prophetical: "Well, there are people who eat the earth and eat all the people on it, like in the Bible with the locust. And other people who stand around and watch them eat it. (*Softly*) Sometimes I think it ain't right to watch them do it" (Hellman, *Little* 205).

She begins talking about "people who eat the earth and eat all the people on it," that is to say, despoilers (Figure 56), and moves on to explain her biblical comparison of the locust with these dangerous people until the camera moves towards Horace (Figure 57). At the exact moment the camera reaches his face, she is talking about bystanders. That is to say, Figure 56



Figure 56



Figure 57

keeps up a correspondence with the first half of the quote ("Well... locust"), while Figure 57 matches up with the second half ("And other people... do it").

The locust, one of the most dangerous plagues sent by God to the land of Egypt, is a well-known insect, which perpetrates terrible devastation. Frequently mentioned in the Bible, there are different species within this destructive family. In the same way as this insect is caustic, so are some people in the world, like the Hubbards. Addie compares them to a plague, to something so harmful that it ends up being lethal. Therefore, the Hubbards are despoilers, since we could even compare their behavior to that of lions: their main aim is to satiate their greed, as lions are predator animals which kill other creatures to fulfil their appetite, that is to say, they kill because they need to eat their prays to survive. On the other hand, there are also other animals which feed on carrion, but in a more passive way, as for instance hyenas, who feed the lion's leftovers. Bystanders however behave in a similar way; they look at others eat without either competing for food for themselves, or avoiding the despoilers' success. Bystanders commit a minor sin, but they sin anyway. They commit omission because, aware of the evil and the probably resulting harm, they remain quiet.

On the other hand, we must not forget that the black locust, a tree indigenous to the lower slopes of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, with dark brown wood that is considered a threat to vegetation outside its native range because it grows too quickly and aggressively. It is difficult to control because trying to remove it by digging only serves to further accelerate its growth. We have already presented the Hubbards as foxes, and if we try to establish a parallelism with the characters in *The Little Foxes* that can be considered as the locust in this sense, once again we get in touch with the Hubbards. Regina, Ben and Oscar are so deeply immerged in the new social system that there is no way to eradicate them. Their growth is also aggressive and unstoppable, thus harmful for the lower social classes, and their behavior is comparable to that of the minor plants which surround the black locust. Therefore, they are despoilers, since they put everything which surrounds them to waste.

On the other hand, the tree is also accountable for its extraordinary use as a medical treatment. From the root, to the flowers and the leaves, it was used to cure the human being. In this case, we cannot compare it to the foxes of Hellman's plays. On the contrary, the medicinal effects can only be found in one character, Addie. She is the one who alleviates Alexandra's worries or Birdie's emotional pains, as well as she seems to be whole family's aide.

Regardless of the fact that Birdie stands as a victim of both despoilers and bystanders, we might identify the plantation owners —paradoxically, represented by Birdie herself— as despoilers, since they used to take advantage of black slaves in order to get richer and richer. On the other hand, we can understand Horace as a bystander, because he does not even make the attempt of spoiling the plans of his brothers-in-law. Perhaps he is too ill now in order to start such a fight alone, although once he discovers the theft of the bonds, he has an option, but he does not act either. As we have already mentioned, Horace's decision to remain still might lie in his desire to displease or even punish Regina, because the theft gave fin the idea to leave the bonds to Ben and Oscar as a loan, so that Regina would have no benefits. Hence, he is a bystander and maybe that is the reason why he resorts to Addie's speech by means of a biblical quote, the song of Salomon which opens the play: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes" (Hellman, *Little* 147). He means to emphasize the cruelty and destructiveness of the despoilers and, in so doing he tries to present bystanders as less harmful.

The consecutive scenes represented in Figure 56 and Figure 57 show a very similar structure, except from the change of character in the foreground: whereas in the former we

can see Birdie anaesthetizing herself with alcohol —so that she may overcome—, the latter is a middle close-up of Horace. On the left, Birdie hides a painful expression behind the glass she is taking to her mouth, and she seems to strongly wish that forgetfulness would invade her. On the right, Horace shows an analogous expression, even if his spiritual pain is mixed up with the physical pain of his disease. He is furrowing his brows, reflecting at the same time pain and disgust, as was Birdie's case, but in contrast to his sister-in-law, he uses thought to alleviate his pains. Thus, Horace deviates his feelings of remorse by emphasizing the immoral and devastating deeds carried out by the little foxes (despoilers) over the actions performed by those who quietly surround the pack (bystanders). In so doing, he pardons himself for not having acted, at the same time he condemns his wife for the spoiling of the vines, a kind of damage he had —fortunately— once decided to avoid causing. That is to say, by accusing now the despoilers he stops being a bystander, in a sense and, thus, his past actions are pardoned.

Alexandra's relevance in both shots is identical, in spite of a different spatial position: on the right-hand side of the frame in Figure 56, she frames the scene by adopting the listener's attentive standpoint, the same as in Figure 57, where she is placed in the center. However, in none of the scenes the girl is more than a witness, an inexperienced young woman listening to the voices of experience. Despite the fact that, in Hellman's plays, Addie does not want her to hear this sort of unhappy things, her father answers the servant that to know something about the world and the cruelties in it is the best way for her to grow up.

Curiously enough, the character in the background seems to be the real focus: occupying a central position in Figure 56 concerning space, and on the left in Figure 57, Addie is the focus of Alexandra's eyes, as well as everybody's or localizer in what comes to the words she is uttering. From the background, she invades the foreground in a moralizing sense. Concentrated on her sewing, at the beginning of her parliament, she slowly looks up towards Zan and the audience —once again frowning, and thus echoing a certain painful feeling— in order to emphasize the importance of her statement, a statement that obliges her to stop sewing for a moment and putting all her effort and conscience in carefully expressing the meanings she would like to convey with her words. This is one of the many examples which help us to perceive Addie's prophetical nature, a nature which inevitably leads us to read her as a sort of medium. In Jung's terminology, Addie would precisely be a medium since, according to his disciple Kataria, mediums become "the mouthpiece of the emotions and aspirations of her people" (121). Addie perceives the emotions of those who are usually unperceived, and she voices their feelings. Thus, they feel understood and appreciated and they realize that they have their place in the world. Experience has made of her a wise woman, capable of knowing what to say and what to do at any moment. "She reads and senses what is in the atmosphere and is just beginning to find expression" (122) to voice her people's feelings, that is to say, she seems to be walking towards an understanding that will allow her to voice the exploitation of black people.

Addie intercedes to help or to provide solace to those who need it, and she also mediates between blacks and whites given that she has a good relationship with both races. It is obvious that she is integrated in the black community, but it she is also very close to several white people: on the one hand, to some members of the Hubbard family (Alexandra, Birdie, Horace), and on the other hand, David Hewitt, the character Wyler added in his film.

Being a medium and a sort of redeemer, Addie becomes a prophet, what makes us think she might be considered at the same time a saint and a powerful tribal woman. Although it may seem contradictory, religion and tribal rituals are part of the African American history of the southern people in the United States, since the religious beliefs of most of the black southerners had its origin in the African religions as well as in the Anglo-Protestant



Figure 58

evangelicalism. African religious roots were very influential in the United States, though silenced probably because religion has always proved to be a powerful force with the weight to provoke changes in the man's perception of his own self. In this sense, religion is influential enough within the community as other social forces, namely the political ones —hence, with the danger of becoming a problem for the communal dominion of the white government. Black slaves transmitted worshiping traditions to their descendants, as well funeral rites, magical rituals and the practice of medicine based upon their own religious system deriving from the ancestral African societies.

In many southern states, numerous slaves were baptized in the Catholic religion, and although most of them did not have any kind of contact with Catholicism, they were converted to Christianity in large numbers, especially during the revivals of the eighteenth century because the gospels were especially attractive for black slaves. Gospels encouraged the same religious ecstasy they had experimented with the African rituals and dances; evangelicalism was identified with emancipation and evangelical churches allowed black men to gather there to pray.

In Wyler's film we can see this kind of gathering, enriched with black religious songs while beautiful nocturnal scenes are added in the form of slow-paced shots where there is no particular action, except for the preaching of the black community, in contrast with the activity and quick pace of the parallel gathering of the white society in the Hubbards' house. Horace has returned from the hospital very ill; he is tired, and seems to be quite weak. Everybody welcomes him home, but they do it in different ways: whereas within his own white circle Regina organizes a social event, a party where she will appear as the nice wife happy with her husband's return, as well as a beautiful, smart and perfect hostess; black people take part in a more private gathering. Despite his whiteness, David is disgusted with the white man's capitalist universe. He prefers to remain outside of the Hubbards' mansion —symbolically, outside of the world white people represent. On the contrary, he is much closer to the black community, and he admires their humble way of living, much less artificial than the white rich men's lives (Figure 58). Sensitive to music, he appreciates Birdie and Zan's ability to play the piano, but he emphasizes the beauty of the black community's singing over the sound of an instrument, because the latter is more distant to the soul than the voice, one of the most authentic channels of feelings. He is accompanied by Zan, who is also beginning to realize the amount of injustices encouraged by her family's yearning for economic power —only a minor example of the many greedy Hubbards in the world who are competing in the re-conquest of the South. By placing Zan and David outside in the dark, alone, without taking part in any of the groups, and at the same time watching both from the outside, Wyler portrays the contrast between the two social poles. The excess of commodities and the artificiality in the white party is highlighted by means of alternating shots from the different social groups. Thus, the hostess' clothes and the pose and the clothes of her particular guests are introduced as their best possessions, that is to say, they are only showing off about their elegant exterior appearance. In contrast, black servants seem to be centered on their own inner side, on their thoughts and feelings, as a preparation to pray (Figure 59).



Figure 59

Pioneer black preachers had already begun their evangelization of black people in the South around the 1780s, and black congregations were increasing in size despite the many restrictions, and even pestering, of the institutions. In their secret religious meetings, blacks "countered the slaveholding gospel of the master class with their own version of Christianity" (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*), a version of Christianity whose God condemned both blacks and whites. Going back to the Exodus, they compared themselves to the sons of Israel, and thus they awaited their liberation. Civil War and the Reconstruction brought about the change of the religious life of black people in the South. The North sent preachers to the South, and many freedmen's associations emerged, heading the creation of colleges and universities. In conclusion, in spite of the fact that "urbanization and secularization led to criticism of black religion as accommodationist and compensatory, *the church remained the most important and effective public institution in southern black life*" (*Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* 192; emphasis added).

Addie can also be interpreted as an alter-ego of Sophronia, a servant in Hellman's family house. Far from being a black humanized character, as some critics have described Addie, Sophronia was a woman who sneaked and kept appearing in many of Lillian Hellman's works, because she occupied a special place in Hellman's heart. Hellman spent most of her childhood in New Orleans, since it was there where her mother's rich family lived: However, the most vivid and nice remembrance of the playwright's past with her southern family was not the wealthy life, but this woman, Sophronia. She was the family's black servant, and she soon became the real mother figure for a love-demanding Lillian, who, in her autobiography, would dedicate the following affectionate words to her: "Sophronia was the first and most certain love of my life" (*Unfinished* 14).

Moreover, Sophronia is clearly reflected in the redeemer Addie, a character who seems to understand love as an obligation and a necessity for any human being. Both look upon children as fragile innocent creatures, whose need of love and support is much greater than many adults may imagine, and both put their effort in taking care of those who need it most. Concerning Addie, we can clearly see such an attitude of conscious and tender behavior when, as aforementioned, she orders to give some food to the black children who had arrived to the Hubbard's mansion begging for some food, for a small piece of the so tasty morsel they had never savored. She realizes that the physical need for food is more than that: the children's hunger is also emotional, so they are asking for love and for all the attentions and privileges white children have. In this, Hellman recalls Sophronia's kindness in *An Unfinished Woman*, for "[s]he was a tall, handsome, light tan woman—I still have many pictures of the brooding face—who was for me, as for so many other white southern children, the one and certain anchor so needed for the young years, so forgotten after that. (It wasn't that way for us: we wrote and met as often as possible until she died" (14-15).

In her study about Hellman's life, Marisol Dorao Orduña introduces the American writer as a conflictive woman, and Sophronia as the bastion and the emotional support the girl needed, because "Dentro de una familia numerosa en que nadie se ocupaba de nadie, Lillian se sentía amada, amparada y comprendida" (104). This very same feeling of affection to which Dorao



Figure 60

Orduña is making reference has been, in our opinion, transmitted to another character of *The Little Foxes*, Zan, who, lacking her biological mother's warmth and being her beloved father distant, begins to walk towards adulthood only hand in hand with Addie, either alone (in the play) or accompanied by David (in the film).

As already mentioned, Addie shares a very close relationship with Alexandra: she is the one who really plays the role of the mother, as Regina is too busy in plotting her next move carefully. And Birdie, though willing, is lacking energy and strength to take on such a role fully. We could say that Regina behaves like a mother only in the sense she wants Alexandra to have a great inheritance, however, it is Addie who fulfills the emotional needs of the girl, always taking care of her and giving her useful pieces of advice. Once again, whites are attached to the physical and material things, whilst blacks are more related to the spiritual side of humanity: Regina takes care of an economic development for Zan, Addie takes care of Zan's personal development. Usually, it was interpreted in a negative way for the Negro, as they were considered too naïve to perceive what was profitable in this southern world. However, it could be considered that it is not that black people were unable to see these realities, but perhaps they were not selfish enough as to place themselves in the center and forget about anything or anybody else surrounding them. In other words, it is possible to believe that they were sensitive to the emotional part because they had not become industrialized bodies yet, and so they had not forgotten to maintain their spirit alive.

When Regina decides to send Alexandra to Baltimore alone to look for her father, Addie openly confesses to the mother that it is not a good idea, since she is too young to travel, not to mention to do it alone. Southern girls used to travel accompanied by their mothers, but never alone, for it was consider improper and even more so at the beginning of the twentieth century, so Regina is —once again— breaking the rules. And she is doing it in a very conscious manner, since she silences both Addie's warning and Birdie's proposal to accompany Zan. Addie cannot tread on Regina's pronouncement, but she can —and she will— counsel Alexandra, as we see she is caringly doing in the scene of Zan's departure (Figure 60).

After having packed under Regina's supervision, Alexandra leaves for Baltimore in the morning chaperoned by a *mother-Regina* who reminds her of her duty and asks her once and a million times to be careful and never to talk to strangers. Although the girl is too excited to listen carefully, she knows Addie is trying to help her and that she is doing it kindheartedly, as if she were her own mother. In fact, whereas Regina thinks of a strategy to convince Horace to take part in Mr. Marshall's business, it is Addie who worries about any possible adversity her young Zanny might find in such a new adventure for her.

Wyler transformed this moment portrayed in the play into significant expressions in the actresses' faces as well as in their gestures. The previous medium shot is later developed in the film into a medium close-up as the camera approaches the characters, and finally into a close-up of each of the women's visages separately to show the feedback exchanged between them so we may see Addie's instructive hand pointing towards Alexandra in a tone of reprimand emphasized by her advisory facial expression and words. Her penetrating gaze focuses on Zan's sweet looks while the girl listens to her and smiles in a grateful attitude. As the carriage moves towards the train station, Addie's maternal preoccupation contrasts with the happiness of the Alexandra,



Figure 61

although both servant and young mistress seem to be conscious of the importance this voyage will have for the girl's development, something Regina is unable to realize, as she considers her daughter an ignorant child, inexperienced and malleable.

There is also a special bond between Addie and Birdie, since Birdie, the daughter of a plantation owner, does not only talk to black servants as if they were people, but she even asks their opinion and introduces them into the conversation. On the other hand, Addie is sensitive to injustices and she is always ready to stand by those she considers victims, as is Birdie's case. One of the most touching examples is staged in the dining room after the key dinner with Mr. Marshall (Figure 61). After the discussion at the table, when Birdie defends the honor of her ancestors against Ben's scornful words —thus revealing an underrating feeling as well as self-pride— and against Oscar's contempt, Mr. Marshall tries to alleviate her suffering by openly praising her manners, but it is Addie's remark what really lessens her pain. After the dinner scene, at the very moment Birdie flattens herself against the table alone with her sadness, Addie approaches her and tells her she looks beautiful and young.

When nobody is paying attention to her, it is precisely Addie who rescues the poor southern belle from her hurting ecstasy in a dead Lionnet. After Ben's speech and Birdie's attempt of defence, the southern belle continues thinking about her past life at his father's plantation. However, Lionnet does no longer exist and the happy memories of something that will never return make her feel very sad. Wyler presented this moment to the audience in a very short period of time captured in the shot above: in the background, the staircase can be perceived majestically calm, parallel to the calmness in the foreground, where Birdie seems to be captured in a different dimension, until Addie gets into her private sphere and awakens her. They occupy most of the medium shots with their figures in profile, one in front of the other. Birdie is dressed in bright colors, while Addie wears a black uniform. However, in contrast with their appearance, whereas Addie is full of energy and a bright soul, Birdie is tired and spiritless. White becomes black and black shines as if it were white in more senses than one, although, according to Bernard F. Dick, "there was another reason why Hellman made Addie Birdie's comforter: it was part of her attempt to humanize the blacks in the film so that they would be more than domestics entrusted with the exposition" (*Hellman* 62). Addie is inevitably exposed to the reality of a white capitalist dominion, but she has found a way to enter the orb of the white elite, and even become the center and the solid base of the Hubbard family, so she does not need of any kind of humanization, she is certainly a human being, and she is even more human than the dehumanized and greedy Hubbards.

Going back to the yet splendorous days narrated in *Another Part of the Forest*, Addie could be directly connected to Coralee, the Negro servant of the Hubbard family when Marcus was still the head. This woman was capable of perceiving —and enjoying— the presence of Lavinia, even when the whole family ignores her. Coralee becomes her unique support and friend and for Lavinia, the only family that exists is Coralee. Similarly, Addie is a model in what comes to supporting ignored or feeble people. In this case her mistress, Regina, does not need her affection but, as we have already explained, Zan does, the same as her aunt and her father.

But we can also establish another parallelism —curiously enough, with a rich family in her road to a foreseen decay, the Compson family of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Dilsey, the Negro servant of the Compsons is a resolute and protective woman, the only stabilizing source within the family. She avoids corruption and maintains southern traditional values such as family, honor and faith alive, trying to keep the family unified until the inevitable decay. Patient and self-sacrificing, she takes care of the family at the same time she raises her own children and grandchildren. In short, she is the only one who really takes care of the poor mentally retarded Benjy, the same as Coralee does with the ignored Lavinia in *Another Part of the Forest* or Addie with Alexandra, a girl whose mother does not actually behave as such. In addition, the three black women take care of the rest of the family members who most need help (Caddy, Quentin, Birdie, Horace), so that at the end they have positively influenced at least one of the characters in their development. One of the possible readings, leads us to interpret these women as characters which imply a hope for renewal, notwithstanding all the tragedies which could have taken place within the degraded families, and they may thus represent the revitalization —or at least the survival— of the pure uncorrupted southern values. Addie in *The Little Foxes* expresses identical social perspectives emphasizing Negro justice or condemning the exploitation of black people, likewise other Hellman's black servants, for instance Agatha, Mrs. Tilford's servant in *The Children's Hour*.

In conclusion, the dismantling of the black community in this section has led us to inevitably deal with the complex weave of social structures in the hierarchically organized American world of the 1900s, and the different methods of establishing these hierarchies. In order to elucidate the ambiguities of a sociopolitical system that seems to satisfy and dissatisfy at the same time the black mass, we will resort to Foucault, who was able to go further in the analysis of the diverse ways through which the power penetrates in the bodies. Not content with just the traditional focus of the problem of power, he brought to light a more precise study. On the one hand, he talked about "political techniques," forces which help the State to incorporate ideologies about the natural care of the individuals' lives and to assume them. Understood as an objective procedure, this is a useful method for social control. That is the reason why the black community depicted in Hellman's play adapts to a hierarchical order in which they are placed at the very bottom. There is an established law and order, what helps to make these black people conscious of the fact that they must serve white masters. On the other hand, within society we find a more sophisticated dominion method that Foucault called "the technologies of the self," and which makes the individuals adopt a subjective awareness of their own self in accordance with the aforementioned objectivities. To a certain extent, it is a personal and conscious vision of the self, caused by an exterior power endowed with the control, the State.

In the black society of *The Little Foxes* there is an apparent equilibrium and everything seems settled as well as accepted, although in reality, the situation is not so simple as it seems. Having *advanced* from slavery to a freedom of a probably underpaid servitude, the Negro's actual condition remains almost unaltered. Notwithstanding, they force their minds to comprehend the reality in an unreal way, contemplating it through the eyes of the system in power, a white social system that constrains the black man to think of himself as traditionally established. Following this biopolitical perspective, we must wonder, as the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben does:

> … then where, in the body of power, is the zone of indistinction (or, at least, the poit of intersection) at which techniques of individualization and totalizing procedures coverge? And, more generally, is there a unitary center in which the political "double

> bind" finds its *raison d'être*? That there is a subjective aspect in the genesis of power was already implicit in the concept of *servitude volontaire* in Étienne de La Boétie. But what is the point at which the voluntary servitude of individuals comes into contact with objective power? Can one be content, in such a delicate area, with psychological explanations such as the suggestive notion of a parallelism between external and internal neuroses? Confronted with phenomena such as the power of the society of the spectacle that is everywhere transforming the political realm today, is it legitimate or even possible to hold subjective technologies and political techniques apart? (6)

On the whole, according to the opinion society has of black laborers as inferior to whites ones, we might wonder what is the opinion of most of the black men supposed to be working for the Hubbard family as cheap laborers once the cotton mill is established. We might wonder if they assume to be paid enough because their white masters told them their salary high enough, and they submit themselves to such a condition in an act of "servitude volontaire". In such a sense, we can say that the general landscape of the Negro life introduced by Wyler in his adaptation shows how the servants and laborers of the Hubbards seem to continue to work for them, without daring to voice their feelings or disagreement, and acting as if they were actually inferior to those who had once enslaved them.

Nonetheless, there are some exceptions to the rule which anticipate a tangible and authentic change for the Negro world. Harold shows sympathy only to those he likes, the same as Addie who, in addition, voices her opinion about the despoilers and the bystanders of the world directly implicating the white supremacy, the one with power enough to destroy or to stop the destroyers.

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5. *ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST*

Written right after WWII and considering that Hellman had claimed to be writing about what she knew, *Another Part of the Forest* came out to precisely show life right after a war, the Civil War that would face the North and the South. By 1945 the world power game was experiencing changes all around, and so it happens in *Another Part of the Forest*, where "the balance of power was shifting from the southern aristocrats to the self-made businessman" (Rollyson, *Lillian* 242). The Civil war brought the destruction of the old world, and with it, a sense of moral isolation for some, of loneliness and wanting to appertain for others, a chance for growth and social mobility for the daring, and the neurotic reactions of those who found it particularly hard to face a new different world. This varied perspective gives rise to a constellation of characters that move in a dynamic of change, and that therefore must evolve towards an adaptation that brings them success or towards a survival mode in which they remain hiding in the memories of the past.

In this chapter we will focus mainly on observing the different relationships between the characters, as well as their individual traits and their self-perception. In this way, we will be able to appreciate the events of *The Little Foxes* under a more precise lens and achieve a better understanding of the development of the characters' diverse personalities. First, we will introduce social relationships and large group formations within Bowden, the fictional community originally created by Lillian Hellman and recreated for the big screen by Michael Gordon. Then we will proceed with our analysis with a focus on the young Hubbard siblings, whom we already know as adults, in order to delve into the shaping of their identities, both individual and social. Finally, we will focus on the analysis of the parents, Marcus and Lavinia Hubbard, until now more unknown to the viewer (despite any previous knowledge of the Hubbard family obtain from *The Little Foxes*), yet highly influential in the character of their children and therefore, also indirectly the events of the future.

5.1. The good folks vs. the bad: the Old South against the Hubbards

In *Another Part of the Forest* we find opposing forces, old and new, reacting to a common trigger —money— and resulting into diverse outcomes. These two main forces are portrayed respectively by an aristocratic family, the Bagtrys, and a bourgeoise family, the agents of the new power, the Hubbards. Both families live in Bowden, Alabama, within a community with mostly traditional values, slowly opening to modernity, and that seems to profoundly dislike the Hubbard clan, both because of past events and their deeds of the present.

On the one hand, the Hubbard family is representing those who want to ascend in the social ladder, as well as those who want —and yet struggle— to feel integrated into select social groups, hence aiming at finding their aimed social identity and achieving personal realization. On the other hand, the respected Bagtry family represents the southern plantation owners who failed at "making the transition from mastery to management, a task for which they were fundamentally ill-prepared" (Glymph 57). In addition, finding it hard to mingle with a newly organized society, the Bagtrys are now lethargic, isolated in their own pity with only their memories of a better world. Their rigid posture and attitude towards the changes of the present

develops therefore into an auto-destructive force, as they have become somewhat crippled and cannot advance, what leads to their ruin.

Through this chapter we observe what the characters do, how they interact with and affect each other; what is their opinion about others and how others think about them; what are their motivations and how much effort they put on achieving their goals, how they face obstacles, and how all this affects their identity. In addition, we point out to what they know or the relevant information they lack, and how this affects their actions. And most importantly, feelings are always observed, particularly in *Another Part of the Forest* while interactions among characters are taking place, since they rarely appear on scene alone, probably precisely because, as prequel to *The Little Foxes*, its main interest lies in how the different types of relationships (love, family, and social) are strongly influencing and shaping the identities of the young Hubbards.

5.1.1. The (old) Bowden community

The movie starts with the sound of music and celebratory drums. It is Confederate Day. The people of Bowden have come together to commemorate the soldiers who fell in the recently lost Civil War —their courage and immense worth, which are cause of respect and pride. This celebration serves at the same time to confront the implicit rejection of defeat, a feeling that for some perhaps weighs as much as the lives shed in the battle.

Whereas here we get first a general perspective of the town and of how the Hubbards react in diverse ways to the town people on a commemoration day, Hellman's play starts with Regina's love scene as she complains to her lover, John Bagtry, for not having met her the night before. The initial scene added to the movie provides us first with a more extensive historical context, putting more emphasis on the values of the community of Bowden, Alabama, while hinting at the same time at some social key conflicts, particularly related to the Hubbard family.

Colonel Isham's speech emphasizes Bowden's principles and seeks to warm the spirit of the community. He is proud of the fact that "the whole town" is gathering there, but the fact is that the Hubbards are not. We can briefly get a glimpse of Lavinia Hubbard in the distance, while she is hiding in the forest, uneasy, observing the celebration from far away amongst the trees. Instants later, Oscar Hubbard suddenly makes his appearance accompanied by Laurette Sincee, a young girl who does not hesitate to speak her own (raw) truth and pursue her own wishes as much as she is allowed and, immediately, Colonel Isham turns to the couple in order to let the young Hubbard know that "it is not fitting" for him to be there, "especially today". Isham insists that he is not wanted there, and he firmly orders him to leave, to what Oscar, showing signs of innocence (naivety), reacts politely but not without showing indignation. He does not understand why Isham prefers the company of a Yankee visitor to his own, and without raising his voice but rather begging like a sad puppy, he asks "but why, Colonel Isham? Why, sir!" At Isham's insistence, he chooses to leave despite his reluctance, whereas Laurette decides to stay letting him go alone, in this way already hinting at her position of power within the relationship.

In the following sequence of shots, we can observe the community of Bowden in the middle of their celebrations. In Figure 62, a two-shot frame from an eye level camera angle, Colonel Isham is proudly explaining about the Confederate Day to the outsider Sam Taylor, who despite not being a member of Bowden's community, is notwithstanding welcome by its members. Both men are wearing hats, and these cover the upper part of their faces, so that their eyes are darkened in contrast to the brightness of the sun that allows us to see their mouths. This is relevant inasmuch as it emphasizes what they are talking about while hiding their gaze, preventing us from going beyond words in terms of interpretation.



Figure 62



Figure 63



Figure 64

In Figure 63, in the center, colonel is giving his speech, in an upright position, showing an attitude of respect and admiration for tradition and (old) southern values, both with his gestures and with his expression. He is perceived from a low camera angle in the background, in front of the memorial statue of the fallen Confederate soldiers, and framed in the foreground with the back-turned bodies of the citizens of Bowden. In the last shot (Figure 64), we observe the scene from a high camera angle with the focus on John Bagtry, a glorified war hero and the nephew of the Bagtry family in town. Two other soldiers stand next to him, and between them the Confederate flag is raised, remaining at a similar height to that of John's. In this way, the Bagtry ex-soldier and the flag stand out in the foreground. The two soldiers filling next to Bagtry could be easily confused with the crowd in the background, they seem to have been included in the shot with the purpose of precisely emphasizing the figure of the southern soldier, and their enormous courage (in parallel with Isham's speech).

Whilst Lavinia and Oscar seem to have some interest in the festivities, the rest of the family shows none. Ben is coming back home from Mobile, where he spent a whole day in order to raise some money he was seeking to invest. As the train is approaching to Bowden, a stranger asks him what's going on there, to which he plainly replies "Bowden's annual masquerade party. Once a year people dress up as heroes. They have themselves a fine time." His summary of the celebrations clearly shows his ideology while providing open criticism to what he considers to be fake heroism, according to his understanding of what is or is not heroic, or maybe, according to the (unfriendly) feeling he might have towards those who participate in the *masquerade*.

Indifferent to the noise and the activities selected by his neighbors to commemorate their heroes of the past, Marcus, the patriarch of the Hubbard family, takes care of his own activities, behind closed doors, in the calm of his office. He represents the rising bourgeoisie, the new businessman dethroning the old southern aristocrats with his *skills* —included that of the trickster— for business. Once changed the plantation system and the way of life, the perfect terrain is prepared for the proliferation of people with an aggressive character, much to the dismay of Bowden residents. On the contrary, the honorable and loved Bagtrys find the very same terrain to be a quite swampy one, since once the war was lost and slaves became freemen, their plantation system failed. The land, Lionnet, was there, but the landowners were unable to make amends to the old system or establish a new one suitable to the postwar circumstances. Therefore, the Bagtrys, even though having a Confederate soldier of their own, become "land-poor" (Fields 81), since they have actually no way to make profit from their plantation anymore.

Notwithstanding, not only is Marcus not interested in the situation of people like the Bagtrys, but he also believes that they deserve it well, an opinion he does not hide and that earns him even greater rejection from his neighbors. Little does he care what others think or do, though, and so he wants to let them know loudly and clearly. In the following shot (Figure 65), we can observe how, in his attempt to get noticed —obviously as an opposing force, and desirably superior—,



Figure 65

showing both his narcissism and his disrespect, he has no qualms about opening the doors of his business wide while the Confederate parade is passing by his store, so that everyone can see that he is working on a holiday. Showing an absolute lack of empathy, and with indented coldness and arrogance that can easily astonish the viewer, Marcus acts as he pleases, without caring about future possible consequences or anything else. He wants to make it clear to the town that for him, the Confederacy means nothing, in the best of cases, and this is no more than a normal weekly day with no major event taking place. Up to this point, the Hubbard company's doors were closed, thus separating Marcus' world from that of Bowden's people. But when he decides to open the doors —not to enter Bowden's world himself, but to let his neighbors observe him—, Marcus' body, with his extended upper extremities holding the doors open, occupies almost the entire foreground. Meanwhile, in the background, a small Colonel Isham can be observed, accompanied by other people. Despite riding a horse, and receiving the sunlight directly, Colonel Isham, sitting erect to emphasize his authority, is yet clearly contrasting in size with the enormous foreground figure of Marcus, whose power consequently stands clear.

Later in the movie, Isham visits the Hubbard house to let Marcus know that his younger son Oscar was identified by eight people as one of the riders beating Sam Taylor over the course of the night before, something that has profoundly altered the sentiment of the community. Therefore, the damage his son made needs to be repaired, especially when, apart from a serial killer whose only joy was murdering boys, the Hubbard family is considered to be the most hated family in the county. The comparison seems out of place as it is disproportionate to compare the whole family to a murderer. However, Marcus does not feel affected by Isham's words; he wants this conversation to end fast and continue with his day, so he simply gives the money to the Colonel and he does not show any sign of true concern for the wounded man or the actions of his son. As we can see in the image below on the left (Figure 66), Colonel Isham arrived at the house with his usual self-confident and straightforward behavior, showing no fear to Marcus, and only concerned with enforcing the law for his town. He looks at Marcus directly in the eye and speaks to the point, while his host stays sitting without worrying about showing courtesy to him until he eventually offers a coffee and, as soon as Isham refuses his courtesy, he immediately gets up to practically force the colonel to sit down. Isham comes into the room with an attitude of power, bringing the support of morality and justice by his side; he tries to keep this position while talking to Marcus; and finally loses it when Ben joins the scene with his brother's alibi. In the next image (Figure 67), we can see how Marcus, despite being in the center, takes now a secondary position in order to give a certain prominence to his children, both standing while the elders remain seated. Ben stands in the foreground along with Isham, and they take the spotlight.



Figure 66



Figure 67

They dialogue without backing down in their positions, but finally the colonel has no choice but to accept the Hubbards' solution: money (to satisfy the attacked man). Ultimately, honor loses meaning, the feeling of guilt fails to make its appearance, and the ultimate power of decision and control remains in the hands of the *money-owners*, the Hubbards. In relation with the lack of a guilt feeling, what's even more astounding concerning Marcus' behavior and in particular his parenting role, is the fact that he has no intention at all to reprimand his son, what makes sense to a certain extent, since it was precisely him who instigated Oscar to beat Sam Taylor. Later, by pointing out to the fact that once Taylor is gone, everybody in the town would come only to Marcus for money, Ben helps the audience to understand why all of this is happening. Apart from pride and ideology, Marcus encouraged his son to give a lesson to Taylor for his own economic benefit, that is to say, he used his son as a tool without caring about the consequences that his actions might bring.

There are some slight differences in the original play worth mentioning since they might affect the perception of characters: the number of witnesses is reduced to eight in the movie from the original fourteen, which, although not contributing to lessen the cruelty of Oscar's actions, it does somehow lower the intensity of the immediate social reactions. On the contrary, the change made to Oscar's alibi —Ben assures they were in the house reading in the movie, whereas Hellman's Ben claimed that Oscar was with him outside the house, while they were waiting for the Mobile train at Bowden's station. Whereas the lie with which Ben comes up in the play could have a certain credibility for Isham, Ben's lie in the movie ironically emphasizes Oscar's illiteracy —since his lack of intelligence and interest in achieving knowledge are well-known traits of his personality for the whole town.

After Oscar's attack to Bowden's visitor Sam Taylor, Marcus intentionally shows the same defiant attitude, without even considering for a second the fact that at this precise moment the town is more actively rejecting the Hubbard's actions. Marcus does not feel any shame because of his son's engagement in a cruel beating; on the contrary, he acts with total self-confidence and with an intended sense of superiority for Bowden's people to perceive. In his neat suit and elegant hat, he lights his pipe without looking down. He is in the background, nonetheless, standing out on a higher level than his foreground neighbors, who we only see from the back. His arrogant attitude is easy to observe both in his actions and his gaze, perfectly captured by the camera (Figure 68). His son is looking at him fom behind, in a second level in the background, with an astonished expression, the same that we can assume have the people observing him from the foreground.



Figure 68

Later events will show us a deeper and more critical side of some of Bowden's people, as it is the case of Laurette Sincee, Oscar's cheerful lover, described by Hellman as "pig-face cute."

She is the poor white trash representative, uneducated and scandalous, known to be and referred to by other characters as "the town whore." We see her for the first time by the arm of Oscar, and later dancing energetically as part of her job. Contrary to the other young ladies in the story, Birdie and Regina, Laurette complements her outfits with hats or eye-catching jewelry, something that matches perfectly with her also striking character. Despite hosting these not-so-desirable characteristics, Laurette also exhibits some positive traits: cheerfulness, ambition of a better future, and even a certain sense of honor, that, even though naive and obviously not fitting with her persona, provides her with a certain respectable character. In spite of Oscar's wishes and his naïve perspective, Laurette is undeniably a member of the very bottom of Bowden's social ladder. Laughed at and rejected by many for such a reason, the girl is, however, not ashamed of who she has become. In fact, it is clear for her that she wasn't given much option for social mobility and so she voices it without hesitation showing her awareness of the difference between yearning and reality: "Yep. Instead of whoring, I just wanted to do fancy embroidery" (Hellman, *Another* 378).

Although it might seem ironic or difficult to understand considering her present circumstances as a social being, Laurette has a deep pride in her southern roots, and so she declares it loudly to the Hubbard's patriarch during the music night gathering to which she attended as Oscar's companion. After drinking too much for her to handle during her visit to the Hubbard house, she inadvertently starts acting out. Marcus, finding her attitude degrading, intends to put an end to her inadequate —probably advancing towards *not-lady-like* but indecorous— behavior. Feeling judged by Marcus, she immediately lashes out at him, letting her words come out of her mouth with as much sincerity and frustration as with fury. As we can perceive in the three-shot (Figure 69), feelings are expressed with words as much as on the characters' faces. Laurette bursts into tears at Marcus reprobation while Oscar remains, concerned, in the background as an observer of the discussion. The expression of the Hubbards' patriarch is harsh and unpleasant, showing his contempt for someone he considers clearly inferior. Although Laurette and Marcus are at a similar distance from the camera, the host has both power of speech and position under the circumstances, since Laurette is but a mere guest desired by no one except Oscar. Hence, she must recognize her uneducated manners, but she is capable, nonetheless, of displaying knowledge and strength enough to point out at Marcus' —much more *not-gentleman-like* but despicable— way of getting rich at the expense of others. Albeit her drunken and emotional state, her speech is clear and accurate, hence letting the audience (both the fictional one at the Hubbards' gathering and the real one outside the story) glimpse at her intelligence and her sense of morality.

To round off this section on the Hubbards' relationship with their community, we need to emphasize that they all, old and new generation, are experiencing some concern or difficulty to interact with others. Oscar makes an effort to take part in the commemorations and he clearly yearns for an inclusion that, although not complete, he can find in reduced social groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan. He describes himself as a gentleman and he claims to be proud of his southern identity. He does not completely dislike the people of Bowden, except for colored people and carpetbaggers. Lavinia, for her part, feels the most comfortable around black people and she likes people in general, being the household the most difficult terrain to navigate for her. Ben is bothered by hypocrisy



Figure 69

and ignorance, and shows no interest in integrating (emotionally) into Bowden's community, unless it means a (financial) benefit to him. Regina has a similar feeling to that of her brother, but she mostly wants to focus on her own objectives, and she does not seem to care about Bowden's society. Finally, Marcus profoundly despises his neighbors, as he feels rejected by them. For both Ben and Marcus, the town people are mere tools on their pursue of power, they are like chess pieces that the Hubbards can handle as they please if they serve them to make the best move for their financial gain. Another relevant aspect to consider is the fact that while the Confederate Day is being celebrated in a forest clearing, we meet both Lavinia and Regina for first time, literally, at *another part of the forest*, respectively hiding and waiting in the middle of the trees. Metaphorically speaking, the reading does not seem difficult to do: whereas they are both immersed in their thoughts and machinations regarding the future they covet, at the same time they are trapped in an adverse situation from which it is costing them sweat and tears to find a way out at the present moment. Ben and Marcus are nonetheless moving through the thickest part of the forest, the one where they can cut down trees without regret to sell them at the best price, and without even taking a sympathetic look at the sage they spill. In other words, Marcus has been bleeding his own people for money, and Ben has been learning from him, growing greatly interested in money and with no qualms to exploit others as long as it serves his purpose. None of the members of the Hubbard family is truly socially integrated; but whereas Lavinia, Regina, and Oscar have a connection with someone belonging to the community of Bowden, Marcus and Ben seem to be completely detached from their neighbors and acquaintances and, although they are not immune to disintegration and social rejection, their identity is cold and strong enough to adapt to their surrounding circumstances without major problem.

5.1.2. John Bagtry: lost soldier of honor

Regina's lover, a kind and elegant gentleman, concerned with traditional values but mainly with his role in the war, John is introduced as an ex-Confederate war hero, the loser of a battle, an educated man made into a soldier who no longer has money or anything to fight for. The same as the rest of his family, he is suffering the effects of the war, which meant for him both a material and an emotional loss, deeply affecting his identity. At a first glance, John might seem a self-centered man, but this undeniable trait of the ex-Confederate is a complex one deserving of a closer observation. Despite being a gentleman and having in his good heart to care for his family, especially his aunt Clara and cousin Birdie, he does not seem to find real motivation in such a purpose. On the one hand, it is in his nature of a good southern relative to care for his family; on the other hand, they have been providing food and shelter for him since the moment he came back —defeated— from the war. It is therefore his gentleman duty to respond as best as he can to his fragile and lonely relatives, and the right thing to do, but his mind is constantly elsewhere. During the events at a party at the Hubbards' house to which John and Birdie had been invited, Marcus asks the aristocrat: "What is it that stays in your memory, Captain Bagtry?" Without any hesitation, John will clearly point to the war as an answer, hence allowing for the conversation to soon enter a terrain of disagreement, as host and guest have very different opinions about such a sensitive and divisive topic:

> MARCUS: People remember what made them happy, and you were happy in the war, weren't you?
> JOHN: Yes, Sir. I was happy. I thought we would win.
> MARCUS: I never did. Never from the first foolish talk to the last foolish day. (*JOHN*

sharply turns away.) I have disturbed you. I am most sorry. I speak the truth—whenever I can.

Birdie (*Quickly.*): John means once a soldier always a soldier. He wants to go to Brazil right now. Of course, you know, Mr. Hubbard, the radical people down there are trying to abolish slavery, and ruin the country. John wants to fight for his ideals.

Marcus: Why don't you choose the other side? Every man needs to win once in his life.

John (*Angrily.*): I don't like the way of saying it. I don't necessarily fight for slavery. I fight for a way of life. (Hellman, *Another* 350)

John is a neurotic character who finds himself isolated in Bowden despite being considered a hero, as he cannot find his place back in the town after the war. His obsession with centering his identity on his role as a soldier will lead him to a detachment from the reality of the present and consequently to a search for an escape in a faraway land. He cannot even focus on anything or anybody else except for "John the soldier" —much less about following Regina's plans of eloping— since he has somehow allowed himself to get lost into that past. During the conversation with Marcus, John feels his wounded pride bursting out and even with his cousin Birdie's gracious attempt of calming down the tone of the two men, he cannot help but explode in anger. The frame below (Figure 70) shows how the expressions of those involved in this conversation darken. Situated in the middle, a worried Birdie tries to mediate between the two agitated men, while on the right Marcus is adopting an upright posture, his head held high to show disapproval, and John's face on the left, slightly more illuminated for emphasis, reflects an expression of extreme anger and frustration, which he is probably trying to contain in his role of educated gentleman. Marcus disapproves of his choices and words, and he considers the Bagtry "a dead man, a foolish man, an empty man from an idiot world" (Hellman, *Another* 400), but beyond any politic ideology and any type of social opinion, fighting is John's calling, and his identity relies on it.

In this sense, John is one of those characters so affected by the past events that he cannot cope with the present, and the same as the rest of the Bagtrys, he seems to have no "stamina to compete in the world around [him]" (Dusenbury 143). John is experiencing a particularly hard time to adjust to the postwar changes coming to the South, where "once a soldier always a soldier" has no longer that honorable meaning that Birdie believes it to have, but rather a feeling of defeat which left an open wound and has led John to experience both an inferiority and a masculinity feeling, both sentiments understood according to Angie Maxwell's perspective of southern sorrow in her work *The Indicted South: Public Criticism, Southern Inferiority, and the Politics of Whiteness*. John's circumstances appear to perfectly fit Emmeline Gross's description of a postwar period where old southern myths were bound to lose effect and crumble: "It is in this context that the South's mythmakers created an image of the heroic veteran standing tall against all odds, who should be honoured for his efforts on the battle-field. Yet, not all veterans felt they had been heroic nor did they all stand tall. The men who fought during the Civil War returned to their homes as losers entering a world that



Figure 70

was different from the one they left" (Gross 36–37). From a perspective of the Old South, John was a soldier with mission. In the New South, the soldier came back home as hero, but he had to return to a place that was *not his place anymore*, a land empty of its previous meaning and that he could no longer identify with.

From a more judgmental point of view, it is also possible to mainly consider John as a weak character, simply obsessed with being a soldier; yet it is necessary to have into account that this obsession responds to a deep feeling of grief in more than one level: he silently contemplates himself a failure —maybe as much as Marcus considers him a foolish loser out loud—, and he is conscious that he does not have any other skill than that of a soldier. In fact, not only Marcus but also John would agree that "[the current] desolation and poverty of the [New] South evidenced the incredible failure of the old communal manhood that had pulled the region into civil war" (Friend xv). Therefore, finding himself unable to change the existing circumstances as well as his defeat in the past, he is determined to find a new cause to revive the soldier inside him so that he can finally deal with his wounded identity in the present. His attitude is indeed egocentric, but this does not seem to be exactly his personal choice (unlike the self-interest of the Hubbards). The same as a person who is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder could act by centering his/her actions on the memories of past events, John is also stuck in his past. He does genuinely care about his family, and he actually seems to be attracted to Regina; however, neither family nor love (or passion) are important enough to keep him from his ultimate goal: regaining his lost pride as a soldier and reconstructing his identity. He does not really care about ideology —slavery is not particularly what he wants to fight for—, he does not feel attached to his family or his town, and he cannot sense or care for any domains of his own identity other than that of being a soldier. He feels pride in the South, but he does not feel at home in the South anymore. Therefore, contrary to her young cousin Birdie's choice to compromise with her feeling of *southernness* to stay in the South, John opts for exile.

5.1.3. Birdie Bagtry: from heroine to martyr

Actress Betsy Blair brings to screen a twenty-year-old Birdie Bagtry with a pretty face, tiny body, and a big smile that perfectly matches her lively character. She is a shy girl, although open-minded and full of positive energy; she has a soft-spoken nature and blushes easily in any social context, but at the same time she is daring to speak out. However, despite her aristocratic birth and her charming nature and desire to please, the Bagtry heiress will constantly be referred to in a not- so-positive light by the Hubbards. She is considered weak by Ben, ignorant and insignificant by Marcus, a "mummy" —as opposed to modern— by Regina, and she is described as "awfully silly" and "melty-mush silly" by the younger male of the Hubbard clan. In addition, Birdie thinks poorly of herself pointing out to her many mistakes while she calls herself a "ninny" but. At the same time, she is conscious about her jovial character, her polite manners, and her good will, which somehow make up for the knowledge she is lacking. Regarding her naïve way of understanding the world, she is quite alike the second Hubbard son, Oscar, for they both see the world through their lens of ingenuousness. "I don't understand. I thought that people always wanted cotton" —she innocently tells Ben. She has her own vague dreamy perspective, and she is too innocent to thrive in the new South, where people are required to make a few adjustments if they truly intend to succeed.

She was counting on Mr. Taylor's money to save her indebted family plantation, Lionnet, but although the man intended to help, he is suddenly gone —after Oscar and his Ku Klux Klan colleagues had attacked him in the night— so Birdie finds no option but to ask Ben for help



Figure 71

in mediating so that she can get a loan from his father. The happiness of the people who surround her is a clear motivation for Birdie, so her wish and goal —saving her family's plantation— is for the well-being of others rather than for her own.

In the medium close-up on the left (Figure 71) we can see how with her lady manners Birdie addresses Ben in a sweet and polite way, showing none of the contempt that Bowden people usually display toward the Hubbards but merely her respect and candor. They chat in the foreground as they look directly into each other's eyes with the light streaming through the windows illuminating them from the background. Ben's expression is calm and attentive, without any hint of arrogance. Erect, he listens to Birdie's words attentively, while the girl is nervous, continuing to make small movements with the object in her hands and in a more cramped position that she will maintain throughout the whole conversation. In her speech an indicative attitude is perceived at the same time as one of shyness and submission, since it is clear that she is asking for a favor and therefore she is at Ben's mercy. This seems to please Ben, who immediately gets interested in her discourse and will decide to help her, yet for his own benefit. In the same way, Ben knows his position of superiority and, seeing immediately how he could benefit from the young woman's sad circumstances, he decides to opt for a more approachable speech, a rather charming one instead of the bordering-the-narcist manners he tends to use towards other people, both members of his family and mere Bowden acquaintances (out-groups).

Insomuch as Birdie has no knowledge of business, she cannot be the heroine for her family while acting silently without their consent as she had planned. As Ben explains how business should proceed to her, she recognizes her lack of knowledge straightaway, in a calm and gracious tone, between a childish shame and a mature acceptance, what makes her look like even a stronger and decided woman, pursuing her goals despite her timid nature: "Oh you mean you can't sign for what you don't own. Oh. I see. I hadn't thought of that. Oh. That's how much of a ninny I am. Forgive me for bothering you. I shouldn't have" (Hellman, *Another* 327).

This proactive and straightforward attitude of Birdie makes of her a character with much greater will and voice than the mature Birdie we will find twenty years later. She will keep her charm and her smile —although sometimes obviously forced— but she will completely lose her power to a very damaging marriage, therefore presenting a wounded identity that finds no other escape than precisely the memories of this Birdie of the past. Once again, the camera framing a two shot of Birdie and Ben (Figure 72). We can see the girl's illuminated face with an angelic smile that reveals her endearing nature. Permanently smiling, always attentive, lovely, and innocent, Birdie listens to Ben, now at a dinner gathering at the Hubbard house. The Bagtry's heiress had been invited by



Figure 72

Ben to a music night at his house so that she could ask his father for the loan during that event. Ben had considered this would be a great opportunity to take advantage of his father's good humor and get his approval, so he asked permission from his father for her to attend his music night. Despite his hatred towards the girl's aristocratic birth and her family, Marcus agreed to receive her at his home, extending the invitation to her cousin John as per Regina's request, and thinking that he might find it entertaining: "Kind of cute... Bagtrys in this house, begging. Might be amusing for an hour" (Hellman, *Another* 363). On the image we can see Ben's attitude in a different, interested and sibylline light. The proximity and naivety of the previous conversation gives way here to a manipulative behavior from Ben, who has no other goal than to get a slice of the transaction from a confident yet scared Birdie. However, the night will not go as they had expected. The events will unfold hastily to the disagreement of the characters, unleashing anger and an aggressive and sarcastic attitude in Marcus.

Nevertheless, even when Marcus gets angry at Laurette and John for disturbing his mind with unpleasant thoughts —consequently spoiling the party night for him with their impertinent perspectives of life—, Birdie tries to lessen the pressure and brighten the mood. She is naturally sweet and, though she seems fragile, she does not give up easily on her intentions to get the money to save her family's plantation. Once the party gets ruined and the host's mood has exploded in a trigger of verbal attacks towards the different party goers, Birdie will get the worst part of it, since Marcus' refusal to lend her the money means bankruptcy for the Bagtry family. Without being slowed down by obstacles and focused on her goal, the young woman reacts patiently and charmingly towards Marcus, assuring him that she has really enjoyed her visit to his house, and that it has been for her an exciting event, since she hardly leaves her home and, moreover, he loves music (Figure 73). Every word that comes out of her mouth at this moment is aimed at calming Marcus's feelings, not only for her benefit but because she truly cares about people's feelings. Despite Marcus's ironic responses, Birdie reaffirms her words without being scared or forced to shut up, which seems indeed surprising when the Birdie from *The Little Foxes* comes to mind, since the mature Birdie would be incapable of holding firmly in position as the young Birdie is doing now. Furthermore, she can accept her loss, gathering herself together, and making a gracious exit, not without showing her gratefulness to Ben for agreeing to help her with the loan. Faced with this situation and seeing that Ben seems upset that the arrangement did not work, Birdie naturally reacts in a sweet attempt to get closer (within her relationship) with Ben by considering him a friend because of (what she believes to be) his good intention.

In the end, by a twist of fate, young Birdie will be able to achieve her goal, since Marcus loses power to Ben, and the young money-hungry Hubbard will not let escape this business opportunity. Hence, her motivation to save her family's plantation leads her to success. However, this success is somehow simply trapped in a figment of her imagination, for there is the reality of the situation to deal with as well: Ben is the one who will profit from this deal in every way and, by getting into business with Ben, Birdie is tying —and submitting— herself to the Hubbards. Her victory is therefore ambiguous, since she achieves a two-sided result: on the one hand he gets the money, but



Figure 73

on the other hand she ends up losing not only the plantation but also her freedom and the possibility of real integration into a new family.

5.2. The young Hubbards: rightful heirs of (mis)fortune

One of the best descriptions of southern identity as a *compound of opposites* is the one by Malone and Stricklin, for whom in itself "[t]he lazy South bows to the booster South; the genteel South wars with the violent South; the rural South recedes before the urban-industrial South; the solid Democratic South gives way to the Republican South" (1). Compound of *opposites* is our choice of words for what Burton calls "contradictions" in reference to the identity of the South. We believe that opposites might be perceived as quite particular or unique if they are to be found in (harmonious) coexistence without losing their original meaning, but it is something possible, nonetheless. The word "contradictions" points out to exactly the same, but it might somehow connote certain negative meaning that we intend to avoid with the choice of the word *opposites*. These opposites coexist shaping the southern culture as much as they coexist within the characters shaping their identity.

The young Hubbard siblings, Ben, Oscar, and Regina are, at this point of their entrance into adult age, a good example of this typically southern coordination of opposites, since they present complex personalities oscillating between weakness and strength, emotion and lack of emotion, absolute sincerity and calculating lie. At their first appearance on the screen in *Another Part of the Forest*, they all display some of their most definitory traits pointing to the ambiguity of their personalities in formation, and they can be perceived as both victims and victimizers of the people surrounding them. Oscar stands as utterly naïve —it is unclear if she is to pity or to dislike for such a reason—; Ben is definitely money-driven —the audience might side with him by understanding his ambition to succeed and look better in his father's eyes, or interpret him as a greedy son—; and finally Regina appears as a young girl in love, with a strong personality and manipulative character, yet uneasy and industriously searching for a escape —not so easy to discern yet if she might be in trouble or if she is herself a troublemaker. In short, the Hubbard siblings are now learning how to find their own paths; hence, how to survive in the forest they live in, and with such a purpose, how to become foxes. In fact, the three young siblings seem to have inherited some *foxy traits* from his father —materialism, greed, selfishness, and iniquity— but time has arrived for them to stop being fox puppies, and although they seem to be yet lost in a big forest, they are certainly willing to find their way out to their preferred within or outside of it.

5.2.1. Regina Hubbard: avid vineyard eater in the making

Regina, a beautiful, impatient young girl with her brunette ringlets half collected in a neat hairstyle that leaves her beautiful little face exposed for anyone to look at, makes her first appearance in the movie in the middle of the forest, dressed up in a dark colored two-piece suit that emphasizes her feminine figure. Regina thinks of herself as a smart, straightforward, and strongly goal-oriented young woman. We will soon learn that other characters seem to have a similar perceptive of her, particularly her father and older brother, who appreciate and praise her intelligence and beauty. On the contrary, her younger brother perceives her as slightly crazy, while for her mother she is a reminder of a failed role at motherhood, and for her lover John Bagtry she is not a serious connection but rather an attractive, capricious, and beyond-demanding flame.

Whereas Hellman's original Regina makes her first appearance at the very opening of the play waiting for her lover John at the side portico of the Hubbard house —hence becoming the first Hubbard member we get acquainted with— in Gordon's version of the story the enthusiastic young Regina makes her entrance once we have already seen the rest of members of the family. We might think that this fact puts the emphasis on other issues —mainly related to historical events and the feeling of the South— rather than on Regina's character, which contributes to a smoother presentation of the setting for the audience, reminding us values of the Old South such as pride, courage, and honor to the land and its people. In the movie we can see Regina's mother at the very beginning, the first face the camera catches in a close-up and in itself, but with no voice —which is, in fact, quite illustrative of her emotional situation— and then the focus goes to the male characters, mainly Oscar, Ben, and Marcus —all of them expressing their thoughts and opinions distinctly. As illustrative members of Bowden's community, there is first a compelling introduction of Colonel Isham, we get glimpses of the ex-soldiers, and we get to briefly meet Laurette, an entertainment girl who also happens to be Oscar's lover. Yet, there is no relevant opinion uttered by a female character until Regina makes her appearance.

Although her love story seems to occupy a secondary place compared to the celebrations of the Confederate Day in town, we soon get to notice her strong personality, her charisma, and how she seems to be actively and ingeniously planning her way out of Bowden and her future without anybody knowing about it. Her passion, as much as her temper, become immediately evident already in her first scene, which takes place in the woods, far from the noise of the Confederate celebration that she did not attend. After a passionate kiss, when John tells her that he could not meet her last night as he had to spend time with his aunt Clara and his cousin Birdie, Regina easily gets into an argument with him. In a sudden outburst of honesty, she openly claims that she dislikes the fact that John is putting his family before her: "It's not the first time you didn't come. And you think I shouldn't be angry, and take you back the next day. It would be better if you lied to me where you were. This way it's just insulting to me. Better if you lied" (Hellman, *Another* 309). In the movie, Regina's words are more intense and louder since she refers to the Bagtry women as "those two dried up mummies," hence putting the emphasis on their stagnation in the past as she lets her anger embitter her words until she ends up showing her lack of empathy, her competitiveness, and her dishonorable thoughts, as she confesses: "I have a good mind to sashay right up to that sacred plantation grass and tell them the war's over, the old times are finished, and so are they. While my papa could buy and sell Lionnet on the same morning, its cotton and its women with it."

Regina seems to profoundly dislike Clara and Birdie, not only because they are anchored in the old Bagtry glory, but mainly because they are obstacles for her. As they feel lonely, they are taking John's time, which supposes for Regina a delay in the advance towards her more immediate objectives —to convince John to elope— and therefore they are obstacles for the future she is actively fighting for, a future she plans to live in freedom without the pressure of her family, and far away from Bowden. Nonetheless, although she momentarily loses her temper and her first reaction is to come strong at her obstacles, she immediately finds her way back to efficiently correct her mistakes the moment she realizes that her aggressive attitude is not helping to convince John. As if nothing has happened, she quickly changes her approach and she turns to her sweet speech and female charm to regain the favor of her lover.

Given that Regina's mentality is entirely constructed revolving around her vision of independence since an early age, we can find numerous examples of her manipulation skills, which will only grow with the passing of time. Observing in detail the different aspects suggested for the analysis of characters' minds in Eder's model, previously described in the theoretical



Figure 74

framework, everything points to her desire for liberation and independence, a feeling around which her values and beliefs develop. Exempt from a rich interior or spiritual life, her identity is being forged in her youth around economic values and material well-being, standards that she breathes from the cradle in the womb of her family. Although her mother Lavinia has a very different set of principles and her morals and kindness are outstanding, her identity is too weak (submissive) for Regina (naturally rebellious) to want to take her as an example. Therefore, following Jeff Newman's categorization of personal motives (qtd. in Eder, "Understanding" 30), Regina *needs* to escape Bowden to fulfill her independence *want*, her *flaw* being precisely her maneuvering persistence —perhaps excessive and undoubtedly calculating— in working towards achieving her goals.

Regina does not care about collateral damage, so she does not measure her words or actions, hence easily reprimanding John without considering his circumstances and badmouthing his cousin and aunt for the simple fact of enjoying his company. As we can observe in the close-up of the Hubbard girl from an eye level camera (Figure 74), her illuminated expression radiates anger and frustration, as she looks away from her lover and physically moves away from him to openly express her disgust towards a retrograde Bagtry family, raising her voice as a symbol of complaint.

John looks at her with concern and tries to justify himself as if he was giving logical explanations to a spoiled child. But after hearing Regina's insults towards his family, he is the one who gets irritated and politely makes a move to withdraw. At this moment, Regina immediately changes her attitude and returns to him, apologizing in a soft voice, with a heavy expression of regret, and hastily initiating physical contact. In Figure 75 a precise instant of this scene is captured in a medium close-up that allows us to observe the expressions of the lovers to perfection: an angry and hurt John looking down, and a worried Regina approaching from behind and looking for his eyes. It is not difficult to perceive, however, that she is starting a persuasion strategy right away. Concerned not for having caused John's bad feeling, but because her plan of escaping to Chicago with him might fail, she proactively initiates her manipulation by putting her feminine charms into play (Figure 76). Proximity, smiles, charm, and a direct look into John's eyes combined with gestures of tenderness, everything comes together so as to deviate the soldier's negatively heated mood to a passionately heated one (Figure 77). Subsequently the romantic fight scene advances to its climax when she will culminate it with passionate kissing behind the tree branches. As we can see, the lovers' encounter in the woods is



Figure 75



Figure 76



Figure 77

mostly filmed among the trees, with the characters interacting under a continuously varying contrast of light and shadow, and their positions within the diverse frames experiencing repeated changes throughout the sequence and the discussion, in a power game in which Regina is far above John, despite her much shorter height.

Judging by the passionate kisses in the middle of the forest, Regina seems to feel a true sexual attraction towards John, contrary to what happens in *The Little Foxes* within her marriage to Horace. Notwithstanding this passion, and even if there could be a certain infatuation in her relationship with John, Regina's callousness and exploitative nature can already be easily glimpsed. Solely for her benefit, she is ensnaring John, a traditional older (gentle)man into a shameful relation —gossip reason for the traditional townspeople. She is not concerned with his wishes or his needs, even though she knows the man has a troubled mind. She likes him mostly as long as he serves her purpose and he is fun to have around. At this point it would be natural for the audience to wonder why she will not be able to make her marriage with Horace Giddens work years later; since she has such a knack for manipulating John in her youth, it would be expected that she could easily manipulate Horace as well. However, the difference lies in the diverse personality of the two men and in the dissimilar degree of authority within the couple that their relationship with Regina allows them. While John and Regina never get to establish a strong bond of union —lovingly or legally—, her marriage with Horace will define specific ties that, despite giving her the benefit of economic well-being, will limit her freedom. This is key for the Hubbard heiress, since the lack of autonomy is something that she cannot easily accept in the light of her search for independence since an early age. Since young, she is rebellious and defiant, resistant to authority, probably because of the influence of her domineering father. Although obedient by obligation, she is not flexible to given orders, and she will instead develop a controlling nature and a passive-aggressive attitude in order to achieve her goals, hence frequently creating conflict in her interactions with others. In addition, it is worth remembering that she now shows a sexual attraction for John that will be absent in her relationship with her husband in the future, therefore giving way to another major drive to grow as part of her more materialistic identity, money.

Once applied the OCEAN model to the young Regina, much like in her mature version, she stands out as a highly conscientious character, low in neuroticism and agreeableness, and in a medium ground concerning openness and extraversion. It is particularly worth noticing that she is completely unemotional and totally down-to-earth, directly in opposition with the Bagtry girl. She is a self-disciplined, organized, efficient and highly ambitious young woman. She is materialistic insofar as she enjoys the riches and comforts that enable her to improve her appearance and emphasize her charms and worth. Therefore, she is interested in looking trendy and cultured, something that makes her happy, as we can observe in the shot on the right (Figure 78), where, contrary to her older self in *The Little Foxes*, she stands out now as a very spoiled girl. After manipulating her father with her charm into fulfilling her whims with his money, Regina receives five new dresses from Chicago, and her reaction is as much of joy as of a remarkable egocentricity and narcissism. In a mid-shot of Regina surrounded by the males of her family at the dinner table, we can see her



Figure 78

smile standing out on her illuminated face as she sort of parades her dresses around the room for the pleasure of her father, and at the same time trying to show superiority over her brothers.

She feels entitled to these possessions and she shows no actual gratitude to her working father or brothers for making money for her. Concerned with nothing but herself, satisfied and happy, she shows her new dresses around leading to two opposite reactions in the room: while Marcus is attentive and evidently pleased with her, Ben and Oscar show indifference to her newly arrived clothes. Here the relevance of the groupings in dyads is revealed (Simmel), since although it might look like a simple group shot, there is a marked contrast between the two existing dyads in it. On the one hand, the two brothers are observed eating, indifferent to their sister's excitement and sassy manners, their eyes on their food instead of on her clothes. On the other hand, the dyad formed by Regina and her father —both with expressions of excitement and joy— shows a much greater connection allowing the audience to perceive a remarkable proximity between them, a sort of comradery that does not exist in any other small aggrupation within the family. Turning his attention to his daughter, Marcus looks at the dress in her arms while patting her back with an almost-uncanny expression of satisfaction showing up on his face. His gestures are accompanied by his words, as he encourages both Regina's greediness and her entitlement jokingly belittling the brothers and making evident his predilection for Regina, not only within the family but among all living creatures. At times like this, the patriarch's exaggerated attitude —his laughter, his looks, and his gestures— could be considered inappropriate, or even perceived as containing certain incestuous overtones. Although this is only hinted at and left in the air for an objective interpretation of the viewer, *Another Part of the Forest* (the same as *Toys in the Attic*) is more concerned with the inner feelings of characters, which helps us to understand the cold and markedly materialistic nature of the Hubbards in *The Little Foxes*, once they lost their sexual drive to focus solely on the economic.

Regina's mother, also at the table, although out of the frame here —the same as she is constantly left out of frame within family interactions—, also shows appreciation for Regina's dresses and, in a motherly and loving gesture, suggests that her daughter try on the dresses with her. However, Regina rejects her without any concern and tells her that she will go out with her father. She does not care at all about her mother's feelings, even if it is her birthday, and she focuses only on herself. The relationship mother-daughter seems to be quite spoiled at this point: although Lavinia makes attempts to approach and please her daughter with her comments, she always gets rejected or ignored, and there is no actual connection between them. This emphasizes Regina's callousness since she acts cold-heartedly and she feels no remorse. Self-centered and goal-oriented as she is, she prefers to be lonely than keeping a bond with her weak mother whom she cannot benefit from; however, she is willing to please her father for her convenience. In the same way that she selects her side at home, so she does socially; she is only interested in people who can contribute to her personal plans or her social appearance. For this reason, she chooses her relationships based on their social status, and she frequently makes comments about money and material properties, or judgements about others based on their possessions. In addition, she makes jokes in reference to the money that men (specifically her brother Ben or her father) have to earn so that she can buy many beautiful dresses. This behavior can be understood as detracting from her otherwise rebellious —feminist— character, since she depends on them financially for everything, and she seems happy with it. But from another standpoint, this also empowers her by showing her as aware of her feminine power over men. Her contempt with other people's money will however disappear in the mature Regina, whose feminist attitude will in contrast increase exponentially to the point that she could even be perceived as a heroine in current times, of course leaving aside her lack of morality.



Figure 79



Figure 80

Another example of Regina's materialism, her entitlement, and her self-confidence is her conversation with Ben after dinner on Confederate Day. Observing the shots above (Figures 79 and 80) we might wonder if a dyad between brother and sister could be possible, although thorough the course of the conversation we will give up on this prospect since they appear to antagonize each other. As they go upstairs, we can perceive them from a high angle engaged in a brotherly conversation: "For a men who wants to get somewhere, you are not a bit smart. You should have figured long ago that papa is gonna do just what you tell him not to do. Unless I tell him to do it," Regina remarks, reassured of herself and her power of manipulation. And as much self-possessed as his sister, Ben has no option but to be realistic and agree with her on the effect that she has over their father. However, he decides to look at the situation from a different perspective instead of backing down, and so he points out to the fact that Marcus will dislike Regina's plans of leaving for Chicago. That is to say, he helps her sister to realize that what she thinks works in her favor may, in fact, work against her.

Both ambitious and narcissistic, the difference between them right now is that Regina makes her plans for her future individually, while Ben wants to use his sister in order to achieve his goals. To this end, the Hubbard's firstborn in his role as older brother, claims to have arranged for a young banker, Horace Giddens, to come visit. He knows he is interested in his sister and wants to take advantage on this to get money from him. Therefore, he lets Regina know about Horace's planned visit and he suggests for her a marriage with the banker —which we recall will take place in the end as we already know about the future events from *The Little Foxes*. Drawing from Krakoviak and Oliver for a disposition theory perspective on the matter, it is worth pointing out that our knowledge of the future events might in this case alter our perception of the present, contributing to either a feeling of empathy for a young girl that will be forced in a marriage or even to a certain fondness of an immoral character who we know will succeed. Regardless of the audience's knowledge of the future events, here Regina and Ben converse at the same level, in the foreground, maintaining a balanced power game, while their brother remains in the background, listening, with occasional interventions that, time after time, contribute to highlighting his unpleasant character.

From this moment on, Regina's fall, much like Birdie's one, begins to take shape soon taking a more important step with John's rejection of a life together with Regina. Judging from the expression on the girl's face in the following medium close-up (Figure 81), the expression of sadness on her face could connote her suffering as well as a feeling of defeat. Under a dim light, while holding John's hands close to her lips and about to cry, Regina is pledging with her lover to stay by her side. Given this situation, the audience could easily decide to empathize with the young woman, who despite her active pursuit of goals, only encounters obstacles.



Figure 81

However, there is no room for pity since there is not a truly defeated Regina to side with. Quite the contrary, once she realizes that her plan has failed, her reaction will be one of a surprising lack of emotion. In this sense, she is perceived as a character with a strong identity, and it is up to the viewer to understand this as her positive skill or her flaw.

Spinning the web to trap the victims as she wants (her father, John, later Horace) and never collapsing with the defeats that arise in her way, she begins to appear more and more as a character to take into account for all those involved in a power game to eventually become a sort of black widow decades later. The young Regina seems to be as much despicable as the older one, contrary to what Hellman could have expected when she decided to show us the past for a better, less judgmental and hypocritical perception of the Hubbards, since a big part of *The Little Foxes* audience was showing, in her words, "a feeling of moral superiority" to the clan (Dodd et al. 163). On the contrary, it would be possible to maintain that young Regina's overall attitude does her no favors when it comes to audience empathy, for either her or the older Regina, who, for her part, had already been generally perceived by audiences as pure evil. The young heiress is spoiled, unpleasant in her relationships with other women, manipulative in her relationships with men, and devoid of any pure emotion beyond noticeable materialism. For her part, the adult Regina could earn the viewer's respect in a sense because of her desire to succeed, for never giving up in the fight for her goal despite the increase in obstacles and sacrifices, among them accepting the consequences of a *marriage for money*, such as giving up to primal desires or love; and most importantly, for tackling her siblings with her brain rather than with unpleasant manipulations and slithering narcissistic tricks, like those she used with her father in her early twenties. The elder Regina has the same objective as the young Regina, freedom; but from a spoiled narcissistic child she grew up into a strong —though dissatisfied and hostile— mature woman with her feet more on the ground and a much less arrogant attitude. All the relationships of the young Regina portray her as the rotten element, emphasizing her greed, her lack of emotion and her conniving nature, over any of her positive traits. Particularly, the daughter-mother relationship is deeply damaged, and Regina's general attitude with other people makes her disregard for her mom look more cruel and harder to accept. She does not appreciate any good words or intentions coming from her mother, and she even gives more attention to Oscar, who, for his part, wouldn't give any to her. We could infer that rather than simply disliking Lavinia and consciously ignoring her, Regina simply wants to avoid becoming powerless like her; however, the girl's spoiled manners and her unethical moves throughout the movie in the pursue of her goals, bring out the unpleasant aspects of her identity rather than those helping to redeem her character, hence probably leading the audience to, once again, understand her as a true villain.

Nevertheless, it is also important to point out to the other side of the coin, owing that while Birdie finds herself unable to adjust and her identity gets more wounded with the passing of time, Regina will become the perfect example of adaptability, with a motivation and a will strong enough to enable her to regulate her flexibility according to the circumstances surrounding her and orienting her moves towards her goals. Looking at the different results obtained by the two women from their common point of a forced marriage, we must pause for a moment to

maybe observe without the lens of judgement in order to recognize, as Brogan claimed, that "[a] family or an individual had to have what it took to survive—and it took adaptability, toughness, perhaps a not too sensitive moral or social outlook" (6). In this sense, once again it is not so easy to judge Regina despite her disreputable behavior.

5.2.2. Oscar Hubbard: the most southern of the Klan

As soon as he makes his first entrance, a young, tall, fit boy with a relaxed smiling expression, he is immediately rejected in the middle of the Confederate Day celebrations. An unintelligent character, he seems to lack reasoning or wit, prone to showing poor judgment and a half-witted thinking. With a tendency to verbal floundering, he struggles to keep up within a group conversation, and shows a tendency to rely on others to make decisions for him — although believing he decided himself. He considers himself a gentleman and he claims to have a deep feeling of the South as his home, hence engaging in group activities in order to unleash his *strong southern fanatic beliefs*. He is perceived by others as a foolish, gullible character with a weak will and disrespectful manners. Observing him as a pathological liar, Regina openly unbridles her opinion on him: "You must have told the truth once before in your life, Oscar, but I can't remember it" (Hellman, *Another* 359). According to the data obtained from the application of McCrae's OCEAN model for the analysis of personality, as previously explained in the last section of the theoretical framework, Oscar scores very low in conscientiousness and openness with a marked tendency to low in extraversion and agreeableness, and an astonishingly high score in neuroticism. His irritability, lack of consciousness, anxiety and impulsivity seem to condition his every move. His ignorance and fanaticism, however, do not prevent him from developing a selfish and unethical identity, but rather, they allow him to emphasize his violent and evil traits, hence making of him a quite unpleasant character, not smart enough to play at a villain's level but spiteful enough to earn rejection from both the fictional society he lives in and the movie viewers.

Within the family as social institution, Oscar is not well integrated, but he sublimates his wish to be loved and admired to other areas: love interest, and social group inclusion. He does not care about anybody: he dislikes Ben for being entitled to lecture him and "boss him around," he does not particularly consider Regina because she is a woman, he ignores his mother because she is a crazy woman, and he respects and fears Marcus but he does not like him all the same. His ambition is different from that of his brothers; at this point he does not seem to care at all for money or a flamboyant life but only about establishing relations that fit his character, and particularly about his love interest, a town tart named Laurette. On the whole, he is presented as a member of the Ku Klux Klan who intends to marry a prostitute, both aspects of his personality openly reproved by his family as well as by the rest of the community. In addition, misanthropic, stupid to the point of ridiculous, sadistic, and violent, Oscar is already detestable at a young age. Some of these characteristics will slowly fade and his negative personality traits will not be so emphasized decades later in *The Little Foxes*, where his son Leo, nonetheless, will inherit his whole set of youth traits, which makes one wonder if the young generations do even have a chance for change, or if they carry an undeletable genetic imprint with their parent's definitory traits. The fact that the Oscar's role is played by Dan Dyrea makes us constantly think about his son Leo, also played by Dyrea. We would compare father and son either way, but this choice of actor might put an emphasis on the generational connections, hence making the audience more aware of similitudes and differences, making us reflect on the effect of time (cyclical or not) on the characters and their influence in new generations. With the events of twenty years

later in mind, it is important to note that between the young Oscar here in Bowden and his future son Leo in *The Little Foxes* there are certain similarities to take into account: both are impertinent, inopportune, apparently rude and nonsensical, shameless, disrespectful, cowardly, impertinent, inappropriate, unwelcome, and lewd (their lust for women is clearly mentioned and laughed at or criticized depending on the circumstances it might be brought up). Once we get deep into the plot of the prequel, we can understand in hindsight what personality traits Leo has taken from his father directly, which ones have disappeared, and which ones have been accentuated. Interestingly, as already mentioned, almost all the negative characteristics seem to surface softer in the identity of a young Oscar, except for his hatred of blacks and, perhaps, his ignorance, quite at a similar level to that of Leo. On the other hand, both seem to feel little weight of shame at times, both want to feel accepted and integrated and, ultimately, both yearn for their happiness. Oscar's character will sour with the passage of time, as his youthful dreams are truncated, and he will have no option but to immerse himself in a married life (for social appearance and with a desire to obtain financial benefits) that does not produce any other personal satisfaction for him.

Therefore, Oscar grows cruel as his father, going from immature idiocy at the beginning of the events to open cruelty at his mature age. The fact that he has a troubled mind and issues of his own does not justify his wrong and abusive attitude. He seems so naïve that he cannot even realize what's happening around him, what makes him more difficult to empathize with. As compared to his brother Ben, with whom he has a rivalry, he stands even more unintelligent, slow, even incapable and unaware of what's truly going on around him. On the contrary, despite Ben being very aware of it and hence more prone to vulnerability, he does not need to hide behind aggressive behavior or violent actions as his young brother. Ben's high intellect, a characteristic that does not define Oscar, allows him to handle adverse situations in an apparently correct way and without the need to show impolite manners.

While Ben may sublimate his desire, or divert his frustration into thoughts that allow him to punt his next card into play after making the necessary calculations and considering all the possible outcomes, Oscar, on the contrary, reacts more instinctively, unable to control his emotions, and rebelling with immature, selfish, and careless reactions. Even when he is involved in serious activities, as being part of a group, he is unable to shake off his tremendous capacity to discredit himself, to unwittingly make a fool of himself, hence emphasizing his recklessness, with actions that border on the ridiculous. As one of many examples we could mention the moment when he leaves his KKK hood hanging from the branch of a tree to escape —face uncovered— upon the possibility that someone can see him.

"Deeply and sincerely in love" with Laurette, he has a quite reduced and childish vision of the world he lives in. He does not seem to understand anything, including what love is, but much like his siblings, he pursues his objectives. When Oscar comes to his father for money ("just 5 dollars," capital he needs to date Laurette), Marcus first mocks him by asking him if he comes to request a book, hence pointing out to his illiteracy. Deficient in fatherly manners, Marcus promptly derives the conversation into any direction denoting the lack of intelligence and good doing of his child, what for the first time shows Oscar as really a victim of his circumstances. The superior-inferior position respectively corresponding to father and son are clearly reflected in the next shot (Figure 82), all will be maintained throughout the whole conversation (and movie), even when Marcus is sitting and Oscar occupies a higher position within a frame. While being assertively questioned by his father, Oscar has no option but to admit that he was asked to leave the Confederate ceremony, a situation that makes him feel rejected and inferior, hence hurting his pride. However, Marcus digs deeper in the wound by comparing his son to



Figure 82

Sam Taylor, who despite being a Yankee, was graciously attended at the celebration. Oscar tries to defend his honor by emphasizing his southern feeling, and pointing out to the fact that he was hurt by the town's bad judgement in welcoming an outsider.

Oscar seems to despise carpetbaggers and blacks, and he is gratified with this hatred towards them given that —he believes— this makes of him a loyal southerner: "I'm a Southerner. And when I see and old carpetbagger or upstart nigger, why, I feel like taking revenge" (Hellman, *Another* 323). Whereas he defines himself as a proud southern gentleman to his father and discusses with him about his perception of the current southern society, in Hellman's play, on the contrary, Oscar shares these thoughts with Ben, what allows him to emphasize his southern pride in direct opposition with his brother's lack of southern feeling, at the same time accusing Ben of escaping his responsibility with the South: "If I had been old enough to fight in the war, you just bet I'd been right there, and not like you, bought off" (323).

The young Hubbard is in a sense Marcus' scapegoat, since in addition to exploiting him as his store clerk (as well as Ben), uses him to do his dirty work. In this way, he advises his son in wrong directions, in order to obtain a pleasing result for him. Therefore, even if a slow-witted Oscar is capable of catching some dishonest undertones in his father's words of encouragement against Sam Taylor, his gullible identity does not allow him to make a proper judgement and act for his own benefit as his siblings always do. The bad effect of Marcus on Oscar is thus evident, and so it will be Oscar's negative influence on his son Leo. The Hubbards' conversation with regards to Sam Taylor in the original play takes place between Oscar and Ben, so it wouldn't be difficult to infer that Ben's encouragement could have an economic purpose: avoiding that Sam Taylor helps Birdie Bagtry to save Lionnet, so that she has no option but to come to the Hubbard house for a loan. However, in the movie, Marcus' purpose in reminding Oscar that "though ignorance becomes a southern gentleman, cowardice does not" is purely manipulative, cruel, and disgusting. At this point, all of Oscar's negative traits are not enough as to compete with his father for the rejection of the viewer. Apart from constantly abhorring him as a carpetbagger, Oscar dislike for Mr. Taylor increases as observes how he shows interest for Laurette Sincee, a point at which he can no longer control his emotions and he decides to convince his KKK mates to beat him up. Claiming and acting as if he truly was "deeply and sincerely in love" with Laurette —who, for her part, and also sincerely, lets him know that they "can't eat on deeply and sincerely" (Hellman, *Another* 377), Oscar's goal is to marry her. Ironically, Laurette is the only woman he seems to care about and respect when he overtly looks down on every other woman whom precisely society would look at with respect (Lavinia, Birdie, or his own sister). Coming from his mouth, his feminist discourse is as much outstanding as funny: "Papa, you couldn't condemn a woman for a past that was filled with loathing for what society forced upon her; a woman of inner purity made to lead a life of outward shame?" (360), Oscar reproves his father. What was meant as a deep and critical comment becomes thus somehow funny as Regina, always sharp and ironic, does not allow us to forget her brother's silly nature remarking that "He's read a book" (360). Although Oscar shows an open attitude in his wish to marry Laurette, he reacts in a traditional in a traditional manner most of the time, as for example at the thought of his sister truly being in a sexual (scandalous) relation with John Bagtry beyond



Figure 83

gossip, to what he claims he would "ride over to Lionnet, carrying a gun" (354). He mentions guns on several occasions, which matches with his weak character in need of external elements for reassurance and acceptance of himself.

The attack on Taylor (Figure 83), to which Oscar proceeds moved by his jealousy and his desire to keep Laurette for himself, is also a reminder of the darkest episodes of American history, filled with lynching and aggression against freemen, black sympathizers ("nigger lovers") and even carpetbaggers —as it is the case of Sam Taylor. At the same time, in Donald G. Mathews' words, it brings back "from reluctant memories shame, guilt and anger at white atrocities" (27) although never for Oscar, who seems convinced to be doing a good deed for his community, by attempting to clean the trash. In addition, this type of aggression makes Oscar feel satisfied with himself, on the one hand because he can feel as part of a group as he engages in these activities with his KKK buddies, and on the other hand because he understands it as an act of respect and devotion his beloved South. Oscar's perspective, though vile, was shared decades before the turn of the century by other southerners who considered lynching and beating negroes "an act of racial and patriotic expression, an act of chivalry, an act, indeed, having a definitely ritualistic value in respect to the entire Southern sentiment" (Cash 118).

On the whole, Oscar's identity seems to be markedly shaped by his strong neurotic traits, and his neuroticism will in fact become his major flaw. With a marked inferiority complex, a slight fear of the ridicule and a significant tenderness to skin criticism, the young Oscar is mainly portrayed as an unpleasant character with a strong need to belong and recognition, easily moved by pleasure drives. Claiming to feel virtuously southern, he is indeed portrayed as mainly a picture of an aggressive South, as a member of the KKK who could also be interpreted as the embodiment of the savage ideal (Cash), the rage to explain (Hobson), and even the sage mentality (Hackney), all of them concepts previously explained within the theoretical frame as markedly southern.

5.2.3. Ben Hubbard: the king is dead, long live the (new) king!

The first impression we get of Benjamin Hubbard is that of a busy businessman on his return home by train from a business trip to Mobile. He appears to be diligent, serious, and judgmental, as he easily provides insightful criticism about his Bowden community. Ben perceives himself as an intelligent man, full of ambitions and strongly goal oriented, much like his sister Regina, who also sees him in the same light in addition to considering him obsessive and skilled at business, wise, self-centered and annoying. For his brother Oscar, Ben is a second imposed paternal figure he profoundly dislikes, given that he constantly lectures him and gives him orders, always showing himself superior to him. Regarding his parents, while for Lavinia he is the only son with whom she still maintains some communication, for Marcus he is perhaps the least loved —in actuality, the clearly disowned one. Fearful of his son's malicious skills and tactics, Marcus tends to oppose him often, just to show his superiority and keep his reign within the household and over the town of Bowden. In reality, the young Ben is a extremely materialistic character with a wide set of narcissistic traits, among them his obsessive ambition, his highly manipulative skills, his selfishness, and his unethical and mischievous behavior.

On the other hand, he also shows some characteristics generally considered as positive: as his family consider him to be, he is a very intelligent, confident, decisive, and efficient young man. His courage and persistence are also outstanding, as much as his resourcefulness, which seems to be even above Regina's.

The mature Ben we have already met in *The Little Foxes* is, emotionally speaking, quite different from the young Ben. He came to become a businessman without any interest and concerned with no one. Both in his youth and as a middle-aged man, Ben is a man without scruples, willing to do anything possible to achieve his goals; however, his younger self seems to still be occasionally conscious about the existence of his mother and meekly care about her, contrary to the rest of the members of the family, who ignore her completely. In this medium close-up Ben visits his mom, who is pretending sick in bed in order to avoid being sent to Chicago with Regina. Ben has been manipulating her in order to avoid that trip as well, as it would mean Regina's way out and the failure of his plans to get money for business. In this brief scene, once again Ben comes to Lavinia simply for his benefit but, despite that, he maintains a closeness and an understanding with her mother that the rest of the family lacks. In Figure 84 we can observe how Ben approaches her, looks her directly in the eyes, and in a paternal attitude rather than filial, he directly advises her to keep her lie about her poor state of health, right after patting her pillow and kissing her on her head. Ben's affectionate attitude is intended more than real, however, the feeling it produces in Lavinia should be positive since the young man at least makes a pretense of listening to her and considering her from time to time, or even using her as an ally —sometimes without actual consent— as is the case here. The dark color of Ben's suit contrasts with the white of his mother's nightwear, perhaps in direct parallelism to their inner life and spirituality. Their expressions also clearly reflect their personality: while Lavinia seems, as usual, uneasy and scared, hence adopting a somewhat cowering posture, Ben stands tall and firm, showing his confidence and his decisive and proactive character.

Concerning OCEAN results, Ben obtains scores similar to those of his sister, although slightly more extreme: he shows a tendency to low openness and extraversion, his neuroticism and his agreeableness are outstandingly low, and he scores the maximum high for conscientiousness, hence presenting a set of traits that emphasize in him qualities such as his self-discipline, his planning skills, his ambition and his diligence. While he still has some room for a pretended empathy that looks mostly real in his youth, two decades later in *The Little Foxes*, however, John will have lost all his empathy and sensitiveness, even for moments when it could prove useful to him.

In a secondary place to his love for business, Ben seems to enjoy challenging his sister Regina, whom he considers a worthy game opponent, but he still tends to act in a more affectionate manner towards the weak as long as they are not disturbing for him, as it is the case of his mom or Birdie Bagtry. With Regina however, he has established a dyad in which he enters a fun tug of war game that they both seem to feel comfortable playing. For this reason, whenever his sister's plans fail, he feels pleasure and satisfaction, especially when it works in his favor. An example of this is the moment when the young Bagtry heiress mentions to Ben about her cousin John's plans



Figure 84

to leave for Brazil to fight in another war. Learning that the soldier has found his calling far away from his sister, somehow comes as an adrenaline rush for Ben, thus contributing to making day brighter. Conscious that he can benefit from Regina staying, he feels this as a win and he continues planning in his head Regina's wedding with the banker Horace Giddens, who he believes will be happy to provide him with the money he needs for his investments once he becomes part of the family. Maliciously and ruthlessly, Ben tries to impose his own will on his sister, who, as might be expected, is reluctant to do so and responds rebelliously to him: "Why don't you marry money yourself." Given the audacity of his sister, Ben, within the power game that we have been talking about, has one more response to silence his sister: "Nobody asked me too."

The following ones are examples of how Ben and Regina occupy different positions in the shots and how their position keeps changing in the same scene, denoting at all times a tight game of power between the siblings, independently of what activities they are engaged in or whether they are discussing important issues or trivial ones. In the following shots from the beginning of the music night scene at the Hubbards' house, Regina worries about Laurette attending their dinner because of the girl's social status. She considers that her appearance at the party would appear insulting to the aristocratic Bagtrys. Agitated, she yells at Oscar "you can't bring that... couch girl here!" and immediately runs to Ben asking him for help to avoid such a situation. Her concerned expression is in direct contrast with that of her brother, completely uninterested, enjoying his bite of food, and even amused at the prospect of a night with a picturesque social variety (towards which he feels neither respect nor contempt, simply indifference). In Figure 85, illuminated by the light, a nervous and frustrated Regina is observed clinging to the fan she is holding in her hands. This image of Regina in particular definitely reminds us of her mother: scared, with a lost gaze, and with a tendency to move around the space she is (suddenly feeling caught). Bold and duplicitous, Ben agrees with her and immediately activates his manipulation skills in order to further agitate her sister, turning her against her father. At this point, as we can see on the medium close-up on the right (Figure 86), Ben stands up, in order to make his mischievous words more effective, and he finishes the conversation looking down at her from above, turning his back to the camera, in another way to show indifference to the events about to take place. Regina lowers her gaze, momentarily defeated, feeling Ben's attack —for she knows he is right about her negative comments about her father. Ben uses correct and smooth language at all times, however, his speech is strong, witty, and sharp. In this way, the expression on the faces of the siblings, as well as their position in the frame, has changed to harmonize with the own feeling of the siblings within the conversation. Ben appears superior and sure



Figure 85



Figure 86

of himself, without fear of any kind and with critical capacity. On the contrary, Regina finds herself trapped, albeit with a predisposition to rebel.

Ben is relaxed, even expectant about the night they are about to live. For him the party does not have any social function, so he is not worried about appearances; it is only important to him that his plan with the Bagtry loan be successful. However, Regina wants to show herself as a perfect lady for John. On his side, Oscar wants to catch Laurette with a marriage and keep her away from other men. This regular party at Marcus' house was an expected event for everyone, since they all were attending not for fun but with very important goals in mind. For Ben it meant a business transaction (goal: acquiring the money he needed for his investment); for Regina it was a social event (goal: eloping with John to Chicago), and for Oscar it had the double purpose of introducing Laurette as his love to his family and so getting a loan from his father to get married to her (goal). However, the results happened to be quite disastrous for all: Ben lost his opportunity to profit from Birdie's loan since Marcus decided not to give her the money, Regina got rejected by John, and Oscar's girlfriend infuriated the host of the party, hence contributing to a gloomy atmosphere.

Following (Figures 87 and 88), we can see a pair of shots practically identical to the previous, with the only difference that positions of power are here observed with greater clarity, consequently pointing out to the fact that the siblings are no longer *playing* at the same level. After the unexpected and hasty development of events, new positions of power are set and characters are repositioned in frame according to them. Therefore, within the same sequence, we go from a low angle (left) to a high angle (right), both very subtle, with the camera very slightly, yet noticeably, leaving the eye view. Fresh after waking up in the morning, Regina approaches Ben with a smile, with all her usual pride, and excited to be leaving to Chicago. Her face is lit up and she radiates joy as she talks to Ben from a slightly elevated position. Although we can only get a glimpse at Ben's profile in this frame, we will see the positions inverted seconds later in the shot on the right where Regina has her back to the audience and we can see Ben instead. It is at this moment that Ben's face lights up and the viewer will clearly distinguish his mischievous smile and his expression of absolute satisfaction, a feeling of gratification that comes after winning a long and arduous battle. He is therefore making use of his newly earned position as head of the family, denying Regina Chicago dream. Suddenly, Regina finds herself at Ben's mercy, as he has stolen the power from her father. A successful and powerful Ben, with his mind completely centered on business and enjoying his recently achieved freedom to rule, does not waste a second to reorganize his plans, without showing any other concern, be it related to his family or to the rest of the Bowden community.



Figure 87



Figure 88

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In direct opposition to his brother Oscar, Ben's southern reaction to surrounding circumstances can be found at a very low level, except for his lying tendency, which he consciously uses in a practical way for his own benefit, simply as a tool to achieve his goals. As Oscar had accused himself of, Ben's feeling of the South is very low, although he keeps latent some of the southern parameters listed by Reed (*Enduring*) after the results obtained with his surveys among southerners. Much like Regina, the young Ben is perfectly courteous whenever necessary, and he prefers to rely on his own actions rather than outsourcing, both tendencies that Oscar completely lacks. Mr. Benjamin, as Birdie calls him, is always amusing, polite, and charming for his benefit. It comes naturally to him, as well as to Regina —the only person who is at his scheming level, unlike the to the rest of the family.

Ben lies in a practical way, in order to satiate his materialistic thirst. He seems to be intensely driven by money and easily corrupted by it, much more than any other Hubbard. In fact, changes in his character can be perceived with any monetary exchange he succeeds at doing, with every economic achievement he makes. Determined to get what he wants (like his sister Regina), and totally unhindered by scrupulous, all Ben cares about is money, whereas Regina wants her freedom. Having worked tirelessly for a meager salary in his father's store and felt like his slave, Ben develops a materialistic personality that will develop into greediness and an unethical behavior. Highly manipulative and devious, his subtlety and trickery are exceptional already at an early age. He is morally wrong and totally unethical, but his duplicitous and scheming nature could however be understood as both his strength and his flaw, hence lingering in the land of the morally ambiguous characters. At this point, Ben is already a villain, a fox definitely ready to engage in a fierce battle for survival —or for money—, with certain traits that might yet be considered interesting or attractive.

Despite his set of negative traits, among them his unethical behavior, Ben's boldness and his resourcefulness in any situation, make of him a character not so easy to hate (at least, until the end of the movie) as other members of his family. He is unemotional and calculating, clearly Machiavellian, but at the same time he is amusing and hilarious while showering people all around with his usually subtle and occasionally stabbing irony. He is a charismatic and charming narcissist —a red alert for danger for whomever attempts to rival with him— and a Robin Hood of sorts, as he has been so far attempting to take from the wealthy rather than milking the poor, unlike his father has always done. From the perspective of Affective Disposition Theory, as an antihero acting in questionable ways, Ben Hubbard would be a character to dislike by viewers due to the fact that "moral-monitoring viewers would disapprove of an antihero's actions and motivations, thus hindering liking and ultimately decreasing enjoyment" (Shafer and Raney 1030). At this point, although it is hard to say if Ben is an antihero, or simply a villain, what stands clear is the fact that many of his actions are immoral. However, disposition-formation towards characters might depend not only on morality but also on other diverse factors (Raney, "Expanding"), as it might happen with a morally ambiguous character such as Ben. In their study about character enjoyment, Shafer and Raney found out that "although the hero was liked more than the antihero … , the two characters were equally well-liked by the end of the film. Thus, character liking was ultimately similar despite differences in morality rating throughout" (1034). This is because viewers can find some cues in the narrative that enable them to disengage morally once they "take off the default lens of moral scrutiny and put on one of moral permissiveness and justification" (1038). That lens of justification, perhaps together with a graduation adjustment for the assessment of positive traits instead of a focus on the negative ones, makes of the young Ben a likeable character for us. We agree with Massimo Salgaro et al. who, in a recently published paper, argue that moral disengagement alone is not enough

to achieve character enjoyment and "the *positive* dimensions and sources of enjoyment that become possible in the absence of standard morality checks require additional psychological mechanisms" (2). They point out to suspense and the feeling of being moved as two factors affecting out reception of characters the most, however, it is our belief that it might the more factors or data we integrate in our perception and understanding of characters, the most likely we are to achieve moral disengagement and become less judgmental of their actions. The results obtained by Salgaro and his colleagues, however, shed light on our study, in which we depart among others from two hypotheses related to the subject of character reception: 1) that the seemingly disgusting characters may not be that much so, and 2) that viewers enjoy the Hubbards' adventures despite their malice and other negative traits, because they somehow appreciate certain characteristics in them that make them outstanding over other, less exciting, characters. This aligns perfectly with Salgaro et al.'s findings: "a marked preference for the BadCharacter version over both the Good- and the EvilCharacter versions based on three of the eleven aesthetically evaluative ratings" (7). That is to say, a heinous character is very hard to like or empathize with, but a medium despicable one is acceptable or even welcomed over a good one. Towards the end of the story, Ben starts —yet mildly— to transition to a bully, from bad to evil (following Salgaro et al.'s tree-stage nomenclature), and his identity will have experienced many changes two decades later, when feeling empathy for him might prove much more challenging. As for now, the fact that he dethroned the evil patriarch, however cruel an action it may seem, it is a point in his favor rather than against him. Villainous and violating the moral code, Ben will experience towards the end of the movie a (momentary) transitional status of antivillian since, being a villain himself, he takes the power of the major evil force at play, his father. Although it is an unethical and brutal situation, at this point viewers might feel comfortable (temporarily) siding with him while ascending the throne. As long as Ben looks like a much less villainous king to hail to, long life to the new king!

5.3. The Hubbard parents: from rugs to riches with all the baggage

The Hubbard parents, Marcus and Lavinia Hubbard, represent opposite values, and we could even say that they are also opposing forces. Whereas the patriarch is materialistic, and he believes only in himself and the power of money, the matriarch is a humble and kind woman who values family and human relations. It would seem that Lavinia is merely a poor victim trapped in the fortress built by Marcus as a symbol of his opulence and power, but she is not as powerless and gullible as it might seem at a first glance. On the one hand, Marcus represents the economic power (capitalism) which is starting to thrive in a new South, a reshaped place that, to a certain extent, has even helped him to grow —since prey animals are the ones who better survive difficult situations such as the war and the Reconstruction stage that came after. On the other hand, Lavinia is educated, considerate, and completely aware of the circumstances surrounding her. However, her spirituality, her unselfish nature, and her religious beliefs, lead her to decide on staying submissive and obedient to her husband, to whom she believes she owes absolute loyalty above anything else. The key aspect of this argument points out to the fact that it was her choice to remain in a passive and docile position instead of confronting Marcus, but she does, indeed, have the power and the will to break the chains any moment she decides to do so. In order to achieve that, she needs to stop being evasive, tame her desire to protect herself and others from perceived harms, get out of her comfort zone, and adopt a proactive attitude. Taking into account her neurotic character, this seems not easy to accomplish but it is, ultimately, her choice. In short, Marcus (destructive force) and Lavinia (dormant force)

can be considered a dyad (Newman), as they are joined by marriage, but there are no remnants of an affective or positive relationship among them.

As role models for their children, they are both bad, precisely for their behavior: one as the abuser, and the other as the (consenting) abused. They both fail at raising their children within a healthy environment: the mother because she deviates from her role as a mother affected by Marcus's aggressions (towards the town and towards her), and the father because she does not care the least since she lacks empathy and cannot show affection or interest in anybody but himself.

5.3.1. Marcus Hubbard: self-made, self-centered, and *self-destroyed* man

Fredric March in the role of Marcus Hubbard makes his first appearance at work, on Confederate Day, sitting on a chair in the middle of the store immersed in reading. He is elegantly dressed and seems to have a certain aristocratic air, in addition to making us immediately aware of his interest for the Greek classics, as he proudly quotes Aristotle to Ben in Greek upon his arrival to the store —also providing the English translation so that Ben can understand: "Parents love their children as soon as they are born. Children love their parents only after time has elapsed and they have acquired understanding." He is proud of his knowledge and wants to show himself as a cultured man, and his self-aggrandizement can be perceived immediately. However, this is an utterly ironic quote, since exactly the opposite will happen in their relationship as father and son, and by extension, in all the relationships of Marcus: upon acquiring understanding of him, everybody will choose to leave him alone.

During the course of this conversation, which starts with Aristotle and deviates to business, Marcus adopts an expression of superiority that will be repeatedly interspersed with another of seriousness, even of certain disapproval that sounds like random nagging for no apparent reason. He frowns at Ben constantly and, as we can see on a medium close-up of father and son (Figure 89), he arches his left eyebrow to look at Ben with disdain. He occupies practically the center of the shot and stands straight in a half-profile position that leaves his face completely exposed by turning his head slightly towards his son, while turning his back to him at the same time. Both his body language and his facial expression give rise to an unpleasant atmosphere, an unknown tension for the viewer yet to be understood. His son, irresponsive —or slightly responsive with an intelligent attitude of some indifference—, remains in a relaxed posture, without being intimidated despite his father's attempts. However, Marcus does not give up either, so he keeps maintaining an attitude of continuous disapproval throughout the entire conversation. He is defensive and cynical, and he has hardly given his son time to speak when he is already contradicting him. Right at the beginning of the movie, merely in his first appearance, Marcus has been presented as an obnoxious, hostile, and stubborn father figure. Grumpy and self-centered, he obstinately focuses on letting Ben know that he is in charge, and that his opinions or wishes have no relevance whatsoever.



Figure 89

In reality Marcus is a self-made man, embittered and merciless father of three, who raised a fortune out of nothing by means that made of him a total social pariah. For Ben, his

father is an obstacle to his businesses, to his path to greatness, and to the feeding of his ego. The first born of the Hubbards is open to modernity, and as soon as the chance came to him to invest in new industries, he was looking forward to making some benefit from the coal mining business. Marcus, who professes his great adaptability to the new times on numerous occasions, does not agree with Ben's investment in the coal industry. However, his attitude is one of absolute lack of commitment, even rejection, towards Ben's ideas and goals rather than a disagreement itself. He simply does not want to support his son by lending him the money he needs for the investment, even though he loans money to the neighbors of Bowden for his own profit. At a first sight it might seem that he is trying to give fatherly advice on how to invest in a proper business, but soon we realize that he seems to feel some pleasure in antagonizing his son's ideas; he definitely wants to exert total control over him. For Regina, her father is more his provider of money and commodities than a father figure. She spends time with him alone, and she tries to please him as much as possible, but she considers this as a job, an effort that she must make to get the money to satisfy her own whims. However, she is more successful than her brother, and her efforts seem to pay off as much as they are taking from Regina's emotional traits, already at this young age at the border of extinction. For Oscar, Marcus is his fatherly figure, the one to look at and follow in his steps. Although Marcus is constantly reminding Oscar about his ignorance instead of helping him to grow up, ironically, Oscar believes to be closer to his father than to his siblings. There is no true connection between Marcus and his younger son, but ironically, Oscar seems pretty content with his father. For this reason, Marcus is the person he prefers to go to for advice and to complain about his brother, whom he dislikes more than anyone else in the family. For Lavinia, Marcus is the husband she must be loyal to, her *master* within the household, and the reason for her feeling of guilt. He is her livelihood and her captor, a person to fear and respect at the same time.

Marcus is a selfish man who seems to love nobody and be interested in nothing that is not but that which is related to art, especially music. He has created his own personal space, reduced to the Hubbard house, a place where each of its inhabitants must be submitted to his rules. That is the reason why attempts to erase his sons' lives: on the one hand, he makes it stand clear that he is the head of the family, the only master, the one man endowed with power to decide within the family. For instance, he has earned enough money with his illegal business, but he never thinks about facilitating Ben and Oscar's careers. On the contrary, he reduces their salary, he denies them a comfortable life and he is not willing to satisfy any of their wishes. Ben is an intelligent man, but he is not keen enough on music as to please his father who, forgetting the fact that they share the same blood, suggests Ben to leave:

> Ben: I've been too busy, Papa.
> Marcus: At what?
> Ben: Working my life away for you. Doing a lot of dirty jobs. And then watching you have a wild time throwing the money around. But when I ask you to lend me a little...
> Marcus: You're a free man, Benjamin, a free man. You don't like what I do, you don't stay with me. (Hellman, *Another* 363)

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Even more than he disregards his sons, Marcus ignores his wife, the same as we already know that will happen with Oscar and his wife Birdie years later. Therefore, Oscar, in a sense, will become a mirror of his father, maybe because his father's attitude and beliefs resonate with him since a child, or maybe because that is the only behavior he could learn and knows how

to reproduce. Be as it may, the initial abuser character of Marcus will span three generations, passing from the patriarch to Oscar, and from him to his son Leo, hence becoming decades later a trace of a past impossible to erase.

Therefore, as observed within Eder's model as part of his sociality (fictional being) traits, Marcus role within the institution of the family stands out as a markedly a tyrannical one, since he is the one who gives the orders and controls everything the rest of the members do. He is the leader of the group, but the feeling of inclusion is not perceived as comfortable and beneficial by the patriarch as much as one could expect: he is particularly fond of Regina, his only source of gratification due to her sharpness and her persuasive nature, in addition to her looks, but the rest of the members of the family do not bring any joy to him, even though he abuses them for his economic benefit or for mental relief. Deep down he feels threatened by Ben, who is as smart and ambitious as him; he is disgusted with Oscar's lack of intelligence and bothered by his ridiculous actions within the community; and he has no feelings for Lavinia who has just become a burden for him, an unwanted incumbrance that he pretends to consider as non-existent. Therefore, the only company he has is that of Regina but, as already mentioned, that is in fact fake, a simple pretended attitude of the girl who, like her father, cares about no one but herself.

As a member of society, Marcus plays at being a snob. After having been rejected once and again by his Bowden fellows, he wants to appertain to a class even superior to the aristocracy of the South, hence turning to the Greeks for a more enlightening and higher experience. Colonel Isham and Laurette Sincee are the voice of the community against Marcus and, although they come from different social positions, both the War hero (socially acclaimed) and the cooch girl (socially spurned) agree in their perspective about the Hubbard patriarch. Despite being conscious of his bad deeds of the past and present, he considers himself superior and he is pretentious and obsessive to the extreme. He encourages Oscar to go against Sam Taylor, but he could be seen as a carpetbagger himself in the sense he wants to make as much profit as possible from others, as the unscrupulous opportunist he is. He amassed his fortune selling salt in the black market, and he has been for long in the loan business, including foreclosing loans, to increase his fortune, but he hypocritically dislikes people who want to make profit —fair competitors that they could be. He also abhors war heroes, perchance because of ideology, or possibly because they remind him of what he is not. He thinks John Bagtry is stupid and his perspective on the war bothers him. He is constantly trying to demean Colonel Isham's words and, when he finds it difficult to get to his skin with sarcasm, he resorts to the power or money, a *good* of which he has plenty to replace for the honor he lacks. For this reason, he is obsessed with making money and learning about art, in order to show himself as superior to the good old aristocrats who were already born with wealth.



Figure 90

Marcus openly mistreats all those who do not belong to his pack, even his son Oscar, whom he vaguely treats as a true member of the family. Oscar is just an annoying fool for him. Although Oscar approaches his father from an above position within numerous frames throughout the movie, as we can see in Figure 90, his attitude is the opposite of a superiority one, since he usually finds himself begging his father for money or for some other concession. Generally, the characters in possession of power or the focus in a certain scene, are positioned

with a higher height, but whenever Oscar is nearby his father, he is always in an inferior position, no matter who is in a higher physical plane. In this shot, an ignorant and daring Oscar leans down to try to convince father, who turns his face to him with disdain, knowing that Oscar is going to say some nonsense and put him in a bad mood. Both actors do an excellent job at reflecting the identities of the characters on their faces. Simply by looking at them one can infer the haughtiness of one and the stupidity of the other. Oscar is asking Marcus for permission to bring Laurette to a dinner that the Bagtrys would also attend. Bringing a prostitute to a dinner with aristocrats is something that does not fit in any mind except Oscar's. As evident as it is incredible to Marcus, he will still agree to Oscar's wishes on this occasion, ignoring the insolence and the audacity of his son's request for such ridiculousness, precisely because he knows that the presence of the girl could make everyone uncomfortable. With an identity clearly tainted with too many narcissistic traits to feel guilt, or even stop for a second to think about his faults or mistake, Marcus sees the sawdust in his son's eye and not the plank in his own. The patriarch, however, is not so much different from his son Oscar, since as much as he belittles —or even despises— him, he is also hankering for respect and inclusion within a group, obsessed with it to the point of the ridicule. Herein lies his battle against Bowden's people, and his resentment towards them for not letting him be part of their respectable community.

Marcus' pack is basically reduced to his daughter, whom he tries to please with his money (in exchange for controlling all her movements). Although unstable, as we already explained in the theoretical frame that Newman considered all dyads to be, father and daughter form a true dyad. During a walk in the forest, Marcus tells Regina that he intends to take her to Greece, but faced with her lack of enthusiasm, he openly reacts with jealousy at the prospect of the young woman feeling a greater interest in Mobile, where the young banker Horace Giddens, interested in getting Regina's attention, resides. For her part, Regina responds annoyed to his covetous comment, thus beginning her manipulating strategy that her father finally allows her to visit Chicago, "where they surely make nice dresses," and where she intends to move to with John Bagtry, relevant information that she hides to his father, perfectly conscious of his jealous —not precisely in the sense of protective— nature. At the idea that his daughter might be the object of desire or attention of any man, Marcus feels jealous and immediately tries to stop the approach of any male figure other than his own. However, she knows how to turn his anger into her favor, and she uses all her resources in order to do so.

In a medium close-up (Figure 91), we can see how this conversation ends once Regina's serpentine moves have made effect. The delighted father can do nothing but laugh at the feminine and delightful comments that his daughter has introduced to brighten the mood. Holding in her hands the book she was reading to Marcus, she adopts a perfect lady-like attitude, and so she lowers her gaze just after making (the *exact amount* of) contact with her father's eyes. He looks at her directly, satisfied and happy with the charming reactions of her spoiled child, who, he trusts, enjoys being consented by her father. This scene among the trees, with the shadows and the lights that the branches redirect to the faces of this dyad of relatives, recalls a previous scene of Regina in another dyad with her lover John, at the beginning of the film. As much as one might want to avoid it, the similarity of the



Figure 91

situation and Regina's repeating mischievous attitude make it impossible to avoid establishing a parallelism. It has been generally interpreted that "Marcus harbors incestuous longings" for her daughter (T. P. Adler 48), and it is not difficult to find more evidence like this auto-explanatory medium close-up to support such an idea; however, to which extent these ideas linger in his mind remains unclear.

From the observation of Marcus' OCEAN scores, he stands out as highly conscientious, with a medium level of extraversion and the maximum low levels of agreeableness and neuroticism, which is revealing of his extreme personality and gives him so much strength as an evil character, thus making of him the most detestable villain in the movie. Absolutely unscrupulous, he does not stop at anything to reach his goal. He is the clear example of sly belligerent businessman, "the kind of aggressive, mercenary, self-made man who was rapidly making his way in their [new] society" (Taylor, *Cavalier* 139), although his money and his escalation to the top were not enough to truly guarantee his social mobility. Economically speaking, he seems to have indeed reached the top, but as long as honor is still valued by Bowden's community, he does not stand a chance to ever actually become one of them. As a cynical person, Marcus is sarcastic, he distrusts people in general and he finds it difficult to support other people's endeavors. He dislikes gullible and weak people (Oscar, Lavinia, the Bagtrys) and he prefers to engage in conversation only with those he considers at his level (Regina, Ben). He wants to be part of the venerable aristocracy of Bowden, but unlike his son Oscar, he does not join any group or institution, mainly because of his distrust for people and his expectation of disappointment in them. Therefore, he claims "I haven't been richly blessed with friends, or with sons." And he is not wrong, for he does not belong in any social group and he remains lonely, in a dark place much like the rest of the members of his family, rejected or misplaced.

As a cultural symptom within Eder's "clock of character" model, Marcus' southern parameters as established by Reed and presented in the theoretical framework, serve to define him as character who does not identify with the South at all: he rarely thinks in local terms, he despises his neighbors rather than admiring them, he does not have any in-group relationship with the community to focus on since he has been rejecting by the whole town, he does not care about religion, morality and the distinction of right and wrong mean nothing to him, he hates tradition, he is not courteous or particularly conservative, and he does not feel any loyalty towards his family as he exploits his sons working under him instead of doing the work himself. As an example of scene where we can see Marcus' almost non-existent feeling of the South, but rather his disrespect, can be introduced with the following sequence of shots. In the first one (Figure 92), we can see the whole family at the table, Marcus with his back to the audience and his head raised towards the servant Coralee, who looks him directly in the eyes from the other side of the table while holding a plate of food in her hands. The tension can be noticed on all of their faces, especially Lavinia's, whose gaze is also directed at Marcus, but unlike



Figure 92



Figure 93



Figure 94

Coralee's, Lavinia keeps her gaze down on her husband, concerned. Marcus is complaining that there is no salt on the table and orders Coralee to bring the salt. "It's confederate Day, Papa. Mama never eats salt on Confederate Day." Oscar innocently says —not to defend his mother but to briskly state the obvious outsmarting his siblings. Marcus knows perfectly well the reason why the salt is not on the table and he claims he wants salt every day, unconcerned with Bowden's celebrations, which he had been ignoring all day long. However, his somehow defensive disrespect for the people of Bowden and the traditions he does not want to share is extreme now, since he is rubbing salt at an old wound. Lavinia did not want the salt on the table on Confederate Day because it was with salt that Marcus had made economic profit from people in need during war times. Therefore, salt is related to exploitation and that is why it is a cause of discussion at the table on a day like Confederate Day precisely. Marcus ignores his wife completely, what exerts emotional pressure on her. He does the same to his son Oscar, but he does not seem as emotionally fragile to Marcus' attitude as his mother, probably in part due to his ignorant character. In an act that puts the emphasis on him as the undisputed leader of the pack, Marcus takes the saltshaker and uses the salt to his liking (Figure 93) to then pass it on to his daughter (Figure 94), the only one that he has in consideration. Regina, siding with her father, accepts the salt, whereas Ben, antagonizing him, rejects it. The saltshaker, which adopts a central position in the last shot of this sequence, becomes an object representative of Marcus's immoral act, or as Lavinia would express it, of his past sins. As the embodiment of a dangerous capitalism, Marcus moves away from any parameter of southern feeling, standing precisely for the social force born to destroy everything the Old South hold dear.

Understanding himself as a superior male, Marcus looks down not only on his wife but on women in general, something that he seems to pass on to both his sons, who will do the same. When Ben tells him that Birdie wants to borrow 7,000 dollars for Lionnet, Marcus claims that the girl is a fool since that is too cheap a price for such a cotton land, a comment to which Ben immediately adds "almost all girls are [fools]." This type of comments together with the manners they both show to Lavinia or Regina, always somehow emphasizing their male superiority, make of them both clear representatives of a strong patriarchal perspective, even showing misogynist attitudes sometimes. Although they both exceptionally leave Regina aside from their misogynist comments, since they consider her intelligent as well as charming and beautiful, they cannot avoid their wish —or need— to show themselves superior to her at all times. It is amusing for Ben, and it contributes to Marcus' self-confidence, however, deep inside, they are both failing at their attempts for it is Regina the one who stands as a worthy —even powerful— rival for capturing their attention and making them to perceive her as a significant being.

Throughout the movie, we can see how the strongest characters form a triad, competing against each other with their corresponding weapons in order to achieve their respective goals. The foxes immersed in the power game, Marcus, Ben, and Regina all three show a haughty and confident behavior. The following three shots above are particularly interesting insofar as they are hinting at a reversal in the possession of power. Ben and Regina, who are talking to their father from their own spaces on the second floor, appear in a higher position, above their father, who is downstairs getting ready for his breakfast.

While the father is seen from the back in a high angle shot looking at his children upstairs (Figure 96), the camera will zoom to Ben and Regina individually so as to capture the Hubbard heirs from a low angle, in a cowboy and a mid shot respectively. Ben has just cleaned up and is ready to start his day (Figure 95), while Regina, still in her nightgown, is getting ready (Figure 97). The faces of the brothers are illuminated by a morning light and they can be seen perfectly,



Figure 95



Figure 96



Figure 97

their half bodies erect in a straight position, both showing a positive predisposition to start their day. Later, in the middle of the battle, Regina, who appears here framed by the window and more illuminated than the males, will score a goal against Ben, who, refusing to lose, will score another by discovering her sister's secret after she had exposed her lie regarding the loan that Marcus was expected to give to the Bagtry heiress. The immediate outcome for brother and sister is quite different, notwithstanding, in agreement with the diverse relationship that the father has with them and the severity of their children's actions.

Once Marcus finds out that Ben intended to steal 2,000 dollars from his loan to the Bagtrys, he immediately fires his son and orders him to leave the house. Birdie had asked for a 5,000 dollars loan to Ben in order to save her plantation but, avid to get a piece of the pie, Ben decided to make of this his business, hence lying to his father about the amount of money Birdie had asked for. Intending to keep 2,000 dollars for himself, he had asked Marcus for 7,000 dollars, a daring and disrespectful trick that Marcus cannot forgive. This meant a win for Regina, the one who had spilled the beans to his father about Ben's lie, fighting in the process her way to get to Chicago as planned. She was able to uncover the truth because of her love relationship with John, who had told her about the 5,000 loan Birdie had asked for. Therefore, the only thing Ben has to do to defeat his sister once he has already been defeated, is to inform his father why Regina knew the details of the loan: her lover, John. Inflamed with jealousy, Marcus becomes embroiled in an argument with his son that ends in physical assault and Ben's utter defeat. Ben will lose his clerk job with Marcus, and be sent away, after being mercilessly slapped by his father.

The expression drawn on Marcus' face in the next close-up (Figure 98) is terrifying. His body, in what looks like an strong cutting motion occupies half of the shot, in harmony with his infuriated face: neck in tension, arched eyebrows, and mouth ready to let out sharp words. His action, lacking in rationality, attends exclusively to his instinct aimed at protecting his wounded ego. At the moment of the fight Regina is horrified, imaginably shocked by an aggressiveness coming from her father that she probably had never witnessed before. In a gesture of concern and unpleasant surprise, Regina's hand moves instinctively to cover her open mouth, as the girl had been unable to avoid expressing her fright. However, this fear shouldn't last long, since once the fight with Ben is over, Marcus tries to start another one with his daughter.



Figure 98

The tug of war proves effective since she first paints a picture of Marcus' nightmare — eloping with John and disappearing from his father's life if he does not allow her to go to Chicago with her lover—, offering subsequently



Figure 99



Figure 100

the option of a not-so-bad picture —visiting frequently and spending time with Marcus. She then kisses him good night and she goes upstairs leaving him alone. Marcus looks more hurt than resentful in the close-up on the left (Figure 99). Regina mercilessly approaches him from above to kiss him on the head, showing her position of power at this moment. Betrayed by his children, the patriarch tries to shut himself up by resorting to his usual cynicism and lack of emotion, his offspring seem to have already become grown up foxes and they are proving hard to control. Marcus fails against his son too. Right after expelling him from the house, once Lavinia reveals his secret, Ben regains power and he immediately threatens his father to lend him everything, hence winning the game and taking Marcus' position as head of the family, but most importantly at the forefront of business (Figure 100).

Summarizing, as a symbol within Eder's "clock of character", Marcus represents the evils of capitalism, a torch that his son Ben will gladly take to light it with more energy decades later. Within a cultural context, Marcus is portrayed by both Hellman and Gordon as a symptom of the fall of the old South, the establishment of a new social order, and all the struggle and discomfort that the transition to this new order conveys. He is particularly depicted as a negative character who destroys or corrupts everything he touches, including his offspring. Understood as a social force, he brings to mind the image of an amoral capitalist system that excels at productivity while ignoring human rights. Marcus might condition the audience to dislike capitalism as a social system and cause frustration at the sight of his immoral behaviors that affect the community as well as the more restricted institution of the family. In conclusion, Marcus is the bearer of a highly toxic identity, and although he seems to detach himself from any feeling of southernness, we will close this section establishing a parallelism between certain perception of the South and our perception of him as a fictional being: the same as southerners have been perceived by some critics as "a whole society with a psychotic spot, an irrational, heavily protected sore through which all manner of venomous hatreds and irrational lusts may pour" (Dollard 33), so we understand Marcus Hubbard.

5.3.2. Lavinia Hubbard: the lucidity of madness

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Actress Florence Eldridge in the role of Lavinia is the first face we get to see in the movie. Full or sentiment and with sort of a gloomy atmosphere, she makes her first appearance in the middle of the forest. The opening credits let us first observe the forest itself, but the camera will be immediately following a woman who seems to be in a rush, so that we can witness the motive of her trip into the woods. When she finally arrives to a part high enough to provide

her with a good perspective of what seems to be a celebration downtown, she observes what is happening in the distance. Among tree branches and the undergrowth, she hides with an expression between scared and sad, while participating in the social event as a spectator. Her face appears illuminated in the close-up contrasting with other interspersed shots of the citizens of Bowden captured from a high angle in the distance. The woman's mysterious behavior and the intense feeling reflected on her face as captured in the mid close-up below (Figure 101), trigger the curiosity of the audience for this troubled fictional viewer. Later, we will find out that this woman is Lavinia Hubbard, the matriarch of the Hubbard family.

Lavinia is introduced as a distracted lady with many preoccupations and thoughts rambling free in her mind. She is elegant and polite, and ignored by all the members of her family, who constantly cut her sentences without even giving her a true option to a conversation. On the contrary, she seems to have an excellent relationship with all her servants, especially with Coralee, who, in addition to taking care of her daily needs, is also a companion and a sort of protector for Lavinia. Therefore, despite being the bearer of positive traits such as kindness, spirituality, fairness, gentility, and generosity, she is also portrayed as needy, emotionally fragile, and highly dependent. She seems to feel insecure and lonely, in need of human connection; but she is denied any interaction except for those with the servants. Her anxiety and her nervousness, however, do not come out of nowhere, but have a justified reason: the burden that she is carrying and has been keeping secret for years. She is aware of her husband's sins, and she feels guilty for keeping them a secret due to her sense of loyalty and great religiosity. She considers herself fragile, and she has developed certain evasion strategies in order to cope with the unkind treatment she receives from her family. She goes completely unnoticed by her children and is emotionally abused by her husband, who encourages her to act like a mad woman in order to make others —and herself— believe her madness. Whilst for Oscar she is just a crazy woman he goes to when there is no one left to hear him whine, for his daughter Regina, she is the role model she does not want to follow, a symbol of a weakness and fragility that the young girl would never want to have as attributes of her personality. For Ben, on the contrary, it is yet his mom; although he manipulates her for his benefit and he does not particularly admire her submissive and evasive nature, he still notices her, treats her with some care —as much as his lack of empathy allows him— and even considers her his confident.

Contrary to the rest of the members of her family, Lavinia is kindhearted and much like the belle of Lionnet, Birdie Bagtry, she has a lady-like sweet and caring personality. She cares for her family, her neighbors and acquaintances, the help, and the poor. She cares for everybody, the living and the dead. Only after all the celebrations of Confederate Day are over, Lavinia takes flowers to the deceased who had been early commemorated by the whole town. Just by observing closely her actions and attitude, we can learn about two key aspects of her identity: she is gentle, and she is scared, or at least very uneasy. According to the analysis of the Big Five personality traits (McCrae's OCEAN), Lavinia would be described as extremely agreeable, with a tendency to neuroticism and a medium level of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion. Unlike her husband and children, her personality seems to be quite balanced for all the domains apart from



Figure 101

the agreeableness one. Despite the balance, or maybe precisely because of it, she is ironically considered crazy by her family, whose members present extreme tendencies in several domains of their personalities.



Figure 102

On the day of her birthday, which coincidentally overlaps with Confederate Day, her family shoe her total indifference, as they did not even remember about it. Even if the matriarch makes hints at this being her especial day, they keep ignoring her completely. Notwithstanding, she receives the attention of all the servants, who happily come out to congratulate her right after Coralee, the head servant, brings her a cake with lighted candles. On the shot (Figure 102) we can see the expressions of joy on the faces of the maids as they congratulate her. They genuinely seem to adore Lavinia, or as they call her, Miss Vinny. If Lavinia has any type of relationship, social or emotional, it exists without a doubt with her servants, whom she appreciates and treats as equals. It is important to notice that despite being in the background, Coralee occupies the central position in the shot, and it is her smile from afar that attracts the viewer's attention. Closer to the camera, in the foreground, Lavinia turns to the servants to thank them for their kindness and show them her happiness with the birthday cake they made for her. Although we cannot see her face in this image, the candor and kindness in this scene can be easily inferred from her posture and the smiles of the maids.

At this point, to save appearances quicky and as inconspicuously —however, without any feeling of guilt or even shame—, her husband and children stand to congratulate her. Momentarily as well, Lavinia seems to feel happy with the attention, a focus that will be literally taken from her only seconds after, when all the members of the family return to their own concerns, forgetting about Lavinia even before she had finished slicing the cake. Sometime later, Ben will realize that she is still alone at the table and, unexpectedly, he will come back to her to blow the candles together. Her birthday passed unnoticed —despite the efforts of the help—, emphasizing her loneliness and her displacement within the family. The fact that they first forgot about it clearly shows the (lack of) relevance she is given within the family unit. Lavinia, technically a member of the group but in reality yet an outsider, is just next to nothing for the Hubbards, a standard decoration that people can look at momentarily without even paying the slightest attention. On the other hand, the fact that they still did not really care after the birthday cake was brought to her, reveals that her alleged insanity might be simply part of the gaslighting to which she is subjected within the household.

"Gaslighting" is as a term born from Patrick Hamilton's play, *Gas Light* (1938), where the husband aims to drive his younger wife to madness by means of covert manipulations. As a form of psychological abuse, gaslighting is frequently used to put ideas in someone's mind until the point that they are so confused that they cannot distinguish reality anymore and end up believing what they have been told. Through gaslighting, people with a manipulative or abusive nature tend to question their victim's lucidity, playing with their perception of reality, toying with their memories, twisting their words. On the other side of the coin, those experiencing gaslighting tend to doubt their perceptions and actions, they generally feel anxious and confused, and end up doubting their sanity. This defines near to perfection Lavinia's situation, at the same time it explains her constant worry, her deep insecurity, her thoughts of low self-worth, and

her reluctance to get out of a comfort zone where she feels comfortable being submissive if that means she does not need to fight —while she is, notwithstanding, somehow consenting to the abuse. In a recent paper, Paige L. Sweet points out the relevance of gaslighting not only for psychology but also for sociology, a point of view with which we fully agree. In fact, what happens to Lavinia, and will also happen to Birdie decades later, goes beyond the household: from the manipulation to which they are subjected at home as the weaker sex (intimate attack), they end up being perceived as "sick" by their families and in a broader a social context. Therefore, it is actually the social characteristics that end up emphasizing the gaslighting effect, as Sweet claims: "Specifically, gaslighting is effective when it is rooted in social inequalities, especially gender and sexuality, and executed in power-laden intimate relationships. When perpetrators mobilize gender-based stereotypes, structural inequalities, and institutional vulnerabilities against victims with whom they are in an intimate relationship, gaslighting becomes not only effective, but devastating" (852).

Lavinia is the lady of the house and understood as such; however, directions are given to her in a similar way as they are given to the help. In fact, when this happens, at times Lavinia seems to be in a slight disadvantage with respect to characters like Coralee. She is highly fragile, and it is extremely difficult for her to confront or contradict her husband without shedding tears, whereas Coralee has no problem dodging her master's comments, or replying to him in a way that satisfies his ego, while in addition being able to protect Lavinia's frailty to some extent. By emphasizing her frailty, her religious fanaticism, and her *crazy ideas* such as building a hospital (a school for colored children in the original play) through covert manipulation as well as with overt intimidation, Marcus makes Lavinia look like an unbalanced person in the eyes of her children, who in turn will grow separate from their mother and will contribute to the gaslighting in their own way. Oscar directly uses the word "crazy" to refer to her, whereas Ben will point out to some attitudes of Lavinia that he describes as "acting funny": crying for no reason, not using salt on certain days, and reacting frightened all the time. As Sweet explained, we can see how the intimate aggression of the husband permeates to the level of the family, a reduced but yet very important social institution.

Painter perceived southern women as lacking individual character, and comfortable in the role they play as mothers to the white race; however, Lavinia feels anything but restful in her mother role. Oscar and Regina ignore her most of the time, being Ben, as already mentioned, the only one who provides some company, hence certain emotional relief. Rejected by her daughter once and again, Lavinia still tries to approach her, but the outcome is always the same: her daughter's negative. Regina is not interested in spending time with her, even when Lavinia offers something that might benefit her, as for example helping her to try up new dresses. Considering that she rejects this type of approach from her mother, it is to be expected that she will be even more distant when there is no benefit for her involved, as for example in the case of Lavinia's birthday. As we can see in Figure 103, Lavinia is happily smiling while making the gesture of giving his daughter her share of the cake. However, Regina goes in another direction and barely looks at the cake —much less at her mother. The center of the shot is occupied by the Hubbard girl, with her



Figure 103

bright face and a smile from ear to ear, as she takes her father by the arm to go out for a walk. It is important to notice that father and daughter are together, while the mother is a little separated from them, further to the right, alone. Among them is the piece of cake, an offering from Lavinia, which goes completely unnoticed, no matter how delicious it may seem. This image adequately sums up the relationship that exists between parents and daughter: on the one hand there is the Regina-Marcus dyad taking center stage and on the other hand, without any companion, there is Lavinia. In the background we can get a glimpse of Oscar's (eternally puzzled) face, in his role of listener, a position he abandons from time to time, to usually say something silly. In this case his presence in the shot has no other meaning that emphasizing Regina's central position, as everybody is turning her face to her; it is her mother's birthday, but she steals the spotlight. At this point, the viewer receives a great emotional charge coming from the cruel attitude of the daughter who, without the slightest consideration, fully ignores her mother; and, on the other hand, from feeling empathy towards a person who despite generously offering her attention and affection, only receives disdain and rejection.

Distracted with Regina's talk, Ben also forgets about his mother for a while, but upon noticing her loneliness, he returns to make her company and stays briefly to eat the cake with her. But all that glitters is not gold either, as Ben has an ulterior motive. It is part of his personality, he cannot help but attempt to profit from any situation or any knowledge he can gather. Therefore, while eating a sweet dessert, he brings back to the table a not so sweet topic: the salt issue, previously introduced during the dinner. It is now when Lavinia opens up to her son and confesses that she feels extremely guilty for having considered a kindness of Marcus to sell salt to people when they were in need of it, while, without her knowing, he was charging them eight dollars for "a tiny little pound". That is the reason why the spiritual and just Lavinia made of if a sort of ritual —in sign of respect for the affected people— not to eat salt on Confederate Day. Within the institution of the family as well as concerning intimate relations, Lavinia and Ben are both mostly alone, and even so, they do so close as to form a dyad, probably because of her son's unsympathetic identity. However, Lavinia does attend church regularly, therefore forming part of a social group, within which she is observed individually, independently of her connection to the Hubbard clan. This works in her favor, as she knows that Bowden's people despise Marcus, and she believes that her religiosity, her honesty, and her candor give her some social credibility. Her understanding of how others perceive her is actually correct, but Marcus is quick to make her believe otherwise (gaslighting).

Recalling the events from *The Little Foxes*, it is worth noticing that Lavinia talks to her husband in a way similar to that of Birdie, her future daughter-in-law, who will find herself reproducing Lavinia's marital behavior twenty years later when interacting with her husband Oscar. Both try to convince their husbands, they speak in a sweet voice and in a very polite way, and both receive, instead, disapproval or rejection. In the shoulder shot on the right (Figure 104) we can see how the matriarch of the Hubbards pleads with her husband to let her start building her hospital as he had promised he would do, but he reacts as she was talking nonsense and gets ready to leave the room. Lavinia, who was trying to hold back her tears while begging him to listen to her, breaks down



Figure 104

and is unable to continue facing up to him after having heard his refusal, a rejection that comes condensed into a painful "another day my dear." Yet, she tries to gather the courage to face him: "That's what you said last year. And the year before that. You said you were too busy." The patriarch, as firm as he is cruel in his posture, cuts the conversation sharply ("I'm still busy!") and leaves, while his wife remains sobbing, without anyone caring. From this the viewer deduces that either this is the usual dynamic within the family, a routine that everyone is used to, or maybe the whole Hubbard clan except the frail matriarch is devoid of affective emotions, or both.

As it has already been remarked with the evolution and parallelism of other characters and their relations, the degradation is, once again, intensified in this aspect with the passing of time, for Birdie —once her family name is changed from Bagtry to Hubbard— will experience this situation in a more extreme way. Lavinia is ignored and psychologically abused, while Birdie will be both physically and psychologically abused. Kindhearted ladies, both Lavinia and Birdie are naturally sweet and charming, and they cannot easily change the modality of their speech; for this is the only linguistic, intimate, and social register they know. On the contrary, Regina has a wide variety of registers and she can pull out a given trait of her personality or another (charming, attractive, smart, strong, manipulative, mischievous, cold) as she considers convenient.

Contrary to her resourceful daughter, Lavinia finds herself unable to control her own life as she keeps receiving constant reminders of her insanity from a cruel husband: "What's the matter with you? Are you completely out of your head?", "It isn't easy to live with you, Lavinia", "Stop your crazy talk." With the pain that feeling unwanted confers on her and with doubts about her own behavior, Lavinia is not only trapped in the household, but also in the past. However, the past comes to her mind not because of its glory, as it happens to the Bagtry family, but because of the deep sense of guilt she carries from Marcus' cruel deeds in the past, when he vilely caused the massacre of his own fellows by leading the Northern troops to them. She does indeed have memories of better times, much like Birdie will experience decades later, although Lavinia's entrapment lies not in the sweet moments but rather in the gloomiest ones. With a deep sense of fairness and an acute moral compass, Lavinia suffers thinking that she made a mistake by choosing loyalty to her husband instead of unmasking him in front of Bowden's people. She endured in the marriage, she explains to Ben, because she believed that was her duty according to her religion. She should honor her bows, maintaining her obligation to marriage over her responsibility to her conscience. With the passing of time, she comes to realize that there is something wrong with that choice, and she feels haunted by guilt.

The feelings of guilt and shame are experienced by people when there is a violation of moral standards or norms, hence directly related to morality and also to religion. Since Lavinia's identity is highly influenced by both, it is worth taking a closer look at this aspect of her personality. Drawing from Eugene A. Nida's original classification of the reactions to religious transgressions falling into three categories (fear, shame, and guilt), Simon Cozens reviews the demarcations of such divisions concluding that shame is the universally expected human reaction (333), independently of the current view of cultures as divided into guilt oriented and shame oriented. His religious perspective, emphasizing guilt as the reaction to the transgression of a divine code, proves very helpful in understanding Lavinia's feeling, as she is not ashamed at all despite feeling very guilty. It stands clear that she worries about how her decision looks in the eyes of God: since she wants to do good as she learned from her Bible readings, she is carrying the burden of guilt after having done wrong. Matching with Cozens' theological conclusions, we can also take into consideration a more sociological-psychological reading if we concentrate on morality as system of values and codes of conduct functioning within societies. There is shame after the loss of honor within a community where integrity is held

as a high value; there is a feeling of guilt when laws are broken or when morality codes have been ignored, hence putting the individual in need of attaining justice or forgiveness. In this sense, we understand that Lavinia does not feel the burden of shame, because her honor is not under attack. However, her guilt could be understood not only as coming from her wrongdoing in the eyes of God, but also from understanding her wrongdoing with respect to the damage it could have caused to Bowden's neighbors, to whom she has denied their right to receive justice for the past actions of her husband. If she were to expose Marcus, not only would she give her community a chance to do justice, but she could also receive forgiveness from the people she has hurt with her decision to keep quiet. Another way of seeing it could be by placing the emphasis on the "I" or in the group. As Wong and Tsai explain, "although both emotions occur when someone has committed a transgression that results in being negatively evaluated by others, the emotions differ in the origin of the transgression. When people attribute their transgressions to their global and stable self ("I can't believe *I* did that"), they experience shame, but when people attribute their transgressions to transient actions or states ("I can't I believe I did *that*"), they experience guilt" (Wong and Tsai 210). From this point of view, Lavinia is not experiencing the feeling as related to her self-identity but rather to her social identity. It is "that" what concerns her causing her sense of guilt.

Applying the same analysis to Marcus' feelings, it is not difficult to conclude that he could never feel guilty, given his lack of religious sentiment as well as of a moral code. On the contrary, we can infer that it would be possible for him to feel ashamed upon a feeling of separation from society due to his lack of honor, or in situations in which he experiences a loss of face, hence degrading his social appearance. In this way, his daughter will find him crying towards the end of the movie once Ben has taken command of the family. Although Marcus feels no guilt for causing the deaths of the Confederate soldiers back in the past, he feels ashamed at the fact of having lost the position of power that he had over his family (humiliation within a social institution) and that, by extension, will also be perceived as his degradation from a broader social context. The Hubbard patriarch feels the impact of the results obtained with his actions on his own perspective of himself, which implies an attack to his ego, something particularly difficult to cope with for a person with a narcissistic identity such as him. Against the absolute delineation of the feelings of shame and guilt as opposite and separate, we agree with Cozens that both can be found in a person regarding the same fact; however, as this is not what happens here, it is not necessary to develop on it.

As events unfold and Lavinia feels more and more trapped in an unwanted situation, her conscience will undergo an awakening that will allow her to gather the energy to confront both her



Figure 105



Figure 106

husband and her own feeling of guilt. After Ben's successful attempt of manipulation (by making her believe that Marcus wanted to admit her to an asylum in Chicago), Lavinia gets anxious and scared, and she spills the salt —that she had been avoiding to use, against her husband's wishes— only to increase her dreadfulness, as we can see on Figure 105. The cake on her left, reminder of Coralee's appreciation for Lavinia, has lost any meaning to leave the central stage to the saltshaker. From occupying a central position in the foreground on the first shot, the saltshaker will take full prominence in Figure 106 on the right. The camera zooms to the saltshaker and we get a close-up of the two contrasting elements again: the sweet piece of cake that was supposed to bring happiness to Lavinia, and the spilled salt that rekindles her feeling of guilt.

Later when Marcus asks Lavinia to buy some new dresses for her stay in Chicago with Regina, Lavinia strongly opposes it, begging her husband not to send her there. Her desire to stay in Bowden instead of accompanying his daughter is so intense that she falls sick —or so she pretends— consciously or subconsciously hoping that this will help her to achieve her goal, staying home, hence avoiding the sanitarium that Ben had planted in her head. She lies for her own sake, to protect her feelings and decides to stay in bed during that especial "music night" that Marcus had planned to share with the Bagtrys, at his children's request. At the end of the night, the fight between her husband and her son takes place, and she will later learn that Ben has been expelled from the house by his father. She sincerely wants Ben to stay, so she pleads with Marcus when, upon his usual rejection and cruelty, miraculously, her strong will and intelligence (until now dormant) get a boost and are unleashed in full swing. It is now that Lavinia becomes capable of threatening her husband with exposing his secret about "the day of the massacre," that shameful day when a nefarious Marcus shared hands with Union soldiers.

Viewers can now find out that the matriarch had been completely aware of the huge power that her secret granted her. She had always known that it could give her as much control of her life as to make her dreams come true and break her free from the rope that her husband had been subjecting her to, and so she tells Ben: "I could walk up those steps and tell him I could still send him into a hanging rope unless he lets me go" (368). In addition, she knows that Marcus is not loved in the town, and she assures to Ben that everybody would trust her and Coralee, her companion of secrets, because "nothing would give [Bowden people] so much pleasure as, as, as, well calling upon Papa" (371). Contrary to the image of a frail, crazy, and scared woman, she eventually proves to be strong, smart, and very clear minded: "I think that people believe what they want to believe, don't you?", she says to his son. Her kindness and deep sense of guilt would not allow her to directly hurt her husband, but when Marcus sends Ben away, and conscious that her husband would never let her free, she decides to intervene by transferring her knowledge to her son. Not only caring about Ben, but also tired of waiting for Marcus to let her go free to build her hospital, she realizes that siding with her son would bring her much closer to meeting her goal and she ultimately chooses her freedom over marital responsibility.

Lavinia's attitude at the ending is slightly different in the movie and in the original play. In the play she says her goodbyes to every member of the family, leaving Regina with her pin, Oscar with her prayer book, Ben with her father's watch, and Marcus with her best wishes. Both Marcus and Ben ask for Lavinia's Bible as a present, but she outsmarts them both and lets them know that it is a possession too important for her to leave it with them. Her answer might be absent of intentional irony, but it does transmit an ironic meaning, nonetheless. She has retained the power in her Bible for over sixteen years —Marcus not knowing about this—, since she had written all the relevant data about "that fateful night" when Marcus betrayed their

own kind and lead the Union soldiers to his own neighbors. Lavinia proves she is no fool; on the contrary, she is way smarter than her family had been giving her credit for: she is perfectly conscious that she had kept an ace up her sleeve for a long time and it means her ticket to freedom. Therefore, it is clear for her that she needs to keep it. In this way, her decision enables her to retain the information —the power— with her, and does not agree to manipulations. In the movie, Lavinia leaves the cage at the end achieving poetic justice, getting her independence, and making her dreams come true, in this sense eventually overpowering her husband after breaking free from his gaslighting. At this point, victorious, she could perfectly claim, as the protagonist of *Gas Light* did, "because I am mad I have betrayed you, and because I am mad I am rejoicing in my heart" (83), but she chooses to express her liberation in an equally strong and heightening way, by putting the focus on her children and their future (which we are allowed to witness in *The Little Foxes*) as she claims: "Now I just wanna go where I can get a breath of air," "I am not tired. And I am not afraid." With a clear mind and a strong judgement, she tells to her already corrupted offsprings: "I don't like any of my children. I feel sorry for you." Putting slightly more focus on Ben, the only children she somehow could have a conversation with, she warns him: "You'll have to be busy because you are a lonely man. All your life you are gonna be lonely… and empty man." This has a particularly impacting effect on the viewer since, after learning about the future events in *The Little Foxes*, we can realize that the warning was more of a premonition. Definitely empowered after having told her truth, Lavinia leaves the room ascending to a new free life as she goes up the staircase.

In this sequence of shots we can see the ascension of a woman who has overcome her obstacles and has freed herself from the patriarchal yoke. This is a new Lavinia who no longer looks back —as she used to do at the beginning of the film—, but advances looking straight ahead. In the foreground of the first shot, a wide shot captured from a high angle, Lavinia takes the central position in the foreground, once she has reached the staircase, while Marcus, defeated, is still within frame in the distance, occupying a secondary position in the background with his gaze directed at his wife, the last possession he has just lost (Figure 107). Second in the sequence we have a medium full shot from a high angle in which Lavinia blooms stands out in the foreground, now in contrast with her children on the background (Figure 108). Again, occupying a secondary position in the background, the young foxes look at their mother leaving, much in the same position within the frame as their father in the previous shot. Finally, as the credits begin to appear at the ending of the film, Lavinia has climbed the ladder and is about to reach the top, as can be seen from a high camera angle in the very long shot that ends the sequence (Figure 109). In the distance, both the children (on the right) and the husband (who can be seen on the left hidden behind the stair rail) continue to observe the ascent of their mother, who stands now as a heroine both for achieving her own liberation (feminist perspective) and for scoring a goal in the battle of good against evil (moral view).



Figure 107



Figure 108



Figure 109

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6. *TOYS IN THE ATTIC*

Following the events of the Great Depression and set in New Orleans, *Toys in the Attic* introduces a southern family made up of three siblings, the Berniers, who have been struggling with money issues. The youngest, Julian, has had constant business failures, thus spending all the money of his sisters, Anna and Carrie who, despite the amount of effort and money required, take care of him with absolute devotion. Directed by George Roy Hill, the film adaptation (1963) starred well-known actors such as Dean Martin, Geraldine Page, or Yvette Mimieux, despite not achieving such a noticeable success as other film adaptations of Hellman's plays.

Although the protagonist of this story is a man, Julian Berniers, his identity —as much as his life— is shaped by his interactions with women. Despite belonging to different social classes and leading diverse types of life, the women in *Toys in the Attic* end up interacting with each other because of their indirect or direct relationship with Julian. Through this constellation of female characters, Lillian Hellman introduces once again themes similar to those found in *Another Part of the Forest* and *The Little Foxes*, among them family relationships and the power of money. However, although money is the trigger for action also in *Toys in the Attic*, this time it appears sharing the limelight with another power, likewise universally longed for: love, which becomes astonishingly dangerous, even destructive, when deviating into other borderline sentiments. Sibling confrontations, jealousy, and love-hate relationships stand out as shaping forces of the identity of the characters, found individually or together, but always in relation to money. Thus, we will be introduced to two sisters with the same background and similar age (Anna and Carrie Berniers) interacting with other two female of different generations (Lily and Albertine Prine), and concerned with another woman outside their social sphere despite being related to Julian (Charlotte Warkins).

Although not directly linked to *The Little Foxes* and its prequel *Another Part of the Forest* concerning events or characters, Hellman's only play set in New Orleans, *Toys in the Attic*, presents certain parallelisms with the *Hubbard dramas*, originally meant to be "a family trilogy about the rise and fall of the rich, rapacious Hubbards" (Erben 125). According to Richard Moody, Hellman had envisioned for the third play in the trilogy an embittered Alexandra Hubbard living as a spinster in Paris by the 1920s (161). In *Toys in the Attic*, set around that same period, we actually meet a soured spinster, Carrie Berniers, a woman who is constantly dreaming of Europe while living an unfulfilled life in New Orleans. The Berniers family as a unit, moreover, could be understood as an extension of the Hubbards, as they lost their wealth and failed to comfortably adjust within society. This might be interpreted as a sort of mirror for the failure of the young generation of Hubbards, a situation that the playwright intended to wrap her trilogy with. Notwithstanding, since *Toys in the Attic* is a play with different characters and a different focus, the analysis presented in this chapter is complementary, and it is basically understood as a possible direction in which the young Hubbards of *The Little Foxes* could have advanced with their lives. This chapter will therefore serve the purpose of briefly exposing Hellman's vision of the South of the 1920s through the social interactions of the characters, their mentality (values, beliefs, motivations, self-identity, personality traits), their identification with the South, and their meaning as symbols and symptoms, as observed from Eder's clock of character.

6.1. The Berniers family and New Orleans

Dreaming of a better future and trip to Europe, Anna and Carrie Berniers, two unmarried sisters, live alone in their family house in New Orleans, and they both have jobs with which to occupy their time and pay the mortgage on the house but, most importantly, pay for their brother's needs and debts. Despite there no being parental figures in the Berniers' household anymore, the sisters act as parents for Julian, since they have always taken care of him and (over)protected him. In exchange for their (probably excessive) attentions, Julian has remained dependent of his beloved sisters. From a sociological perspective, the triad formed by the Berniers siblings seems to be a unified group in which, however, an imbalance is observed: while there is a balance between Anna and Carrie, the sisters as a dyad, they maintain a somewhat different relationship with their younger brother. That is, within the triad, Julian occupies a different position than the sisters. Interestingly, Hellman seems to have a predilection for this type of aggrupation, despite being herself an only child. It is a fact, however, that sibling relationships (and conflicts) are an intriguing topic to ponder and discuss, since cases like the original one by Cain and Abel themselves.

The sisters do not like the house they live in, although they have fond memories of their childhood. From the beginning of the film, a sense of emotional suffocation is perceived in them in line with the hot and humid weather of New Orleans. The dialogues that they maintain are somehow void and monotonous (although sometimes ironic) as are the regular gifts that they exchange as a habit. They constantly contradict each other in their speech, as much as in thought. Yet, they have remained together under the same roof for so long. Julian, fully reliant on them, has tried to succeed in numerous businesses, each and every one of them resulting in failure —which, on the other hand, is not in dissonance with the difficulties experienced by many people during the period of the Great Depression. Despite his bad luck with business (or his inability to keep a job), he has tried to move on with his life and has married a rich young woman named Lily, Albertine Prine's daughter the new addition to the Berniers family.

As other Hellman's work, including the ones already analyzed in this study, *Toys in the Attic* has some autobiographical content, therefore counting with characters directly inspired by the playwright's family members: Julian Berniers is based on the playwright's father, who was also a businessman deeply cared by his two sisters; Carrie and Anna were inspired by Hellman's maiden aunts; and Albertine Prine's love interest is also based on a black chauffeur related to one of Hellman's aunts. Among other biographical details, it is worth mentioning that, like Julian, Hellman's father had failed in his shoe business, and Lily is a reflection of Hellman herself as a child (Lederer). In addition to the autobiographical overtones borrowed from the members of the playwright's family, New Orleans' influence on it is more remarkable here than in any other work, although it extends to her vision of the South in general. As Headrick claims: "By her New Orleans connection Lillian Hellman captures the tension of southern life in a magnified manner and makes us reflect on how individuals navigate through the hybrid social constructions of contemporary life" (2). In *Toys in the Attic* we get to experience the scene of the French Quarter hand in hand with the characters, and we can witness lively scenes of the city nightlife (as seen in Figure 110), a life in which the Berniers sisters do not participate, although their brother does know



Figure 110

well. In addition, Lily will navigate the streets of New Orleans on several occasions, letting us see what she observes as she passes, whether they are streets busy with lively citizens or locals of jazz or variety venues.

6.2. The love birds without a nest

Julian and Lily Berniers are a couple of young newlyweds whose family nest has yet to be built. With Lily's dowry and the money he had received as a gift, Julian had opened a shoe factory business right after their wedding, but it ended up failing and the couple decided to return from Chicago, Illinois, to Julian's family house in New Orleans, the ever-bustling city where he had also planned to do some business before visiting his sisters, Anna and Carrie. In Julian and Lily's relationship, the traditional roles established within the patriarchal system could be reversed, since Lily is a rich heiress (in possession of economic power) and Julian cannot keep up with any job. However, given the young woman's fragility and neuroticism (lack of emotional control), the sum of her personality traits endows her with a final power that results useless in her pursuit of goals. In other words, despite being in a position of power, she is limited by the power that her personality allows her to exercise. In this dyad, Julian aims to be the provider while Lily is totally uninterested and passive concerning money, focusing all her attention on maintaining the affection of her husband. They both seek to dominate in different ways, but both fail in the selection of means, thus encountering obstacles, and both achieve someway a similar result.

6.2.1. Julian Berniers: the southern goodwill of the bad provider

Julian Berniers, in Hellman's mind "a handsome, tall man of about thirty-four" (*Toys* 19), was interpreted for the big screen by one of the most popular entertainers of the mid twentieth century, Dean Martin, who transferred Julian nuances of his comic character. Much like Hellman's father (from whom the character was inspired), Julian is a young man who despite having experienced several business failures, has always been supported by his two overprotective maiden sisters. He has a cheerful personality, and he prides himself in that. For his sisters, he is their life mission. They live to care him and enjoy taking care of him. For Anna, he is her dear little brother, the one she wants to see happy more than anything in the world. Carrie, however, has a more selfish feeling towards Julian; rather than loving him as her dear little brother, she has a more complex and domineering relationship with him. Therefore, she hides her intentions under the mask of a sweet and fragile southern woman, which is the only side of her that Julian will know until the end of the film, when her mask will fall off. For his young wife, Lily, Julian is also the center around which her whole life revolves. She is madly in love with him, and she constantly makes it known to him and anyone else she interacts with. Julian is surrounded by women and both his sisters and his wife want him to depend on them, so that they can manipulate him at their will. Loving him, yet manipulating him, these women become master puppeteers and pull the strings of their *toy* in order to achieve their goals.

When we first meet Julian, he is moving around town in a hurry while doing his chores, yet unknown for the viewer. As we can observe in the wide shot in Figure 111, Julian runs across the street, carrying a package in his hand and with a certain expression of stress. This morning image of New Orleans contrasts with the one previously introduced in Figure 110, where the city appeared in all its nocturnal splendor. Seconds later, we will find out that he is in the same city as the beautiful young woman who stars in the first scene of the movie, since she is waiting



Figure 111

for him in a hotel room. This woman is his wife Lily, and the city is New Orleans, where they have no home of their own but where they can go visit their families. Very close to his sisters and reminding us of the idea of the southern family bond, Julian primarily values family; but money and social status are also crucial for him. He is a kind person with a desire to be liked and eager to please others. Like the Hubbards, Julian's goal is to succeed in business and become very rich, "a tycoon" (although he does not really know the meaning of the word). However, contrary to representing an evil greed like that of the Hubbards, Julian's money drive is somehow forgiven from Hellman's point of view, and so it translates into the film adaptation as a lesser sin, owing that he is a loving character and his need for wealth is caused by his desire to make his loved ones happy and by his aspiration to offer his best possible version to society. This forgiveness, nonetheless, is but a mere illusion, something that the viewer can easily realize as events progress. His motivation becomes his flaw; and although Julian's intentions are good, the playwright makes it clear for us to understand that the destructive effects of the young Berniers' thirst for money can be as intense as those caused by characters perceived as mischievous, such as Regina Hubbard.

Observed as a symbol following Eder's "clock of character," Julian stands as a perceptible example of the reversal role of the provider. Unable to earn money and keep it, he becomes a powerless male dependent on his sisters, a *job* that they accept and execute gladly. The provider is a "hero [that] inhabits the scene of modernity with comfort and is proud of its technologizations and colonizations" (Anderlini-D'Onofrio 195). Enabled with the capability to deliver goods for others, the provider thinks he can take other (non-material) goods in exchange, but, as Anderlini-D'Onofrio claims, "Hellman created a dramatic situation where the myth could be seriously challenged" (195). Julian is indeed a *bad provider*, for he has no economic power to provide for the well-being of his sisters or wife and is instead provided for by them. Therefore, he becomes the object of desire for the women rather than showing his desiring superiority as a subject (196).

Julian's identity reflects the typical contradictory character of the South (Burton), or what we introduced in the theoretical frame as a set of opposites: he is a dreamer and childish to a certain extent, probably because of the overprotection he has always received from his sisters, but he is at the same time quite defeatist and reacts emotionally to every obstacle he encounters; he is courteous and kind, but he can also be quite aggressive in his narcissism. He is charming, funny, and generous, but at the same time he presents a picture of not so positive traits since he stands out for his simplemindedness, his emotional dependence (from which he derives a certain psychological weakness), and his superficiality (that borders the point of ridicule). According to his OCEAN results, he presents a low level of conscientiousness, a very high level of extraversion and openness, and quite a high level of agreeableness and neuroticism. In this way, his identity allows him to dare *making business* in an unethical way, since he has the energy impulse to do so, while lacking the awareness of the circumstances in which he acts, what leads him to overlook the effects that his actions might entail. In the following cut in shot (Figure 112) we can see how Julian starts a shady process to get money. This is his new *business*, and he is completely willing to go through with it, even if it would imply making threats to the man he intends to profit from. In this image Julian is captured by the camera from behind, in the foreground, with a body gesture of walking towards the background, while carrying in his hand some documents that share the center of the frame with a man in the foreground who is looking

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Figure 112

directly at Julian with evident discontent. This man is Cy Warkins, a rich —and shady— lawyer, in the frame sitting at the desk while receiving Julian in his office. Mr. Warkins' face, slightly illuminated, expresses seriousness and amazement at the same time, given the fact that he is about to becomes Julian's victim. A person both with social status and in possession of economic power, it is hard for Mr. Warkins to guess that a young man without profession and without money has come to overpower him.

Owing that this is money made without the effort of professional work, Julian knows perfectly well that he is not acting correctly but he does not care, since he considers Cy Warkins a bad person and feels like an intelligent Robin Hood for taking the money from him. On his way to achieving the status of a wealthy man, he (perhaps momentarily) abandons morality; and once he gets the money, he finds some role conflicts, given that he cannot harmonize his position as an enriched member of society with that of brother or husband. Both his sisters and his wife dislike his newly achieved social status, as it is proof that he gathered the money without their help.

After achieving his goal, Julian is ready to enjoy his new life of wealth, and that is the perfect moment to finally visit his sisters, whom he had been avoiding contact with for a while (as his business had failed and he did not want them to know). Thus, along with Lily, Julian gets a cab to his sisters' house, where he intends to stay for a while. Figure 113 provides a high angle shot from the movie where we can see how the sisters, who had gone up to the attic to prepare the house for the arrival of their brother, watch Julian arrive through the window (thus symbolically marking their position of superiority within their triad relationship), and immediately rush downstairs to meet him. Upon Julian's arrival, the three Berniers are excited with the reunion and exulting with happiness, in contrast to Lily, who is sad and frustrated by the fact that her husband will be spending time with her sisters instead of dedicating it exclusively to her. After the effusive welcome, full of hugs, and the shouts of joy from Julian and Carrie, who seem to have a deeper relationship within the triad of brothers, the young man prepares to pay the cab driver, as we see in Figure 114. Dressed in a white suit, accompanied by simple accessories, such as a hat of the same color and a handkerchief in the front pocket of his jacket, Julian takes out his envelope full of money and pays the man, who does not look up from the bills. Filled with happiness and pride, with the adrenaline rush of experiencing a wealth that he has never known before (since this is the first time he has achieved something by himself), he gives the cab driver a huge tip as he tells him "Name your son Julian." On the one hand this reflects his joy, while on the other it reveals his narcissistic traits. In the foreground, Julian occupies the center of the frame, standing straight with a cigar in his mouth and the



Figure 113



Figure 114

money envelope in his hands. To his left, the driver is surprised to see the amount of money that the young Berniers is handling, as is his older sister**,** who watches him from the background. A level farther in the background, we can get a glimpse of Lily, who at this moment is observant, with a sweet smile in her mouth in an attempt to show sympathy towards the sisters who are welcoming her into their home.

Intoxicated with money, Julian has started showing off, and his attitude in this image recalls the gestures of greatness of Marcus Hubbard and, as much as Dean Martin gives Julian a pleasant and sympathetic appearance, he is still a narcissistic character just like the patriarch of the Hubbards and his firstborn. If we pay attention to the cigar, luxury good, and therefore significant of wealth, we can draw a comparison of Julian not only with Marcus Hubbard in a memorable scene with said product (Figure 68), but also with Marcus' grandson, Leo Hubbard (Figure 38). Hellman uses the same image for all three men, as they all share traits of grandeur, glamor, and narcissism. At the same time, by establishing this parallel, behind the sympathy of Julian, the viewer can glimpse at his *not-so-positive* side.

In a later scene, the viewers will encounter a loving brother, full of happiness for having now the chance to treat his sisters, who have always cared for him to extreme levels. In order to show his gratitude (and somehow pay his debts), Julian buys many gifts for them. Everything is very expensive; however, all the gifts are either very large and unexpected (the piano, the refrigerator, the trip to Europe), leaving the sisters astonished and not knowing how to react; or they are really impractical and quirky gifts. The clothes he chooses for them are evening clothes, even though neither Carrie nor Anna go out at night. Judging by the desperate faces of the sisters in Figure 115, their gifts are more of a burden than a joy. Sitting on the sofa, amazed at the new clothes that Julian has taken out of the boxes to show them, the sisters can hardly speak. In the center of the frame, we can see Julian, who is handing Anna a large box full of clothes, while in the background the disorder of open boxes and clothes scattered on the floor is noticeable. However, the cloaks, the hats, the furs, the bags are all excessively flashy complements that do not suit the sisters well. In short, the gifts are just as exaggerated and ostentatious as Julian's acting. The most impressive gift, however, is the mortgage on the house, which Julian pays in full, completely unaware of the fact that his sisters hate the house and they intended to live in another one when possible. In addition, he even decides for them that they should quit their jobs and, without even mentioning this issue to them, he directly manages the farewells of the two sisters in their respective workplaces. His intention is to make a generous gesture and show love to his sisters, while repaying his debts to them; but instead of achieving that, he ends up invading their private spaces and entirely imposing his will, totally ignorant about his sisters' wishes. Consequently, even with a lot of money, he turns out to be a "bad provider" nonetheless.

Following Julian's wishes, after his enormous display of generosity, the three Berniers and Lily will visit the French Quarter with the purpose of enjoying another *luxuriously exaggerated* experience. As we can infer from Figure 116, the result is even worse, as Carrie ends up crying, embarrassed at the idea of giving a ridiculous image to the people in the restaurant, among whom she feels completely displaced. Contrary to Anna, who is calm and accommodating, and even wearing one of the new hats that Julian bought for her, Carrie refuses to wear any of Julian's fancy gifts and she starts expressing her



Figure 115



Figure 116

hatred for caviar since the beginning of dinner, finally making a scene when Julian ask her to dance with him. In this mid shot, Julian is again in the center, between the two sisters, leaning to his right to speak with Carrie, who for her part hides her face while wiping her tears with a handkerchief, apparently in despair with her brother's showing off attitude. Anna is sitting to Julian's left, worried about the situation that is taking place, but without losing her composure. In the same way that the attitudes and reactions of the sisters are different, Anna's huge hat contrasts with the small one that Carrie is wearing, from which the viewer could infer to some extent the different degree of importance that both sisters give to social appearance. Lily, more displaced and lonelier despite being seated at the same table together with the Berniers, is left out of this frame, relegated to that second place that she had feared occupying from the moment that Julian brought her to his sisters' house. In contrast to the uncomfortable scene taking place in the foreground, in the background to the right we can appreciate some of the musicians who liven up the nights of the French Quarter, and a dancing couple enjoying its lively atmosphere.

Although the viewer gets enough information about Julian through what other characters say about him, as well as from his actions, there is hardly any information about his past from his point of view. It is through a conversation between Albertine and Henry that we learn about his relationship with a woman called Charlotte Warkins. A lover of Julian's past, Charlotte decides to re-initiate contact with Julian to partner with him in a plot that she designs to make money through the businesses of her husband, Cy Warkins, and thus get the independence to leave him. After receiving her ex-lover's information, Julian sells a few acres of swamp land to Warkins for a good amount of money (deal made in the scene on Figure 112), after having been informed by Charlotte that the man needed that property to do his own business. It is also from Albertine's conversation with Henry that we learn some other key information about this mysterious woman allied with Julian:

> Albertine: … They knew each other? And she told him about the railroad? I'm not gossiping, you know that.
> Henry: I think that's what happened. She was in love with Julian once. She hates Warkins and she has wanted to leave for years. Maybe this is the money to leave him.
> Albertine: (*Softly, in a new tone; as if it were forced out of her, and she was ashamed*.) How do you know about Mrs. Warkins? Please.
> Henry: I don't know about her any more, but I used to. She's a cousin to me.
> Albertine: (*Stares at him, and then laughs*.): She's part colored? Isn't that wonderful! Did Warkins know when he married her?
> Henry: He doesn't know now. But Julian did, and didn't care. She's a foolish woman and grateful for such things.
> Albertine: That's understandable, God knows. (*Toys* 55–56)

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In addition to what has already been explained, here we also find out that Charlotte is Henry's cousin and therefore a colored woman, something her husband has never known. It is important to notice nonetheless that Julian, in contrast, was aware of it and "didn't care," what shows his open-mindedness, a trait dominant in his personality and that could win him the sympathy of Hellman as well as that of the audience. Because she is passing as white, she introduces the



Figure 117

topic of *passing* in Hellman's story. In a moment before the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, the atmosphere of New Orleans, as well as that of the entire nation, is not yet ready for the true social inclusion of colored people. Therefore, worried about a possible rejection of the white community, some colored folks decide to approach white people and their world while hiding their race, something that only those with light skin can do. Charlotte Warkins is one of these people, with a black origin but a fair skin, as we can see in Figure 117, where she shares a frame with his husband, both reflected in the mirror. Although he appears in the foreground and she shows from the background, it can be clearly seen that the color of her skin does not differ from that of her husband. In this occasion, the actress selected to play the role of Mrs. Warkins (Nan Martin) has very fair skin, but there were many blacks with much darker skin than Charlotte's who could easily pass for white.

Such is the case of the protagonist of the movie *Passing* (2021), based on Nella Larsen's novel under the same title (1929), with a screenplay and direction by Rebecca Hall, and set in the 1920s as *Toys in the Attic*, although changing the southern atmosphere of New Orleans for the northern one of New York. The same as Charlotte, the protagonist of *Passing*, Clare Bellew (interpreted by Ruth Negga in the movie), is a colored woman married to a white man unaware of her black origin who, ironically, claims to hate blacks. Like Charlotte, Clare can live a perfectly normal life passing as white, until the moment she meets an old friend and enters her social circle of colored people. Had she not deviated from her daily routine within the white community, she would have found no obstacle to continue passing as white. In the same way, if Charlotte had not turned to Julian to carry out her plan, she probably would not have met the tragic end that she finds when Lily intervenes motivated by her jealousy. The reasons why Charlotte decides to run away from her marriage, however, are very different from those of Clare, who feels alone wrapped in the monotony of her life at the same time that she is curious about the life of her friend. More than two decades later, the character of Charlotte relapses in the topics introduced by Birdie and Regina Hubbard, what clearly emphasizes Hellman's point of view in this regard. On the one hand Charlotte's husband is in possession of a great fortune but his wife lacks independence and is subject to his will, much like Regina in her marriage to Horace. On the other hand, it stands clear from the information we can gather about Cy Warkins from his attitude and the comments of other characters that, like Oscar Hubbard, he is a violent man. Charlotte endures the situation for years, but ultimately decides to take the risk trying to escape, a purpose for which she needs money, exactly like Regina. Despite not having a romantic relationship with Julian, she unleashes the jealousy of both his sister Carrie and his wife Lily, a happening that will lead to her final tragedy when, once discovered the secret of her passing, her husband sends some thugs who will disfigure her face. The moment of the attack, in which Charlotte is together with Julian, can be seen in the aerial shot, where the thugs corner them between boxes and barrels, stealing his money, her beauty, and the pride of both (Figure 118).



Figure 118

Therefore, although indirectly, in the end Julian ends up hurting everyone around him:

he causes the suffering of his sisters, whose relationship finally deteriorates with his visit; he causes her wife to suffer by having regular meetings with Charlotte Warkins and making her jealous of her; he causes the suffering of Charlotte, whose plot is discovered and punished by her husband; and there is a possibility that it could even cause a rift in his mother-in-law's relationship with Henry (due to the misfortune he has brought to Charlotte).

6.2.2. Lily Berniers: naïve southern beauty trapped in childhood

Originally a Prine, the newlywed Lily Berniers (interpreted by Yvette Mimieux) is introduced as a pretty, sweet, and gentle young woman, very much in love with her husband, Julian Bernier. She is always kind and aims to please, but she lives in torment thinking that people, including her loved ones, do not like her. For Julian, Lily is an adorable girl whom he wants to pamper, as well as a spoiled, frail, and too sensitive child. Yet, he adores her. For her mother, Albertine Prine, Lily is a sensitive and immature child whom she cannot understand well and with whom, therefore, it is difficult for her to communicate. But, as in the case of Julian, it seems that Albertine loves her daughter even though she does not know how to show this to her in a language that the young woman can understand. For Henry Simpson, the colored driver and partner of her mother, Lily is also a fragile girl, whom he somehow cares for by mediating in her relationship with her mother. Lily is, however, a different person for each of the Berniers sisters: for Anna, she is Julian's young partner, innocent and sweet, and whom she gladly accepts as the woman who makes her brother happy; for Carrie, however, Lily is a rich girl who is an annoyance and an obstacle in her relationship with her brother.

Although she has no interest in money, Lily considers her greatest virtue to be a rich heiress, on the one hand because she thinks that this is what gives her the most power in her relationship with her husband Julian; and, on the other hand, because she is incapable of observing other virtues in her personality. For this reason, Lily feels deep anxiety and has a profound distrust in her abilities, as an individual and as a member of society, as wife and as the rich heiress to her mom's fortune. Therefore, she thinks that no one loves her, even the people she needs most, her husband and her mother. According to the data obtained from applying the OCEAN model to Lily, she presents a high level of openness and extraversion, in addition to a very high level of neuroticism. It is in this last dimension where her traits can be more clearly discernable for the viewer, since she has a tendency to feel anxious and depressed, affecting her own vulnerability and leading her to act impulsively. On the contrary, she shows a tendency to a low agreeableness and conscientiousness: she is extremely suspicious, stubborn, selfish, weak-willed, and hasty.

Lily feels motivated by her infatuated perspective of love, and her goal is to (re)gain the absolute attention of her husband. She loves him deeply, although she understands their relationship in an obsessive way, what will lead her to the opposite direction to the one she actually wants to move forward, and she will end up hurting her marriage. She values love over anything else and, having known wealth her entire life, she does not care about money. However, in addition to not having wealth as a goal, to some extent he claims to belittle it, something that his mother reproaches her as a negative and unintelligent attitude at the same time she warns her to try and make a wiser approach to wealth, since extreme perspectives, whatever it is the pole one chooses, are always dangerous:



Figure 119

> Lily: That's an ugly way to speak, Mama.
> Albertine: On your struggle up the mountain path, you will find that truth is often ugly. It burns. (*After a second.*) I don't believe there is any other woman but in any case be wise enough to wait and find out.
> Lily: (*Rises, crosses down R. of bench.*) I don't want to be wise, ever, Mama, ever. I'm in love.
> Albertine: Then be happy that Julian has finally had a little luck. Lily, he would have come to hate your money. That was the danger I feared for you.
> Lily: I never wanted us to have money. I hate money. You know that, Mama.
> Albertine: Then be very careful. Same thing as loving it. (*Toys* 45)

Lily is the first character we meet in the movie (Figure 119). In the middle of the night darkness, the young woman descends the stairs of a hotel to advance towards the light of the streets of New Orleans. On the contrary, Julian will use the very same staircase for the first time in the movie in broad daylight, after coming home at dawn. Even though it might seem irrelevant at a first glance, this could be metaphorically interpreted as related to their vital energy: while Julian is actively working to achieve his goal (positive feeling, daylight), Lily passes her time passively, alone (negative feeling, darkness). The music that is playing at this moment, in combination with the darkness of the entire opening scene and the night lights and shadows, sets the atmosphere of the film with a mysterious tone, which reaches its climax in the last scene, when Lily gets to the end of her journey through the streets of New Orleans to find her husband sitting with another woman at a cafe table. From this moment on, Lily's anxiety will grow parallel to her distrust towards her husband. Regarding relationships, the most relevant dyad for Lily is the one she forms with her husband, it seems to be damaged. The viewer is unaware of her context and, at this point, he/she can understand Lily's feeling. Having followed the girl through the streets of the city and observed for a moment that Julian was with another woman (with which the doubt of infidelity is unleashed), the spectator's first reaction would most likely be one of sympathy towards Lily. Without understanding her husband's behavior and therefore jealous, the young wife is restless and sad, and although she makes an effort to attract Julian's attention, neither her attempt at sexual seduction nor her tears of suffering because of her husband's abandonment (he had been leaving her often alone in a hotel room) make any positive effect on him.

As we can see in the following shots, the young woman tries to approach her husband as if she were a master of seduction. In the wide shot (Figure 120) she is lying on the bed with her hair down and wearing lingerie, with a bent torso and a penetrating and seductive gaze, while she talks to her husband, who has just entered the room. Although we see her in the background and the foreground is largely occupied by the television box, Lily, illuminated by an intense light, is the center of the scene and the obvious objective of the camera. In the medium shot (Figure 121) we can witness how, now in the foreground, she hugs her husband, who had come to comfort her by noticing his unstable emotional state, and at this moment Lily tries to



Figure 120



Figure 121

manipulate him through her emotions, acting like a needy child and begging him not to leave her alone. "Please stay with me," she implores Julian while hugging him tightly and looking into his eyes with her own ones full of tears. Tender but determined, Julian rejects her, explaining that he has business to attend to and asking her to have a little more patience and wait for him without leaving the hotel. However, patience is one of the qualities that Lily lacks and, having seen him with another woman, it will become increasingly difficult for her to obey Julian's orders. With such a behavior, despite being young and rich, Lily cedes all power to her husband by obsessing over their relationship and fearing that one day he will stop loving her, cheat on her (an image that is already taking shape in her head), or even eventually abandon her. This leads to the assumption that Lily fears being alone, not simply in a physical space, but in the sense of *feeling lonely*. Correlating this type of loneliness with Hegel's and Feuerbach's "bad" alienation or Marx's "estrangement", Mijuskovic explains the feeling of loneliness as follows:

> … loneliness—in contrast to aloneness—is a state of mind, according to Gotesky, that is essentially conditioned by (a) the feeling that we are rejected by our fellows or excluded from the activities and interests of others, when (b) we desire to be included and accepted by them. … It is the feeling of being cut off from the other consciousness and longing for reunification, as in the cases of the lover separated from the beloved, the orphan from a family (Dickens), the individual estranged from God (Augustine), the nonconformist ostracized by his fellows, the "marginal" man alienated from his peers or colleagues, etc. This kind of loneliness is characterized by the author as extremely disturbing; it is a feeling—a quality of experience—that we continually strive to avoid. (62–63)

Lily (a) feels rejected by her husband, who spends the nights without her (out of her bed) when (b) what she wants most in the world is his love and exclusive attention. In her longing, she feels lost, which will lead her to allow the ghosts that inhabit her mind to reinforce or multiply. In some way, it could be said, therefore, that Julian leads his wife into an anxious-depressive state from which the young woman will try to get out without having much success. In one of the first attempts to calm her unstable emotional state, she thinks about turning to her mother. After her failed attempt to gain Julian's attention and control his actions, Lilly feels down and calls home, as we can observe in the low angle close-up below (Figure 122). She confeses to Henry, the house servant and Albertine's companion, that she had walked to her house the previous night to finally simply stare at the door and pass by. She makes such a confession since Henry himself tells her he saw her. From the fact that she had not made up her mind to enter her mother's house, and that she now mentions it to Henry, it follows that there is also a problem in this dyad (mother-daughter).

Lily does not seem to have a close relationship with her mother, whom she perceives as an authority figure, superior and distant. As Anderlini-D'Onofrio claims, Lily is "a younger Hellman dressed as a proto new-feminist character" (197), but this feminist character is more emphasized in the original work than in the film, where her rebellious attitude appears closely linked to her naïve character and her general neuroticism. Anderlini-D'Onofrio compares Lily's relationship with her mother to that of Regina and Alexandra in *The Little Foxes*, since there is separation between the



Figure 122



Figure 123

members of both dyads: "[t]he mother and daughter live inside a patrilineal kinship structure that alienates them from one another" (198). And one of the things that clearly separates them is Henry. Although Lily respects him, she cannot understand or accept that her mother maintains a relationship with a black man freely. The viewer could assume that Lily simply has a racist feeling, but in reality what she feels is a mixture of white superiority and jealousy. The fact that a black man shares the life of her mother while she feels left out of it is what emphasizes her negative attitude towards race, since it reduces her to an insignificant being whose existence is secondary to that of a black man. It is important to consider that "[t]he southern locale of *Toys in the Attic* bears the forebodings of the Civil Right's movement, but cultural anxiety about interracial sex is still pervasive, especially when white women seek male partners of color in an effort to generate cultural hybridity" (Anderlini-D'Onofrio 196). Regardless, Henry's personality is so markedly positive that Lily has no choice but to accept him as her empathetic mediator in her relationship with Albertine.

Even though Lily eventually gathers enough energy and courage to confront her fear of rejection and visit her mother to share her troubles with Julian with her, the unceasing thoughts of Julian's cheating that have settled in her mind (encouraged by a ruthless Carrie), will soon lead her to stop wandering the New Orleans night scene (Figure 123) in search of her husband to start actively spying on him with total impudence (Figures 124–127). Thanks to Lily's walks through the city, the viewer can learn more about the French Quarter and the lively scene typical of New Orleans with its clubs, its bustling nightlife, and its freedom of expression through different forms of enjoyment and vice, among them the peeping shows.

In Figure 123, a wide shot of the many that appear to us along the girl's walks, we can see Lily from behind, at her entrance into a room where a dancer, practically naked, performs her dance on the bar of the bar where customers, both men and women, are enjoying their drinks. In a close-up to the right of the frame, with her head covered by a veil and her back half uncovered, Lily shares the limelight with the dancer in the background and her sensual movements. Both the sensual and the sexual tones are frequent in *Toys in the Attic* since, in addition to the French Quarter images that the viewer can glimpse at in different scenes, there are also several explicit comments that Lily makes regarding her physical connection with her husband. Since Lily and Julian are a newly married couple, the infatuation and sexual intensity that Lily confesses to love are normal and expected feelings. However, her jealousy seems to increase the intensity of all her emotions, directing her towards an increasing obsessive thinking. In the sequence of shots that follows (Figures 124–127), the viewer can witness how, unable to contain her neurotic impulses, Lily tries to listen in on a phone conversation from Julian. The young Berniers, all the while cautious and knowing the character of her wife, catches her in the act, thus making her feel even smaller and more miserable.

Mistrust, secrecy, and mystery emphasize here the growing distance between the members of this dyad who, notwithstanding, are sincerely in love with each other. The sequence of shots that is presented to us (among which only a small sample was selected), gives us account of how the characters are submerged in a sttrugle for power (hinted at with the changes in the angle of the shots), in the same way that it happened —also on the staircase— in *The Little Foxes* and *Another Part of the Forest*. First Lily looks at Julian from below, getting ready to act sneakily (low angle shot, Figure 124). Then, the camera captures a close-up of the young woman picking



Figure 124



Figure 125



Figure 126



Figure 127

up her phone and ready to listen to her husband's conversation with the mysterious woman (Figure 125). Following, Julian realizes that Lily is spying on him and stops the conversation for a moment, as seen in the close-up of Figure 126. And, finally, it is perceived from a high angle shot (Figure 127) how Julian has discovered Lily and orders her to hang up the phone. The young woman, with her pride wounded and her feeling of sorrow increased, obeys silently. However, she will persist in her persuasive attitude and remain active in her *particular pursuit of happiness*, never fully relinquishing power to her husband.

As she had explained to her mother, Lily would prefer Julian to depend on her (economically), so it would grant her the dominant position within the relationship. She misses the first days after their wedding, when Julian still had money and did not care about any business other than her:

> Lily: First we lived in a big hotel in Chicago, and I didn't like it, and didn't have anything to do. Then we moved to a little, poor hotel and I learned to cook in the bathroom, and Julian and I were close together, and he didn't have his friends any more, and he was sad and sweet and often he stayed with me all day, in bed, and we'd read or sleep, and he'd tell me about things. We were never really hungry, but I'd have to watch the meat and give him my share when he wasn't looking because he likes meat, and I was very happy. (*Toys* 41–42)

In this sense, Lily tries to be an oppressive force for her husband (in the same way that other female characters are) because of the immense love she feels for him and the fear she has of losing him. At the same time, she is selfish: she does not care about her husband's needs or about the significance that money has for him, both in order to be able to act as a successful provider within their marriage, and to pay his debts to his sisters finally achieving a satisfactory social status. Just as Julian's good intention is egocentric, so is Lily's love.

In a similar way to Lily, Carrie, desperate with the attitude of her brother, who seems to have stopped paying her the attention that she craves and requires, begins a manipulation strategy so that Lily acts (innocently) by breaking into the friendship relationship of Julian and Charlotte. Although she is well aware that there remains no love (or sexual) relationship between them, Carrie persuades Lily otherwise, right after convincing her that both her mother,

Albertine, and her husband, Julian, underestimate her and do not need her in their lives. Upon finding out through Carrie about the identity of Julian's *mysterious woman*, Charlotte Warkins, Lily's neuroticism explodes, hence causing her to act carelessly without thinking about the possible consequences of her actions. Both her jealousy and her feeling of inferiority have increased when she heard from Carrie that Charlotte Warkins is Julian's ex-lover and that, in addition, she is a colored woman passing as white. In her mind, she immediately connects them sexually: they were lovers; besides, Mrs. Warkins might be more sexually attractive to Julian because of her racial characteristics. Thus, overwhelmed by fear, she decides to call Cy Warkins to tell him his wife's secret, an idea strongly encouraged by Carrie, who was actually feeling even more disgust for Charlotte Warkins from the moment she learned that this woman had been her brother's lover.

In the end, Lily's action leads to Charlotte's tragic end and, by extension, to Julian's and hers as well, a denouement that the naïve lover could never have foreseen. When she finally meets Julian again after he had been attacked by order of Cy Warkins, the worst of her fears comes true: not only does she feel Julian's rejection as an emotional manifestation, but she also feels it physically on her body as he decidedly and aggressively slaps her. Understanding and empathetic, Anna tries to protect the young woman while Carrie, serpentine and cruel, persists in her attitude and goes on with her manipulations. Hence, pretending to care for Lily, she lets Julian know that it had been his wife who had called Cy Warkins.

In the last shot (Figure 128) we can witness the moment in which Lily falls to the ground after being slapped by her husband. This climatic low angle shot can be divided into two levels of action: in the foreground, to the left, Anna rushes to help and take care of Lily, who has just hit rock bottom in her relationship with Julian and is probably more heartbroken than physically wound. In the foreground in an almost central position are Julian and Carrie, a dyad that has just been reinforced, since Julian has fallen into the manipulations of his sister and feels that she understands him and is on his side. All the characters seem to feel and express different emotions: Julian is unhappy because he has lost all his money and his newly acquired social status; Carrie seems astonished at Julian's reaction and raises her hand in a feigned astonishment that has nothing to do with her current feeling of joy (as she just regained Julian's favor for her); Anna is concerned and willing to help; and Lily is heartbroken. Her physical fall reflects her metaphorical one. Decades after the events in *The Little Foxes*, like Birdie, Lily ends up being abused by her husband and displaced within his family. Contrary to Birdie, she lives in modern times and has been given all the advantages to succeed in challenging the patriarchal system and maintaining her power without having to suffer under male dominion (a more open social perspective in her environment and the whole South, money, family support, appearance, charm, freedom). Nonetheless, like Birdie, she fails at adjusting to modernity and, unlike Alexandra, who forms a strong bond with a black woman, Addie, Lily is unable to allow Henry to become her ally, although he clearly tries to help her. To conclude Lily's analysis, it should be noted that, paying attention to John Shelton Reed's *southernness* parameters applied to her character as selected for the research purposes of this dissertation, Lily seems to have a markedly southern identity; however, the interpretation she makes of racial differences, together with her neurotic personality, prevents her from fully enjoying the region and preferring Chicago to the South.



Figure 128

6.3. Albertine Prine: new classy southern woman

Albertine Prine, interpreted by Gene Tierney, an actress acclaimed by her beauty, is presented in Roy Hill's adaptation as a flexible, ambitious, bold, and autonomous single woman. She was envisioned by Hellman as a mature female "*of about forty-five, dressed with elegance, but in no current fashion*" (*Toys* 12). Mother to Lily, a girl with very different traits, she stands out as a very beautiful and elegant lady, possibly fashionable in the movie (unlike in the play), and in what seems to be a happy relationship with her colored chauffeur, Henry Simpson. Without leaving aside other relevant traits of her identity, in this chapter we will mainly focus on two aspects of her personality: Albertine as a mom and as a partner.

6.3.1. Social elite member and mother

Much like Regina at the end of *The Little Foxes*, Albertine has reached her economic independence, hence overcoming the patriarchy obstacles as Anderlini-D'Onofrio claims, "she has braved the monosexual endogamic order" (197), although perhaps maybe at the cost of getting apart from her daughter, who seems insecure and in need of affection. Discreet and courteous, she treats people with kindness and with a touch of particular intelligence that endows her with a certain charisma. Focused though spontaneous, she is concentrated in her own affairs and prefers to live her own life without paying too much attention to appearances. For Lily, Albertine is an unloving mother who does not want her in her life, and she is convinced that she is only interested in enjoying her (disallowed) love life. Whereas Julian perceives her as role model because of her economic success, his sister Carrie is fast to judge her for having a relationship with her colored chauffeur, in addition to disliking her wealth. For the rest of the community, Albertine is a gracious businesswoman who has achieved a success that many, both male and female, yearn for. In contrast, she perceives herself as a mother who has failed in her role and a person who lives more at night than during the day, maintaining limited contact with people.

The first time we are introduced to Albertine, she appears in her luxurious house while having a lively conversation with her chauffeur and companion Henry, for whom she is an intelligent and empowered woman he is happy to share his days with. They live in a spacious house where both are comfortable and respect each other as equals. In the following wide shot (Figure 129) both Albertine and Henry are in the center, framed by the door curtains, and illuminated by a light that falls from above. Henry is sitting, looking directly at Albertine, who is standing while also directing her gaze to a smiling Henry. At a first glance, it would be difficult for the viewer to deduce that Henry is the chauffeur, given that the scene is undoubtedly showing the complicity of a couple. This gives them an air of mystery, therefore triggering the curiosity of the viewer. The perspective in the shot is exactly the one of Lily upon her arrival at her mother's house in need of her moral support and advice.

Seeing the happy scene, she feels insecure —or uncomfortable— fearing a rivalry with Henry for her mother's attention, consequently attempting to leave immediately. However, the colored *more-than-chauffeur*, showing himself gentle and remarkably empathetic, is quick to hold her back with what appears to be



Figure 129

the perfect choice of words: "Your mother has been expecting you." Although there seems to be some friction between mother and daughter, we will soon realize that Albertine is an affectionate mother who, despite being sarcastic and humorous as a response to her daughter's whining, she does, indeed, show empathy to her acting as a supportive mother. Considering the groupings in dyads (Newman), it is worth noticing that the dyad formed by Albertine and Lily, although deteriorated, seems to have a change of reinforcement. Given the fact that Albertine's interventions in the movie are not too many, it is not easy to extract content about her identity.

From observing Albertine's resulting OCEAN data, it is worth emphasizing that she shows extreme results in two dimensions: on the one hand, she has a very high conscientiousness, hence a goal-oriented, efficient, responsible, and dependable woman; on the other hand, she presents the minimum low of neuroticism, hence always showing calm and even-tempered, in addition to being confident and resilient. She shows a very high level of agreeablenes, which is in consonance with her honesty, humility, and generosity; a medium level with a tendency to low in openness; and a medium level in extraversion, where she can find a more blurred classification since she is quite adventurous and mostly cheerful but also very distant and solitary. The following could be counted among her values: independence, self-respect and her personal relationships (including her daughter, even though Lily might fail to see it). Albertine is dissatisfied as a mother but willing to make up for her absence in her child's life, or for her mistakes, as we can infer from the following shots.

In the mid close up on the left (Figure 130), Albertine is offering money to his daughter, thinking that Julian's last business would not have worked well, and Lily would need money to live in a city as expensive as Chicago, where the couple resides. Given Albertine's smiling face and gentle gestures that clearly convey kindness, it is somewhat unexpected that Lily feels offended or unappreciated by her mother. However, despite the fact that the highly neurotic young woman cannot reason clearly due to her emotional state, Albertine tries to dialogue and finally succeeds, as seen in the medium shot on the right (Figure 131), where mother and daughter come together in a tender hug. In both shots the expression the audience can clearly see is Albertine's one, illuminated by the light, while Lily remains on her back, permanently showing her tears of deep sorrow directly to her mother.

When Albertine, inferring that her son-in-law's business has failed, kindheartedly offers money to Lily, her daughter is quick to reject it, reacting with certain anger, stating that Julian is rich and that they do not need money. Albertine, who had immediately offered the money without having heard about her child's needs first, appears to be surprised but happy that they have no shortage of money and, willing to listen to her daughter, she asks her to speak. At this moment, Lily expresses her jealousy again —something that does not stop happening throughout the entire film— and Albertine, with a totally opposite personality, talks to her with the voice of reason, without sugaring her comments, something that the sensitive Lily would rather prefer, since she has a tendency to initially interpret her mother's words in a negative way:



Figure 130



Figure 131

> Lily: I told you there is another woman. I saw them. I followed them and they went places where people wouldn't see them and they talked. And she has something to do with his getting rich.
> Albertine: Do you intend him never to speak to another woman? I don't know what you are talking about, getting rich, but it's good for people to have money of their own. The day comes when they don't like taking it from others. I know people thought of Julian as a charming man who didn't care about such things. But I never thought so. (*Toys* 44)

Given that Albertine is direct and se does not mask the reality, Lily may perceive her as a distant mother who clearly stands as her enemy instead of supporting her. Although that is not the case, Lily's perception is not completely unreasonable; it is simply the subjective perception of a person who is suffering, and for whom the doses of reality are particularly unpleasant to digest given her weak emotional state. In fact, that is the main problem in the mother-daughter dyad: as Albertine is unable to put herself in Lily's place, she keeps speaking from the logic of her reasoning, and this makes Lily interpret her words as lacking in empathy, thus understanding her as an antagonizing force:

> Lily: Last night when I lay waiting for him, and he knew it, he said he'd had too much champagne and he wanted to sleep alone. It's been like that since the lady came to Chicago.
> Albertine: You've learned women's chit-chat very fast. I'm not good at this, but since we've started I can tell you that everybody wants to sleep alone sometimes (*laughs*), maybe most of the time.
> Lily: He liked to come to bed with me. You didn't know that, did you?
> Albertine: I have not read it in the newspaper. But, as you know, I'm a large stockholder, and if you'd like it reported in detail. (*She breaks of, puts her hand over her eyes, sits bench.*) Forgive me.
> Lily: You'd never have believed anybody could want me. I didn't believe it, either. I was so scared at first that I— But there I was, good for the man I loved. He said I was better than anybody, and that I must learn to cook because he'd always believed that a woman who was good in the bedroom was good in the kitchen. (*She laughs happily. Softly.*) I was beloved, Mama, and I flourished. (*Sits table.*) Now I'm frightened. Help me.
> Albertine: (*Gently.*) How can I help you when I don't understand what you're talking about? Are you really saying that if Julian stayed dependent on you, al would be safe, but if he has money for himself, and need no crawl to you— (*Toys* 44)

Whereas Lily, clearly unstable, reacts defensively towards her mother asking for her help at the same time, Albertine finds Lily's attitude hard to understand. She disagrees with her daughter in her interpretation of money as much as about couple relationships. Nevertheless, she makes an effort to control her speech avoiding more intense and direct comments so as not to hurt her. Yet, she says her truth, and her position stands equally clear. This atmosphere, which could be interpreted more negatively in the play, translates into a more affective one in the film. Going a deeper layer within the relationship Albertine maintains with her daughter, we can get relevant information related to her social roles: her general role in the movie is mainly that of being the Lily's mother, but also an esteemed member the New Orleans elite social spheres. In her attempt to harmonize both roles, Albertine finds what Newman calls social strains and conflicts, as introduced in the theoretical framework. Her role strain lies in her mother role, for she is

unable to fulfill its demands, therefore giving place for the role conflict to happen since she cannot reconcile her role as a businesswoman with that of a mother, fully attending to the care her daughter requires. Another role that the viewer might consider secondary, even though Lily perceives it as primary, is that of Albertine as Henry's lover. From her point of view, her mother prefers to spend time with Henry rather than with her, which in a way makes Henry her rival for her mother's love. However, Lily seems not to blame Henry for this reason, but only his mother.

Therefore, we could say that the relationship between Albertine and Henry has special relevance not so much because it may affect Lily's relationship with her mother, but in the sense that it introduces the subject of interracial relations in the South of the 1920s from the Lillian Hellman's perspective. Although there is no significant data on Albertine's ascribed social status, it is very remarkable, as already indicated, her achieved social status, having amassed a great wealth, the same as Regina after her husband's death in *The Little Foxes*. Yet she chooses to have a colored man, with no fortune, as her partner: Henry Simpson.

6.3.2. Albertine's Henry

Interpreted by Frank Silvera, a light-skinned actor whose performances transcended race in the 1950s and 60s, Henry is the same age as Albertine, with a generally serious demeanor, which does not prevent him from smiling often, revealing his kindness. He is intelligent and direct, even daring, in her attitude towards Albertine, undeterred by her glamor and her social status. In addition to this, he is endowed with an empathy and communication skills that stand out above those of Albertine, something that stands clear from his interactions with other characters despite being very scarce. Whereas in the play Henry wears his driver's cap, he loses it for the film, thus emphasizing the fact that he does not feel inferior with respect to Albertine but rather behaves like his partner, as it can be observed in the following scene in which he greets Julian upon his arrival at the Berniers' house.

In this mid shot (Figure 132) we can see how Henry and Julian greet each other happily while Albertine remains by Henry's side, equally smiling. Henry occupies the center of the shot and, despite being a few steps behind Albertine and Julian, he receives more attention due to his dark suit that contrasts with the white suit of Albertine on the left and the light clothes of Julian, still in pajamas, on the right. The handshake between the men, which will proceed with a little chat between them, is indicative of a good relationship and a total acceptance of Julian towards Henry. In this sense, once again, as it had happened with Coralee or Addie in her previous works, Hellman introduces black people with great respect, even with affection and appreciation, as she herself had claimed to actually had felt for his family's servants (*Pentimento*).

Not long after a sociable scene where Julian confesses to Albertine his new feeling of equality and belonging to the world of the rich, a much less friendly scene will take place with Carrie involved. Albertine seems to like Julian; she finds him amusing and she seems to enjoy her interactions with him. On the contrary, she does not feel comfortable with his sisters, whom she met only twice. Therefore, she does not get into the house and chooses to stay sitting on the porch instead, while thinking about her daughter's problems and talking to Harry about *the other woman* in Julian's life. It is at the end of this scene that the viewers can witness how Carrie not only disrespects



Figure 132



Figure 133

Albertine and Henry's privacy, but she even replies offensively to Albertine, who had caught her spying on them because of her reflection on the door glass.

In this long shot (Figure 133) the two women share the center of the frame, Albertine on her back in the foreground and Carrie in profile in the background. Although Albertine takes up more space, the attention is directed not to her but towards what she is looking at: Carrie. This image, as well as Carrie's attitude, reminds us of the most cunning moments of the Hubbard siblings, those in which they remained observant with a serious countenance indicative of their unethical thought process. Likewise, the expression on the face of the Berniers middle sister here is one of total concentration as well as dislike for what she is hearing and the immediate activation of subjective (likely groundless) judgments in this regard, which will cause her urgent concern and jealousy. Already immersed in her thoughts, her reaction to Albertine's sharp words ("Are you writing a book, Miss Hellman?") is one of anger and rejection. After realizing that she is unaware of some facts about Julian's life, her anger is unconsciously unleashed since it annoys her enormously that anyone else knows more about Julian than her, her beloved sister. As a consequence, her usual feigned southern lady attitude is exposed to reveal a woman with no manners and with a sour character, regardless of the fact that she responds stating a true fact: "This is our house, Mrs. Prine."

Albertine knows that Carrie is going to use the newly gathered information, but, instead of emphasizing on the woman's unprincipled behavior, she leaves the scene with Henry. The landscape of the area where the Berniers sisters live is however stressed in Hellman's play clearly showing Albertine's feelings of the South and her memories of the past:

> Nice to live this close to the River. I still like it down here. Soggy and steaming. The flowers aren't strong enough to cover the river smells. That's the way it should be. Very vain of flowers to compete with the Mississippi. My grandmother lived on this street when I was a little girl, and I liked it then. I used to pretend I slept under the river, and had a secret morning door up into this street. (*Toys* 13)

She accentuates the natural beauty of the river over the ornamentation that the flowers offer, also stating her preference for the typical characteristics of the southern weather, "soggy and steaming," that so much annoys Carrie as shown in the film through her use of the fan and ice. A rich lady who values integrity, kindness, and a life with peace and freedom to be herself, Albertine seems to have no flaw other than her lack of interest for social interactions, something that can be negatively interpreted as an evident lack of social skills, which, if that was the case, she easily makes up for with other outstanding positive traits. Although we agree with Dick's opinion (*Hellman* 123) that Albertine loses meaning and strength in the film adaptation, it is necessary to say, nonetheless, that she might be yet perceived as a sort of heroic character above anything else. From the perspective of Affective Disposition Theory (Daalmans et al.; Eden et al.) this interpretation of the character might be achieved because of her outstanding moral principles, which lead the viewer to accept her behavior. Particularly in a scenario where she is surrounded by other characters who seem to have psychological issues and behaviors that deviate from ethics, Albertine, together with her companion Henry, stands out as the axe of what is considered correct, thus achieving the sympathy of the viewer. The same result could

be reached by the schema-activation route (Krakowiak and Tsay-Vogel, "What"; Oliver et al.; Raney, "Expanding"), since Hellman imbued the character of traits that make her stand for the empowered modern woman, smart and straightforward, so much so that the author herself originally "considered Lily's mother the second most important character and worried that she was taking over the play" (Lederer 91).

Finally, the findings of Francemore et al. came to shed new light on the topic of disposition formation, as they concluded that the participants in their study "were more sensitive to female-character behaviors than male-character behaviors", which, according to the authors, "resulted in more extreme approbation of behavior" (15). This might as well happen to the viewers while watching *Toys in the Attic*, since female characters seem to overpower male in every sense, despite being Julian the one expected to get the spotlight.

6.4. The sisters: similar opposites

Anna and Carrie Berniers are two southern spinsters who have formed a strong dyad due to their blood bond rather than because of an intense sisterhood feeling. Within the dyad, each sister has her function and her usual monotonous lifestyle, which get mixed in the household through their conversations and the gifts that they exchange weekly, everything automatically done as part of said routine. Their perception of the world, as well as their character, are practically opposite. While Carrie lives anchored in the past (much like Birdie Hubbard), Anna is more open to change and is making the leap to modernity.

Although their personalities show some aspects in common (they both are very conscientious, old-fashioned to a certain extent, and reluctant to abandon their comfort zone), their major identity traits are very different. According to the data obtained through the observation of the sisters with the OCEAN model, they present exactly opposite results in three of the five domains: extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Whereas Anna tends to be silent and more distant, Carrie seems to be more active and dominant (low vs. high extraversion). While Anna is extremely agreeable (honest, generous, humble, forgiving, and merciful), Carrie is very manipulative, selfish, stubborn, arrogant, and cold. Most importantly, with regards to neuroticism, while Anna gets the lowest possible score, Carrie scores the highest, presenting herself as a highly neurotic character, even above Lily. Despite her attempts to contain her anxiety and her urges hidden behind her feigned charming southern belle attitude (which Anna lacks), Carrie ends up losing control and exposing her true nature. Although Anna is a very secondary character compared to her sister Carrie, it should be stressed that, regarding their major personality traits, her even-tempered and absolutely contended attitude could result as surprising for the viewer as the shocking neuroticism of her sister. Despite their differences, both sisters adore their little brother Julian, and their identity is markedly southern.

6.4.1. Anna Berniers: detachment of unwanted roles

As the eldest of the Bernier siblings, Anna takes on the mother role and decides to protect her siblings from a young age. Although she seems to be doing it voluntarily, as events progress the viewer may discover that, despite Anna's goodwill and predisposition, playing this role for Carrie and Julian has been taking a toll on her. She is a serious, kind, calm, generous, and very patient woman in her mid-forties. Although she is unemotional much of the time, she is an observant and empathetic person who is always ready to help. Her honesty and straightforwardness are quite uncomfortable for Carrie, who prefers to see reality from her own lens after having put a veil on

it. For Carrie, Anna is her life partner and mother figure, while she is in a sense an oppressive element insofar as her restraint and seriousness, to a certain extent, keep Carrie in place. For Julian she is also a motherly figure, and he seems to have great appreciation for her, despite not having a relationship with her as close as the one with he maintains with his sister Carrie.



Figure 134

In her first appearance in the film, Anna appears to us as a traditional woman, doing housework (Figure 134). However, we soon discover that she also works outside the house, as a salesclerk in a clothing store. As we can see in this medium long shot, Ana seems to be a traditional woman who does not care particularly about dressing elegantly or with modern clothes, despite her fashion related job, but in its stead wears a matching dress and jacket, combined with a hat that she seems to have forgotten to remove. At this moment, Carrie bursts into the scene and she can be glimpsed in the background as she enters the house full of energy, while Anna, actively doing chores around the house, remains the focus of this scene in the foreground.

Carrie walks in and starts talking animatedly, as she seems to wait for her sister to finish her chores and serve her. Anna speaks calmly and with an even tone, not raising her voice, not forcing a charming accent or any type of posture. She seems to be yet busy cooking. In this first contact the viewer has with both sisters, it is to be noted that even if Carrie gets in with a paper bag carrying the shopping, it is Anna who is actually cooking for both of them. Carrie, moving faster and elevating her tone while speaking, keeps complaining about the hot weather, so definitory of the South, and sharing her thoughts at loud. She seems to have been given the role of the active sister. On the contrary, Anna reveals herself as the calm one, paradoxically proving herself as the truly active one on getting things done. Soon the viewer will find her to be more independent than Carrie, and the most reliable and grounded sister, as compared to the imaginative Carrie.

As Walcutt notices, the sisters talk "about a dozen disconnected matters" (29) without paying any attention to the dialogue. They talk about the weather, their day at their respective jobs, the Carrie's visit to the cemetery, the gifts they are about to exchange (a new perfume for Anna and one more jar of candied oranges for Carrie), without having any interest in the least in each other's comments and opinions. Although they are talking, both seem to be concentrating on their own thoughts. As seen in the two shot (Figure 135), they do not even look into each other's eyes and interact mechanically. Anna, although maintaining her serious expression at all times, shows the humorous side of her, which is probably more comical for the viewer than for Carrie:

> Carrie: I didn't go to the park. I went to the cemetery.
> Anna: (*Sighs and exits D. L.*) Everybody still there? (*Toys* 6)

In the following medium close-up (Figure 136) we can see how Carrie stores her candied oranges in the closet. This image is relevant as it allows us to realize that her closet is full of candied orange jars that Carrie has not consumed yet. From that follows that she either is tired of her sister's (recurrent) gift, or else she does not like her it all. Later it will be revealed



Figure 135



Figure 136

that Carrie hated her candied oranges, to what Anna will respond with an insightful comment: "Well, people change and forget to tell each other. Too bad... causes so many mistakes." The weekly gifts are a sort of ritual they have kept because it makes them comfortable in the sense that they know there always will be something waiting for them, something "nice," as Carrie says, that should give their monotonous and lonely lives a certain feeling of company. But at the same time this routine makes them uncomfortable, for the emptiness that it really entails. The gifts emphasize the relevance of appearance, something that seems to be key for Carrie. So does accentuate the repainted furniture in the house, and Carrie's talk to Gus about not needing ice and going on a trip to Europe. On Carrie's side, everything is done or said to create an illusion, not only for society but also for herself, so that she can live *happily* the routine life she is immersed in.

Right after this scene, they go out onto the porch carrying refreshing drinks so they can withstand the heat. Also, Anna takes her fan and Carrie comes out with a bottle of perfume to put a few drops on her neck. They talk about the house: Carrie confesses to hating it and she believes that her sister, on the contrary, likes it. According to Moers, "[c]haracters dislike each other thoroughly (and their old house, and their dead parents too)" (Moers 99). Although it is not so obvious yet that characters dislike each other at this point, tensions are mounting and the ground is being prepared for an explosion of both events and feelings. Anna corrects her sister immediately, hinting at a certain tone of annoyance caused by her sister's ignorance. At this moment, the viewer becomes fully aware of the distance between the sisters: although they share physical space, in reality their relationship is not close, and they do not even know basic information about their different personalities and feelings. Nonetheless, Anna is much more appreciative than Carrie, and understands her siblings much better than they both know her. In the same way that they feel trapped and suffocated in the house, so do they feel about their lives owing that nothing has changed in many years. In fact, the Berniers sisters do not seem to have changed —evolved— themselves in any different direction. They stayed in the past, failing to grow up, not expanding their minds or experiences, hence stagnant and somehow lifeless.

Their brother Julian is the ray of light that shines through their gloominess. At the simple thought of him, her faces light up and they experience joy at the idea of meeting him. When Albertine Prine calls (Figure 137) to announce that her daughter Lily and Julian will arrive to the Berniers' house on that same day, upon hearing such news, the sisters' excitement (especially Carrie's) becomes evident, they interact more closely and less mechanically, and they get unified in a true dyad since they both share a common goal: getting ready to receive their brother with open arms and the best they can offer. Once again, big news or situations are discussed on the staircase. Although this news seems to be positive now, without abandoning her role as responsible caregiver, Anna starts to doubt about Julian's success with his business and immediately starts to worry about her brother. On the contrary, Carrie gets more excited because she is just wishing to see him; she does not truly care about his business, she is only interested in being able to hug him. Consequently, she



Figure 137

immediately starts preparing the house for his arrival and organizing everything, somehow avoiding every thought that comes to her mind about Lily. On the contrary, Anna prepares herself not only to receive Julian but also Lily, who obviously accompanies him and whom she also wants to welcome with open arms. She is the image of maturity, while Carrie stands as a spoiled (almost rude) child.



Figure 138

The controlled and even-tempered character that the siblings perceive in their older sister, is indeed part of Anna's personality traits, but at the same time it is an indicator of the exhaustion she suffers from having taken on the responsibility of caring for her siblings, a task that has proved difficult given the fact that they both have a childish character. By having been them given more flexibility to make mistakes, Anna was left without any. For years she has remained in her role as protector, but the moment Julian comes back home with money raised by himself, she experiences a tremendous relief and the burden she had been carrying begins to lessen. She feels like she has finished her job and, encouraged by her brother, she decides that it is time to take a trip to Europe as she had always wanted. After arguing with her sister about her obsessive attitude towards Julian, she realizes that her attempt to open her eyes to reality has only served to further unleash her neurosis and irrational behavior. However, at this point, she no longer wants to continue playing the role of mother anymore, and she decides to let go of Carrie.

As she was about to leave, Lily bursts onto the scene and Anna finds out about the plot that Carrie had set up to separate Julian from Charlotte Warkins (and hopefully from Lily). At that moment, news reaches the Berniers' house that Julian has been attacked, and the three women run to meet him. Once they arrive at the scene of the attack, Lily realizes that it was her who (unintentionally and naively) had caused it, and she immediately bursts into tears of despair. Anna, who was supposed to have already abandoned her responsibilities as a mother figure, reprises her role and rushes to calm Lily down. In a clear and strong tone, agitated and concerned for both the girl and her brother (Figure 138), Anna asks Lily not to apologize to Julian, not to tell her anything about what happened. Knowing that they love each other, and wishing the best for both of them, she tries to protect them. She is certainly a great support to Lily, and her kindness does not go unnoticed by the viewer, who probably respects her integrity and her genuinely good actions.

6.4.2. Carrie Berniers: southern horror at the exit of the attic

Carrie Berniers is first introduced to the viewer as a charming southern woman, energetic and active, remarkably chatty (with a fast and constant dialogue), more distracted than attentive, and immersed in her own thoughts and dreams. However, even though she tries to maintain a feminine and charming attitude, it is not difficult for the viewer notice the falsehood in her dialogue. Her tone is unpleasant, her way of speaking is empty and tiresome. In every intervention she makes, her neuroticism underlies in one way or another. If something contributes to her positive mood, she speaks from her dreamy point of view in such a way that reality loses its meaning. Instead, when she does not like something, her dialogue becomes sharp, judgmental, even unpleasant or rude. Anna counteracts Carrie's empty dialogues with her humor and irony, but she seems to be exhausted from the implicatures in many of her comments, and so she asks her younger sister to speak clearly: "What do you mean? You hinted at this before, Carrie …

don't talk circles with me!" Anna speaks softly but she does not hesitate to shut up his sister when she deems it necessary. Unable to face the realities and wanting to maintain her point of view (hence a dominant position), Carrie changes the subject almost every time this happens. She knows that, if this were not the case, her sister would force her to confront reality, something that seems to horrify Carrie, even if it is a small minor thing. She complains about everything and exaggerates every idea she intends to express, thus marking her southern character with this attitude, but at the same time letting her falsehood show. In order to justify her attitude or to feel supported, she pretends to write her sister's script herself, reaching the point of ridicule when, for example, she insists that Anna has a headache: "I know that you're just as worried as I am. I know that's why you're having headaches again." Anna, who had already told her that was not the case, denies it again: "I said I didn't have a headache."

For Ana, Carrie is her little sister, whom she has voluntarily been taking care of and whom she wants to protect; but at the same time she is a burden because of her anxious, impulsive, and easily irritable personality. For Julian, in contrast, Carrie is his soul sister, his favorite person, with whom she has a special connection, since they are closer in age and she has a more jovial character than Anna's. However, when both interact, it does not seem easy for Julian to maintain a dialogue with Carrie either, since she is very sensitive (and conceited) and reacts strongly to each comment of the young man. If the viewer makes an attempt to locate Carrie's values, this might not be an easy task, since the woman somehow lives in a state of what could be called *an adult childhood*, a sort of pre-state to a childish adulthood. In a sense, her values and beliefs are difficult to identify, owing that she keeps everything veiled with her particular way of perceiving reality, from the security and comfort provided by the *attic* she is hiding at. It is obvious notwithstanding that she adores Julian, and she values their relationship above all things. It is also evident that she values tradition and is reluctant to welcome modernity, both concerning attitude and ideology. Thus, she acts like a sweet and fragile southern belle, although in reality she has a rebellious spirit and her identity is cold rather than charming; on the other hand, she devalues or feels rejection towards colored people (Henry, Gus, Charlotte), believing herself superior.

In her first appearance in the film, however, we meet a modern woman in the sense that she is returning home after having finished her work at the office (Figure 139). Carrie walks with a certain wish to be noticed outside, in the same *empathic* way that we will she also witness her moving inside her house. Like her words, her gestures have added content. When she speaks, she also modulates her voice in a manner so that it does not go unnoticed. She wants to appear charming, cute, attractive, but she soon turns herself into a pitiless person, as soon as her sister's intelligent and ironic comments put her in her place. Both her speech and gestures recall those of Birdie Hubbard; the difference lies in the fact that Birdie's were not posed but real, whereas Carrie's can easily be perceived as fake. Put simply, despite her attempt at faking it, Carrie is not a southern belle, either in manner or attachment to the South. In fact, for Carrie the South is a suffocating place: she complains about the heat that she has been enduring every summer season, and from which she tries to escape with the help of the fan and the iced drinks that Anna makes for her. In addition to being a humid city with very hot summers, New Orleans is also, as Headrick points out, a "city of contrasts, of conflicting tensions, of startling gracious touches" (8). And those conflicting tensions



Figure 139

can also be found at the Berniers, with almost every interaction Carrie has, such as the brief conversation she maintains with Gus, a black salaryman who is in charge of the Berniers sisters' ice supply.



Figure 140

The iceman talks freely to the sisters, something that Anna finds natural, whereas Carrie feels quite offended, even bothered. Leaning against the wardrobe, her head clearly raised in a haughty gesture, Carrie discusses her plans with Gus, uttering lie after lie, while the colored man, crouched down, is doing his job (Figure 140). She cannot easily accept the man's words and his freedom of speech, which allows him to tease her about her *so much announced (though never-happening) trip* to Europe. Her discontent is reflected in her attitude, as much as it is revealed on her facial expression and her sharp replies to Gus. First of all, she does not want to lose face: she had bragged about traveling around Europe, but after having failed to embark on her journey several times, Gus just laughs at her when she comes to him with this topic one more time. He seems to be an opinionated and funny man, so he respectfully teases her because he does not believe her at all even though Carrie assures that she will take a solemn oath in church: "told me that last year and I stopped the ice, told me that two years ago and … I stopped the ice then. When do I stop it now?" He knows she is just being arrogant and trying to show superiority, and he takes it with humor, something that Carrie lacks. Second, she hates the fact that a colored man can tease her: "How dare you?", Carrie whines to Gus. During their brief conversation, Carrie expresses arrogance, haughtiness, disdain, shame, annoyance, anger, and finally, out of the blue, she changes her tone showing content and indifference, forgetting about the colored man and turning to Anna: "Well, we can still go to Europe this year."

After discussing the trip with her sister, and getting similar negative results as with Gus, Carrie continues to talk to Anna on the porch, jumping from topic to topic, and matching the words in her endless speech. After a while, in the middle of one of her monologues, Carrie refers to her house as "the awful oak tomb," hence, a place where people cannot get renewed air, a dead place or, perchance, a place for the dead. The image seems unequivocally selected to explain the life of the Berniers sisters: suffocated in the monotony of their daily routines, without enjoying leisure or the company of other people, and repressing or devoid of feelings. In a sense, the house is the tomb that they inhabit in their paradoxical inert life. Although they were unaware that they had this aspect in common, Carrie claims to hate the house, and so does Anna. "Funny how you can live so close and long and not know things, isn't it?", Carrie says to Anna after finding out she did not like eating with her parents inside the house. She recalls a memory of her and Julian eating on the steps, while Anna was not there. She is very accurately pointing out to the distance existing between her and her sister. Despite having no much contact with others, and sharing their lives together every day, the Berniers sisters' dyad is just a functional one, which works for them (maybe especially for Carrie), but that does not truly seem to have an emotional connection.

Right after learning that Julian would come to spend some days with them, the Berniers sisters rush into the attic to prepare for his arrival. While Anna gets distracted with a wooden horse and looking at portraits, momentarily nostalgic of the past, Carrie keeps recalling memories of her youth. At this moment, they both seem to have been transported back in time and their minds are full of thoughts. Suddenly, Julian arrives in a cab and interrupts their regression to the past, literarily calling for Carrie to get out of the attic, probably a premonitory hint of



Figure 141

Hellman for her audiences. Julian brings up excitement and vitality into that house of inner life, the atmosphere now seems more fluid, and its inhabitants can breathe inside. He is the (objectified) desired subject, not only for his wife but also, strangely, for his sister Carrie, who cannot contain her joy neither in her facial expression, nor in her gestures, nor in her usual verbiage, which has now become remarkably positive (even though, as the viewer can notice, there is always something feigned in her). As the center of attention, the person adored by all, and the trigger of the plot, Julian should be able to dominate the narrative surrounded by so much loving women. However, despite Hellman's intention to make of Julian the central character of the play, as recommended by her partner Dashiell Hammet (Lederer), his character became somehow overpowered by the female ones, particularly by Carrie. Hellman wanted to write about a man, but she also wanted to surround him by women, and characters turned out to develop in a different way from what the author had expected. In Hellman's own words: "[characters] don't always go your way. At least, they don't go my way" (Phillips and Hollander 71). This also happens to Carrie, who from the beginning to the end of the film tries to impose her own narrative on the rest of the characters, without success on several occasions. Notwithstanding, the fact that she does manage to impose it on emotionally weak characters, such as Lily or Julian, is a clear indicator of her major relevance within the constellation of characters.

The joy and excitement that Julian's arrival had brought quickly fades, as the sisters cannot understand his behavior. As Carrie explicitly puts it, "it looks like Christmas!" Her remark is quite accurate, given that first Julian gifts them with his presence, which does cause them great happiness, and later he happens to give them material gifts as well, which instead of enthusing them, surprises them, worries them, and even scares them, as we can see in the high angle shot above (Figure 141). Here we can notice three different expressions on the faces of each sibling: in the foreground, Carrie, with an expression of disappointment and anger, is focused on rearranging the clothes that her brother had scattered around the room to proudly and happily hand in to his sisters. She does not think she should keep the gifts, nor does she want to, so she is already thinking about returning them. Her neurotic personality will not allow her to stay calm; she now feels upset and wants to stop that feeling.

Despite not being in the center of the frame, Carrie is the center of attention of the scene as all eyes are directed at her, including those of her siblings, who are watching her from the background. Ana holds a large box on her lap as Julian continues to explain the gifts to her at the same time he rushes to ask Carrie not to pack anything to return because —he assures— he is rich enough to buy all those gifts for them and more. Carrie, who still does not understand what is going on, does not try too hard to contradict him, but she instinctively frowns in sign of disapproval, a similar reflex as when she touches her head. While Anna's expression reflects great concern (she does not know where her brother got the money from), beside her, Julian, finally fulfilled for having been able to provide for her sisters, is beaming with happiness (ignorant of his sisters' true feelings regarding the gifts). As time goes by, Carrie's neurosis rages more and more, as shown in Figures 142 and 143. Julian is acting differently, he has money of his own, and Carrie feels displaced at her realization that he is not depending on her anymore. Added to her stress is that of Julian's greatest gift (he has paid the sisters' mortgage), as this makes her the owner of a house she hates (Figure 142). While Anna, with an expression evident of amazement, reads the documents that verify the payment of the mortgage, Carrie whines



Figure 142



Figure 143

continuously until she breaks into tears. Deeply saddened, she holds her head lowered between her hands and keeps whining. The calm and humorous tone with which Anna reacts to her in most of their interactions is still surprising while it serves as a relief to the viewer, who otherwise could feel overwhelmed without Anna's help in controlling Carrie's neurotic impulses.

In Figure 143 Carrie acts again like a spoiled kid demanding time and more attention from her brother, indifferent to whatever business he has in town or his own needs. She just wants him to be "like he used to" and, in an explosion of rage, she directly demands this from him with Anna, deeply concerned, as witness in the background. Carrie slams her back against the wall in the foreground, as if escaping from a reality that she does not want to confront (a scene that is repeated several times in the film). Her face reflects anger and disdain, and she does not look Julian in the eye. She does not want to listen, since she refuses to be rejected. However, she cannot avoid making demands, and this causes a very tense situation between the siblings. In an attempt to calm the waters, just as Julian had tried to control his wife's emotional outbursts on previous occasions, he now tries to appease Carrie. Tactfully but confidently, he repeats that he cannot spend time with her "rigtht now" because he is busy and he needs to attend to his own business. Although he offers to spend time together later, Carrie no longer attends to anything. The intense urge that she needed to satisfy "right now" is not satisfied, and her mood becomes uncontrollable. We might now recall that upon his arrival to the house, Julian called her sister from downstairs: "Is that my Carrie hiding in the attic?" As mentioned, she was indeed in the attic, but both in a physical and a metaphorical sense; in the real part of the house as well as in the attic in her mind, the private space where she had been hiding *her Julian*. Carrie's tragic flaw is her incapacity to accept evolution and change; she is a Peter Pan of sorts who cannot make peace with the fact that people grow up and live a life different from that of childhood. She fails to comprehend this reality as she somehow remains trapped in that past herself, which has contributed to prevent her from developing a more mature personality and remain stuck in a whimsical and childish behavior. Throughout the film the viewer is given many clues about her immaturity; for example, she shouts to her brother "I can still jump. Shall I jump and you catch me?", a fanciful idea that is dismantled with Julian's practical response: "Don't jump. I have no hands to catch you… Darling Carrie-pie." But, although we know that she can be ridiculous up to this point, it is not easy to accept this type of behavior, totally lacking in rationality, in a 38-year-old woman.

As events unfold, we have more evidence that it all stems from her intense, repressed feeling for Julian. On the one hand, so far Julian has been for her a boy who depended entirely on her, something that contributed to her happiness as this made her feel wanted and more valued. On the other hand, he is some*body* she wants to possess. In a deeper sense, as time went by since their childhood, and Julian left their house to move forward with his own life elsewhere, Carrie placed him in a very special part in her mind, where reality and dream converged. That is the reason why both the cherished memories of the past as well as those dreams and wishes remained stored in her mind, *hidden in the attic*, both for her comfort and as the only pleasure



Figure 144

she enjoys (in a safe place, where no one but her can get in). However, Anna, empathetic and a good observer of the reality around her, has been capable of seeing through the closed door of her sister's attic (mind). Thus, when Anna discusses Carrie's repressed feelings explicitly with her, doors and windows of that attic shatter, and the information can no longer be locked away. With the (unspeakable) truth exposed, terrified with the reality that came out, Carrie loses her balance completely and, consequently, her control. Unleashed with fury towards her sister for "speaking the unspeakable," for opening her eyes to a reality that she does not want to see, she finds no other way out than lashing out at everyone. Unable to cope with reality, she is a train wreck; hence, she might be doomed to hurt not only others but also herself.

In the mid shot above (Figure 144) we can see how the sisters share the center of the frame during the aforementioned fight, in which Anna decides to risk talking to Carrie about her problem. The fight is violent, the two sisters raise their voices and struggle, and Carrie seems to be on the verge of a nervous breakdown or, observed from another perspective, perhaps entering the realm of insanity. Her gaze is terrifying, her attitude and words are hurtful, and she seems to have lost control of herself. However, all the agitation fades, the screaming ceases, and silence falls once Anna lets Carrie's secret out:

> Anna: All right. I'll take that chance now. Don't you know what's the matter, don't you know? You want him and always have. Years ago I used to be frightened and I would watch you and suffer for you.
> Carrie: (*Crosses to porch. After a second, in a whisper.*) You never said those words. Tell me I never heard those words. Tell me, Anna. (*When there is no answer*.) You were all I ever had. I don't love you anymore.
> Anna: That was the chance I took. (*Toys* 59)

The dyad is now broken, and here Carrie experiences her first great loss. Notwithstanding, in a sense she becomes more humanized once she lets her hatred out. When she expresses her feelings and dislike to Anna directly ("I don't love you anymore," "How dare you?"), the viewer can clearly perceive that she is wounded and reacting in what could be an expected way. There is certain respect in that injured person who is finally facing the painful truth, something that Carrie had been avoiding for too long. A Carrie struggling to deal with her feeling of shame (never that of guilt) is, ironically, more approachable than a repressed (fake) Carrie. She seems better acceptable and understandable when she expresses her suffering rather than when she attempts to save face, hiding behind words and gestures, and expecting from both her siblings that they somehow play her game.

Carrie is not a victim, though it might seem like that to some; she is not an angelic girl trapped in her dreams of the past in the manner of Birdie Hubbard in *The Little Foxes*. Her entrapment is different. She is too selfish and spoiled, which makes her cruel at times, such as when Julian arrives with Lily to the Berniers' house and she ignores Lily, furthermore, intentionally emphasizing for the young woman the fact that she had been ignored. She is naturally mischievous to the core. She pretends to be a sweet and lovely spinster who has nothing but good wishes and kindness for her siblings; but, in fact, she can be understood as a truly malicious woman. In the same manner that Ben Hubbard had no qualms to reach his goals, likewise she lacks scruples when it comes to satisfy her wishes. While the Hubbards

showed no qualms about using all the means (and wiles) at their disposal to achieve their markedly capitalist objective towards obtaining the highest possible economic profit, Carrie, not so money-driven, focuses her attention on an unethical pursuit of objectives on the personal level. She does not respect anyone, and her jealousy or her own selfishness leads her to love only herself, hence causing in the end her brother's misfortune instead of her happiness.

Perceived as a symbol (Eder), Carrie stands for the danger of repressing feelings, of hiding some things in the attic, putting on a blindfold, or living a life with a mask on. Somehow, the repressed always remains latent. Furthermore, when something was suppressed and suddenly the truth comes out, the shock can be too strong for a person to cope with, though reactions to shock can be varied. It is worth noting that Anna Freud called repression "motivated forgetting," which is understood as a well-known technique to put in a shelf something that is hurtful or disadvantageous for an individual. Hence, by repressing the memory of such thing, the individual is supposed to be capable to cope with it and continue to live his/her life normally. This is what happened to Carrie: she never erased her memories of Julian; on the contrary, they have been a refuge for her. However, she did indeed obliterate her awareness of the fact that she wanted to sleep with him. And there would be no problem with this process were it not for the fact that her desire has remained latent. For this reason, Carrie feels terribly jealous of Lily, now Julian's wife, and even of Charlotte Warkins, a lover from his past. Although she had been behind her southern attitude, a fake charm, and a pretended happiness (or at least content), her incestuous desire inevitably grew as a major part of her identity. In fact, we could say that as there was a lack of sexual fulfillment in Regina's marriage, so there is this sexual unfulfillment in Carrie's (mental) marriage —her one-sided connection— to her brother. As her neuroticism unravels, Carrie keeps piling up *toys in the attic*, in other words, thinking more nonsensically and behaving more foolishly, walking towards insanity, precisely the meaning that the old expression "toys in the attic" stands for.

Despite hearing the truth and breaking off with her sister, Carrie still wants Julian. And maybe she could sublimate her sexual desires by deviating them towards a kind of infatuation in real life while she holds her fantasies in her imagination. However, this would require a constant presence from Julian, something impossible to achieve now that he is married and has money. Driven by her desire and convinced of her manipulative abilities, she begins to weave the web with which she will trap all her victims. First, he reveals to Lily the identity of the mysterious woman the girl had been so jealous of, Charlotte Warkins, and lets her know that she is black. Lily, who already shares her mother's affection with a colored man, infers that Julian might have more interest in Charlotte perhaps because of the exoticism of her origins, or perhaps because they have already been lovers in the past, another relevant fact that Carrie also makes the poor young woman aware of. Then, she turns the girl against her mother so that Lily, resenting Albertine, would not turn to her for advice, but to Carrie herself. Finally, venomous and serpentine to point of terrifying, she encourages Lily to call Cy Warkins, which will lead to the ultimate tragedy: the disfigurement of Charlotte's face and Julian's return to mediocrity. Perhaps submerged in a certain state of madness, or perhaps simply letting out her poison, Carrie acts ruthlessly; she is clear about what she wants, and that is the only thing she cares about.

For a short space of time, her actions pay off and she manages to approach her brother, a beaten and dejected Julian, in order to manipulate him into her side. But Carrie's success in the original play seems to derive into a sort of poetic justice in the movie, which in turn makes the tragedy bigger, owing that, in addition to affecting Charlotte, Lily, and Julian, it will splash Carrie too. Anna, who had already decided to abandon the role of her mother and



Figure 145

is preparing to leave for Europe, cannot but support Lily since she is well aware of Carrie's manipulations. Therefore, before abandoning the house and saying her last goodbye to her sister, she intervenes as an agent of good against the forces of evil, and she seems to succeed in guiding Julian back to Lily. Eventually realizing Carrie's manipulative attitude, Julian chooses to follow the path of his older sister, and he abandons Carrie as well. With this choice, hope opens up for his future, at the same time it closes for Carrie, who is left alone in that "awful oak tomb" that she had claimed to hate. Her downfall is made evident and is thus visually represented through an aerial shot in which we see for the last time the neurotic and ruthless spinster, who seems downcast now as she remains crying inconsolably while lying down at the bottom of the staircase (Figure 145).

As Walcutt claimed, Carrie Berniers "gives the impression of a woman frivolous to the point of stupidity, selfish and whimsical to the point of being frightening, but withal so frothy in her latent (or is it superficial?) craziness that we take her as a sort of commentary on the southern style rather than an agent to be watched and evaluated" (29). However, interpreted as a comment of the South, Carrie is yet unpleasant to watch, unlike other characters considered villainous, like Regina Hubbard. Her evilness stems from a sort of madness probably caused by her loneliness, that in turn seems to have been increased by her voluntary withdrawal from the real world and her detachment from people with whom to interact and maintain healthy social relationships. In this sense, Carrie becomes a different kind of frivolous, her evil is twisted but not especially intelligent, it is a sickly evil, it could be said that it is typical of a psychopath, since she acts with total decision and does not feel any kind of remorse. She does not care about anyone in the world except, apparently, Julian. But beyond the appearance, the reality is that she does not care about Julian either. The only thing she wants is to regain that feeling she had when she was young, to feel admired and loved, observed as a superior being. Unfortunately for Julian, due to his lack of skills to provide for himself and his dependent nature, he was the one who most aroused this type of feeling in her sister, even to the point of leading her to incestuous desires. However, he is but a mere tool to her satisfaction. Contrary to what Lily feels for Julian, Carrie does not really love her brother. In fact, she does not mind at all destroying his life completely. After being attacked by order of Cy Warkins and having lost all his money along with his dignity, Julian decides to side with Carrie after having fallen for her manipulations and put the blame on his poor wife. However, the feeling of both women towards this defeated Julian is completely opposite: while Lily feels terribly guilty for having caused the suffering of her husband, Carrie basks in her victory after having achieved her goal: breaking all of Julian's connections and taking away any type of power he could have (economic or emotional), so that he has no other option left than to depend on her again. As Lily cries inconsolably, Carrie plans a future in which she is the only master puppeteer with the power to manipulate her puppet (Julian) at her will. It is obvious that Carrie has just played her cards and she does not care about Julian's feelings or needs in the least. Whereas Lily (lacking in conscientiousness) had acted egotistically because of her immaturity, Carrie (extremely conscientious) acts selfishly because of her evil nature.

To conclude, it would be worth introducing some comment about the reception of Carrie as a character in order to present the perspective we have reached after her analysis. Our point of view could easily take shape in those cases in which the viewer fails in his/her attempt

to connect with or feel sympathy for Carrie. As it has already been mentioned, the message that Hellman wanted to send to her audiences through Carrie is clear, but Carrie's complex personality and *the character itself* is not easy to fully comprehend. Although uncommon, it might be possible that the viewer failed to interpret Carrie as both a villain and a victim (of her immaturity and her own feelings). This is in fact how we understand Carrie. On the one hand, she cannot be considered a victim because no one intends to harm her, quite the contrary (Julian takes care of her and Anna, who knows her most inner secrets, tries to help her); it is Carrie who has kept the secrets *in the attic* (hidden) and has decided to live taking refuge in them and the memories of her past. The repression of her feelings is not successful but, instead of destroying her, it only affects badly to others surrounding her. Somehow her narcissism protects her. Therefore, her alleged victimization cannot really be considered as such since she directly derives her pain to others.

On the other hand, we also fail at perceiving her as a villain, owing that her source of evil is somewhat particular, and shows her as a person absolutely lacking the charisma or intelligence that are normally associated with a narcissistic personality and the character of the villain. Her wickedness has a certain psychopathic tinge, which does indeed make a good prototypical villain, but her neuroticism is somewhat unusual —probably due to her repression—, which leads her to act in a fake manner. As a consequence, it is hard to comprehend Carrie: we cannot truly know about her suffering, since she is in denial and she hides her inner feelings from everyone. Anna shares with the audience what she knows but, in reality, she does not know about the true inner world of her sister either. The fact that Carrie feigns fragility and tries to believe it herself —just as she tries to believe all the lies she tells (spread out in similar doses for both relatives and non-relatives)— is, nevertheless, a defense mechanism for her. This, to a certain extent, detracts from her power, which can ultimately lead the viewer not to perceive her as a complete villain.

Ironically, given the fact that she was not taking about herself, Carrie had claimed in a sort of premonitory statement at the beginning of the movie: "people and place and time can make things go wrong." This might be true, and many will think this also happens to Carrie. But, considering that Anna shares with her the same people, place, and time, we could also rephase her statement: *things can go wrong depending on how we deal with time, place, and other people*. In the end, which perspective adjusts better to Carrie's situation, might yet remain unclear and it is up to the viewer to decide how to interpret it.

To sum up, Carrie's feigned personality and her true subconscious mix in a complex cocktail eventually manifesting in her Machiavelli behavior with hints of madness. She lacks the allure and resourcefulness of villainous personalities like those of Ben or Regina Hubbard. Like Marcus Hubbard in *Another Part of the Forest* or his son Oscar in *The Little Foxes*, she is indeed very narcissistic and highly immoral but, unlike the Hubbards' case, there is a sickness factor in Carrie's identity that might confuse the spectator. She is certainly vile, abhorrent, almost sickening, uncannily passive-aggressive, dominant and scheming, narcissistic and arrogant, and yet, contradictory as it may sound, she is just as ridiculous in her feigned personality as she is scary with her actual actions. Ultimately, she is a truly complex character and, although she is difficult to comprehend or categorize, and to sympathize with, her complexity results somewhat fascinating.

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CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Departing from the assumption that Lillian Hellman's "round" characters, according to Edward Morgan Forster's classical definition, stand out as elements of the stories they inhabit in their fictive worlds, serving nevertheless as clearly illustrative of historical specific times and spaces in the South of the United States, it was estimated that an analytically organized study of characters could contribute to the rapprochement and better understanding of the South portrayed by American playwright Lillian Hellman (1905–1984).

The main goal of this dissertation was, consequently, the critical interpretive analysis of the most representative southern characters created by the author that made their way to the big screen in three film adaptations: William Wyler's *The Little Foxes* (1941), Michael Gordon's *Another Part of the Forest* (1948), and George Roy Hill's *Toys in the Attic* (1963). To this end, the characters were observed in a systematic way, taking into account the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects they introduced or stood for at the author's will, without losing sight of major additional or detracted meanings altered by the directors. This was carried out through an eclectic theoretical approach that allowed us to analyze the characters comprehensively and in detail, from their self-identity to their social identity. As a consequence, it was possible to give account of Lillian Hellman's (re)vision of the South as one more of the existing interpretations of the South of the United States in parallel to its socio-cultural and historical reality, and as part of the perennial (North-South) duality of the country, also a perspective of the North.

With this study we concluded that the careful elaboration of Lillian Hellman's complex characters is the author's instrument to convey her image of the South. This aspect is even more emphasized in the film adaptation, where we can see the characters on the big screen, which allows the directors to influence the mental constructs of the viewers to a greater extent. Therefore, from a detailed reading of the characters, the viewers can understand the events and establish a dialogue with the author and the directors of the different films.

Throughout this work we have also argued that Eder's "clock of character" is a valuable tool for the analysis of characters, since it grants access to the content by paying attention to their key aspects by observing them (multifacetedly) as artefacts, fictional beings, symbols, and symptoms. On the other hand, this dissertation revealed the relevance of characters for the reception and transmission of complex historical and socio-cultural content. It was discussed how the approach of the viewer to the characters facilitates the interpretation of said content, since the viewers can establish a closer relationship with the characters, which contributes to their interest in complex and/or unknown topics related to the South of the United States in specific times of the past (1880, 1900, and 1920s).

In Chapter 1 we presented a general background of the South considering the geographical and cultural contexts of the times and socio-historical circumstances portrayed in the cinematographic adaptations of three southern plays by Lillian Hellman: *Another Part of the Forest*, *The Little Foxes*, and *Toys in the Attic*. Here we chose to present the events following the historical line in order to facilitate the reading of this dissertation. We introduced major historical events and the South as a region, focusing mainly on Alabama and Louisiana to provide context

for a better understanding and an easier reception of the movies. In Chapter 2 we introduced Lillian Hellman as part of the group of authors considered as southern; we provided a review of the literature, especially centered on works linked to the South; we outlined the existing gaps in literature; and we introduced the specific purposes of this dissertation. Chapter 3 dealt with the theoretical framework of the study where, after having specified our goals, we presented four interconnected approaches from which the character analysis was performed: sociology, identity theory, southern studies, and film character analysis. This chapter also presented the model for character analysis used as an instrument for observation and data collection, Jens Eder's "clock of character," together with the Big Five Personality traits model proposed by Costa and McCrae, which proved to be very useful both for the classification and for the understanding of the characters. In Chapter 4 we concentrated on the analysis of characters from *The Little Foxes*, aiming at a descriptive writing that could help contextualize the complex relationships and lives of the Hubbard clan. From the perspective that Lillian Hellman had of the South, we provided a Marxist reading as we observed the characters' struggle for power from different perspectives. Thus, through characters like Ben Hubbard and his brother Oscar, we approached Hellman's vision of capitalism as a destructive force; through the analysis of Regina and Birdie Hubbard, we were able to focus more on the theme of patriarchy; with the new generations (Alexandra, Leo, and David) we discussed the cyclical nature of the story; and by observing the black community we could analyze different voices and the new perspectives of those who were on the lowest social scale. In Chapter 5, dedicated to the analysis of *Another Part of the Forest*, we focused on the past of the Hubbard family members two decades prior to the events presented in *The Little Foxes*. Here we opted for a deeper analysis to the detriment of description since the major descriptive data had already been provided in Chapter 3. Here we concentrated on observing the contrast existing between the Hubbard family, representatives of a new social class (bourgeoisie), and other community members, including Birdie and John Bagtry, representatives of Old South values. In addition, we analyzed in detail the relationships between the characters and the way their social interactions and their own perspective of themselves influenced their identities. Finally, in Chapter 6, we were able to broaden Lillian Hellman's vision of the South through the analysis of a new family, the Berniers, whom we meet in New Orleans in the 1920s, after two more decades since the events of *The Little Foxes*. Here we introduced the most relevant aspects of the personalities of the different characters and, through them, themes directly linked to the South of the time.

Lillian Hellman's perspective of the South was deeply influenced by her life caught between North and South. Her relationship with both Americas during her adult life was very different, as was her relationship with her mother's family (wealth) and her father's (poverty), and all this permeated to her characters, who, having been inspired by members of his family, offered the spectator a great deal of socio-cultural content from their identities and, in addition, they helped us to understand the vision that the author had of the southern family. Thus, we explored how *Another Part of the Forest* offers the possibility of redemption for the Hubbard family through new marriage; *The Little Foxes* denies such a possibility, but leaves the way open for a re-generation of the new generation in Alexandra Giddens —it may exist or it may be lost permanently—; and *Toys in the Attic* seems to more conclusively close off the possibility of regeneration or resurgence of the southern family, through the downfall of both generations, the old and the new. Money becomes the means to achieve success and the inability to achieve it leads to failure. Most of the members of the Hubbard family in *Another Part of the Forest* and *The Little Foxes* seem to be unable to attain money, and something similar happens to the Berniers siblings in *Toys in the Attic*, where Julian Berniers' unstable state and his particular

relationship with money leave the whole family in a non-comfortable and non-ideal social position. They are different times and situations, but they share two significant intersecting axes: money and family.

The analysis of characters applied to three plays depicting different periods of time allowed us to offer a more global vision of the southern perspective of playwright Lillian Hellman. On the other hand, this gave us the possibility of applying a systematic analysis, which, when taken to the three works together, broadened our knowledge by establishing interconnections among the works. Within the field of sociology, especial attention was paid to issues such as social order, social interactions, and different social groupings, all of them very influential aspects in the shaping of the identities of the characters, in addition to being important for our reception. From the approach of identity theory, the self-identity of the characters was examined, whereas relevant concepts such as the southern feeling of inferiority and the southern feeling of masculinity were explored under the lens of southern studies, and extensively explained through the analysis of characters such as John Bagtry or Oscar Hubbard.

From a general perspective, the basic findings of this dissertation are consistent with research showing that the analysis of characters is relevant for the analysis and understanding of society. Specifically, with this dissertation we also concluded that Hellman's characters, even the secondary ones, are convincing to the spectator, because they show a realistic image of the southern man and woman of the different historical times in which the dramas were set. By presenting them individually we studied, from different points of view, the society of the South they stand for, attending to a variety of reactions typically related to the southern identity. Through the analysis of the Hubbard family and their connection to the northern tycoon, Mr. Marshall, we explored how the Civil War had taught southerners the wisdom of industrialization and a diversified economy. It was a period of development and abuse, and fortunes were amassed with ruthless means.

Since Hellman centers her plots on money and the effects it causes on individuals and society, our approach to her Marxist reading of the South was facilitated by the observation of the evolution of characters, their flaws, motivations, and goals; and their different reactions to the circumstances of the South. We found out that, through the use of melodramatic devices directly related to the characters, such as stolen bonds, corruption, blackmail, or shady business, Hellman introduces us to her perspective of the southern society in three different moments in history: 1880, 1900, and the 1920s. Consequently, the characters under analysis stood as representatives of different social groups, dissimilar ideologies, and diverse reactions to southern issues. On the one hand, we dealt with the characters that represent the image of the new South —prone to corruption and, still, achieving success and wealth—, while on the other hand we were also given examples of some characters that continue representing the values of the Old South. As any society under the turmoil and confusion of change and evolution, the characters depicted by Lillian Hellman suffer the consequences of the re-adjustment or the adaptation to the environments they live in.

The capitalists' goal to benefit from proletariat in Hellman's southern plays is evident in the Hubbard's schemes and manipulations both outside and even inside their own family. Materialism, in Marxist terms, implies that everything existing is material and matter determines consciousness. Dialectics refers to the fact that everything existing is in conflict with something else. Hence, there is constant transformation which can be subdivided in three steps: thesis, a statement to prove or defend, an intellectual preposition; antithesis, a critical perspective or contradiction of the thesis; and synthesis, the resolution of conflict between thesis and antithesis, and the occurrence of a new statement. In *Another Part of the Forest* we can see the thesis in

the Bagtrys, the aristocrats, and the antithesis in the Hubbards, the capitalists who ambition and plan their steps in order to come to power and achieve a dominant position. By the ending of the play, we could consider as synthesis the proletariat that is subtly introduced by means of a new relationship between bourgeoise represented by the Hubbard matriarch, Lavinia, who decides to open hospital for poor people together with her servant Coralee. In *The Little Foxes* the black servant, Addie, steps in from her proletariat position openly criticizing those who from a dominant position "eat the earth and eat all the people on it like in the Bible with the locust". In addition, she does not respect the attitude of those who, being also part of that bourgeoisie, "stand around and watch them eat it" (205). She clearly emphasizes to Alexandra, the young heiress of the Hubbards, that a passive position is not correct since the *predators* behavior should not be consented. Although the Marxist reading is a little less emphasized in *Toys in the Attic*, given the fact that Hellman focuses on exploring the individual, more concerned with the inner spirituality and the psychology of the characters, the power of money as a devastating force is still latent. Therefore, through characters like Julian Berniers, bearer of a kind nature, but involved in a damaging relationship with money, we are reminded again of the terrible moral consequences of wealth.

This doctoral dissertation provided, to our knowledge, the first detailed analysis of Hellman's southern perspective presented on the big screen in a comprehensive and systematic way encompassing the maximum southern historical breadth discussed by the author. That is, topics taken from the historical reality of the southern states and fictional beings were not analyzed separately, but themes were introduced from the observation of characters. In other words, characters themselves presented the southern society and history to the viewer from the perspective of their creator. For the first time, themes specifically linked to southern identity were previously taken and systematically applied to the characters (southern parameters can be seen concentrated in the Appendix), in order to appreciate with what degree of significance the characters represented these themes or were related to them.

With this study, a systematic model for character analysis was brought together reportedly for the first time with southern characters created by playwright Lillian Hellman (both male and female, capitalists and non-capitalists, major and secondary). Never before had a work been presented that included the different social layers, and that encompassed both the analysis of male and female characters (the latter so far, generally more studied for their interest from a feminist perspective). Although certain divisions into groups and classifications were reached, it should be noted that the characters were not observed for classificatory purposes but rather studied as unique individual artifacts, fictional beings, symbols, and symptoms (Eder), thus seeking to remove stereotypes. A reading of the South as perceived by Hellman was provided for the first time through the analysis of her characters on the screen. On the other hand, film characters were analyzed taking into account interconnections between the different works as long as this helped to deepen the study of their identities.

Costa and McCrae's Big Five Model of Personality (OCEAN) was applied to Hellman's characters for the first time, in order to further internalize their individual characteristics. By using the OCEAN model, we tested our hypothesis that, even when not using the model to the limit of its capabilities, it provides very relevant information about the characters that contributes to a deeper understanding of each character in general, therefore enabling us to analyze their behavior from a more comprehensive perspective that considered their personality traits in connection to their actions. In other words, this model came to provide data so important that it explained the general behavior of the characters by pointing out to their dominant traits, in addition to hinting at the original conception that Hellman had of them. For example, Marcus

Hubbard was found to have a narcissistic character, and his lack of guilt corresponded to his low level of agreeableness and neuroticism. In applying the OCEAN to his daughter, Regina Hubbard, it was clearly observed that such traits of her father were repeating (or retained) as part of her personality, albeit to a lesser extent. However, Julian Berniers, despite feeling the same thirst for money as the Hubbards, shows a picture practically opposite to theirs. From these findings, other relevant data were deduced such as the fact that the author does not present Julian's actions in a negative way, like those of the Hubbards, precisely because they are somehow justified by his neurotic traits (instead of just pure greed) and, for the same reason, the viewer fails to understand the young man as an antipathetic and villainous character like the Hubbards, despite the fact that (indirectly) he is the trigger for the delusions and tragedies of all those around him. Moreover, the OCEAN as a tool was very helpful in observing character traits for the understanding of their reactions to social groups, and to the South in general. In the group of those southerners who adapt to the new times and benefit from the arrival of industrialization and the use they make of money we encountered Marcus, Ben, Oscar, Leo, Regina Hubbard, or Albertine Prine and Cy Warkins. On the other hand, those who find trouble to adjust within society and cannot get economic benefit, such as Jonh Bagrry, Birdie and Alexandra Hubbard, the whole Berniers family, and Lily Prine are generally in possession of neurotic traits. We have demonstrated that, as a unit, the Hubbards represent a corrupted family moved by money rather than by affective or blood bonds and, leading the viewer to a judgement of their actions, Hellman succeeds in showing us her critical perspective of the South.

Furthermore, for the first time, the descriptive-analytical content of specific scenes and shots of the film adaptations of Hellman's southern works was also provided. All the selected shots were included because of their relevance concerning characters' attitudes and actions rather than actions themselves or simply because of their cinematographic features, although both aspects were included in the comment as well. While providing analysis of specific frames, the attention to expressions, gestures, and actions varied depending on the relevance of the content that these data contributed with respect to certain characteristics of the characters and/or southern attitudes. To favor a smooth reading and understanding of the analysis, all the outstanding characteristics of each character were integrated into the comment, while those that were considered obvious or repeating (that is, those that could be easily inferred from previous comment) or those that were considered less relevant for the understanding of characters and what they stand for, were left out.

As a final reflection, we would like to point out to an aspect of this study that we found to be particularly challenging: the fact that the amount of information handled and the different possibilities of analysis are practically endless, as we can choose to add greater concentration on different elements within each of the four quarters in Eder's "clock of character." In this sense, we are aware of the fact that the decision to analyze three works with this level of detail was ambitious, due to the effort it requires during the different stages of the writing process, as well as for its reading.

Regarding future lines of research, we would like to focus on a more detailed analysis from the Affective Disposition Theory approach, concentrating mainly on the reception of characters. On the other hand, we find interesting the character analysis proposal offered in "Metodología del Análisis del Personaje Cinemátografico: una Propuesta desde la Narrativa Fílmica," by Pérez Rufí, who after reviewing the works of scholars such as Chatman, Egri, Seger, or Bentley, among others, presents another multiperspective model particularly attending to the audiovisual nature of the cinematographic character. We consider that this character analysis methodology proposal is a very comprehensive and functional one, and we would like to embrace this model

for further studies where the sociocultural focus is not our main concern from a starting point so that we can develop more from a narratological approach. In future works, it might also prove valuable investigating the potential the OCEAN model might have for the understanding of characters and the reasons of the connections we establish with them, possibly by identifying with some of their most dominant traits or feeling rejection towards them. This would be especially interesting in the case of villains, for the studies of which research is currently being carried out focused on the issue of morality and the way in which the viewer uses it in the relationship established with the characters.

Moral ambiguity is precisely a good place to register out thoughts about possible future work in relation to character analysis, as it raises the question where the limit is for that ambiguity to jump into the area of clear immorality. As we know, the reception characters may vary depending on the viewers' concept and perception of morality, in addition to their background and their understanding of the world. It would be interesting to observe if and how this evolves over time with memorable characters, as Regina Hubbard could be considered. In present time, characters like the notoriously fashionable villain Cruella de Vil or the God of Mischief Loki have become *curious villains*, or we may dare to say *beloved villains* for some viewers, especially in Craig Gillespie's prequel for Disney, *Cruella* (2021), and in Michael Waldron's television series *Loki* (2021–ongoing), both villainous characters well known to most of the public for decades, tend to have now more fans than detractors. Another example, in this case from the DC universe, is that of the Joker, who has stopped being that scary and horrible clown that antagonized the heroic Batman, to become a character for whom part of the audience can somehow feel sympathy through productions such as Todd Phillips' *Joker* (2019) and series of television such as *Gotham* (2014–2019) or *Titans* (2019–ongoing), to mention just a few of the most recent. Batman, in turn, is now the dark knight who has become a shady anti-villian rather than staying a hero. We can hypothesize that this is due, among many other many factors, to the fact that we have a greater knowledge of ourselves than decades ago, and therefore, we perceive the characters differently and maybe we judge we judge with greater care both characters who are presented as heroes and those who appear to be villains. Taking this into account, it seems probable that a modern audience would not favor characters like that of the cruel Marcus Hubbard, but most likely they would also not find appealing characters such as Lavinia Hubbard, Birdie Hubbard, Lily Berniers, or even Julian Berniers. How bad can a baddie be so that we can sympathize with her/him is becoming almost as relevant as how good can a hero be to continue being perceived as a hero, or how good can a character be to arouse sympathy from the viewer.

Delving into the direction of the investigations of Krakowiak and Tsay-Vogel, concerned with "What Makes Characters' Bad Behaviors Acceptable?" we wonder: how bad are Hellman's villians? Do modern viewers really hate Regina Hubbard or is it Regina who indeed makes *The Little Foxes* more attractive for the viewer? Would it be equally interesting if only her brothers were portrayed as villainous? Would she be perceived in the same way if Hellman had given us more context about her husband? Since Hellman's works are generally full of villains and lack heroes, it might be interesting to study them within an structured model for analysis as the one here presented, but particularly from the approach of the Affective Disposition Theory and with special attention to morality.

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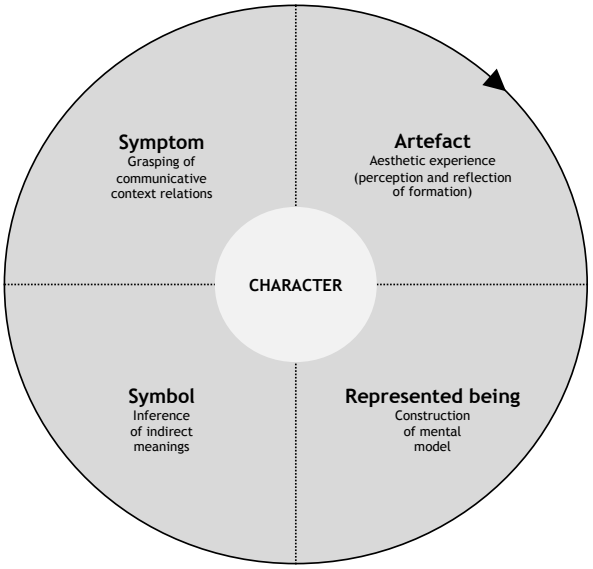
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Cape Fear. Directed by J. Lee Thompson, performances by Gregory Peck, Robert Mitchum, Polly Bergen, and Lori Martin, Universal Studios, 1962.
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Lady from Louisiana. Directed by Bernard Vorhaus, performances by John Wayne, Ona Munson, Ray Middleton, and Henry Stephenson, Republic Pictures, 1941.
The Little Foxes. Directed by William Wyler, performances by Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall, Teresa Wright, and Richard Carlson, MGM Home Entertainment, 1941.
Passing. Directed by Rebecca Hall, performances by Tessa Thompson, Ruth Negga, André Holland, and Bill Camp, Significant Productions et al., 2021.
Pinky. Directed by Elia Kazan, performances by Jeanne Crain, Ethel Barrymore, Ethel Waters, and William Lundigan, Twentieth Century-Fox Pictures, 1949.
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These Three. Directed by William Wyler, performances by Miriam Hopkins, Merle Oberon, Joel McCrea, and Bonita Granville, United Artists, 1936.

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Toys in the Attic. Directed by George Roy Hill, performances by Dean Martin, Geraldine Page, Yvette Mimieux, and Wendy Hiller, United Artists, 1963.
Virginia. Directed by Edward H. Griffith, performances by Fred McMurray, Madeleine Carroll, Sterling Hayden, and Helen Broderick, Paramount Pictures, 1941.
The Young Ones. Directed by Sidney J. Furie, performances by Cliff Richard, Robert Morley, Carole Gray, and Jett Harris, Anchor Bay, 1961.

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Appendix

Summary to our model based on Jens Eder's "clock of character"



The structure presented in the following pages for character analysis has been adapted from JENS EDER'S "CLOCK OF CHARACTER." All the contents inserted within the main categories or Eder's four quarters of the clock (artefact, represented or fictional being, symbol, and symptom) have been selected from the four different theoretical approaches introduced in the theoretical frame and organized exclusively in order to create this tool.

"The 'clock of character' captures fundamental differences that are lost in many theories, which all too often restrict themselves to treating characters only as fictional beings. The "clock" offers a simple survey of the most general domains of features that can be ascribed to characters, and it closely connects them with the viewers' reception. It renders visible which features may be assigned to characters during an analysis, in what relationships the features stand to each other, and what concepts are suitable to describe them." (Eder, "Understanding" 22)

1. ARTIFACT

"How and by what means is the character represented?" (Eder, "Understanding" 21)

2. FICTIONAL BEING

"What features and relations does the character possess as an inhabitant of a fictional world, and how does the character act and behave in this world? The answer to this question rests on the formation of mental models of characters." (Eder, "Understanding" 21)

2.1. Corporeality
2.2. Mentality (Five-Factor Model of Personality: OCEAN)
2.3. Sociality
2.4. Behavior

3. SYMBOL

"What does the character stand for, what indirect meanings does it convey? The term "symbol" is to be understood here in a broad sense to comprise all forms of higher-level meanings, in which characters may function as signs of something else. Of what, may be inferred from their features as fictional beings and artifacts." (Eder, "Understanding" 21—22)

4. SYMPTOM

"What causes the character to be as it is, and what effects does it produce? In this perspective, characters are taken to be symptoms, that is, causal factors or consequences of real elements of communication; for example, as the outcome of the work of the filmmakers or as role models for viewers. (Eder, "Understanding" 22)

4.1. Cultural contexts
4.2. Effects on recipients
4.3. Southernness parameters (John Shelton Reed)
4.4. Southernness feeling



Regina Giddens

The Little Foxes

1 ARTIFACT

The description of the characters and the media-specific means of representation (such as **casting, acting, mise-en-scène, music**, or **camera work**) is introduced throughout the dissertation —with their corresponding shots— for a more convenient analysis and for explanatory purposes, so the *artifact quarter* will collect minimal information here.

A. Distribution of information throughout the film**: constant, appropriately dosed, provided through the perspective of other characters (+) and the character actions and speech (+).**
B. Excess of information**: No. Only relevant information is provided.**
C. Missing information: **No. There is enough relevant information provided, even about the past.**
D. How character appears: **beautiful, intelligent, active, energetic, haughty, conceited, dominant, materialistic.**
E. How character really is**: calculating, greedy, selfish, cold, callous (-) / resourceful, persuasive, persistent, proactive, focused (+), and as he appears (D).**
F. General conception**: realism.**

2 FICTIONAL BEING

2.1. CORPOREALITY

Gender: Female. **Age**: 40. **Ethnic**: White. **Hairstyle**: Always totally tied up. **Clothing**: Very elegant, emphasizing her slim figure and her beauty.

2.2. MENTALITY

Values and beliefs: power, social position, strength of character, intelligence, commodities, and a wealthy life.

Inner life/spirituality: Tendency to coldness, although sometimes there are references or aspects pointing to her warmth (e.g.: she doesn't mind feeding poor colored children "now and then," her servant Belle notices).

Goals: Economic independence (main). Moving to Chicago to live an autonomous and glamorous life.

Motivations: Money, social position. **Need**: money. **Want**: money. **Flaw**: excessive money drive

Self-identity: smart and capable woman. **Stereotyped identity**: evil wife. **Stigmatized identity**: ✖.

Character's perception: **as self**: smart; **as part of a group**: the mind of the group; **in relation with out-groups**: ingenious and charming (for her own benefit).

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Regina Giddens: Five-Factor Model of Personality (OCEAN)

1	2	3	4	5	OPENESS	6	7	8	9	10

Down-to-earth	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Imaginative
Philistine	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	**8**	9	10	Artistic
Unemotional	1	**2**	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Empathic
Old-fashioned	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Novelty-seeking
Concrete	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Curious
Dogmatic	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Liberal

1	2	3	4	5	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	6	7	8	9	10

Inept	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Efficient
Untidy	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Organized
Lax	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Scrupulous
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Ambitious
Weak-willed	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Self-disciplined
Hasty	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Careful

1	2	3	4	5	EXTRAVERSION	6	7	8	9	10

Distant	1	2	**3**	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Warm
Solitary	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	**8**	9	10	Sociable
Unassertive	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Dominant
Slow-paced	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Active
Unadventurous	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Fun-loving
Somber	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	**8**	9	10	Cheerful

1	2	3	4	5	AGREEABLENESS	6	7	8	9	10

Suspicious	1	**2**	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Trusting
Manipulative	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Honest
Selfish	1	**2**	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Generous
Stubborn	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Forgiving
Arrogant	1	2	**2**	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Humble
Cold-blooded	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Merciful

1	2	3	4	5	NEUROTICISM	6	7	8	9	10

Calm	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Anxious
Even-tempered	1	**2**	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Irritable
Contended	1	**2**	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Gloomy
Confident	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Self-conscious
Controlled	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Impulsive
Resilient	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Fragile

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2.3. SOCIALITY

SOCIAL STATUS

Ascribed social status: daughter of merchant with economic power
Achieved social status: independent woman by the end of the movie

SOCIAL ROLES

General role: typical female roles within the household, mother and wife
Role strains: wife
Role conflicts: mother vs. independent woman (attempt at making business to get independence)

SOCIAL RELATIONS

Member of dyad: 1. Regina-Ben (+), 2. Regina-Horace (-), 3. Regina-Alexandra (neutral)
Member of triad: 1. Regina-Ben-Oscar
Member of a coalition: ✖
Member of a social institution: family

SOCIAL MOBILITY

Flexible: ✓ (possible after many obstacles)
Hard: ✓ (but attainable)
Achieved ✓(by the end of the movie)

INTERACTIONS

In-group: with family (interacts with everybody, but she is no close to anyone); with friends (n/a)
Out-group: with the community (positive; she is charming and she is a good hostess)
Degree of success (very successful/ successful ✓/ occasionally successful /unsuccessful ✓(with husband))
Honest interactions ✓ generally honest, except when she intends to manipulate
Manipulative interactions ✓ whenever she has a purpose

RECOGNITION: Not achieved (historically hard for female during the period), although there is a hope for it.

SYMPATHY: Sympathy for random community members depending on the interaction topics (Mrs.Hewitt).

CONFLICTS: 1. With her husband, 2. With her brother Oscar, 3. With David Hewitt (funny tone, David is defiant of Regina), 4. With her daughter (developing towards the very end of the movie).

ATTRACTION: Money, glamorous life. She feels attracted towards the North (hence towards the tycoon Mr. Marshall); she dreams of moving to Chicago

REJECTION: Ignorant people (Oscar, Leo)

VALUES: Social values of the South are not relevant for her, she values modernity and independence instead. However, she does act naturally like a Southern lady.

POWER: Achieved within the family (as mother, wife, and sister), socially achieved (through her husband) and obtained completely towards the end of the movie together with her economic independence.

SOUTHERN REACTION TO SURROUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES	VERY LOW		LOW		MEDIUM		HIGH		VERY HIGH	
Defeatist attitude (Fletcher Green)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Inferiority complex (Fletcher Green)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tender (skin) to criticism (Fletcher Green)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Fear of ridicule (Fletcher Green)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Scarred from the past (John Temple Graves)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Need for belonging to a group (Alfred Adler)	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Need for recognition (Alfred Adler)	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Need to pursue superiority (Alfred Adler)	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pleasure drives (Freud)	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
Narcissim (Freud)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Savage ideal [rejection to racial integration] (Cash)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rage to explain [superiority attitude caused by an inferiority complex] (Fred Hobson)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Siege mentality [perception of environment as hostile and victimization] (Sheldon Hackney)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Masculinity complex (Angie Maxwell)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Life lies mechanisms (Lewis Killian)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Appearance compensating for damaged pride (Kathleen M. Brown)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sensitivity to physical change (Angie Maxwell)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lying and deception *SUBTABLE (Michael Lewis)	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
Compensation for patriarchal anxiety (Kathleen M. Brown)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Discrimination as contributory to unification and fortification of the discriminated (Lewis Killian)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2.4. BEHAVIOR

Notes on particular behaviors:

Gaze: intense, witty, haughty, playful
Gestures: dominant, haughty, elegant
Speech: intense but moderate speech, intelligent, polite, dominant but classy
Actions: dominant, calculating, selfish, unethical, manipulative, cold
Others: centered, persistent, strong

FICTIONAL BEING SOUTHERN BEHAVIOR LYING AND DECEPTION	YES	NO
To protect one's feelings		X
To protect the feelings of others		X
To avoid punishment		X
Practical lying (to achieve a goal)		X
Pathological lying	X	

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3 SYMBOL

▪ Forms: theme bearer of manipulation, personification of materialism, exemplification of gender struggle.

▪ Topics of reference:

- Thematic messages. The character stands for 1) greed for money and 2) struggle for power (within a patriarchal system).
- Meanings the viewers are likely to infer: excessive materialism and greed for money corrupt the individual (morally) and society (materially).

Latent meanings: dehumanization brought with industrialism and the modern world.
Figures from: Myth ✓(Greek), Religion ✖, Reality ✓

Social roles: she fails as a wife and as a mom, while she succeeds in joining the exploitative bourgeoisie.

4 SYMPTOM

4.1. CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Production context: Bette Davis and William Wyler relationship, Bette Davis stardom.

What was the basic perception of the film images: Corruption in business, exploitation caused by capitalist systems, corruption of the soul

Formation of mental models: the evil woman

Inference of indirect or abstract meanings: all the relevant meanings are explicit

Reflection about the real causes and consequences of characters:
- caused by the economic circumstances experienced by author Lillian Hellman
- empathy or rejection of the audience, agreement or disagreement with Regina's struggles arise as a consequence

What are the intentions of the filmmakers with regards to the characters?
- representing the bad effects of a too strong drive for money (aggressive capitalism)
- expressing gender struggle and female empowerment

4.2. EFFECTS ON RECIPIENTS

· Conditioning	· Education ✓	· Frustration ✓	· Affirmation	· World discovery ✓
· Manipulation	· Learning ✓	· Identity construction ✓	· Imitation	· Substitute for social actions

- Very similar to all the Hubbards, but probably with more intensity in the reaction of recipients.
- World discovery (South of the United States), learning (South of the United States, capitalism, human behavior, gender struggle) and frustration (manipulative / cruel attitudes) are likely to emerge from the audience.
- Perception of the world reality might be affected: capitalism might be understood as (mostly) connected to greed and the corruption of social systems.
- Identity construction: rejection of unethical or immoral actions, rethinking one's own attitudes.

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4.3. SOUTHERNNESS PARAMETERS (John Shelton Reed)	YES	NO
Tendency to think in local terms		X
Choosing local people as those to look at or admire rather than people from other areas		X
Focus on the in-group		X
Likely to be Christian		X
Reliance on their own actions instead of outsourcing	X	
Strong moral beliefs		X
Attention to the distinction between right and wrong		X
Likely to engage in a fight		X
Conservative		X
Tradition-loving		X
Courteous	X	
Loyal to family		X

4.4. SOUTHERNNESS FEELING	YES	NO
Does the character feel himself/herself as southerner?		X
Does the character represent southern values?		X
Does the character reject southern values?		X
The South is home		X
The South is just a place	X	
The South is an oppressive place	X	

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Marcus Hubbard

Another Part of the Forest

1 ARTIFACT

The description of the characters and the media-specific means of representation (such as **casting, acting, mise-en-scène, music, or camera work**) is introduced throughout the dissertation —with their corresponding shots— for a more convenient analysis and for explanatory purposes, so the *artifact quarter* will collect minimal information here.

A. Distribution of information throughout the film**: constant, appropriately dosed, provided through the perspective of other characters (+) and the character actions and speech (+).**
B. Excess of information**: No. Only relevant information is provided. Emphasis on *the past deeds*.**
C. Missing information: **Not particularly noticeable. Explicit references to Marcus's feelings are rare.**
D. How character appears: **serious, haughty, proud, confident, conceited, narcissistic, prone to psychological abuse and bullying.**
E. How character really is**: intelligent, calculating, greedy, selfish, cold, and as he appears (D).**
F. General conception**: realism.**

2 FICTIONAL BEING

2.1. CORPOREALITY

Gender: Male. **Age**: In his 50s. **Ethnic**: White. **Hairstyle**: Short, usual male hairstyle. **Clothing**: Elegant.

2.2. MENTALITY

Values and beliefs: Money, art, music. He likes ancient Greek culture (he reads Aristotle). He does not believe in people. Power of adaptability, of a good education (he educated himself). Not southern ideology, he believes that it was expected the North win the war.

Inner life/spirituality: Void of spirituality. Focused on money and material achievements.

Goals: Making more money and gaining the respect of his community. (He wanted social mobility and, although he was allowed to achieve it, he hasn't earned the respect of his community yet.)

Motivations: Money, social position. **Need**: social position. **Want**: social position. **Flaw**: obsession with getting wealthy and appearing superior.

Self-identity: Cultured, self-made man (proud). **Stereotyped identity**: the vile greedy neighbor. **Stigmatized identity**: poor.

Character's perception: **as self**: smart; **as part of a group**: the leader; **in relation with out-groups**: bad

Marcus Hubbard: Five-Factor Model of Personality (OCEAN)

1	2	3	4	5	OPENESS	6	7	8	9	10

Down-to-earth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10	Imaginative
Philistine	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10	Artistic
Unemotional	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Empathic
Old-fashioned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10	Novelty-seeking
Concrete	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10	Curious
Dogmatic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10	Liberal

1	2	3	4	5	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	6	7	8	9	10

Inept	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10	Efficient
Untidy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**	Organized
Lax	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**	Scrupulous
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**	Ambitious
Weak-willed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**	Self-disciplined
Hasty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**	Careful

1	2	3	4	5	EXTRAVERSION	6	7	8	9	10

Distant	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Warm
Solitary	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Sociable
Unassertive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**	Dominant
Slow-paced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**	Active
Unadventurous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10	Fun-loving
Somber	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10	Cheerful

1	2	3	4	5	AGREEABLENESS	6	7	8	9	10

Suspicious	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Trusting
Manipulative	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Honest
Selfish	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Generous
Stubborn	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Forgiving
Arrogant	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Humble
Cold-blooded	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Merciful

1	2	3	4	5	NEUROTICISM	6	7	8	9	10

Calm	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Anxious
Even-tempered	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Irritable
Contended	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Gloomy
Confident	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Self-conscious
Controlled	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Impulsive
Resilient	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Fragile

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2.3. SOCIALITY

SOCIAL STATUS

Ascribed social status: poor
Achieved social status: enriched man

SOCIAL ROLES

General role: family provider, moneylender of the town (despoiler)
Role strains: n/a
Role conflicts: n/a

SOCIAL RELATIONS

Member of dyad: 1. Marcus-Regina
Member of triad: n/a
Member of a coalition: not willfully included
Member of a social institution: family

SOCIAL MOBILITY

Flexible: ✓
Hard: ✓ (but attainable)
Achieved ✓/not achieved

INTERACTIONS

In-group: with family (negative, except with Regina); with friends (n/a)
Out-group: with the community (negative), with Colonel Isham (negative)
Degree of success (very successful/ successful / occasionally successful /unsuccessful ✓)
Honest interactions ✓ generally honest, except when he intends to manipulate
Manipulative interactions ✓ with his sons, with his wife, with Colonel Isham

RECOGNITION: Not achieved

SYMPATHY: Not achieved

CONFLICTS: With Colonel Isham, with the community in general

ATTRACTION: Money

REJECTION: Ignorant people (Laurette), aristocracy (Bagtry family)

VALUES: Social values of the South rejected, praise of the new capitalist world

POWER: Achieved (through wealth)

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SOUTHERN REACTION TO SURROUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES	VERY LOW		LOW		MEDIUM		HIGH		VERY HIGH	
Defeatist attitude (Fletcher Green)	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Inferiority complex (Fletcher Green)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
Tender (skin) to criticism (Fletcher Green)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
Fear of ridicule (Fletcher Green)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
Scarred from the past (John Temple Graves)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
Need for belonging to a group (Alfred Adler)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Need for recognition (Alfred Adler)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
Need to pursue superiority (Alfred Adler)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
Pleasure drives (Freud)	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
Narcissim (Freud)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
Savage ideal [rejection to racial integration] (Cash)	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rage to explain [superiority attitude caused by an inferiority complex] (Fred Hobson)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
Siege mentality [perception of environment as hostile and victimization] (Sheldon Hackney)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Masculinity complex (Angie Maxwell)	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Life lies mechanisms (Lewis Killian)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
Appearance compensating for damaged pride (Kathleen M. Brown)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Sensitivity to physical change (Angie Maxwell)	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lying and deception *SUBTABLE (Michael Lewis)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
Compensation for patriarchal anxiety (Kathleen M. Brown)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Discrimination as contributory to unification and fortification of the discriminated (Lewis Killian)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**

2.4. BEHAVIOR

Notes on particular behaviors: He gives special treatment to his daughter Regina (incest nuances)

Gaze: serious, austere, sharp, aggressive
Gestures: haughty
Speech: tactless, intense, judgmental
Actions: indifference, mistreatment, power abuse
Others: mischievous, scheming, cruel

FICTIONAL BEING SOUTHERN BEHAVIOR LYING AND DECEPTION	YES	NO
To protect one's feelings		X
To protect the feelings of others		X
To avoid punishment		X
Practical lying (to achieve a goal)		X
Pathological lying	X	

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3 SYMBOL

▪ Forms: personification of evil, metaphor of the evils of an aggressive capitalism, exemplification of a destructive father figute

▪ Topics of reference
- Thematic messages. The character stands for the evils of an aggressive capitalism and immoral behavior
- The meanings the viewers are likely to infer are exactly those intended by Hellman in the original play

Latent meanings: Incest (Freudian comment)

Figures from: Myth ✗, Religion ✗, Reality ✓

Social roles: exploitative bourgueoisie

4 SYMPTOM

4.1. CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Production context: No specific comment for this character. Curiosity: the artists interpreting the role of Marcus and his wife Lavinia, were a real life married couple

What was the basic perception of the film images: evil nature of the social system focused on making material profits

Inference of indirect or abstract meanings: Capitalism as negative

Reflection about the real causes and consequences of character: Poverty leads to greed for money and power.

Intentions of the filmmakers with regards to the character: Showing Marcus as a moral ill. The new social system allows for the loss of morality whereas values of the Old South, in comparison, appear as the true (moral) values.

4.2. EFFECTS ON RECIPIENTS

· Conditioning	· Education ✓	· Frustration ✓	· Affirmation	· World discovery ✓
· Manipulation	· Learning ✓	· Identity construction	· Imitation	· Substitute for social actions

- Education is intended
- World discovery (South of the United States), learning (South of the United States, capitalism, human behavior) and frustration (manipulative / cruel attitudes) are likely to be achieved.
- Perception of the world reality might be affected: capitalism might be understood as (mostly) connected to greed and the corruption of social systems

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4.3. SOUTHERNNESS PARAMETERS (John Shelton Reed)	YES	NO
Tendency to think in local terms		X
Choosing local people as those to look at or admire rather than people from other areas		X
Focus on the in-group		X
Likely to be Christian		X
Reliance on their own actions instead of outsourcing		X
Strong moral beliefs		X
Attention to the distinction between right and wrong		X
Likely to engage in a fight		X
Conservative		X
Tradition-loving		X
Courteous		X
Loyal to family		X

4.4. SOUTHERNNESS FEELING	YES	NO
Does the character feel himself/herself as southerner?		X
Does the character represent southern values?		X
Does the character reject southern values?	X	
The South is home	X	
The South is just a place	X	
The South is an oppressive place		X

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Julian Berniers

Toys in the Attic

1 ARTIFACT

The description of the characters and the media-specific means of representation (such as **casting, acting, mise-en-scène, music, or camera work**) is introduced throughout the dissertation —with their corresponding shots— for a more convenient analysis and for explanatory purposes, so the *artifact quarter* will collect minimal information here.

- **A.** Distribution of information throughout the film**: constant, appropriately dosed with gaps to leave room for suspicion and a mysterious atmosphere; provided through the lens of other characters, biased (+) and the character actions and speech, objectively (+)**
- **B.** Excess of information**: No. Only relevant information is provided. Emphasis on Julian's relations with the different female characters**
- **C.** Missing information: **Detail about his past from his own perspective**
- **D.** How character appears: **handsome, joyful, courteous, kind, exaggerate, smart, hustling**
- **E.** How character really is**: naïve, a little clumsy, generous, unresourceful, narcissistic, weak (because he has been overprotected), and as he appears (D)**
- **F.** General conception**: realism**

2 FICTIONAL BEING

2.1. CORPOREALITY

Gender: Male. **Age**: 34. **Ethnic**: White. **Hairstyle**: Neatly combed. **Clothing**: Elegant suits.

2.2. MENTALITY

Values and beliefs: Family, money, social appearance and status

Inner life/spirituality: Kind person with good intentions. He likes contributing to the happiness of others.

Goals: Becoming rich, repay his debts, ascend in the social scale, and making people around him happy.

Motivations: Money, social position. **Need**: Money. **Want**: Social acceptance. **Flaw**: He is bad at business and lacks power to maintain a dominant position within a patriarchal system where that is expected from him.

Self-identity: From loser to proud of his achievements to loser again. **Stereotyped identity**: loser breadwinner. **Stigmatized identity**: loser.

Character's perception: **as self**: from loser to soon-to-be-tycoon; **as part of a group**: loved by his family and closed ones; **in relation with out-groups**: not admired by the community

Julian Berniers: Five-Factor Model of Personality (OCEAN)

1	2	3	4	5	OPENESS	6	7	8	9	10

Down-to-earth	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	**9**	10	Imaginative
Philistine	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	**8**	9	10	Artistic
Unemotional	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	**9**	10	Empathic
Old-fashioned	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	**9**	10	Novelty-seeking
Concrete	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	**9**	10	Curious
Dogmatic	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Liberal

1	2	3	4	5	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	6	7	8	9	10

Inept	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Efficient
Untidy	1	2	3	**4**	5		6	7	8	9	10	Organized
Lax	1	**2**	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Scrupulous
Lazy	1	2	**3**	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Ambitious
Weak-willed	1	2	**3**	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Self-disciplined
Hasty	1	**2**	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Careful

1	2	3	4	5	EXTRAVERSION	6	7	8	9	10

Distant	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Warm
Solitary	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Sociable
Unassertive	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	**8**	9	10	Dominant
Slow-paced	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Active
Unadventurous	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Fun-loving
Somber	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Cheerful

1	2	3	4	5	AGREEABLENESS	6	7	8	9	10

Suspicious	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	**9**	10	Trusting
Manipulative	1	2	3	**4**	5		6	7	8	9	10	Honest
Selfish	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Generous
Stubborn	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	**10**	Forgiving
Arrogant	1	2	2	4	5		6	7	**8**	9	10	Humble
Cold-blooded	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	**9**	10	Merciful

1	2	3	4	5	NEUROTICISM	6	7	8	9	10

Calm	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	**9**	10	Anxious
Even-tempered	1	2	3	4	5		6	**7**	8	9	10	Irritable
Contended	1	2	3	4	**5**		6	7	8	9	10	Gloomy
Confident	**1**	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	Self-conscious
Controlled	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	**8**	9	10	Impulsive
Resilient	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	**8**	9	10	Fragile

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2.3. SOCIALITY

SOCIAL STATUS

Ascribed social status: unsuccessful middle-class man
Achieved social status: enriched bourgeoisie (momentarily)

SOCIAL ROLES

General role: family man
Role strains: businessman (achieving success and maintaining it)
Role conflicts:
- brother vs. businessman
- husband vs. social being

SOCIAL RELATIONS

Member of dyad 1: Julian-Lily (+), 2. Julian-Carrie (+), 3. Julian-Charlotte (+) (minor)
Member of triad 1: Julian-Carrie-Anna (+)
Member of a coalition: ✖
Member of a social institution: family

SOCIAL MOBILITY

Flexible: ✓ (possible after many obstacles)
Hard: ✓ (but attainable)
Achieved and lost ✓✖ → Not achieved

INTERACTIONS

In-group: with wife (she adores him but she doesn't trust him, so communication is hard), with sisters (he is adored and overprotected by them); with friends (good relationship with Charlotte)
Out-group: with the community, Gus, Albertine, Harry, random salarymen (positive; he is courteous and kind)
Degree of success (very successful/ successful ✓/ occasionally successful /unsuccessful ✓(with wife)
Honest interactions ✓
Manipulative interactions ✖

RECOGNITION: Not achieved but yearned for.

SYMPATHY: Sympathy for random community members, mostly workers (taxi driver, musicians, Gus, etc.)

CONFLICTS: 1. With wife, 2. With Carrie, 3. With Mr. Warkins

ATTRACTION: Money, glamorous life.

REJECTION: Social strains, judgement, Mr. Warkins (he claims to hate him)

VALUES: Family and social status

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POWER: Momentarily achieved and rapidly lost

SOUTHERN REACTION TO SURROUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES	VERY LOW		LOW		MEDIUM		HIGH		VERY HIGH	
Defeatist attitude (Fletcher Green)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Inferiority complex (Fletcher Green)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Tender (skin) to criticism (Fletcher Green)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Fear of ridicule (Fletcher Green)	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
Scarred from the past (John Temple Graves)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
Need for belonging to a group (Alfred Adler)	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
Need for recognition (Alfred Adler)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Need to pursue superiority (Alfred Adler)	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
Pleasure drives (Freud)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
Narcissim (Freud)	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
Savage ideal [rejection to racial integration] (Cash)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Rage to explain [superiority attitude caused by an inferiority complex] (Fred Hobson)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Siege mentality [perception of environment as hostile and victimization] (Sheldon Hackney)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Masculinity complex (Angie Maxwell)	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
Life lies mechanisms (Lewis Killian)	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Appearance compensating for damaged pride (Kathleen M. Brown)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
Sensitivity to physical change (Angie Maxwell)	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
Lying and deception *SUBTABLE (Michael Lewis)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Compensation for patriarchal anxiety (Kathleen M. Brown)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
Discrimination as contributory to unification and fortification of the discriminated (Lewis Killian)	**1**	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2.4. BEHAVIOR

Notes on particular behaviors:

Gaze: direct, joyous, enthusiastic
Gestures: impatient, hyperactive, exaggerate
Speech: ornate, sugared, sincere
Actions: exaggerated, well-intentioned
Others: charming, sweet, emotional, occasionally easily irritable

FICTIONAL BEING SOUTHERN BEHAVIOR LYING AND DECEPTION	YES	NO
To protect one's feelings		X
To protect the feelings of others		X
To avoid punishment		X
Practical lying (to achieve a goal)		X
Pathological lying		X

He doesn't lie, although he is imaginative about his businesses, about the future and his possible opportunities.

3 SYMBOL

▪ Forms: theme of the failed businessman

▪ Topics of reference
- Thematic messages. The character stands for a weakened patriarchy, the failure in business and the loss of control of one own's life
- Meanings the viewers are likely to infer: Eagerness of a man to attain wealth

Latent meanings: the bad provider

Figures from: Myth ✗, Religion ✗, Reality ✓

Social roles: failed wannabe (economic and emotional downfall)

4 SYMPTOM

4.1. CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Production context: Dean Martin (comedic element)

What was the basic perception of the film images: A lost man struggling to fit in society and controlled by women.

Formation of mental models: The bad provider

Inference of indirect or abstract meanings: All meanings are explicit

Reflection about the real causes and consequences of characters: Lillian Hellman's reality. Julian was inspired by her father, whose shoes business also failed and who was adored by two female relatives of Hellman.

Intentions of the filmmakers with regards to the characters: Showing how to much attention (overprotection) and love (love) can destroy a person in many ways or contribute to his/her failure.

4.2. EFFECTS ON RECIPIENTS

· Conditioning	· Education ✓	· Frustration	· Affirmation	· World discovery ✓
· Manipulation	· Learning ✓	· Identity construction ✓	· Imitation	· Substitute for social actions

- World discovery (South of the United States, Great Depression period), learning (capitalism, struggle to attain economic stability, human behavior, gender struggle) are likely to emerge from the audience.
- Perception of the world reality might be affected: money might be understood as (mostly) a destructive force
- Identity construction: rethinking one's own attitudes, reflection on the power of money and male/female relationships
- Major realizations: obsessive behavior, although born of love, can cause much harm; whatever it is the reason to pursue wealth, no moderation and morally wrong ways to achieve it will lead to a bad result.

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4.3. SOUTHERNNESS PARAMETERS (John Shelton Reed)	YES	NO
Tendency to think in local terms		X
Choosing local people as those to look at or admire rather than people from other areas		X
Focus on the in-group	X	
Likely to be Christian	X	
Reliance on their own actions instead of outsourcing	X	
Strong moral beliefs	X	
Attention to the distinction between right and wrong	X	
Likely to engage in a fight	X	
Conservative		X
Tradition-loving		X
Courteous	X	
Loyal to family		X

4.4. SOUTHERNNESS FEELING	YES	NO
Does the character feel himself/herself as southerner?	X	
Does the character represent southern values?	X	
Does the character reject southern values?		X
The South is home	X	
The South is just a place		X
The South is an oppressive place		X

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The southern film characters adapted from original works by American playwright Lillian Hellman represent meaningful experiences for contemporary viewers because of their attractive complexity and both the regional and universal themesthey stand for. This dissertation aims to provide an interpretive analysis of her most representative southern characters in three films: The Little Foxes (1941), Another Part of the Forest (1948), and Toys in the Attic (1963). From an eclectic theoretical approach, this study focuses on the social, cultural, political, and economic contexts portrayed in the above-mentioned adaptations pointing out to the relevance of characters for the reception and transmission of sociocultural issues through cinema.