

Gail Godwin's *A Southern Family* –
Codes of Life and Verbal Diagram

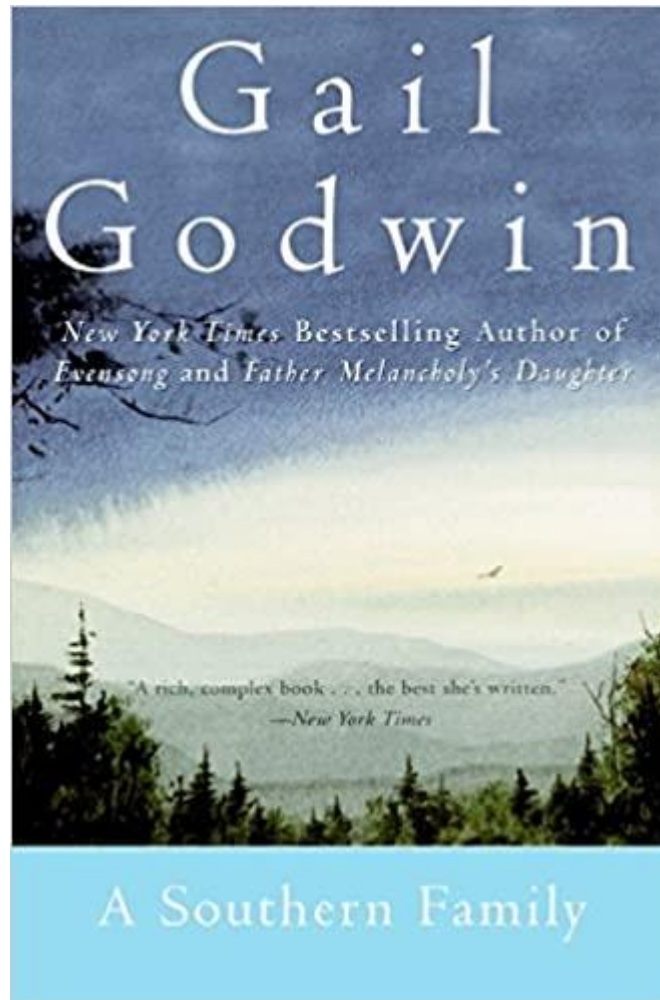
Dr. A. Kalyani

Advisor

Vellore Institute of Technology

Chennai

drkalyanianbu@gmail.com



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Gail Godwin

Courtesy: www.amazon.com

PREFACE

Gail Godwin Commenting on the novel remarks, in A Southern Family I found the writing there much denser; you have to sometimes go back and re-read a sentence, and then follow it through once more to get all the threads of it. (Xie 169).

"The New York Times finds 'A Southern Family' to be "a rich, complex book" in which the author is "in full bloom and at her mindful best. Jonathan Yardley of the Washington Post admires the "dense populous world" of this "Psychologically acute" novel an "ambitious book that entirely fulfills its ambitions" (Cheney 229).

Barthes five codes of structuralism is applied to the single text A Southern Family to get all the threads of the novel together. Structuralists in general, place one book in particular and link it with other books, but Barthes places the five codes in particular and moves into one text . By applying all the five codes of Barthes to the novel, all the minute details can be understood.

The work throws light on the five 'Barthesian Codes' of structuralism for the analysis of the literary text. It also contains

examples of all the codes exemplified in this novel. The five codes of Barthes illustrated in Gail Godwin's, 'A Southern Family', are the Proairectic code, Hermeneutic code, Cultural code, Semic code and symbolic code.

Gail Godwin's A Southern Family as 'Verbal Diagram' deals with the five codes in the novel. The mysterious death of Theo Quick is the Proairectic code as it is the central event of the action, around which the entire novel revolves. The Hermeneutic code solves the mystery behind Theo Quick's death because none is able to certify whether it is a murder or suicide. The cultural code is highlighted on three basic Christian beliefs such as the importance of love, the Christian concept of Heaven and the soul's preparation to meet God.

The Semic code is employed in the description of the heroine Clare and other important characters. By way of elucidating the Symbolic code, the parallels in structure, motives, characters and situations are explained. The contrasts in plot, characters and situations are also explained. The patterns in language such as dreams, letters, metaphors and songs are also substantiated.

The book proves that the application of Barthes five codes to Gail Godwin's A Southern Family makes the study intrusive.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The focus of the formalists' concentration on what is internal to the linguistic constructs prepared the ground for the full-blown Structuralist Criticism. This is exemplified in the works of the French Scholar Roland Barthes (1915-80) "its essence is the belief that things cannot be understood in isolation, they have to be seen in the context of larger structures they are part of (hence the term structuralism)" (Barry 39).

Structuralism propounds a theory that texts, languages and social system should be regarded as a structure whose parts have meaning only when considered in relation to each other. Though structuralism appears to be a recent development, it has its roots as early as 1957. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure is called the father of structuralism. He was the first person to concentrate on the patterns and functions of language. Unlike the linguistic scholars of the nineteenth century who were interested in the historical aspects of language, Saussure focused on the patterns and functions of language, with the emphasis on how meanings

are maintained and established through grammatical structures.

According to Saussure, meanings of words are always interdependent and no single word can be understood in isolation. A word depends for its exact meaning on its chain and meaning of any single word will be altered if any other single word is removed from the chain. Saussure used the term 'langue' and 'parole' to signify, the language as a structure on the one hand and the meaning it conveys on the other. So the individual remark is a discrete item which only makes sense when seen in relation to a wider containing structure.

Though Saussure laid the foundation, the theory was developed only in the twentieth century. The anthropologist Claude Levi - Strauss applied the structuralist outlook to the interpretation of myth. He suggested that the individual tale that is the parole from a cycle of myths did not have a separate and inherent meaning but could only be understood by considering its position in the whole cycle which is the langue, and by the similarities and differences between the tale and other tales in the sequence. He interpreted the Oedipus myth in relation to the tales

concerning the city of Thebes. He was thus able to throw a new light on the story.

Structuralist pattern can be understood within a single work or in the whole literature of an author. The text is analyzed under the convention of the genre to which it belongs and in relation with other texts of the same genre. Robert Scholes in The Structural Analysis of Literary Texts explains what a structuralist does when he approaches a specific text, using Todorov's description and the actual work of Barthes.

According to Tzvetan Todorov, a literary text can be approached in a number of ways. He has used a variety of possible approaches to the study of literature and writing about it. He recommends the following three traditional methods such as Projection, Commentary and Poetics. Projection is studying and understanding in relation to the society of which it is a part of or the psychology behind the creation of literature.

It goes beyond literature, while Commentary limits itself to the text. To him, paraphrasing a literary text is commentary. The third approach to literature is Poetics. It seeks the general principles that manifest

themselves in particular works. Poetics does not mean considering a particular work as an instance of a general law. The poetic study of any particular work should lead to conclusions which complete or modify the initial premises of the study. "A mere hunt for archetypes or any preestablished structural pattern is not an exercise in poetics but a parody of it" (Scholes 143).

Though Todorov gives importance to other aspects like reading, description and projection, he rarely emphasizes the semantic dimension of literary texts. But structuralism aims in finding a satisfactory way of incorporating the semantic dimension within the consideration of structure. Structuralism facilitates the understanding of the story. Writers employ structuralism in their complicated story. Thus structuralism makes reading easy.

Contrary to the views of Todorov, Barthes gives importance to semantic dimensions. So it is his five codes which paves the way of understanding a work of art in relation to its structure. Roland Barthes "is a literary critic, an advocate of *le nouvelle critique*, a practitioner of *le nouvelle critique*, student of popular culture, a scholar of Racine, a brilliant

polemicist, a formidable rhetorician, an ingenious, mercurial man of letters" (Scholes 148). Barthes published his book S/Z in 1970. This book, of some two hundred pages is about Balzac's thirty-page story called Sarrasine. In this book Barthes divides the story of Balzac into 561 units and classifies under five codes which forms the underlying structure of all narrative.

Barthes five codes of structuralism is the string which connects the story together. The five codes of structuralism are seen in the context of a larger structure, and the larger structure is then seen as an overall basic 'dyadic pair', such as art and life, male and female which have relationship with all the five codes. Structuralists aim is to understand the individual item by placing it in the context of the larger structure to which it belongs. According to Barthes the individual item is the particular story and the larger structure is the system of codes which he sees as generating all possible actual narratives just as the grammatical structure.

Frye in Literature as Context made it clear that Milton's Lycidas, if read alone will not convey any proper meaning because it has connections with other pastoral elegies like

Adonais, so if a reader has to understand any of the elegies, he has to be familiar with the structural element of myth in all the elegies. In the critical essay The Figure in the carpet Todorov connects all the novels of Henry James and shows the link between all his works of art, and gives a complete idea about his novels and thus makes the understanding of his novels easy.

But later critics like Barthes, Gerard Genette have proved that structuralist method of analysis can be applied even in the analysis of a single novel. According to Barthes, by applying structuralist method of analysis, one can understand even the minute details of a novel that will enable one to comprehend a complicated story easily.

to work on the unique text down to its least details, is to resume the structural analysis of fiction at the point where it is presently stopped at the large structure; it is to give it the power (the time, the case) to follow the capillaries of meaning to leave no significant spot without presenting the code or codes that it may be connected to (Scholes-19).

Thus his book S/Z is a two hundred page study, about a thirty page story written by Balzac called Sarrasine. And moreover Barthes makes it clear : that by comparing the entire corpus of an author's work of art, the texts will lose its differences. The opening sentences of the book are self explanatory. To quote,

They say that by virtue of their asceticism certain Buddhists come to see a whole country in a bean. This is just what the first analyst of the recite wanted to do; to see all the stories in the world in one single structure we are going, they thought, to extract from each tale its model, then from these models we will make a great narrative structure, which we will apply (for verification) to any story in existence an exhausting task and finally an undesirable one, because the text thereby loses its difference (Scholes 148)

Over the past ten years structural poetics has been forced to justify itself by its applicability to individual text, and this has been considered a healthy phenomenon. Barthes is the first critic to use codes in

analysing an individual text. Robert Scholes explains his method of analysing a work of art by using codes as follows.

More than any other scholar, Barthes has concerned himself with the pervasiveness of codes and coding in human experience. He is close to Levi-Strauss in many respects, and is certainly the most sociologically oriented of the literary structuralists. He finds, for instance, in modern France an active codification of clothing, furniture, food, and many other aspects of ordinary life. There is a food system, for instance, in which the various possible foods are arranged paradigmatically, according to their affinities, and syntagmatically according to the order in which we eat them at any given meal (149).

Barthes points out that both aspects are present on a typical restaurant menu. If one reads a menu

horizontally, looking at all the entries or all the deserts, for instance, we are exploring the system's paradigms. If we read vertically, from soup to nuts, we

are proceeding syntagmatically. The whole menu represents the Langue of the restaurant (and a sub language of the whole culture). When we select from the menu and place our order we make a statement (parole) in the language of food (149).

Barthes makes similar demonstrations with clothing, with furniture and architecture and makes one agree that human beings organize virtually all their experiences along linguistic lines. "These various 'codes' then shape our lives into symmetries which may be fearful or comforting depending on one's point of view" (Scholes 150).

Scholes also states that Barthes way of interpretation is different in numerous ways. Barthes clearly indicates that interpretation in American criticism is usually reading and each reading is in some way a reduction of the text to a particular meaning that may be drawn out of it. He feels that the interpretation of fiction differs markedly from the interpretation of poetry. Even if the poem is about just twenty lines, its criticism exceeds twenty pages. This means that the interpretation of poetry is expansive and fiction is reductive and selective. So any such

reading of a fictional text will be insufficient and hence will require other connective reading and interpretations. So Barthes has made a critical study of Sarrasine for two hundred pages to bring out its various systems of meanings and their interaction.

The five codes identified by Barthes are, the Proairectic Code, the Hermeneutic code, the Cultural Code, the Semic Code and the Symbolic Code. The Proairectic code explains the action of the story. The Hermeneutic code poses questions or enigmas which provide narrative suspense. The Cultural code provides the means whereby information contained in authoritative texts like the Bible finds its way into the novel, poems and other genres.

The Semic Code is also called the Connotative Code which is linked to the theme. This code when organized around a particular name constitutes a character. The Symbolic code is also linked to the theme but on a larger scale. It consists of contrasts and pairings related to the most binary polarities: male and female, night and day, good and evil, life and art. These are the structures of contrasted elements which structuralists see

as fundamental to the human way of perceiving and organizing reality.

Silverman (1983) exemplifies Barthes' five codes in a lucid manner in her The Subject of Semiotics. She has applied the Semic code, in the description of a character called Durbeyfield in Hardy's Tess. "The Semic code is useful for grouping a number of signifiers around a proper name or another signifier (as though it is a proper name) and the signifiers grouped function like a collective signified to the proper name as its surrogate" (Krishnaswamy 174)

Durbeyfield has been described as follows:

On an evening in the later part of May, a middle-aged man was walking homeward from Shaston to the village of Marlott, in the adjoining vale of Balkemore or Blackmoor. The pair of legs that carried him were rickety, and there was a bias in his gait which inclined him somewhat to the left of the straight line. He occasionally gave a smart nod, as if in confirmation of some opinion, though he was not thinking of anything in particular. An empty egg-basket was slung upon his

arm, the nap of his hat, was ruffed, a patch being quite worn away at its brim where his thumb came in taking it off. (Krishnaswamy 174)

Before the proper name is supplied, middle aged, empty egg-basket, rickety-legs, shabby hat, bias in his gait, are given to create a collective signified.

According to Peter Barry “the best way to appreciate the Semic code, is to use a variation of what educationalist call ‘cloze procedure’, which involves deleting words from a text and having readers fill these gaps by drawing inferences from context and overall structure” (56). To cite an example

John Edward Scott Armitage: fifty - five years old five feet eleven inches tall, weight thirteen stone three (Pounds, ounces). The passage is taken from the opening of a novel by Mervyn Jones. The central character, Mr. Armitage, is presented in the opening scene and his character immediately established. In the gaps if the wrong alternative is chosen, the character will be decisively altered (56).

The Hermeneutic code is entrusted with the responsibility of articulating and resolving the enigma. Here she cites an example from Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The enigma is found in the description of Mr Hyde's house.

"Even on Sunday, when it veiled its more florid charms and lay comparatively empty of passage, the street shone out in contrast to its dingy neighbourhood like a pine in a forest showed no windows, nothing but a door on the lower story: and a blind forelead at disclosed."

The mystery is built up with the use of a trap, Equivocation, jamming and disclosure. A trap (snare) is created when Utterson asks Poole, the servant about Hyde: 'O, dear no, Sir. He never dines here. Indeed we see very little of him on this side of the house; he mostly comes and goes by the laboratory.

Equivocation contains a snare and a truth, when the body of Hyde is discovered, Utterson remarks: 'Hyde is gone to his account; and it only remains for us to find the body of your master. Utterson is already in the presence of that body and has no need to search for it. Thus it is a snare

Jamming can take place in the form of, the death of a key witness or something missing, etc., A suspended answer or partial answer may be given disclosure is the closure and end of signification (Krishnaswamy 175-176).

Peter Barry in his Beginning theory have applied the Symbolic code in the interpretation of Edgar Allan Poe's tale.

A brief working summary of the plot may be useful. During what appears to be a civil war in an unnamed European country a wounded officer (as we may assume him to be) takes refuge in a recently abandoned chateau. The room he sleeps in contains an extremely lifelike portrait of a young woman, and a written account of this portrait, which he finds in the room, tells how the artist was her husband, who had become so carried away with the creation of the portrait that he failed to notice that as 'life' was kindled in the painting it simultaneously, drained away from the sitter. At the end of the tale the placing of the final touch of colour which renders the portrait

perfect coincides with the death of the sitter (52).

The parallels lie in the binary structure of the tale, which is made up of two contrasting halves. In the first half the chateau is a place of refuge, where he finds safety from his enemies. In the second half by contrast, it is a place of danger and ultimately destruction for the sitter, where she is delivered to the whims of her artist husband and her life is drained away. A third level of contrasts and parallels are those which concern narrative mechanism such as presentation and language. Here the parallel lies between the narrators of the two halves because both have a degree of anonymity. Though the tale contains so many parallels and contrasts, the entire tale is based upon the basic dyads such as are and life, day and night, male and female. So finally one has to decide on which side the tale is. As Peter Barry explains,

The thesis of the structuralist is that narrative structures are founded up on such underlying paired opposites, or dyads, so that contrasts such as these are the skeletal structure on which all narratives are fleshed out. If we had to reduce this list of dyads, to achieve a

single pair, then it would be the art life contrast, since the talk seems most to be about life and are viewed as factors in an overall psychic economy.

The obvious final question is to ask which side of this dichotomy the tale is on. There can surely be little doubt that it is on the side of art, for it is the act of artistic creation and, to a lesser extent, that of contemplating a work of art, which is most vividly and passionately described in the tale, rather than any sense of the waste of a young life (55-56).

The structuralist emphasizes on structure, symbol and design and presents a series of parallels, echoes, reflections patterns and contrasts so that the narrative becomes highly schematized and the work of art becomes a Verbal Diagram. A structuralist analyzes the factors listed on the left and expects to find them in the sections of the story listed on the right.

Parallels	Plot
Echoes	Structure
Reflections/ Repetitions in	Characters / Motive

Contrasts	Situation/ Circumstance
Patterns	Language / Imagery (Barry 52).

Unlike other critics who have applied different codes to different works of art. Barthes applies all the codes to one work of art, which enables the reader to understand even the minute details in the work. This book undertakes to analyze the five codes of Barthes as exemplified in the novel A Southern Family by Gail Godwin.

Gail Godwin, like William Faulkner, has employed structural elements involving disruption of chronological time and multiple points of view as reflected in her A Southern Family. The structural elements as used in her A Southern Family is an innovative mode of her narration. As the story does not have a particular hero or a villain with multiple points of view and with the structural elements the writer enables the reader to perceive its implications with clarity. By applying Barthes five codes of structuralism the incidents and characters are gradually unfolded. The story with the structural elements and multiple

points of view enable the reader to understand all the characters comprehensively.

Gail Godwin was born on June 18th 1937 in Birmingham, Alabama she attended her peace junior college during the year 1955-57 did her B.A., in the University of North Carolina in the year 1959, did her M.A. in the year 1968 in the university of Iowa and completed her Ph.D., in the year 1971. She started writing at the age of thirteen itself and now she has become a prominent figure in the American Literary circle. According to Jane Hill:

Godwin's impulse to write long
Precedes her matriculation at Iowa,
however. She began keeping a journal
at 13, a habit that persists even now.
She says, 'I made my first diary, with
half-sheets of note book paper, card
board, and yarn, and I wrote in it
passionately, because I felt there was
nobody else like me and I had to know
why or why not'. Through her juvenile
fiction, Godwin gradually discovered
that the process of writing allows one
to take control, to shape oneself and
one's experience toward a goal, in

much the way that a writer shapes a protagonist in fiction. This concept of life mirroring fiction, Godwin argues, allows an individual access to the heroic (7).

Gail Godwin published her first book In 1970 The Perfectionists. Her Glass People, The Odd Woman and Violet Clay were recommended for the National Awards. She published her next novel A Mother and Two Daughters in 1982 and this novel was also nominated for the National Book Awards. Mr. Bedford and the Muses and The Finishing School were published in the year 1983-1984. In 1988 she was named the distinguished Alumna by the university of North Carolina and was awarded Thomas Wolfe Award for A Southern Family.

In short Gail Godwin has written seven novels and two short stories Dream Children and Mr. Bedford and the Muses, but these short stories are also considered as her novel. According to Jane Hill " Godwin's reputation rests primarily on her novels, so much so that she has sometimes been introduced as the author of nine novels rather than seven novels and two collections of stories.

Godwin has employed different techniques in her novels, she has used realism as a technique in A Mother and Two Daughters (1928) Folkloric structure in The Finishing School. But her talent in technical experimentation is shown at its best in A Southern Family (1987). It is a complicated novel with multiple narration, the novel does not have a particular hero or villain. Each character is seen through many eyes. Barthes five codes promote better comprehension of the novel.

The title of the story makes it clear that it is the story of a Southern family. According to Jocelyn Donlon story telling is a conversational activity which constitutes a meaningful part of southern culture and southern literature. As a result of the art of story telling, all the characters consider themselves as a part of some play. They are not able to accept reality. "In A Southern Family, Godwin continues to explore the jealousies and hatreds, the dark interior of 'the family caldron' to reach a similar point individual survival and community will being depend on individual development: respect for each others pain; and tolerance for differing perspectives" (Kissel 130).

A Southern Family revolves around three important aspects namely the violent and mysterious death of Theo Quick, the Quicks coming to terms with reality after much difficulties and the differences between the middle class family of the Quicks and the lower class family of Theo's ex-wife Snow Mullins. These three aspects are interwoven in this single novel. But Theo's sudden death makes a great change in all the characters, and they all accept realities and difficulties of the world with hope. "The single action of one family member, Theo Quick, causes everyone else to examine his or her part in the Quick family drama, causes each individual whose consciousness the novel explores to evaluate the role he or she plays in the unfolding of events before and after the momentary act that calls the foundation of family life into question" (Hill 103)

Several qualities of A Southern Family makes it a departure from Godwin's previous novels. For the first time, she has employed multiple points of view, several of them rendered in the first person. Another departure is that, for the first time in a novel, Godwin creates a protagonist who shares her profession. The central character Clare Campion is a novelist. Another important

departure is the main character Clare Champion who is introduced as a secondary character. This shift is the result of the multiple perspective, also an expression of the author's acknowledgement of the nature of the characters.

The story is narrated from the varied points of view of Lily Quick, Clare Champion (Lily's daughter), Ralph Quick (Clare's step father), Rafe Quick (Clare's half- Brother), Felix (Clare's Viennese -Jewish Lover), Julia Richardson (Clare's life long friend), Sister Patrick (a Quick family friend), and Snow Mullins (Theo Quick's ex-wife). All have shared a relationship with Theo Quick, who at the outset of the novel kills a woman. In a mysterious way he dies which bewilders and haunts his family and friends. Each survivor interprets Theo's character and death in different ways.

Lily Quick, as a true white Southern Lady tries to protect her family members from failures and limitations and from pain and shame. But the protective stories and secrets have a sinister on going function. They block the acceptance of reality and prevent the growth of the individual family members. According to Kissel,

The Quick family lives in its gun closed- off world, an oxygen deprived pressure chamber of family life", with the bickering Lily and Ralph at the center. In their remote house on the hill, the Quicks, according to Julia Richardson, [have] shut themselves up inside, closed all the windows, turned on the heat or the air-conditioning, and continued to provoke and intrigue and smolder, oblivious to the peace and beauty of the immediate surroundings. They have created an environment that is physically, emotionally, and mentally unhealthy for all of them(131).

But after the sudden death of Theo, Clare overcomes her negative family background to embrace a larger a more real and imperfect world and emerges as a more compassionate and realistic self. Even Lily Quick begins to change after the death of Theo by helping the old underprivileged people. But everyone regrets for Theo's death. They all come to the conclusion, that they have failed to understand Theo. But on the first anniversary of Theo's death, Sister Patrick explains Lily that in her dream, she saw Theo preparing himself to shake hands with God. This makes everyone feel happy.

Gail Godwin's 'A Southern Family as Verbal Diagram' exemplifies the five codes of Barthes in the novel. A Southern Family. The Proairectic Code contains the indication of action and it is the main event which connects the entire story together. In A Southern Family the death of Theo Quick is the main event which connects the entire story together. The Hermeneutic Code refers to enigmas. In this novel the enigma is the mystery behind Theo Quick's death.

Nobody knows whether it is a murder or suicide. It also contains Snare, Equivocation, Jamming and Disclosure to reveal the mystery. The Cultural Code deals with certain Christian beliefs and tenets such as man and God relationship in the novel. The Semic Code focuses on the importance of words in the novel. The Symbolic Code deals with contrasts and pairing related to the plot of the novel. And the application of these codes enables the reader to understand the complicated story easily.

CHAPTER - II

VERBAL DIAGRAM

Gail Godwin's A Southern Family, begins with Clare Quick's return to mountain city from New York. The very next day, Theo Quick, half brother to Clare Campion is found dead with his girl friend Jeanette in a car. His death is a mystery. The death of Theo Quick marks a great change in all the characters. When Theo is alive, everyone fails to understand him. He loves his wife Snow Mullins, but Theo's mother Lily Quick is not able to accept her since she is from a working class.

As a result of the contempt between Lily and Snow, Theo finally divorces Snow and plans to marry a nurse called Jeanette, but suddenly they both are found dead inside the car. After Theo's death, both Lily and Snow want the custody of Jason the son of Theo Quick. Till the end of the story the three year old Jason is sometime with his mother and sometime with his grand mother.

Lily Quick for the second time marries, Ralph Quick, a man younger to her. After her second marriage in order to look after her

family and children, she gives up her writing career. Her daughter by the first marriage Clare, leaves home at an early age, since she does not approve of her mother's second marriage.

Clare after seeing her mother's life does not want to bear children though she lives with a man called Felix Rohr and his daughter Lizzie. She is a popular novelist in New York, but all her stories lack reality. According to Theo, Clare makes her character suffer a little, just enough to improve their character but always rewards them with love or money or perfect job or sometimes all three. She is not interested in writing about Theo because, he does not fit into her world. Before her half brother Theo Quick dies, he requests her to write stories with a touch of reality. After his mysterious death, she starts writing stories with a realistic touch.

Lily's marriage with Ralph is not successful. Ralph Quick spends most of his time with his neighbour Miss Alicia Gallant. Lily after her son Theo's death, casts off all her pride and starts helping the old people. After a significant dream she turns over a new leaf. The death of Theo Quick brings the rural class and the upper class together. Though in

the beginning Lily does not like Jason being with Snow, she later on accepts it and even thinks that Jason being with both the classes will learn the ups and downs of both the communities.

Everyone is tortured with a sense of guilt that he or she has not taken care of Theo Quick. It is only the final dream of Sister Patrick which fills them with happiness. In her dream, Theo is washing his hands in order to shake hands with God. Thus the novel ends on a happy note.

The Barthesian codes are well exemplified in the novel. The Proairetic code or code of action "is the code of action in a story, the sequence of events within a story; it is the 'glue' which binds the events together".(Krishnaswamy 176). In A Southern Family the code of action is Theo's mysterious death and this is the central event of the novel

The death of Theo Quick is a mystery. Some believe that Theo has killed his girl friend Jeanette and killed himself and some of them are of the view that they both must have committed suicide, and some even believe that Jeanette's son who is three years old, seated at the back seat must have killed

them. As per the neighbours' report they are found dead in his car while the child is seated on the back seat.

Now this mysterious death of Theo, changes the calm atmosphere of the entire Mountain City. This becomes the center of action in the novel. All the characters including Lily Quick undergo a great change after Theo Quick's mysterious death. Ralph Quick, father of Theo Quick even announces a prize money to any one who clears the mystery behind Theo's death. Thus the Proairetic code proves to be the code of action, since the whole novel centers around the death of Theo Quick.

In a Southern Family the views of Barthes about the Hermeneutic code is reiterated in the Equivocation which contains a snare and a truth. The snare refers to the possible causes of Theo's death. A stranger who is arrested and released for an attempt to rape Jeanette is one of the suspects. Ralph Quick explains this incident to the Detective and even tells, that to safeguard herself from the stranger, he has given his gun to her through Theo. Commenting on this incident Rafe remarks "Theo was talking some stuff about that trial today, when we were working

on my car after lunch, he was saying some kind of strange things. But Theo's always saying strange things, and I didn't think too much about it afterwards" (104).

Ralph Quick even doubts, Jeanette's three year old son, seated at the back seat. He has his own doubts whether this child would have killed Theo and Jeanette The following conversation with the detective is self explanatory.

Surely you're not saying that a three year - old child strapped into a car seat could have somehow reached forward over the seat, wrested that heavy gun away from the two adults in front and placed three accurate and fatal shots?

Children ounger than that kill people every day. It's in the papers. I'm not saying, he did, I'm saying why is it you all won't even look at the other possibilities? (189).

Rafe Quick suspects Snow Mullins, Theo's former wife as responsible for his death. To his psychiatrist he says, "You know, you asked me a minute ago who I think Killed Theo. Well, in the most important sense, she

did. She may not have been there to pull the triggers but marrying her was like signing his own death warrant”(263).

The Truth behind Theo Quick's death is revealed later on, when Clare Quick feels that it is his own family which has killed him. Clare after his funeral states, “Well, if guns don't kill you, families will”(162). This is confirmed by Snow's statement, “Theo was never allowed to live his own life or be his own self. In a sense, it was his own family that killed him, and he let them do it”(238). Rafe Quick also regrets that he has failed to understand his brother and he holds himself responsible for his death.

The following view of Julia makes it clear that, Theo is killed by his own people, who are all the time around him but have failed to understand him.

No, said Julia more charitably, but with bitterness, I think he was a troubled young man growing up in a society that wasn't much help to him. And surrounded by people who weren't a whole hell of a lot of help to him, either. Among them I prominently include myself. Last night he asked me

for help, but I had a headache and wanted to get home and grade my papers (97).

When he is alive, all the Quick's refuse to spend time with Theo. As a result, they are responsible for his death.

"Jamming, a part of the Hermeneutic code refers to the death of a key witness or something missing etc. As a result a suspended answer or partial answer may be given" (Krishnaswamy 176). In A Southern Family both Theo and the nurse Jeanette are found dead, and the only evidence, who has seen their death is the three year old son of Jeanette who is unable to explain anything. Ralph Quick even suspects the child to be the murderer. But through the Child's statement one gets a vague idea that Theo must have killed the nurse and then himself, but everyone including the lawyer feels that the child's statement cannot be taken into account. The lawyer explains,

Now, in cases like this, there's a correct way questions should be asked of children, and in my opinion Detective Robbins followed strictly correct procedure. He asked the child,

'What happened? 'The Child told him, 'Bang, bang, Mommy fell down'. Then he asked, did someone shoot Mommy? And the child said yes. Then he asked him. 'Who shot Mommy?' and the child said, 'Theo'(185).

But none is able to come to any conclusion with the child's statement. The lawyer himself acknowledges, "Like I tried to tell you earlier, Mr. Quick, there's Just no such thing as a perfect investigation. Human beings are fallible"(190). Disclosure should put an end to significations. The signification of Theo's death is put to an end by the multiple narration.

All the Quick's share their guilt in Theo's death. It is Theo Quick's brother Rafe, who first acknowledges his guilt, he explains to the psychiatrist that from their childhood days, everyone has liked him more than Theo. He has been the favorite of his grandmother and mother and so many people like him but none pays any attention to Theo who never expresses him self to anyone. He conceals everything with a grin on his face. Rafe regrets that he has failed to understand his brother. Even that very afternoon before his death, his brother informs him that he has lost his job

and he also explains that he is going to see the nurse Jeanette whom he intends to bring with him. He confides all his problems to Rafe but Rafe instead of consoling him starts hating him and avoids him. He regrets that if he had consoled his brother and had taken him with him for a ride, he firmly believes he could have averted the tragic end.

I guess I was having conflicting feelings. I loved him, he was my big brother helping me out, but at the same time I couldn't hide from myself that he was being an ass and was probably going to end up a failure. I wanted I guess I wanted to get away from him. I was impatient for him to finish fixing my car so I could get in it and drive away from that hill and from him and all his problems. I mean, here he was, twenty-eight years old and still acting about fifteen, and he had this kid and was living at home with Mom and Dad, and he'd just as good as lost his job and hated what he was doing, anyway it all seemed so hopeless, and as I was driving back to Chapel Hill I was thinking about him and trying not to think about him, and saying to myself, Well, Rafe, you haven't fucked

up your life yet, and you're not going to.
And I was trying not to think really
terrible things (288).

Clare, the half sister of Theo Quick although has inherited the name Campion from her father is more of a Quick than a Campion. She also shares her guilt in Theo's death. She eliminates Theo even during his childhood days. She likes Rafe more than Theo. She affirms to her friend Julia, that if she has understood her half brother and has spent little time with him and written to him, he would have become a different person but she fails to do so and now after his death she regrets for her behaviors. And when he states that he wishes to be a character in her novel she thinks that he does not deserve it.

And now everything is disclosed and it becomes evident that it is his own family which has killed him. All including Lily, her mother, attempt to understand his feelings. Now the enigma is solved.

The third code exemplified in A Southern Family the Cultural code which is represented in the form of good and evil, humanity and bestiality, day and night, body and soul. "These are fragments of ideology

whose effect is felt in all the other codes. The Cultural code provide the means where by the information contained in the authoritative texts like the Bible, finds its way in to the novel, poems and other genres" (Krishnaswamy 177).

The novel contains three basic Christian beliefs, they are, the importance of love, the Christian concept of Heaven and the soul's preparation to meet God. In A Southern Family all the characters refuse to shower love on Theo. Ralph, Theo's father spends most of his time with his neighbor Miss. Alicia and is not concerned about his family. Lily in the same way does not spend much time with her family and likes Rafe more than Theo. Theo's wife Snow who leaves him and nurse Jeanette fail to express love at his point of need. Theo's brother Rafe also fails to understand him. Clare, his half sister is so busy in building her career as a writer that she does not find time to spend with Theo, and she loves Rafe more than Theo.

Felix, Clare's boy friend even argues with Clare to understand his brother and spend time with him. Though Felix feels that there is none to care for him he also feels

disgusted on seeing Theo's behaviour. Felix argues with Clare.

I like your brother Theo. Why is it you so rarely speak of him? It's always Rafe. This brother is a mensch. He feels things. He makes such provocative and original observations. But he has troubles. He needs someone to help him".

Help him how? asked Clare, frowning at herself in the mirror.

Show him we are on his side. Give him moral support. We had a very interesting talk while you and Rafe were at the Supermarket. He's unhappy with his work. That's not good. May be we should invited him and stay with us, he's never even been to Newyork. We could show him the city and I could take him to the theater and you could talk with him. I think he needs the example of people who like what they are doing. It could give him courage to start something else (308).

The failure to show love and care results in Theo Quick's death. They all realize

his value only after his death. They all feel guilty and think that if they have spent little time with him his tragic death would have been averted.

In The Bible, in certain occasions God Speaks to man through dreams. The novel too contains two important dreams. The Queen mother Lily dreams about herself becoming a saint. After the dream there is a tremendous change in her, and she prepares herself for becoming a saint. The Christian concept of Heaven is evident through Sister Patrick's dream. To all the characters, Sister Patrick's dream becomes a source of consolation.

Abraham Dreamed. Jacob was wounded while wrestling with an angel in a dream. Joseph was freed from prison and placed in pharaoh's service because he understood dreams. Eli advised Samuel to answer the voice that called to him in dreams, and thus learned the future of himself and his house. The Church fathers dreamed. Polycarp on his way to Rome, dreamed he would be killed there, and was. Saint Justin Martyr a student of philosophy, believed, as did Irenaeus, that dreams were a means of

maintaining a direct union with God. Constantine saw "Chi" and "rho" written in the sky, and at night Christ appeared to him in a dream carrying these two letters in his hand. The king converted to Christianity, and the letter worn on the shields of his warriors, became the symbol of the Greek Empire for more than a thousand year to come (516).

The dream of Sister Patrick about the dead Theo on his first death anniversary is significant. In her dream, she sees her horse named Shadow, kicking a young man and she identifies it to be Theo Quick and he tries to explain to her about his death, but Sister Patrick is not able to hear anything since she has forgotten to wear her hearing aid. In the dream he is washing his hands to enable himself to shake hands with God.

Lily after hearing details of Sister Patrick's dream feels happy. According to her, it is Theo's way of sending message to her. Sister Patrick did not hear anything when Theo explained about his death because what is important is that though Theo suffered much in this world, now he has got a place in Heaven and is ready to shake hands with God. In this

earthly world, including his mother and wife there is none to understand him. But God has loved him and has given him a place in Heaven and this makes the novel end with a happy note.

Another significant dream is about the soul's preparation to meet God. Lily Quick dreams about herself. In the dream she sees herself as a saint. She feels happy about it, as she experiences the joy of attaining sainthood in her dream. She narrates her dream to her daughter.

I dreamed I was lying on a narrow bed in a convent cell, began Lily, her blue eyes going cool and distant. "Ten or maybe fifteen nuns were crowded around my bed. They were in a kind of ... awe, and one of them said, 'She's dead'. Another one asked, 'Are you sure?' 'Oh, yes,' said the first nun, 'and she looks so beautiful in her death. You can tell she's a saint.' And another nun asked, 'Shall we begin laying her out?' All this time I was thinking, But I'm not dead, yet all the same I continued to lie perfectly still and let them think so. I couldn't bear losing the opportunity of

being a saint. "And that was the whole dream? (456).

After this dream, there is a tremendous change in Lily's character, the queen mother whom everyone calls the proud Lily now understands what life is and starts helping the poor old people. Earlier she hates the very sight of Snow and calls her a 'hilly billy girl'. Snow even abuses that it is Lily who has separated her and Theo. Even after Theo's death, she is so particular that Snow should not meet Jason and file a suit against her claiming for Jason's custody. But after the dream she turns over a new leaf and is convinced that if Jason grows with them for some days and with Snow for some days he will have many people around him to take care of him. The following lines throw light on the change that has come over Lily.

Mrs. Mullins will teach him to dig potatoes and make biscuits and all his rough little cousins will teach him to be taught and protect himself and if I can just teach him to expect the most of himself and help shape his ideals. I will die a happy woman". It's what I care about most, seeing that child grow up strong and intelligent, without being

damaged irrevocably by his early bad luck. It's what I am living for now. When Clare called yesterday, from Switzerland, to wish me happy birthday, I could tell she was a little disappointed that I didn't get more excited about our relatives in Switzerland. Ten years ago, I might have been. But 'roots' don't matter to me much anymore. Ancestors-in-common are just more antique clutter and old debris. I care about what's here for me to do now (531-53 2).

Finally, she is seen in the company of Sister Patrick traveling together towards sainthood. She becomes an 'Angel' as her grandson always calls her. She has cast away all the worldly pride in her and has prepared herself to attain sainthood.

Barthes named the Connotative Code as the Semic code. This is linked to "theme and this code when organized around a particular proper name constitutes a character. It utilizes hints or 'flickers of meaning', and works through the nuances of individual words and phrases" (Barry 56).

Clare, at forty - two still had her rapt air of doom. She had become the writer she had wanted to be since she was twelve, she had achieved an enviable combination of artistic and popular success. Yet she was still tensed - you could see in the line of her shoulders for a crushing defeat. That wasn't all of her, of course. She was also funny, wickedly acute about people, and when not plotting scenarios of misfortune for herself, had a large capacity for enjoying life. She had a mind that never stopped questioning and an insatiable craving for things of the spirit; her example, on many occasions had provided Julia with much needed doses of confidence and courage (16).

The central character Clare is presented in the opening scene and her character is immediately established. Her artistic success and her achievement is clearly stated, but it also shows that she has a touch of failure in her. As soon as the reader reads it, one gets an idea of Clare's character and her career. The words popular success, crushing, funny, confidence, courage, give a clear insight into Clare's character. The relationship between Freddy Stratton and

Clare is revealed through the conversation between Clare and Julia. "I've got up my Courage to phone Freddy. I've been working up to it for years. I want to test whether I'm over that terrible sense of inferiority, she could make me feel just by looking at me. It's been over twenty years since I last saw her"(45).

Words such as 'courage', 'years' 'terrible' explain that Clare has to make herself courageous to overcome that inferiority complex, she has over Freddy Stratton. It indeed shows that Freddy has made Clare feel inferior to her, which Clare is not able to forget even after so many years. If the quoted words are replaced by some other alternatives such as 'memory', 'days I know not', 'awful' the entire meaning will be changed.

While speaking about Clare's writing to her. Theo explains that she never allows her character suffer a lot. They suffer for a short time and finally they are rewarded.

Wait, I haven't finished. I thought he meant it as a compliment too, at first. 'Oh? Why is that?' I asked him. 'Because', he said, 'you take care of them so nicely. You let them suffer a little, just enough to improve their

characters, but you always rescue them from the abyss at the last minute and reward them with love or money or the perfect job or sometimes all three (49).

The words 'nicely', 'a little', 'improve and reward' throw light on Clare's treatment of her characters in her novels. If these words are substituted with other words such as 'artificially', 'not too much', 'give them prize of reward'. The entire meaning will be altered.

Theo's death around which the story revolves is given the multi dimensional treatment. Everybody talks about his death. It is Clare's friend Julia, who first gives a hint that it is his own family which is responsible for Theo's death. "I think he was troubled young man growing up in a society that wasn't much help to him" (97).

The word 'troubled' shows that though Theo is a good man by in nature, he is troubled by the society and his family who never understand him. The word troubled reveals that he is not responsible for his death and it is his family which has given him the trouble and that trouble has killed him. If the word

troubled is replaced by the word 'distressed' the meaning is changed.

After Theo's death Lily starts visiting the underprivileged old people. These underprivileged old people suffer a lot in their death bed unlike Lily's mother who has an easy comfortable death.

Eleven years before, Lily's mother had accomplished her death in the same fastidious style in which she had lived her life. There had been no fuss, no blood, no loss of dignity. She had simply run down and the doctor had put her in the hospital for tests, which showed nothing but a disintegrating spine (not unusual at eighty-six, the doctor had informed her ungallantly), a little anemia, and her old friend Angina, which she had been using for decades to blackmail others into concessions. She was not sick enough for the hospital or strong enough to go back to her apartment, so the doctor suggested an interim stay at Brenthaven Rehabilitation Center, one of the better places of its kind, where you could still have a private room - if you could pay

for it. Exactly one week from her date of admission, she died (174).

Words like 'accomplished', 'fastidious style', 'no fuss' imply that her death is a peaceful one without causing any disturbance to anyone. Instead of these words if other words such as met, proud, confusion, little, are used one will not get the grandeur of her death.

Snow explains that after her marriage, she is torn in between, but she loves Theo a lot but when Theo is alive they are not allowed to lead a peaceful life.

When we was first married, I guess I had a choice of two parts, I says. I could go on being the ignorant hilly billy girl Theo had raised from the dirt or I could let the Queen Mother make me over into her idea of what I ought to be I should dress like them and talk like them and go to their snob churches and sit around with them in that stuffy house and act like it was the most wonderful thing in the world to be Theo's wife. They just mostly wanted me to reflect them. That was to be may part, I guess (236).

Snow gives full credit to Theo for raising her from the dirt. The words 'ignorant', 'raised' and 'wonderful', give a clear view of her and her position before her marriage and after her marriage. If these words are substituted with other words such as 'harmless', 'picked', 'beautiful' the entire meaning will be changed. The word 'raised' shows that Theo has improved her life but if it is replaced by the word 'picked', it will only emphasize that he has simply selected her from the dirt and has married her.

Linguists give importance to each and every word in a text. Structuralists give importance to words and according to them if a single word is altered the entire meaning is altered. In all the above six passages if the quoted words are altered. The entire meaning which links to the theme will be altered.

The Symbolic code is related to the field of themes. "Under this code, the theme is presented on a larger scale. It consists of contrasts and pairings related to the most binary polarities - good and evil, life and art. "According to the structuralist, the narrative structure is found upon such underlying paired opposites; or dyads, and these contrasts

become the skeletal structure on which all the narratives are built" (Barry 51).

The binary polarity in A Southern Family is between life and art. The Quicks never accept the realities of life. They lead a life of their own like the characters in the southern stories. According to Snow,

All families have themselves problems. I told that court appointed psychiatrist we all had to go and see after the first hearing, when the judge said they could have Jason for four more weeks and then we would meet again in his chambers. But if you want my opinion, there's something a lot more than that wrong with the Quicks". 'What do you think is wrong?' he asks. 'Well', I says, "It's like they are all acting in a play or something. Each one's got themselves a part, and they have to stay in that part as long as they're around the others (236).

They see themselves as performers in a play. Even regarding Theo's death whatever the family members know they narrate it like a story. This basic polarity of life and art underlines the structure of the novel.

Through the art of Quicks' story telling the author reveals the truth behind Theo's death. There are so many parallels and contrasts in the novel which help to understand the other aspects of the novel like the class system, the upper and lower classes, and their problems and the life of three generations of people. A third level of contrasts and parallels are those which concern narrative mechanisms such as presentation and language, as well as content .Structuralists trace Parallels, Echoes, Reflections or Repetitions, contrasts and patterns in plot, structure, character, motive, situation or circumstance and language or imagery . Some of these aspects are found in A Southern Family as stated below.

Parallels	In	Structure Character or Motive Situation or Circumstances
Echoes	In	Situation Plot Character
Contrast	In	Motive Situation
Language Patterns	In	Language

All these parallels and contrasts help the readers understand not only the basic polarities of life and art but also the other aspects of the novels. Listing some of the parallels from A Southern Family is the best way of understanding the novel.

The Parallel Structure in the novel lies in the multiple narration of the characters . Parallel to the view of Snow, Clare and Rafe reveal that they are responsible for Theo's death. In the end, it becomes evident that it is his own family which has killed him. In this story, two characters have Parallel Motives, Lilly Quick and Snow, both fight for the custody of Jason. The novel also contains many Parallel Situations. The first chapter begins with the mountaintop Journey of Julia and Clare and ends with the mountaintop journey of Sister Patrick and Lily Quick.

It also contains an important Parallel Situation in the life of Theo Quick. When he was a child, he washes his hands to shake hands with the Mother General and after his death, in Sister Patrick's dream he washes his hands to shake hands with God. Another Parallel Situation is found in the lives of both the father and the son, who have an unsuccessful married life. Parallel Characters

are found among the Quicks. Another set of Parallel Characters are found between Clare's friend Julia and her step daughter Lizzie.

Snow openly declares in the court during the trial of Jason's custody that it is his own family which killed him. When he is alive, Lily does not like Snow. All the time she forces Snow to dress like them and talk like them and go to their snob churches and sit around them in that stuffy house and to feel proud of being Theo's wife. According to Snow "They just mostly wanted me to reflect them that was to be my part, I guess" (236).

According to her, though she and Theo live in a separate apartment they are not allowed to lead a peaceful life, Lily often visits them and finds fault with Snow. Theo can neither be with Snow nor with his family, he is torn in between them. He is unable to take a decision regarding his family and wife. In the words of Snow,

Well, Theo, he was so torn. I mean he didn't like them finding fault with me, but at the same time he was always wanting to go back up there. It was like he was afraid of missing something, even though he know they was going to

hurt him or make him mad the minute he walked in the door. He kept on putting himself in the position where they could tell him what to do, like he'd have to go up there to consult his father about new tires or car insurance. Do you know that even after Theo was a married man and a father, he still didn't own his own car, even though he had paid for it with his own money? (237-238)

Rafe, one among the Quicks also acknowledges that he is responsible for Theo's death, he has failed to understand Theo. Rafe remains everybody's favorite, and there is nobody to care for Theo and understand his feelings. He explains to the psychiatrists that there is none to shower love on Theo. The conversation between the psychiatrist and Rafe brings out the partiality of Lily. He in fact is her special child and is her joy. This is sometimes a problem for Theo that so many things come easier for Rafe and that people are drawn towards Rafe without any effort on his part. He is his grand mother's favourite and she makes no secret about it. She spoils and pampers him like a little king, whereas with Theo it is always just a friendly relationship.

Rafe hates Theo, and his hatred becomes all the more when Theo marries Snow of whom Rafe has mocked at the inn. Theo works as an accountant but he is unable to pass his CPA exams. And the very afternoon before he commits suicide when both Rafe and Theo are repairing Rafe's car he informs Rafe that he has lost his job and his boss no longer considers him an asset and he also informs him that he is going to see the nurse Jeanette and ask her to come with him, and if she refuses he is going to create trouble. He openly shares all his problems to Rafe but he instead of consoling him, starts hating his brother and he just wants to get rid of him.

Snow remarks that the Quicks have kept Theo away from living his own life. He is never allowed to live his own life. In the sense, that it is his own family that has killed him. Parallel to Snow's view, Rafe exclaims,

All the way back to Mountain City, I was thinking, If only I'd spent a little more time with him, if may be I'd said, 'Don't go over to Jeanette's if you feel like that, let's you and me go for a drive somewhere and just talk. Let me take you out of your misery, the way you used to console me after my

nightmares'. If only, if only. And yet I hadn't. What I had done instead was drive away from him down that mountain as fast as I could and imagine how it might have been easier if he had been killed in Vietnam. It was almost as if You know what I'm thinking, don't you, Dr. Blake?" It was as if I made it happen, and how can I live with that? I mean in my heart I killed him just as surely as when I shot him between the eyes in my dream (290).

Failure to console him at his point of need torments him. And he feels strongly that if he has consoled him and has taken him for a drive to the inn, he would not have met with the tragic end. He fails to understand and console his brother. This guilty feeling is reflected in his dream, which he explains to his psychiatrist. He feels that he is totally responsible for Theo's death and explains the dream to Dr. Blake.

In Rafe's dream about Theo, he hears people telling him that his brother has come back. He looks like Theo but with little difference. On seeing him, he feels that he is Theo but instead of accepting him as his

brother, He suddenly pulls out a gun and shoots him in the middle of his forehead. He feels both in real life and in the dream it is he who has killed him.

Clare also shares her guilt in Theo's mysterious death. She eliminates Theo totally out of her life from his childhood till the day he died. Clare explains to her friend Julia that she failed to understand her brother and does not spend time with him.

Clare is also not interested in spending time with Theo. At sixteen she does not want a baby brother whose love for her will bring her back to the family, and at thirty two she is so busy building her career that she does not find time to answer his letter thanking her for his graduation present. She dashes off a cheque and sends a card with letter board cap and diploma on it, and put him out of her mind. And a shy charming letter comes as a reply from Theo with just the tiniest reproach in the letter which says. "Write me a letter sometime when you have nothing better to do"(375).

Clare now regrets that she has lost the opportunity forever. Even the very afternoon before he commits suicide, he just tells Clare

that it will be better if she writes about something that can never be wrapped up like his own story. Clare refuses to write about him because he does not fit into her world. Clare feels that she is also responsible for Theo's death.

Snow, Rafe Quick and Clare feel that Theo's family is responsible for his death. In short Julia says that, all the Quicks have failed to understand him. They have even refused to spend sometime with him. The Parallel Structure clears the mystery behind Theo's death. All the Quicks affirm the view of Snow that it is his own family which has killed him. They all shut Theo out of their lives because he is not like other Quicks.

Gail Godwin has depicted two different classes through the two families of the Quicks and the Mullins. Parallel Motive as found in A Southern Family makes an interesting study. Quicks belong to the upper class and Theo's ex-wife Snow Mullins belong to the working rural class. Theo's mysterious death brings these two different classes of people meet each other because they have Parallel Motive of claiming Jason son of Theo.

All the characters, Jason's pediatrician, Terry the lady who cuts his hair, the Nun, the priest and Father Zachary all speak in favour of Lily because the Quicks are financially sound, who always care for the underprivileged people but Snow argues that if Jason lives with them he will also become a part of their play, and will not be able to lead a life of his own.

Parallel Situations are other characteristic features of the Symbolic code. According to Anne Cheney, "The structure of A Southern Family, however, is as sound as one of Ralph Quick's houses. Early in the novel, Clare and Julia enjoy a 'walk of celebration' during their mountain top picnic, while Lily Quick and Sister Patrick close the book with their mountain top walk of "experience" (233). In the beginning, Julia takes Clare to the mountaintop and there they talk about their childhood days and their present situation. In the same way, at the end of novel both Lily Quick and Sister Patrick are seen together on the mountaintop. As experienced people, Lily Quick has seen both the ups and downs of this world and is preparing herself to become a saint. Sister Patrick narrates her dream about the dead

Theo and now they prepare themselves to attain saint hood.

At the end of the novel, Lily remembers a Parallel Situation in Theo's life. When Theo is in the first grade Mother General comes from Paris to visit their school and everybody shakes hands with her, when his turn came he runs and washes his hands so that they will be clean enough to shake hands with her. Similarly in Sister Patrick's dream on the day of his first death anniversary he is in the process of climbing steps towards sanctity. He is on the way to wash his hands so that he will be fit to shake hands with God. Theo as a child feels that his hands should be clean to without any dirt to shake hands with the God. In the same way at the end of the novel in Sister Patrick's dream he is washing his hands to clean his hands from the dirt. So that his hands will be fit enough to shake hands with God.

There is a Parallel Situation in the lives of both the father and the son that is their unsuccessful married lives. The book presents two unsuccessful marriages. One is between Ralph Quick and Lily and the second is their son Theo's marriage with Snow. Everyone speaks about the unsuccessful married life of

Ralph and Lily. They do not even converse. Even during Theo's funeral Ralph Quick thinks deeply of his enduring love not for Lily but for Hannah Ullstein a German Jewish psychologist whom he meets when he builds an additional top on to her house. Though Lily and Ralph do not like each other they live together and Ralph Quick spends most of his time with the ninety year old Miss. Alicia gallant and Lily spends most of her time visiting old homes.

The failure of marriage in Theo's life has a Parallel Situation. Though he marries Snow out of his own interest he is not able to lead a happy life and he divorces his wife and plans to marry a nurse called Jeanette.

The two Parallel Characters in the novel are Clare's friend Julia and Clare's step daughter Lizzie who accept the difficulties and realities of the world and are very much in touch with the realities of life. They are not bound by any family ties and they retain their individuality and lead a successful life.

Julia, Clare's life long friend though she faces many problems, she accepts all these problems of life as part of life. Julia's mother is obsessed with status and is irresponsible

towards her family, and her hatred for Julia becomes all the more, when she divorces the wealthy heir of a plantation family. Though her mother hates her, she takes care of her mother when she is bed-ridden, and consoles his father after his mother's death. She does not flee anywhere to escape from her problems, instead she works hard and becomes a successful historian and she tells Clare that every Saturday she makes love with another historian and leads a peaceful life. Her students love her a lot and often they drop gifts into her house. Even Clare envies her friend for leading such a happy life. In the words of Susan S. Kissel,

Julia combats the negative forces at work in her own family by returning home. She gives up herself but does not give up. She finds professional fulfillment in her return to Mountain City. Her return to the role of a daughter remains a facet of Julia's character development, one that allows her to merge her personal autonomy with care for others upon the death of her father. After her father's death she will explore other, broader possibilities (134).

Felix's daughter Lizzie, though is of Jewish origin, is brought up as an American girl and is totally ignorant about her religion. But after her visit to Israel, she learns about her religion and she herself becomes a Jew though her father is totally against it. Like her step mother she does not flee from her house, because her father does not like her becoming a Jew, instead she tries to convince him.

Like Julia she also stays with her family, but does not give up her individuality. Julia and Lizzie, though they live with their family, they lead an independent life. Julie finds satisfaction in becoming a historian. *Lizzie* finds satisfaction in becoming a Jew. Lizzie feels that she can realize her own self more by becoming a Jew. Later on Clare also feels convinced about her change she remarks "May be what she's doing is searching through Jewishness to see if she can find any lost parts of herself Clare has finally suggests. "May she's looking for more *Lizzie-ness*" (414)

Both Lily Quick and Clare Quick are Parallel Characters. Both the Characters are introduced as writers, Lily gives up her writing career only after her marriage. Clare has inherited the art of writing from her mother.

Both of them find difficult to come in touch with reality. Both of them shut Theo out of their lives, and are not willing to spend time with him and console him. But Theo's sudden death makes both of them come in touch with reality and his death marks a great change and finally, they both break all the bondages and are ready to embrace a larger world.

All the Quicks have Parallel Characters. All of them do not accept reality, they live in a world of their own. They shut Theo out of their lives, because he has got many problems which do not fit into their world. Everybody fails to understand him. But Theo's violent death, makes everyone examine themselves and they regret for having failed to understand him. Finally all the Quicks come in touch with reality.

The Symbolic Code also features the Echoes in a novel. In A Southern Family there are many Echoes in Situations. The Echoes in situations are clearly brought out through dreams. All the characters dream about themselves and their dream comes true in their lives.

Gail Godwin being a writer, in an interview tells that her dreams have helped her a lot in her writing process.

I use dreams to help me write my books, Yes. If you really learn to trust your night life, you can get a great deal done. As I grow older I guess even my dreaming self knows I'm a writer because words form in my dream, as if my dreams are... sort of writing for me while I sleep it can be exhausting and sometimes down Wright annoying, to wake up having had your dream typed on all night (Hill).

Before Theo's death, all the Quick's live in a world of fantasy without any touch with reality but after his death there comes a realization in their lives through their dreams which are echoed in their lives.

Lily before going to bed reads the biography of Saint Francis and the book also contains some interesting chapters about her friend Saint Clare. Saint Clare is determined to be a nun against the wishes of her family but Francis helps her. She runs off to his monastery and the monks cast off her hair

and give her an old gown and take her to some Benedictine sisters nearby.

This incident is echoed in her dream that night. In her dream she sees some fifteen nuns around her. "They are in kind of awe, and one of them says 'She's dead'. Another one asks, 'are you sure?' 'Oh, Yes', says the first, 'and she looks so beautiful in her death you can tell she is a saint'(456). And another nun asks 'shall we begin laying her out. All time Lilly is thinking. But she is not dead, yet all the time she continues to be perfectly still and let them think so. She is not able to bear losing the opportunity of being a Saint.

After the dream, the proud Lily whom every one calls 'Queen mother' cuts off all her family bond, pride and culture. She comes in touch with reality for the first time and understands what life is and casts away all the shackles after her son's death and spends time for helping the under privileged and moves with all type of people in the society. After this dream, she is seen with Sister Patrick climbing the hill towards 'Saint hood'.

Again it is a dream which makes Rafe understand his own self. Before his dreams about the dead Theo he blames Snow for his

death. He infact declares that it is Theo's marriage with Snow has killed him.

The night after Theo's death, in a dream, he sees himself and Theo as puppies curled around each other in a dustbin and he sees a big hand taking Theo away from him and he starts barking as loud as if he is saying in words. "He is not going to die, he is not because I won't let him' and the hand throws Theo back then he starts licking Rafe all over. And both hear human voice saying" it's a miracle but it seems he's going to live after all. This dream makes him realize that if he has shown little concern for his brother he would not have died.

That afternoon when Theo dies, Rafe and Theo spend sometime fixing their car together. After Theo's death, Rafe longs to spend time with his brother and this is reflected in another dream. In this dream, they are traveling together to California but suddenly their car turns into two tricycles, but they are together. This comforts Rafe, who feels that they will be together forever.

Rafe feels that through his dreams he will get back his dead brother but he also feels guilty for being responsible for Theo's death.

He has failed to understand and spend time with his dead brother. And this guilty feeling is reflected in another dream where he kills his own brother. He narrates his final dream to his psychiatrist Dr. Blake.

In his dream he sees a figure approaching him. The figure looks like Theo but with little differences. Rafe is about to hug him but suddenly he feels that it is not Theo. Other than Rafe everyone believe that it is Theo.

It wasn't Theo, though he looked exactly like him. He would have fooled most people, but not me. But I wanted it to be him so bad that I called out, 'Theo, is it really you?' and the tears started streaming down my face. And he came towards me, grinning in this exact same way Theo did, except he took it one degree too far, like an actor who's trying to play somebody and exaggerates just that one degree that ruins it. 'Yes, Rafe,' he said, 'it's really me'. Then he put out his hand-you know, to shake hands - and I knew if I touched his hand, if I pretended to believe he was Theo, that he would turn into Theo for me, and we would go

places together and talk about our shared past-through some means he would be able to remember everything I remembered and I wouldn't have to be so lonely. Well, what I did was pull out a gun, which I suddenly seemed to have on me, and I shot him right between the eyes (265).

Rafe's guilty feeling is reflected in the following lines "When I turned him over in the dust with my foot, I had this awful feeling it was Theo, after all. And I woke up feeling I'd lost Theo not only in life but in some other dimension as well. And I felt it was somehow my fault, for not being brave enough to make the dream come out differently. I felt that, in a real sense, I had murdered him" (266).

This guilty feeling in the dream comes true in his life also, When he confirms to the psychiatrist that it is he who has killed his brother. Even Sister Patrick's dream about Theo, shows that though Theo does not achieve anything in the material world, he has got a place in Heaven. In her dream, Theo is climbing the stairs with her to wash his hands so that he will be fit to shake hands with God. When Sister Patrick explains the dream to Lily, she feels happy. She does not

consider the dream as a jumbled version, she feels that Theo has sent a message to her through Patrick's dream. According to Lily.

It was Theo's way of sending a message that it's all right, don't you see? The details of how he was ... struck down, exactly what happened that day, well, they aren't important; they're just past history. That's why the details aren't important: they're already over, we don't need to know because it won't change anything. That's why you didn't need your hearing aids. But in the realm that matters the realm where the indestructible personality lives on the realm mere history can't touch, Theo lives. He lives, and right now he's in the process of climbing that very steep hill to sanctity. He's is on the way to wash his hands so that he'll be fit to shake hands with God. Oh, I consider it a gift your dream, Sister Patrick, I really do(536).

The dream comes true. Lily strongly believes that Theo is right now preparing himself to meet God. The readers also share Lily's belief.

All the above dreams are about the dead Theo. But there are other characters who dream about themselves. According to W.E. Sergeant "If I were asked to define the word 'dream I should say that a dream is a mental play illustrating part of the sleepers unconscious life" (37). Selchrist believes that dreams can be an important source of information in numerous ways. Dreams are useful for understanding oneself, for guidance in practical matters and for encouragement and inspiration. It also helps "for stimulating creativity; as record of psychic sensitivity and experiences; for realizing responsibility to immediate relationship; for developing one's spiritual natural for gaining inner peace and awareness of one's inner being" (140).

In A Southern Family Clare invites her family members to stay in a cottage called 'No Saints' and everyone whoever sleeps in a particular bedroom dreams about himself or herself. In fact, the dream serves as a window for everyone to know about their own self. The first person to sleep in the bedroom is Clare.

In her dream she is climbing a circular stairs; she is aboard a spaceship and somebody takes her to the captain and the person is advising her not to fall in love with the captain,

because everyone falls in love with her. Finally, she reaches the top of the stair and her guide disappears suddenly. There is a great big metal door, and the captain is behind it. She pushes the heavy door open and sees the captain inside. The captain is seated on a high pilot chair in front of an instrumental panel. The captain is a woman, immediately she falls in love with the captain even before seeing her face. Then the captain slowly swivels around in her chair and hold out her arms to Clare. But she recognizes that the Captain is herself, but a more powerful self of hers and she goes right into her arms and is filled with delight.

Clare is totally confused about the dream but she explains to Felix that she can make use of the woman as a character in her novel. "May be I can track her down by following the feelings I had in the dream and trying to match them with a scenario in a novel I will write someday"(407).

This dream has helped to progress in her creative writing, since she has got a character like hers to write in her novel. It is just before this dream, Clare comes in touch with reality, and decides to include failure characters like Theo in her novel. And the

dream affirms her that if she writes novels with a touch of reality, she will achieve greater heights like the Captain.

The next person who sleeps in the bedroom is Clare's editor. He is an amiable, bookish man who never talks about his thoughts or feelings but who is quite happy to tell anyone that he has sung *Mini in La Baheme* at the Met in 1948, or refresh one's memory about minor characters in nineteenth century novels. He usually sits on the beach listening to Gregorian chants on earphones and taking frequent solitary dips in the ocean. There is always something lonely and boyish about him. Before the Editor goes to sleep, Clare tells him about the breezy room but he replies that he seldom dreams and, even if gets a dream he will not remember it the next day. But the next morning at breakfast he also reports about his dream to Felix and Clare.

In his dream he is watching an archaeological dig in the middle of the desert. He know the names of all the archaeologist. He also know that they have uncovered the toms of a Goddess, but he is not able to have a close look at the Goddess. He feels sorry for not having a close look at the Goddess.

The dream has enabled him to understand himself he is not satisfied with his wife. This is proved when after six months he gives a call to Clare telling her that his forty years of married life is broken and he has seen a girl two months back whom he has planned to marry. Clare feels that probably he has seen the Goddess whom he could not see in the dream.

The Symbolic code traces not only the Parallels in a novel, but also the Contrasts in the novel. A Southern Family has got contrasting plots. In the first plot, the Quicks consider themselves as characters in a play, but in the second plot they come to terms with reality. Though Lily Quick and Clare are mother and daughter, they have Contrasting Motives. Lily in order to look after her family gives up writing career. Clare in order to become a successful writer does not want to bear a child. The novel also has Contrasting Characters. Theo is shown as a character of failure. His brother Rafe, on the other hand achieves whatever he aspires for.

Other contrasting characters are Clare and her friend Julia. Clare, though she is a successful novelist, is bound by her family ties, and is not able to lead a peaceful life. The

novel also has many contrasting situations. In the beginning, Theo is shown as a failure, but later on he gains success by getting a place in Heaven. Lily serves as a role model before her marriage, but after marriage she becomes a different person to everyone.

A similar Contrast in situation is seen in the character of Lizzie. When she is introduced, she is more of an American girl and is totally ignorant about her religion Judaism but at the end she herself becomes a Jew. Another contrasting situation occurs in the relationship between Ralph Quick and his Step daughter Clare. In the beginning she thinks that Ralph has deprived Lily of her writing and hates him but later on understands that Lily herself is responsible for it and their relationship gets smoothed. Contrasts in Situation is shown in the treatment of blacks by Miss. Alicia Gallant and Ralph Quick. The novel also has a contrast in language, which is present in the language spoken by Snow and other characters.

The novel A Southern Family is divided into two halves, the first half deals with the Quicks, who lead an artificial life. The second half focuses on the change that comes over their lives after Theo's death, from mere

actors of a play they begin to accept the realities of life.

Julia, while commenting about the Quicks' way of life, remarks Clare's most troublesome aspect, as far as Julia was concerned, "was this habit all the Quicks had of short changing reality. They didn't give life a chance to express itself, they were so busy making it over into what they'd rather see, what presented them in a more intriguing light, what felt or sounded better"(3 5).

Clare in the first half is shown as a writer who writes novel according to her whims and fancies. She never writes a novel with a touch of reality. Snow while speaking about Clare's writing remarks "Clare is just like the rest of them in that respect. No she's worse. Because she makes up lies about real people and writes them down in books and makes a lot of money of the lies "(241)."

In the second half, she becomes a totally different writer. She is interested in writing stories with a realistic touch. Theo's sudden death brings about this great change. She confesses to Julia.

Theo taught me something, whether he had read my book or not. He was speaking out of his own knowledge of me that after noon I won't let things be themselves. I arrange things around me the way I want them the way I need them to be and shut the rest out. I shut Theo out all of his life because he did not fit into the life I intended to have for myself (Kissel. 136).

After her confession to Julia, she turns out to be a new novelist. She becomes the writer as Theo imagines her to be. According to John Alexander Alien,

When Clare returns to New York, she does write the letter to the dead Theo, telling him, among other things, that his death has caused her to throw into the trash the half - finished manuscript for a new novel which now sees lacked reality entirely, although it was 'the kind of thing I thought I ought to be doing next'. As she watched the jaws of the garbage truck chew up her manuscript she thought, 'I don't want to see whoever wrote those pages Coming back through this door'. The following summer, when she and Felix have

invited that Quick's to share their college at the beach, Lily hears Clare's typewriter going. Clare tells her mother she is writing up some notes she made on a conversation with Julia. The reader has encountered what she wrote already, in the second chapter of A Southern Family. Clare is becoming the writer that Theo thought she ought to be (4).

Clare overcomes her negative family background to embrace a larger world full of realities and difficulties.

In the first half, Lily is presented as a character, who never shares her feelings with others. She thinks that it is below her dignity to talk with Snow and does not give her any respect. In the second half, she becomes a totally different person. She gives up all her family bond and culture. She begins to respect Snow and stops calling her a 'hilly billy girl'.

Lily starts respecting everyone and as a result, her friendship circle is enlarged. According to Kissel.

Lily focuses on her work in the presents, the part she can play in

helping her grandson Jason develop, and the task she shares with the other members of Jason's extended family in building his future. Lily's family and her community have been enlarged, necessarily, through the course of the novel to include those of different races (her masseuse, Thalia, and Theo's friend LeRoy): religions (Felix): social classes (Snow

Theo, is torn between his family and snow and finally divorces her. He desires to keep with him his three year old son Jason whom he loves the most but Snow also demands Jason. After all these failures, he plans to marry nurse Jeanette, whom even Lily thinks will match her son. But the girl, though loves him, refuses to come with him and both the girl and Theo are found dead in his car. The first half portrays Theo as a failure. Even Clare feels that her half brother's life is a total failure. "I noticed a slight heaviness around his belt line and a defeatist slum about his shoulders, and it struck me for the first time that my little brother would soon be middle - aged and might have to cope with being a middle - aged failure as well" (50).

Though in this world he appears to be a character of failure to everyone, he has gained a place in Heaven. The dream of Sister Patrick depicts Theo as a character of success. According to John Alexander Alien, "To Lily, the dream is a message from Theo. She understands it instantly. The dream conveys to her and to the readers that in the realm that matters, Theo lives, and right now he's in the process of climbing the stairs to sanctity. He is on his way to and the rest of the Mullinses) and nationalities (Sister Patrick and Felix)" (137). Finally, after a significant dream she is seen in the company of Sister Patrick travelling towards Saint hood.

Both Lily and Clare finally become different, in contrast to the first half of their lives before Theo's death. In the words of Kissel,

In A Southern Family, Godwin's female characters learn to relate a larger world, tolerate human difference and envision a more promising future. Finding a successful integration of work, self, and society in their own lives, they begin, then, to help others become more socially responsible and tolerant. Their personal development

extends from concern for the self to concern for others; from escape from the nuclear family to a reaffirmation of 'Family' reconstituted as a more socially inclusive unit; from fear of the larger world to embracing its challenges and shaping a more humane future (138).

Similarly Rafe in the first half does not accept the realities and difficulties of life. But in the second half, he comes in touch with reality and realizes that he is responsible for his brother's death.

Theo likes both his family and Snow and is torn between them, and finally divorces Snow. He wants to keep his three year old son Jason with him whom he loves the most but Snow also demands Jason. After all these failures, he plans to marry the nurse Jeanette, whom even Lily thinks will match her son. But the girl, though loves him, refuses to come with him and both the girl and Theo are found dead in his car.

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The dream of Sister Patrick depicts Theo as a Character of success. In the words of John Alexander Alien, "Readers can share Lily's belief and exaltation is a tribute to Godwin's tact and skill. Lily's revelation is exactly right for her. She has earned it and Godwin has prepared for it. It ends A Southern Family in general and in particular Lily's role, on a warm and satisfying note of affirmation" (9).

A Southern Family also tells the story of contrasted heroines, Julia Richardson Lowndes and Clare Champion, women of the same age who have been close friends for thirty five years. After college both women leave their home in Mountain City. But both are drawn back to the native place after a long time. Julia comes back to look after her aging father and works as a history professor in a local college. Clare comes back for a periodic visit from New York.

Earlier Julia the least important of the heroines, though faces many problems, later

on earns her doctorate in history and begins her research work about slaves. When the novel opens she has settled into comfortable routine. She is successful and happy in her academic position and she has a man well suited to her needs. And in the novel she is portrayed as a plump slightly dowdy woman who is happily picking over products with her elderly father in a super market.

Though Clare has financial independence, a flaring career and a stable relationship with a man who is intellectually equal to her, she is still afflicted by the demons of self - doubt and this appear to be a failure in her character. And in her private ecstasy of failure she looks to Julia to convince her. She is bound by her family ties and has problems in accepting the realities of life.

The basic difference which underlines Julia and Clare is their attitude towards art and life. Julia from the beginning is ready to accept the realities of life, though she looks after her sick mother, she does not give up her individuality. On the contrary Clare's clearly thinks about her mother's unsuccessful married life and the very thought that her mother has not become a successful writer puts her down from her successful writing

career. Unlike Julia, she is bound with the family ties, and is not able to lead a peaceful life.

Theo and Rafe, are contrasted. Though they are brothers, Rafe is shown as a character of success and Theo as a character of failure. Unlike Theo, he is very successful in doing his Ph.D. At the end of the novel, Lily tells Sister Patrick that Rafe loves investing money in real estate and he has already published two papers, one under his own name and one with his thesis advisers name. Lily tells that when he gets his doctorate he can have his pick of business school any where in the country because so many of them are ready to sponsor his business because he is the first to get a doctorate in real estate as is a it brand news field in the academic world. "Now he just needs the right girl. I can imagine just what she would be like, only where is she?. Rafe's such an attractive boy; if I were girl of his age - no, a little younger would be best - I'd be falling at his feet" (534).

Lily Quick and Clare are writers, but they have contrasting motive in life. Lily's prime importance is her family while Clare denounces the idea of bearing children in order to become a successful writer. Lily is a 'Prisoner of her

body' and after marrying Ralph Quick and begetting children she gives up writing. On the other hand Clare in order to become a successful writer gives up the idea of giving birth to children. Again the basic difference between Lily and Clare is, Lily gives more importance to life than the art of writing, but Clare gives more importance to the art of writing than her family life. According to Felix, Clare is always weary of babies because they stopped her mother's writing.

Gail Godwin focuses on the social aspect through the individual character. There is a Contrasting Situation in the treatment of Blacks. Miss. Alicia Gallant narrates her experience with a Black man to Jason. She recalls an incident of the past. She gets into a crowded bus and finds only two vacant seats in the front area - the white area. One is nearer the front, near a white person's seat, but the white man, is dirty, smelly, grossly unattractive.

The other choice is in a no-man's land an area towards the back of the bus that shifted between blacks and whites as the passenger population shifted. On that occasion Miss. Alica remembers so clearly, the vacant seat is next to a black passenger a very clean,

nice - smelling colored man. She chooses to sit near the Black person. Hearing about his daughter's actions, her father praises her and tells her that if she will always make a similar choice, she will come out 'smelling like rose' every single time.

Ralph in a similar situation handles it in a different way. When Clare is a child, she and Ralph get in to a crowded bus. Ralph asks a black woman to move back. But she refuses and the driver talks on Ralph's behalf, and the black woman leaves the bus rather than moving from the seat. That which stands out in Clare's memory is that Ralph shouts after the woman calling her a 'black bitch' even though he is getting the seat he wanted.

In a Contrasting Situation the relationship between Clare and her step father Ralph is highlighted. Clare always despises and resents Ralph from her childhood . She thinks that it is Ralph who has deprived Lily of her writing career. And Ralph lusts after Clare and her friends when they spend their night in her house. But later on, after many years when they are having a personal conversation in 'No Saints' Ralph explains all problems to her. And her hatred towards her step father gets somewhat lessened. According to Alien,

Clare has always resented and despised this man, but her stormy interview with him, like so much else in this book, results in the conversion of an unrealistically simple attitude (utter rejection by Clare of Ralph) into a complex one. Clare comes to realize that although Ralph did 'take away Lily's independence' it was Lily who, when they were courting, would lie with Ralph in the back seat of his car and moan repeatedly. 'I need you to take care of me' Ralph admits to Clare that, in the early days, he secretly lusted after Clare and her "little friends who spent the night". He does not deny that he "knocked her around". But he succeeds in suggesting to her for the first time what it was like to be a penniless young man of twenty four married to a woman of thirty two who brought with her a nine year old child. Clare now takes her place in this book of revelations. 'The only thing', she says, "that makes me sad is that Lily paid most of it for me"(7).

The awareness that dawns upon Lizzie and the change that comes over her life, is in great contrast to her earlier phase of life. Lizzie

is totally ignorant of her religion. Though Felix is of Jewish origin he does not teach anything of Judaism to his daughter Lizzie, who always has nice time with Clare. But when she comes back from Israel, she comes back totally as a Jewish girl.

Yet since she had come back from visiting her cousin in Israel, she had brought no young men to the house, nebbishes or other wise. There was a new solemnity to her - she stayed in her room a lot, reading books about Judaism, and when the three of them went out for a Chinese meal, she shunned her old favorite mushu pork, and would not order any of the shrimp dishes, either. At home she refused Clare's veal paprika, ostentatiously helping herself only to the brown rice and salad (411).

According to the Jewish culture, she has cut her hair so much that even Clare is not able to recognize her. Lizzie tells Clare that she has also planned to marry a Jew. She behaves exactly like a Jew. She starts reading only Jewish books and eats only their food.

As children, Clare and Julia consider Lily as their role model. As a successful writer, she always encourages them. She never appears as a Southern women and even scorns the Southern women for their culture and behavior, but she herself later on behaves exactly like a Southern women. Both Clare and Julia long to see Lily back as a successful writer, Julia tells her father Nevellie Richardson.

I did not think of her as the typical Southern women, at all, when I was growing up, said Julia. She was the most vibrant, sensual women I knew. She said daring, unconventional things; she mocked the status quo. She was writing a novel that she said was going to blow the lid off this town, only she never finished it. I still dream of reading that novel. Now, whenever I meet her, I feel I'm talking to someone under a spell. It's as if she'd been trapped and transformed into the kind of woman she used to scorn. But she takes some deep, perverse pleasure in acting the part to the hilt. Sometimes I want to shake her; other times she makes me want to go off somewhere and cry (328).

Clare dreams of her mother becoming a writer again. In her letter to her dead brother Theo, she writes about the change in Lily.

The Lily of my childhood believed in Art the way the Lily you grew up knowing counted on God. It was her resource and her respite, her trusted magic and her trump card. At the time you came to consciousness, Lily was giving up on Art, but as far back as I can remember. I was taught by her to believe that special patterns of words, or the resolutions of chords, or inspired slashes of colored pigment on a flat surface could make all the difference between feeling you were an ordinary person, lonely, disappointed, and trapped, and knowing you possessed a passkey to a kingdom with powers and privileges unlike any other. Lily loved poems with lines like To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. She admired beautiful, tough-minded heroines with names like Dagny Taggar and Eustacia Vye (392).

Contrast in Language is another important feature of the Symbolic Code. All

the characters including the blacks speak good southern English. In contrast to their language is Snow's. She is not even able to speak proper English, being a hilly billy girl, who has completed only her ninth grade. She herself accepts this. "No", says quietly, "it doesn't mean you would. That's the way Theo always corrected my English "(63). Even in the court trial of Jason's custody she makes lots of mistakes in her speech. To cite some examples 'When we was first married' (236). 'After we was married' (231). 'Look here' I says to my legal aid lawyer (227).

Gail Godwin has employed, many Patterns of language which are expressed through different dreams, metaphors, letters, and songs. In A Southern Family, dreams are used as a mode for the characters to understand their own selves. There is a metaphor regarding Lily's ride in the car and her life. She has the habit of driving the car without gas. This is because they have to fill gas by themselves. She is not the type of person who will fill gas by her own self.

The habit is also a metaphor for the way of life Lily represents. Her sense of family and culture is is 'running on empty'. In one of the situations, Lily finds her self out of gas and

walking the long hill to her home. "On that walk she has a vision of saint hood of what it would be like to transcend herself, and in this vision even Lily, the master of the life story that cripples Theo and perplexes even her daughter the writer and perhaps her greatest admirer, recognizes what her children and others also come to know during the course of the novel" (Hill 118).

As she climbs towards her home Lily realizes

If she could make it to the top of the hill carrying her entire and acknowledged load of sorrows and mistakes, as well as all the evils experience and had taught her human beings were capable of writing on one another, it seemed to her she might be granted a kind of spiritual second wind. And somewhere during the ultimate stretch of this honest walk home after years of 'running on empty' inside a protective vehicle, she would be shown how to divest herself of personal grievances (ranging from broken soap dishes to malicious daughter-in-law). How to die herself without actually dying. What a refreshing atmosphere to live in (212).

The key word in the passage is 'honest'. It is a part of Lily's thought process which indicates that she is fully aware of the dishonest nature of much of her existence (Hill 118). In many ways, Lily is the most spiritual character in the novel, with the exception of the priests and Sister Patrick, but she has, to a large extent, kept her spiritual life, her pursuit of a higher truth, separate from her real life, from her relationships with others, even those closest to her, her husband and her children.

Lily is stopped short in her metaphorical journey toward a transcendent self when Ralph and Jason who pick her up in the middle of her metaphorical journey. "She gets into the car with them and thus sacrifices the chances to know whether her vision of a new better self would have been realized "(Hill 118). In the novel's final chapter, Lily is again climbing the Mountain top. Later she is totally a different person. She has started to love and respect everyone. And now she is seen in the company of Sister Patrick traveling towards saint hood".

Gail Godwin has also employed Letter patterns in A Southern Family. There are three important letters in the novel. The first letter is written by Clare to her friend Adam thanking for having sent her a copy of Olive

Hutchinson's Fools of loss. The next letter is from Theo's colleague Luellen Me Donalds, which appears to Lily like a biography as the letter is fully about the three years, Theo and McDonald were working together. In her letter about Theo she opines,

"No body else in the firm had the integrity that Theo did. He even tried to put the firm before himself by eating cheap when he was on an expense account. People confided in Theo because they knew that he had that rare ability to let secrets stay with him. He never used another's weakness to make himself look better. He wanted to succeed on his own merits and that's very difficult when you're working in an office full of egocentric manipulations (183).

The letter highlights Theo's Character. It shows he is a hardworking and aspiring man.

There is an important letter written by Theo to his half Sister Clare, Thanking her for the graduation gift. He concludes the letter with the statement 'P.S. Write me a letter sometimes, when you have nothing better to do, and tell me what a Sister's day is like. Any old day

will do'(374). This reveals that Theo longs for love and care. He requests his Sister Clare to write often to him.

The fourth is a very important letter which is the seed of the novel. Clare's letter to her dead brother Theo. She spends more time in writing the letter more than she spends with him when he is alive. In her letter she tells all her experience in 'No saints' and above all, through the letter Clare reveals to the reader, that she has come out of her society and culture and she has turned a new leaf in her career by writing novels which can never be wrapped up.

There are also songs in the novel. The novel itself begins with a song from Julia's doggrel book, Julia though a historian also writes poems. The first song throws light on Clare and Julia

Clare and Julia
Julia and Clare
One was dark
The other fair
The dark one fled
As soon as she could
The fair one returned
To home's deep wood

Old faces haunted
The one who fled
The other sought answers
Among the dead
And in the end
They both turned gray
And their star spun on
To its own drying day
- from Julia's doggrel book (13).

Both Clare and Julia fly away from the native place, but Julia comes back and becomes a historian takes care of her father and leads a happy life. Clare on the other hand after becoming a successful novelist comes back to her native and is caught up in the family tangle. But finally she comes out of it, because of the death of Theo and starts a new life.

The book also has an important and final song which contains the theme of the entire novel. The song is

A woman got on the highway
Left her life behind
Stored her guilt in the family trunk
Went to see what she could find
Put the top down on her car
Put the top down on her mind
Halleluja! Here I come

To see what I shall find
A slim dark car of unknown make
Seduced her with his lights
She let him pass and back she blinked
His license plate said MARS
In the Sheraton as they screwed
He said you've got to teach me
I'm not from here but I'd like to learn
What do earthlings want?
They screwed all night
They screwed all day
They screwed till her
hair Down there turned gray
You've taught me quite a lot, he said
Rising gleaming from her bed
Tell me, mother, what's the fee
For your generous hospitality?
I can make you famous
I can make you rich
Shrink you back in to a virgin
Swell you in to a witch
Just take me to the mirror, she said
And kindly hold my hand
And let me die standing up
Facing what I am
- from Julia's doggerel book (323)

This is about Clare's journey towards Snow's place and her experiences. Now that she has learnt more about life and using all

this experience, if she puts in writing in her usual southern story telling manner she can write many successful novels. But she is not interested in writing stories without any touch of reality. Instead she accepts the reality of life as it is.

According to Barthes' five codes, the obvious final question is to ask which side of the dichotomy the novel is on; whether on the side of art or life? There can surely be little doubt that it is on the side of life. Earlier all Quick's live like characters in a play but after Theo's death they realize and come into touch with reality. As a result now they are ready to accept any failure and anyone in their lives. Now the circle of their life and their world is widened.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

Barthes' five codes of structuralism as applied to Gail Godwin's A Southern Family covers all the details in the novel. The five codes of Structuralism have enabled not only to understand the incidents related to the main theme, but also have enabled to throw light on other traits of the novel such as the class distinction between the Quick's and the Mullins, the black and white relationship and also the patterns of language employed in the novel.

The Proairetic Code contains the main event of Theo's mysterious death which connects the entire story together. According to John Alexander Alien "The central event of A Southern Family is the death of Theo Quick, aged 28 of Mountain city, North Carolina" (2).

The Hermeneutic Code contains an enigma, Equivocation which should contain a snare, and a truth, Jamming and Disclosure. The enigma in the novel is the mystery behind Theo's death. The snare regarding Theo's mysterious death revolves around the numerous suspects connected with his death. Jamming implies the partial answer, and one gets a

partial answer from the three year old son of Jeanette. Disclosure denotes an end to the problem. The mystery is put to an end by the realization of all the character as expressed through their narration.

The Cultural Code deals with the whole system of knowledge and values invoked by a text. "These appear as nuggets of proverbial wisdom, scientific "truths" the various stereotypes of understand. Which constitute human reality" (Scholes 124). It deals with Christian beliefs in a novel or poem. A Southern Family contains three basic Christian beliefs.

The Semic code gives importance to individual words. Linguists examine the importance of individual words by giving many alternatives to one individual word, and prove how the meaning gets changed if a wrong alternative is used. There are so many passages in the novel, wherein the wrong alternatives cannot be a substitute for the chosen, chiseled words of the author.

The Symbolic Code is the vast field, and it is based upon dyadic pairs such as male and female, art and life, day and night. A Southern Family is based upon the dyadic pair of art and life. It traces the parallels, Echoes,

Contrasts, and patterns in structure, plot, character Motive, situation and language.

The novel contains parallels in structure, Motives, characters and situation. It also highlight the Echoes in situations. Nearly all the characters dream about themselves and their dreams are echoed in their lives. It also brings out the contrasts in plot, character, motives and situations in the novel. The novel also consists of different patterns of languages such as dreams metaphors, letters and songs. Thus Gail Godwin's A Southern Family with all its Parallels, Echoes, Contrasts and Patterns in languages becomes a Verbal Diagram.

All the novels of Gail Godwin are highly autobiographical but in A Southern Family one finds this element to the fullest. In the words of Jane Hill.

Readers familiar with Gail Godwin's fiction, whether they realize it or not, are also to some degree familiar with her life, and anyone curious about the author's life would find her novels and stories as informative as other available sources. In "The uses of Autobiography", Godwin argues that for any writer, no matter how a protagonist is disguised,

that character is in some way a reflection of the author's self or at least some aspects of that self. Of her own work specifically she says. 'All my protagonist - Slapstick, allegorical, disguised by gender or species, occupation or social class or hardly disguised at all -are parts of myself She cites an idea expressed by Dickens' biographer Edgar Johnson as the reason behind this necessary, unavoidable link between autobiography and fiction, 'experience not profoundly realized within cannot be vividly or profoundly rendered without' (1).

So Godwin's fiction are strongly based on her own experience. The direct relationship between her life and work of art is very obvious in all her novels.

A Southern Family is Gail Godwin's most autobiographical novel. The 540 pages contains all members of her "Manless little Family" her mother's second family, the Coles are depicted as the Quicks in the novel. Frank Cole is portrayed as Rafe Quick in A Southern Family, Tommy Cole becomes Theo Quick and Gail Godwin's Friend, Pat Merchant Verhulst is portrayed as Julia Lowndes. Godwin's Mother

is portrayed as Lily Quick. Gail Godwin's Grandmother is shown novel lies beneath her tombstone with the inscription "Even Harshaw Buchal January 20, 1972" Gail Godwin herself becomes Clare Champion (Cheney 231).

In A Southern Family Clare does not like her mother marrying Ralph Quick and as a result of it she leaves home at an early age. Like wise Gail Godwin did not approve of her mother's marriage with Frank Cole. As Frank Cole became a successful architect Godwin's Mother gave up her writing career. Similarly Ralph Quick also becomes a successful architect and as a result of it Lily gives up her writing career Gail Godwin always wanted her mother to become a successful writer, similarly in A Southern Family Clare till the end Clara dreams of her mother becoming a great novelist.

Gail Godwin was influenced by her mother, and she inherited the art of writing from her mother. In A Southern Family Lily Quick serves as a role Model to Clare's writing cares. In the character Clare certain aspects of Gail Godwin's life are found. Like Clare's idea that marrying and giving birth to children would mar her writing career as it has occurred in her mother's life, is reflected by the following words of Gail Godwin.

Well, the very obvious ones were the stories told to me when I grew up in Asheville about how Thomas Wolfe went to New York and then to Europe to become a writer. So leaving home became part of the myth very early. If I wanted to be a writer, I would have to go away. Then there were the many stories that my mother would tell. She very much wanted to be a writer, and she would tell stories about how other writers made it. I saw how my mother didn't become a writer because she had made choices that would have made it too difficult. She married, she had children, she had to work. There was a lot of economic strain. This may be a reason that I didn't stay married in my several attempts and that I didn't have children or ever really want to. It made me aware that there were traps, very attractive traps, that I could fall into easily. And it also made me alert to wrong choices that I had already made so that I could change or more on. I think that it made me quite ambitious when I was young, and very single - minded and grin at times (12).

Gail Godwin is criticized for concentrating too much on family issues and for ignoring social and political issues. On the contrary Jane Hill, argues against such views. According to her,

One criticism frequently leveled against women's fiction in general and Godwin's fiction specifically is that its intense focus on the personal on the details of an individual life (usually the life of someone born to a relatively high station) -limits its broader significance. These writers are frequently accused of ignoring larger social issues as they scrutinized and analyze every iota of the personal issues confronting their character. Careful examination of Godwin's work demonstrates that such a criticism is not well founded. Although the emphasis of all her novels, including *A Southern Family*, is primarily on the personal, all of the novels, touch larger social issues, and that emphasis becomes greater as her career progresses (122).

Gail Godwin with satirical attitude comments through Julia Lowndes in *A Southern Family* on the triumph of unenlightened egalitarian developments over

gracious patrician custom in North Carolina. While driving her father to a friend's home, Julia notes that the 'Van Campus' vast meadow land, where their show horses used to romp and graze, had become a private golf course for a community of mansard -roofed dwelling called 'Town House Acres'(7).

Godwin also portrays the class system and race division in A Southern Family. The class division is clearly brought out through the Quicks relationship with Snow Mullins. It also deals with the treatment of Blacks in the Southern Society According to Jane Hill.

The events immediately surrounding Theo's death provide several examples of how the relationship between black and whites have changed in the south while Ralph attends to the legalities and the details at the hospital on the evening Theo dies, Lily finds herself being comforted by 'This nice Negro orderly' who holds her hand and walks her up and down the hall while they pray together, using some of his prayers, some of hers (125).

A more positive and finally more significant treatment of the evolving nature of black white relationships in

the south is conveyed in Godwin's treatment of the relationship between Lily Quick and her masseuse, Thalia Thomson. The massage room where they meet is called the incubator for their delicate friendship", and when Lily comes for her first massage after Theo's death, Thalia says to her, "I want you to take everything out of that head of yours and hand it over to me for an hour", to which Lily responds "Gladly. Take it all, Thalia, Only be careful you don't get scalded from the acid or defiled by the pitch". This exchange indicates their roles and reveals that each is concerned for the other (Hill 127-128).

Gail Godwin also narrates the historical changes in the south. She explains the "striking aesthetic deterioration of the Appalachian landscape caused by sunbelt explosion resulting in careless deforestation and mining. She indeed has become a significant voice in Southern Contemporary American Literature. Her travels to various places like England, Denmark, and Spain and her teaching experience at Vassar, Columbia and Iowa and her knowledge in music, art and literature have added polish and depth to her work. In

the words of Anne Cheney, 'She has also become a significant voice in Southern literature. She has inherited from Faulkner, Welty and Wolfe a love of the land, a 'sense of place'.

Gail Godwin has become a prominent figure in the literary circle. In the words of Jane Hill,

In her twenty years of an active career, Gail Godwin has established herself as one of the most gifted, prolific and popular late twentieth century southern novelists. She has published eight substantial novels two collection of short stories, numerous perceptive reviews of books by fellow writers, and several long essays relating the connection between her life and writing. Her increasing prestige within the literary community is seen by her long time residence at the artists colony in Woodstock Newyork and the attributes given to her work by established writers such as Joyce carol Gates, John Fowles and Kurt Vonnegut (22).

To conclude with the words of Anne Cheney,

Gail Godwin shares a 'Sense of place' and some ideas about the Southern family with earlier writers. She becomes, however, a member of the new generation in her views of woman's place in the family, Southern religion and race. She has studied the novels of Faulkner, McCullers, O' Connor, Walker Percy, Wolfe, and other Southern masters. She absorbed the best of European culture from the nuns in Asheville. She cherished the independence and love of her 'manless little family'. But she is her own person. She is innovative, intelligent. Godwin remains "fluid" continuous to grow, and is in no danger of congealing (212).

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