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THE ROLE OF THE NEGRO IN
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
WORLDS

DISSERTATION

by

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Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

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The Ohio State University
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PREFACE

Only relatively recently has it become fashionable, or academically responsible, to think of William Faulkner's work as an object for intellectual study. The reasons for this reluctance have been several. Among the obvious: (1) the retiring nature of Faulkner himself and (2) the difficulty of his work.

A researcher presumes a great deal when he proposes to undertake a study of Faulkner's work. After a short period of time, he becomes aware that what was assumed to be a simple routine academic task is instead the challenge to solve a geometrical-like puzzle which, from the "start-here" point, directs and enmeshes the gullible puzzle-solver in an intricate and challenging, but, at the same time, peculiarly ego-shattering design. While all the while, the ghost of the puzzle-maker stands quietly and politely on the sideline--a slight, but firmly definitive figure, the chin slightly lifted and projected, the white hair immaculately coiffed, the hand carelessly encircling the perennial pipe, and the dark and piercing eyes watching with an almost bemused expression as the researcher charges blindly along one corridor after another of the puzzle de-
sign, only to find that each leads to several more confusing corridors, or that it is altogether a dead-end.

Two recognitions become evident; the meanings which seem the simplest are often the most involved and complex; those which should be complex, or which the researcher seeks to submerge in *academia effluvia*, are the simplest. And, this is as it should be, because true to Aristotle's guiding principle, William Faulkner's work is an "imitation of life," and life is like that--many answers are obvious and there for the taking; others are more elusive; some are never found.

Too often, the researcher does not find his way to the point marked "the finish," but in the process of the endeavor, he has been involved in an engrossing experience and has been challenged to try the game again and again.

Many persons have been vital to the completion of this study. The researcher is, of course, indebted to the critics of Faulkner, but also to Dr. Wilfred Eberhart, adviser and chairman of the Reading Committee, for his reading and criticism of the manuscript, to the staffs of The Ohio State University and Antioch College libraries for various favors and their cheerful and untiring assistance, and to Random House for permission to quote from Faulkner's texts.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

William Faulkner was a man steeped in the soil and the social conventions of his native land. He was a Southerner—a Mississippian—by every instinct, but he was able to recognize the flaws of his Southern society, to probe into the reasons (sociological and moralistic) for these flaws, and to seek some compromising solution. His quest was made more difficult because his personality was not a simple one.

Excluding the earlier writings, Faulkner had published seventeen novels and seventy-six short stories by the time of his death in 1962. Thirty-two of the short stories have been assimilated into larger units (e.g., The Unvanquished and Go Down, Moses and Other Stories). All of these works except nineteen short stories and five novels are set within his fictional region, Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi. Although, in view of contemporary developments, Faulkner's work may be more than slightly outdated in terms of its social and racial views—that is, more than a few of his characters are supercilious and some of his preachments are superficial—this, nevertheless,
offers a unique and important historical, sociological, and psychological basis for a study of the culture of the South and, more importantly, of the universal social issues inherent in that society.

The assessment of William Faulkner as a man and as an author has been varied. Several critics have assigned him a place among the eminently notable; others have relegated him to the mediocre. Many have described him as a "liberal," but, at the same time, a carefully authentic writer, who exhibited a deep and humane insight into the social conditions prevalent in the context of his native South, and who possessed a cogent awareness of the psychological evolutions and philosophical formulations of the minds of the several social stratifications which compose that South. Still others have described him as bigoted, overly subjective and sentimental in approach, and protective and defensive of the Old South—a social structure which from any rational or moral standard or point of view must be described as reprehensible. Most have agreed that he created a more realistic, comprehensive, and concentrated portrait of the complex, and often paradoxical, class structure of the New South by virtue of his willingness and capability to look beyond the external structure of the stereotyped-character images, portrayed by some other contemporary Southern writers, to probe deeply in a compulsive-like effort to discover the causal pattern of the social
responses of these stereotypes, and to transcend the surface, mechanistic literary tool to discover the philosophical, psychological, sociological human image.

Statement of Problem

Historically, the Negro has been a popular subject for stereotyping and exploitation by Southern authors; like his counterparts, William Faulkner also made extensive use of these types. His moral vision, public and private, of the Negro and the degree of the relationship of the public vision to the private vision have been subjects for diverse debate. One school of thought denies that Faulkner's life and environment had any significant influence on his writings. This view has gained in popularity during the last few years, and it is very evident in the many critical essays which have largely ignored Oxford, Mississippi, apparently dismissing it as irrelevant to the interpretation of the work at hand. Few of the school suggest that Oxford is, or could have been, a factor in the development of Faulkner's moral view of the South and the Southern Negro.

By contrast, a second school of thought asserts that Faulkner's heritage and Southern environment were important forces in his moral development—an approach which yet today finds sufficient and persuasive supporters. This lack of consensus is hardly surprising in view of the large and
varied volume of research which has been devoted to the work
of Faulkner, the social attitudes which have evolved in the
period of time during which this research has occurred, and
the changes in critical approach (e.g., the New Criticism).
The lack of agreement might also have been due to the absence
of an authoritative, scholarly biography of William Faulkner.

Preparing to offer a course in Faulknerian literature,
this investigator found that, despite the volume of critical
and historical scholarship that has evolved around Faulkner,
the studies in the specific area of the role of the Negro in
his work have been varied and deficient. There have been
too much generalizing and a paucity both of reliable fact
and sound judgment. Thus, to secure any degree of uniformity
of judgment among the critics is extremely difficult, and
the result is often misleading.

One critic has stated that in terms of scholarly
critical research, William Faulkner has been "done." When
one is confronted with the volume of Faulknerian research
which has accumulated since 1939, this seems an appropriate
and valid statement, but a review of this research indicates
that interest has been concentrated in some areas and that
deficiencies have existed in others—one of these deficient
areas being the role of the Negro in Faulkner's fiction.

Dissertations in English and American Literature--1865-1963
(New York, 1968) lists the number of dissertations completed
on Faulkner as fifty-five. Most of these have been concen-
trated between the years 1949 and 1963, and only three are
cconcerned mainly with the Negro character. Dissertation
Abstracts (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1964-69) records three addi­
tional studies between 1964 and 1969. A Bibliography of
Doctoral Research on the Negro, 1933-1966 (Washington, D.C.,
1969) lists five completed studies. Periodicals and book-
length studies have been completed, and these, together with
the dissertation studies, will be reviewed in the section
"Related Studies" (infra, pp.6 et seq.).

The investigator hopes that the broad scope of this
study will help it to be a useful supplement for teachers
and students of English, sociology, and American history.
Recognizing the study of Faulkner's response to Negroes in
general, his approach to his Negro characters, and his usage
of these characters in their several appointed roles and
functions to be of special value in the general strategy of
his fiction, this study was designed as a means of explicat­
ing further those aspects of Faulkner's life important to his
literary career and to bring additional light to bear on the
significance of that data to his responses to the Negro, indi­
vidually and as a race, in the factual and fictional worlds
of which he was a part. Although Faulkner's literary tech­
niques range from photographic realism to maudlin sentimen­
talism, the essential strategy of the author is the same:
through the ethnic divergences, cultural confluences, and
personal drama, to bring to the reader a coherent picture of
the Southern society which, through the vehicle of fiction, attempts to focus on the clash of the "Southern dream" with reality and on the momentous effect of this clash upon the Southern Negro. Faulkner's fiction, like any other fiction, may be a falsehood, but it is a deliberate one designed to entice, anger, and stimulate the reader in the author's effort to reconstruct what "was" and what "is."

This researcher experiences no pleasure in criticizing the results of the arduous work of other researchers, nor is it the expectation that this study will be the final word on the subject. The materials with which it deals have the characteristic of being collective representations rather than the work of a single mind, and the researcher's debt to some of the writers criticized should be plain.

This inquiry, then, is an attempt to bring together, in a single volume, a compilation of the most useful materials available on the role of the Negro in Faulkner's fiction and to comment upon this material from the standpoint of a sociological analysis of Faulkner's concept in regard to the Negro in the South.

Analysis of Related Studies

Serious publication of Faulknerian criticism is dated from the publications of O'Donnell¹ and Aiken.² Scholarly

studies on the role of the Negro in Faulkner's fiction began much later. These two publications set the stage for subsequent studies. O'Donnell focused on the historical and sociological aspects apparent in Faulkner's work and concluded that the conflict in Yoknapatawpha could be explained by the confrontation between the two social classes represented by the Sartorises and the Snopeses. This oversimplification has been disputed subsequently by such critics as Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren. Conrad Aiken's report concentrated on Faulkner's writing style and technique, justifying it by the statement that "the whole elaborate method of deliberately withheld meaning," was a part of Faulkner's design to keep "the form and the idea--fluid and unfinished, still in motion, . . . and unknown, until the dropping into place of the very last syllable" (p. 652).

The volume of scholarly research on Faulkner has increased since these seminal writings, but in proportion little has been done about the Negro as an important element in Faulkner's fiction. Since the Negro did not become a popular subject for study or discussion in literary circles until much later--except as a stereotyped object of humor or denigration--this is not surprising. The majority of Faulkner's Negro characters, though stereotyped in a sense, do not fit into this mold and cannot be disposed of this simply.
Apparently having also felt the lack in this area, several researchers have completed studies. The summation of the more worthy of these follows. Because of the volume of the studies to be reviewed, documentation will be brief. For more complete source data, please refer to the selected bibliography listing.

Among the scholarly studies of the role of the Negro character in Faulkner's fiction and representative of the traditional approach is Walter F. Taylor's "The Role of the Negro in William Faulkner's Fiction" (Unpubl. diss., Emory Univ., 1964). Taylor has attempted an assessment of the thematic and structural roles of the Negro characters, and he has taken the previously held view that Faulkner's depictions are traditional and stereotyped, are "seldom far from traditional ones," and that most of the important Negro characterizations are "outgrowths of the traditions of the Negro as childish dependent of the white man, as emotional primitive clown, or as tragic mulatto." Accordingly, Faulkner's most important contribution has been his attempt to dramatize the meaning of the Negro for white society. In his study, Taylor questions the relationship of such descriptions to real experience, and he sees their real value as that of foils for Faulkner's white protagonists.

Melvin Backman's *Faulkner: The Major Years* (Indiana, 1966) is another traditional approach to a critical study of Faulkner's major works which includes an extensive discussion
of the Negro characters. The author himself seems to have approached this discussion with a stereotyped view of the Negro, and since he imposes this view in his interpretations of the works—particularly is this true of his analysis of the character Dilsey—he often fails to comprehend some of the motives and actions of the Negro characters. Backman's interpretation is rhetorical and literary in style, but it might not be especially practical for the average student of Faulkner.

Following the trend of several other critics, George Sutton, in his study "Primitivism in the Fiction of William Faulkner" (Unpubl. diss., 1967), finds Faulkner to be partial toward primitive characters (children, idiots, Indians, poor whites, hunters, and Negroes) as embodiments of virtue which modern man can at best imitate.

Perhaps one of the more noteworthy as a newer approach is Raleigh Player's "The Negro Character in the Fiction of William Faulkner" (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of Mich., 1965) in which he sets as his goal "to investigate the portrayal of Negro characters in the novels and short stories of William Faulkner and to evaluate that portrayal in terms of the scope and variety of the characterizations, the types and importance of the roles assigned the characters, and the thematic role of the Negro character in the author's fiction." The outstanding feature of this study is Chapter I, which contains a glossary of the 165 characters whom the researcher found in
Faulkner's fiction. These are classified in terms of their occupations, their relationships to the whites, and their several varieties as types of characters. Player's compilation is unique because it concentrates (1) on the Negro characters only and (2) on their sociological relationship to the Southern white. In his attempt to create an original classification of Negro characters, Player surveys these in four representative groups: (1) Figures of Loyalty, (2) Figures of Revolt, (3) Figures of Adjustment, and (4) Figures of Defeat. In spite of the new terminology, the result is that this delineation, like others, is oversimplified to the point of stereotyping, and it merely projects one side of the total many-faceted personality which a human character is expected to possess. The responses of real persons are not so easily classified, nor is it this investigator's opinion that Faulkner wished or intended his characters to be categorized in this manner. Although the study is mainly confined to Negro characters, it might well be noted that the classification employed by Player could be applied to Faulkner's characters in general, and the four qualities represented by Player's four groups are usually apparent in the personalities of most characters at some point in their careers. This investigator agrees with Player that the responses of the types to certain stimuli are different, but the investigator cannot agree that the types can be this easily divided, classified, and defined, unless one is speaking only of dominant characteristics.
Raleigh Player concludes that "no thematic role of the Negro character seems evident," and that, although Faulkner is at his best when he is portraying the Negro character in youth and old age [also true of his portrayal of white characters], his ability to portray the Negro character in complex social situations with fidelity and understanding is demonstrated." Some examples listed are Charles Bon, Uncle Parsham Hood, Lucas Beauchamp, and Joe Christmas. Player further notes that Faulkner's ability to portray Negro characters is limited "only by his lack of experience with Negroes of certain types." Faulkner himself recognized this situation as a crucial hindrance to white authors and as an important reason for their failure to depict realistic Negro characterizations.

Several additional students of Southern literature have attempted an innovative classification of Negro characters (e.g., Nancy Tischler, Black Masks) only to restate the classical delineation set forth by Sterling Brown in The Negro in American Fiction (Wash., D.C., 1937) and in the Introduction to The Negro Caravan (New York, 1941) and again restated by Hugh Gloster in Negro Voices in American Fiction (Chapel Hill, 1948): contented slave, comic Negro, wretched freedman, tragic mulatto, and exotic primitive.

Other Faulknerian students have provided adequate and useful dictionaries of Faulkner's characters which correspond to Raleigh Player's contribution. One such recent effort is Robert Warren Kirk's "An Index and Encyclopedia of the Characters
in the Fictional Works of William Faulkner" (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of So. Calif., 1959) in which he arranges the works by title and in the order of their publication. An alphabetical listing of all the characters who appear in each work and a listing of each page of the work on which their names occur are included with a brief description of each character's relationship to each story. Whenever relevant, a brief description of the character's personality qualities is provided. The study concludes with a compiled alphabetized master index of all of Faulkner's fictional characters and a list of every work in which their names occur.

Faulkner's personal response to the Negro, as an individual and as a race, has been a popular area of study. Some conclusions, though guarded, have been logical and reasonable; others have been erroneous. Perhaps in too many instances, the researcher's own prejudices and hostilities have inadvertently come to the forefront; consequently, there appears the easy attempt to define Faulkner's perception of the Negro as either "good nigger" or "bad nigger," although it is obvious, even from a cursory reading of Faulkner's work, that the author himself saw no such clear line of demarcation between the qualities of good and bad in his characters, white or black. A point of illustration is Caspey (Sartoris), who has been considered by some critics to be an ungrateful opportunist because, as a result of his exposure during World War I to other than the Southern way of life, he desires more than
economic and social subjugation to the white man. Faulkner's characterizations suggest that all men, regardless of race, color, or creed, are both good and bad and that these qualities are manifested in the particular situation to which the characters must respond.

One such study of Faulkner's moral view of the Negro is Aaron Steinberg's "Faulkner and the Negro" (Unpubl. diss., N.Y. Univ., 1963) in which he sets as his goal "to avoid unsubstantiated generalizations about Faulkner's treatment of the Negro in his fiction" from his perusal of the depiction of Negroes in *Sartoris*. The validity of his study is lessened by his apparently too ready assumption to accept the views of Faulkner's white characters as Faulkner's own—an assumption which leads him to conclude that "Faulkner's hostility to Negroes at the beginning of his career seems evident from his statements about them." From his examination of Faulkner's later works—*Go Down, Moses, Intruder in the Dust,* and *Light in August*, the supporting conclusion follows that "Faulkner's hostility to the Negro, his belief in the Negro's inferiority, his irrational fears of blood pollution—all deeply ingrained Southern attitudes—permeate his fiction," a hostility of which Faulkner seems unaware. The author argues that because of this latent hostility, Faulkner was unable to treat the Negro as a fully developed character, his best achievement being the use of the Negro as a "touchstone-catalyst" stereotype used to "show up white behavior." Aside
from these generalities and the researcher's persistence in the attempt to prove Joe Christmas not a Negro and therefore not a contradiction to his theory, the study is an adequate and useful one. Most of the researcher's conclusions regarding Faulkner's literary techniques, as these relate to the role of the Negro characters, are good. In his attempt to understand Faulkner's moral view of the Negro, too often Steinberg's own moral view gets in the way.

William Clark Doster's "William Faulkner and the Negro" (Unpubl. diss., The Univ. of Florida, 1955) is an examination of the prose writings of William Faulkner to analyze his depiction of Negro characters, in regard to themselves and to whites, and to trace Faulkner's attitude toward these characters. His conclusion is twofold: (1) that in his fiction, Faulkner is a "proponent of the integration of the Negro and white races in the schools of Mississippi" and (2) that he gained his insight into Negro life and customs by his having had as a child a Negro nurse and a Negro playmate. The second statement is representative, at most, of surface sources which are reflective of the shallow reasons given by some other Southern authors (e.g., William Styron) for their assumed understanding of the Negro.

Doster's study presents a good overall historical and statistical survey of the circumstances of the Negro in Mississippi and the relationship of Faulkner's family background to Yoknapatawpha County. The author, however, gives a more
cursory interpretation of the fiction and is prone to skim over some of the real issues involved. Consequently, some generalized conclusions are drawn. For example: Chapter II, although it is an excellent account of Faulkner’s life, nevertheless, does not "relate him [Faulkner] and his work to his chosen fictional setting, the imaginary county of Yoknapatawpha and its county seat Jefferson," as the author assumes because these communities "closely resemble Lafayette County and the town of Oxford in Mississippi."

Several critics have discussed the matter of the relationship of Faulkner’s public and private worlds. Among them is Wallace G. Kay’s "Faulkner’s Mississippi: The Myth and the Microcosm" (The Southern Quarterly, VI, 1967) in which he examines Faulkner’s fictional world as it compares with his nonfictional world. He concludes that Faulkner starts with the actual South of his experience and imaginatively fills in details to create the myth that raises the work beyond reality to cosmic significance. Harold Edward Richardson, "William Faulkner: From Past to Self-Discovery; A Study of His Life and Work Through Sartoris—1929" (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of So. Calif., 1964), feeling that previous biographies of Faulkner have been inadequate and have, in fact, lent a bizarre slant to Faulkner’s life, visited Oxford, Mississippi with the hope of clarifying some of the existing conflicts and of gaining a clearer view of the relationship between Faulkner’s life and his literary work. This study of
Faulkner's background reveals the emerging themes of the past and his resulting struggle to identify as he was drawn, on the one hand, toward the past, and on the other, toward a more personal individuation in the South of his day.

In "William Faulkner: The Private versus the Public Vision" (Southwest Review, XXXIV, Summer, 1949), W.M. Frohock discusses the ineptness of using the standards of realism to judge the intentions of William Faulkner, and he concludes that to apply the exclusively realistic criteria to him is to miss the point. The reader must be aware that to understand Faulkner's meaning he must be conscious of his habit of seeing and presenting the action through the personality of one, or several, of the characters; his not ordinary distinction between past and present; and his exploitation of ambiguity, absurdity, and violence. Frohock makes a distinction between the "public" vision which he describes as "what we all see the same," and the "private" vision or the "individual way a person sees a thing." These two visions often collide and threaten realism. Frohock, like Robert Penn Warren and others, feels that Faulkner's private vision is essentially tragic.

An interesting view is represented, quite adequately, in G.T. Buckley's "Is Oxford the Original of Jefferson in William Faulkner's Novels?" (PMLA, LXXVI, 1961). Buckley refers to certain geographical and historical facts and persons to prove that Oxford is not the original for Jeffe-
son, at least not always. He concludes that when Faulkner was dealing with the Sartoris family, he nearly always had Ripley in mind as the original of Jefferson, and that in *Light in August*, he used Holly Springs as a model throughout. In *Intruder in the Dust*, however, Buckley feels that Oxford is the same as Jefferson. The latter identification is based on the references Faulkner makes to the "courthouse and everything else in or on the square having been burned to rubble by Federal occupation forces after a battle in 1864" (p. 50) and to Crawford Gowrie, who lived for almost eighteen months in a series of caves and tunnels in the hills within fifteen miles of the courthouse in Jefferson" while evading conscription during World War I (p. 164). Buckley presents the lack of an university in Jefferson as his most persuasive argument that Oxford is not always the model for Jefferson. This is a detail he feels that Faulkner would not have overlooked.

In contrast to Buckley's theory are the statements of Robert Coughlan, "William Faulkner" (*Life*, XXXV, 9/28/53 and 10/5/53); Irving Howe, "Faulkner and the Negroes," in *William Faulkner, A Critical Study* (New York, 1956); William Van O'Connor, *The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner* (Minneapolis, 1954); and Ward Miner, *The World of William Faulkner* (Durham, 1952), all of whom agree that Oxford is to be identified with Jefferson. Buckley based his opinion on his personal knowledge of Oxford and surrounding towns. He does not deny that Oxford was an all-important factor in Faulkner's development
and a significant influence on his writings, since Faulkner lived in that area most of his life.

In a revised version of an address delivered at the University of Mississippi, April, 1965, and reprinted in *Faulkner, A Collection of Critical Essays* (New Jersey, 1966), Robert Penn Warren expresses the idea that in Faulkner's work the theme of the Negro as the curse is dominant, for it is clear that "for him [Faulkner] the Civil War merely transferred the crime against the Negro into a new set of terms." Warren sees the Negro as "a central, if not the central, figure" in Faulkner's works, especially those treating the post-bellum period, and contrary to Raleigh Player's conclusion (*supra*, pp. 9-11), he decides that these characters are used as thematic and structural proponents. Warren repudiates the misstatements of those critics who have accused Faulkner of avenging himself and of having an abnormal concern with the miscegenation theme in his portrayal of characters of mixed blood because of an inherited fear of mixed blood. When he expresses the opinion that Faulkner deals specifically with the reality behind the Negro's mask, Warren emphasizes the point that the human reality and the social definition are appallingy juxtaposed.

Another study concerned with the social masks which the Negro is forced to assume in American society is Nancy Tischler's "William Faulkner and the Southern Negro" (*Susquehanna University Studies*, VII, 1965), an essay which was
later expanded and incorporated in a longer study of the role of the Negro in Southern literature as reported in Black Masks (Penn., 1969). The germinal report is concerned with Faulkner's Negro as moral nemesis. In both reports, Tischler defines Faulkner's moral view as this is reflected through his works. Though not without faults and, at times, a slightly biased approach, Nancy Tischler's studies are valuable and useful references for the student of Faulkner.

Charles Glicksberg, in his article "William Faulkner and the Negro Problem" (Phylon, X, Second Quarter, 1949), studies four of Faulkner's novels (The Sound and the Fury, Light in August, The Unvanquished, and Absalom, Absalom!) as a means of identifying the kind of role assigned to Faulkner's fictional cosmos. He sees the Negro as "playing a background role and occasionally a central tragic role." He finds evidence of the first in the Negroes as the cause of the War, as portentous background, and as parallels to the white characters. The Negro is the element of horror, the sense of guilt, that pervades the South, and this he finds obvious in what he interprets as the "recurrent theme of Negro blood acting as a source of defilement, a genetic curse, a fatality"—an obsession present, he feels, not only in Faulkner's mind, but also in the collective psyche of the South. (For a similar point of view, see Aaron Steinberg, supra, pp. 13-14.) Glicksberg concludes that Faulkner wastes no humanitarian pity upon the Negro; he merely describes his plight as he sees it, and
"if there is any conclusion that Faulkner seems to arrive at, it is that the Negro is the doom of the South: both the object of a perverse love and the fatal enemy." Glicksberg agrees with Faulkner that the final solution may well be the amalgamation of the Negro race into the white race. He feels that *The Sound and the Fury* offers a cogent statement of the relationship between the Southern Negroes and the whites: the Negro must accept his way of life with complaisant fortitude. Certainly Faulkner's statement is partially this, but to see only this is to ignore the deeper meanings of the novel and the full realization of the capacity of the character Dilsey.

Several critics have regarded Faulkner as a critic of society, particularly of the Southern society. Hugh M. Gloster refers to Faulkner's effort in *Intruder in the Dust* as a "manifestation of his statements to the New York Herald Tribune reporter, John Hutchen: "I'm a States' Rights man ..." (Oct. 31, 1948). He sees this statement as constituting "the central ideological position of *Intruder in the Dust*, in addition to the plantation-school tenet that the white South will defend its racial homogeneity." These statements, he feels, are illustrated in the symbolic story describing the deliverance of Lucas Beauchamp. Gloster's indictment of such an approach (*Phylon, X, Summer Quarter*) is based on the idea that it repeats the "mildewed doctrine that legal attempts to emancipate the Southern Negro not only will lead to grief, agony, and violence, but also will produce a national division at a
time when unity is the *sine qua non* of our country’s con-
tinuing welfare." Gloster recognized most of the characters of *Intruder in the Dust* as "stock puppets of the fiction of the decadent South" that included down-trodden Negroes. The one exception is Lucas Beauchamp whom Gloster described as a "distinctive and memorable character . . . proud, fearless, stately . . . who refused to observe . . . conventional stand-
ards of Jim-Crow etiquette." *Intruder in the Dust* is identi-
fied as "an apotheosis of mercy, Southern style," and as Faulkner's effort to justify the ways of the South. Gloster further states that as a sensitive observer and writer of the South, this was a difficult task for Faulkner, who found it necessary to reconcile his own prejudices as a true-blood Southerner with the obvious principles of human justice, and as a result, Faulkner invalidates his own plea for patience with the South by his depiction of the qualities of the majority of the Southern white characters in Jefferson. He saw Faulkner as "dedicated to the cause for which Dixiecrats campaigned in the Presidential election before the publica-
tion of *Intruder in the Dust*," and feeling that Faulkner's approach is somewhat dated, Gloster reminds him that "our reputation as a democracy is besmirched by our treatment of minorities, that the South is now making accommodations to civil-rights legislation without resorting to violence, that a rapidly increasing number of Southerners are ready to render justice uninfluenced by racial considerations, that
Negroes have more faith in good deeds than in the good intentions of their white fellow citizens, and that many Negroes are not content merely to endure until the distant tomorrow when Dixie lawmakers might decide of their own free will to institute racial equality" (Ibid.).

Another critic, Edmund Wilson, also considers Intruder in the Dust to be a rebuttal to the Civil-Rights Program. In "William Faulkner's Reply to the Civil-Rights Program" (The New Yorker, XXIV, Oct. 23, 1948), he erroneously identifies Lucas as a Negro "who had developed so rigid a pride that even when wrongfully charged with the murder of a white man, he can hardly bring himself to stoop to defend himself against the enemy of his race" (this, of course, was the least of Lucas's reasons); therefore, his benefactors, persons in the community who "having come to respect Lucas's independence, interest themselves to save him from lynching." Wilson is equally erroneous in describing Mrs. Eunice Habersham as having "grown up with the accused man's dead wife in the relation of mistress and maid," and as a result, he classifies Intruder in the Dust as a "kind of counterblast to the anti-lynching bill and to the civil-rights plank in the Democratic platform." Seeing Gavin Stevens as the proponent of Faulkner's viewpoint, he summarizes his most cogent statements regarding the South and the racial situation as representative of Faulkner's view. Wilson arrives at the dubious conclusion that Intruder in the Dust is indicative that the pressure
from persons outside of the South has had some moral influence on the South, since in the story-line of the book, "these white folks of the best old stock [also a dubious assessment] come to the rescue of the Negro with a zeal that I do not remember to have seen displayed before by the inhabitants of Yoknapatawpha County" even, he adds, in *Go Down, Moses*. The most that can be said of Mr. Wilson's statement is that it is typical of a critic who has not done his homework; that is, he has not completed a careful reading of the work he is purporting to criticize.

Critics who have analyzed Faulkner's work in terms of its relation to the history of his region and its subsequent social statement of that region must eventually come to grips with the debate concerning the parallels between legend, myth, and history. In his "The Theme of Responsibility in the Later Fiction of William Faulkner" (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of Wash., 1961), Robert Leslie Berner examines Faulkner's work and concludes that his view is much closer to the realities of history than to legend. Its relationship to history is therefore relevant. Berner, like Wilson, also concludes that Gavin Stevens often expresses Faulkner's personal views, but he adds that Stevens's inadequate actions show that he is not merely Faulkner's spokesman.

As a contrasting view, Glenn Carey, in "William Faulkner: Critic of Society" (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of Illinois, 1963), sees Faulkner as primarily an artist, not a propagan-
dist or reformer, but he concedes that Faulkner’s work does include criticism of man and society. Although Carey does not see these criticisms as intrusive on Faulkner’s art and views them instead as advancing the action of the story, like Wilson, he regards the one glaring exception, Intruder in the Dust, as a book in which Gavin Stevens’s speeches can be judged only as propaganda, not art. He adds that in this one case, Faulkner failed to follow his usual technique of “making his criticism dramatically effective and acceptable by having . . . the responsible characters speak and act against the evils in civilization” and integrating this social criticism with the creative design of his work.

Some uncomplimentary critics have chastised Faulkner for what has seemed to them to be a total ignorance of or unconcern for the new attitudes which were heralding a new social consciousness during the period in which he wrote. Other more complimentary critics have seen in his work a dramatic development of his social conscience as he accepted, through the years, his responsibility as a man and a writer. While some critics have tried to clock a gradual development of awareness in Faulkner’s approach, the majority have agreed that moral concern has always been the core of Faulkner’s work and that the false ideas of gradual development results merely from Faulkner’s change of emphasis at different points in his career. One such critic, Joseph Gold, in his "The Single Vision: A Study of the Philosophy and the
Form of its Presentation in the Works of William Faulkner" (Unpubl. diss., The Univ. of Wisconsin, 1969), traces the objectives and limitations of the moral themes in Faulkner's novels by re-interpreting each with a view to its overall implications rather than emphasizing individual scenes. From this approach, which involved "opposing the critical tendency of recent years which sees a radical change of view in Faulkner's work from a cosmic pessimism to a provincial optimism and the assertion of moral values," he sought to discover unity in Faulkner's work which he felt had not been detected by other critics. Gold, unlike some others, does not view the Nobel Prize address as a climax of a development of Faulkner's moral concerns; instead, he feels that these concerns have been present even in his early works. Gold likens Faulkner's moral beliefs to an "ill-defined humanism" which encompasses a belief in God while at the same time considering man's responsibility for his history. For the purposes of his study, Gold divided Faulkner's novels into three principal types: those which deal with the "values" or "verities" projected in the Stockholm speech (The Bear, Intruder in the Dust, and A Fable); those which depict a contrast between successful and unsuccessful attempts to cope with the human predicament (The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, Wild Palms, and Light in August); and those which reject society in its most sordid and materialistic aspects (Absalom, Absalom!, Sanctuary, Pylon, The Hamlet, and The Town).
Robert Leslie Berner's study (supra, p. 23) follows a similar direction and, like Gold's, indicates that by a gradual development of the theme of responsibility, Faulkner seems to be "attempting to create a character who can consciously prevail without being destroyed." He sees in Go Down, Moses the suggestion that brotherhood between the races will be achieved because of the inevitability of amalgamation. Berner points out that in his development of this thesis, Faulkner dramatizes the discrepancy between thought and action.

Also among the proponents of the unifying moral theme is James Roberts, who in his "William Faulkner: A Thematic Study" (Unpubl. diss., State Univ. of Iowa, 1956) concludes that although Faulkner's mythical world changes from an attitude of despair to one of hopefulness, the basic Faulknerian values remain a constant unifying force throughout his work. To explicate his discussion, Roberts divides Faulkner's work into two broad classifications: those early novels which reveal a world of despair and which end with the publication of The Hamlet (1940), and his later novels which reveal a world of hopefulness and which begin with Go Down, Moses (1942).

A study related to the development of Faulkner's moral view is Stanley Lawrence Elkin's "Religious Themes and Symbolism in the Novels of William Faulkner" (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of Illinois, 1962) in which he projects the idea that "the final ambivalence in Faulkner is the split between idealism and cynicism reflected in his evaluation of the disparate
nature of God." He bases this conclusion on the argument that Faulkner's religious background, as it is reflected in his work, is ambivalent, and although all religious themes in Faulkner are associated with some concept of suffering, Faulkner's response toward suffering is ambivalent. This, he feels, is particularly emphasized in his "endure/prevail" theme. "Romanticizing the Negro, Faulkner gives him the capacity to endure (passively to submit to fate), presenting him as noble in his stoicism." He recognizes, however, that although Faulkner is sympathetic to characters like Dilsey and Nancy, he is more sympathetic to characters "like Runner or Mink ... who engage the world by resisting it, who prevail." Elkin adds that the notion that suffering is "mystically purgative" is as strong a theme in Faulkner as it is in the Russian novelists or in religion itself.

In an effort to realize some unifying basis for Faulkner's social consciousness with that of other writers of his time, Daylon Kohler, in his "William Faulkner and the Social Conscience" (College English, XI, Dec., 1949), uses World War I as the conditioning experience. He sees Faulkner as a "Southern writer committed to the historic predicament of his region and as a serious writer who must explore its social and moral possibilities." Although Kohler explains Faulkner's myth-making as "a significant controlling image by which he has given dramatic force and moral subtlety to his pictures of southern life," he does not feel that Faulkner intended it
to be a historical account of the South any more than Hawthorne intended *The Scarlet Letter* as a history of Massachusetts. Kohler classifies Faulkner as a "writer of tradition in an anti-traditional society" who speaks for a social conscience which recognizes "values beyond the accepted patterns of expediency or compulsion in human behavior."

Another interesting comment is William G. Clark's "Is King David a Racist?" (*University Review*, XXXIV, 1967) which follows a psychological line of reasoning to argue that Sutpen's aversion to persons of mixed blood goes beyond a Southern racist attitude of blood purity, and it can be traced back to his youthful experience with the liveried-coated Negro servant who refused him entrance to his master's house. Negro blood is symbolic; accordingly, Clark concludes that Sutpen's design is a momentous scheme to prove himself better than the Negro.

A related study is David Hugh Stewart's dissertation, "William Faulkner and Mikhail Sholokhov: A Comparative Study of Two Representatives of the Regional Conscience, Their Affinities and Meanings" (D.A., XI, 1958-1959) in which the author uses as a device to determine the meaning of what an author says, a character type which he labeled the "center of consciousness"—a character with divided social and cultural loyalties who is given the task by his creator of "confronting and evaluating the crucial matter of social flux with its derivative crises in the class order, in family, and
individual morality and behavior." Representatives of this
type in Faulkner's works would be Ratliff and Gavin Stevens.
According to Stewart, an examination of Faulkner's "centers
of consciousness" reveals that they are "highly egocentric,
that they believe themselves to occupy special positions or
to play messianic roles in the social organism, and that they
have the power to order the world in their own image." These
characteristics result from their inability or unwillingness
to confront reality on its own terms.

A study which has served as a valuable informative
background reference for this researcher's investigation is
Agnes Moreland's "A Study of Faulkner's Presentation of Some
Problems that Relate to Negroes" (Unpubl. diss., Columbia
University, 1960) in which the slave origins of economic,
social, and moral problems, miscegenation, and self-assertive-
ness in Negroes are discussed. Her thesis is that although
Faulkner has often shown Negro characters to be the source of
problems in his fictional world, he has also shown Southern
white characters and the total Southern social structure as
the primary causes of the trouble-maker role of Negroes. Her
study is an analysis of some of these problems. Chapter I is
a discussion of the social, economic, and moral problems that
derived from the white-Negro conflict; white-Negro interbreed-
ing in addition to the hatred some Southern white men have for
Negroes as the cause of the Civil War, as well as for the
Northerners whom they believe to have exploited the Southern
white men and the Negroes. Agnes Moreland feels that in depicting these relations between Negro and white men, Faulkner has not "shown scenes of physical violence toward the Negroes," and his main concern "is with the psychological and emotional effects of slavery on the white masters and their descendants." Chapter II is a study of miscegenation as a major problem and the resulting problems of the person of mixed blood. The author feels that many white men "define being as being white . . . mixture of races negates being," and in connection with this idea, she refers to Faulkner's suggestion that racial conflict will end with amalgamation of the black and white races. Chapter III considers problems that arise in Southern society when a Negro refuses to be subservient to a white man and when there is a perversion of law when it deals with Negroes. Moreland feels that some of Faulkner's characters are fanatical in their response to Negroes; others are insensitive or unbelieving of the emotional side of Negroes. Moreland notes that Faulkner portrays Negro social offenders as victims rather than as criminals.

Other directly related studies which offer a contribution to the subject include the following: Irene C. Edmonds, "Faulkner and the Black Shadow" (Southern Renascence, pp. 192-206); Charles H. Nilon, Faulkner and the Negro (New York, 1965), a study which represents the extension of a dissertation effort (Wisconsin, 1952) and which is especially good as an account of the several roles of the Negro in Faulkner's work; Daniel
Bradford's chapter "William Faulkner and the Southern Quest for Freedom" in Black, White, and Gray: Twenty-One Points of View on the Race Question (New York, 1964), which gives a liberal post-mortem view of Faulkner as a humanitarian; and Melvin Seiden, "Faulkner's Ambiguous Negro" (Massachusetts Review, IV, 1963). In addition, Richard A. Lawson, "Patterns of Initiation in William Faulkner's Go Down, Moses" (D.A., XXVII, 1966), finds that this novel shows ambivalence operating in each individual's search for identity through initiation. Each is marked by his ability or inability to come to terms with life. As an example is the dream of Eden that Ike McCaslin has and which is impossible for the South.

Other related studies include the following: Walter Allen, "Mr. Faulkner's Humanity," (The New Statesman and Nation, XXXVIII, October 15, 1949), a review of Intruder in the Dust; Warren Beck, "Faulkner and the South" (Antioch Review, I, Spring, 1941); Earle Berney, "The Two William Faulkners" (The Canadian Forum, XVIII, June, 1938), a review of The Unvanquished; Roark Bradford, "The Private World of William Faulkner," a biographical account including photographs by Bradley Smith (Magazine of the Year, II, May, 1948); and also Bradford's "Go Down to Faulkner's Land," a review of Go Down, Moses (The New Republic, CVI, June 29, 1942).

Various thematic matters in several closely related studies are mentioned here because of their significance to the present study. Among these is Richard Beale Davis's
essay, "Mrs. Stowe's Characters-in-Situations and a Southern Tradition" (Durham, N.C., 1959), in which he defines a character-in-situation tradition in the Southern slavery novel initiated by Mrs. Stowe which extends to include Mark Twain, G.W. Cable, and Faulkner. Beulah V. Johnson's "The Treatment of the Negro Woman as a Major Character in American Novels, 1900-1950" (Unpubl. diss., N.Y. Univ., 1955) is a comparison of the characteristics which Negro and white authors attribute to Negro women in novels. "Dominant Images of the Nego in the Ante-Bellum South," by Richard B. Erno (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of Minn., 1961) examines images of the Negro as Janus, Caliban, Satan, Friday, Mammy, and Uncle Tom, while the dissertation of Catherine J. Starke, "Negro Stock Characters, Archetypes, and Individuals in American Literature: A Study for College Teachers" (Columbia Univ., 1963), provides a referential framework within which the older images of Negro characters may be viewed objectively and which suggests a technique for objectively handling literature which contains offensive stereotypes. Analytical criteria used in this study are name, physical description, identity, responsibility, and relatedness.

Electra C. Wiley's "A Study of the Noble Savage Myth in Characterizations of the Negro in Selected American Literature Works" (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of Arkansas, 1964) deals with literature in which American writers have characterized the Negro as a thinking and feeling individual who contributes
significantly to the themes of the work in which he appears. The purpose of the study was to examine the concept of noble savagery as related to the Negro character in American literature. The author, like Richard Erno, points up the need for objective attitudes and skillful interpretations on the part of readers to avoid a great cultural loss through omission, censure, and ignorance. Helena M. Smith's dissertation, "Negro Characterization in the American Novel: A Historical Survey of Work by White Authors" (Penn. State Univ., 1959), another historical survey of Negro characterizations by white authors, analyzes the Negro as a literary figure in historical perspective at varying stages of development. It considers the significance of the Negroes to the plot, the attitudes of whites toward Negroes, and also various authors' attempts to portray Negro thought. The study surveys the pre-war approach, the post-war approach (romanticizing, resentment, and anger), and the World War I approach (the objective psychological approach used by a number of Southern authors, including Faulkner, who began to study interracial relationships and to write from the Negro's point of view. J.C. Furnas's Goodbye Uncle Tom (New York, 1956) provides an interesting discussion of the Uncle Tom character connotations and a statement regarding the influence of such characterizations on current social relationships. In a correlated study, "Attitudes Toward the Negro in Southern Social Stories and Novels 1932-1952" (Unpubl. diss., Vanderbilt Univ., 1953), Robert
Gilbert reports that rapid changes in Southern society are reflected in the treatment of the Negro in both novels and nonfiction. Stuart Burke James's "Race Relations in Literature and Sociology" (Unpubl. diss., Univ. of Wash., 1960) offers an analysis of contemporary American literature in which Negro characters appear, and it is based on the thesis that literary artists must be socially responsible beings. The author assumes that "a correspondence of meaning exists between a writer's creation and the real world.

Assumptions Underlying the Hypotheses

During the early 1900's, the South began to develop a literature peculiar to its own culture—tales of sentimentality for the Old South were presented paradoxically side by side with tales of irony about the native land. The writers of this new literature manifested several and various points of view, and particularly was this true of their portrayals of the Negro. While some preferred the old surface stereotypes as a means of exploiting the dramatic possibilities, others, like William Faulkner, were able to depict the more human aspects of the Negro characters which lurked beneath the conventional types and strove to move toward a more perspective, if vacillating, view of the Southern world. As has been attested by the foregoing analysis and review of related studies, previous study of the role of the Negro in Southern literature has been extensive, if insufficient. This present study was pro-
posed to offer no magic new discovery, but rather to present a compilation of a many-sided view of these characters and thus possibly to clarify and broaden the understanding and appreciation of their significant roles, particularly in the work of Faulkner's middle and latter career, as the often central figures in his work.

In this inquiry, when studying Faulkner's view of the Negro, the investigator assumed that his reaction as indicated by the behavior sample (the view manifested in his public world) was approximately, and at some level of probability, representative of the larger aspects, or universe, of his reaction in his private world. This basic assumption may be summarized in the proposition that an author's view is a resultant of (1) certain situational and environmental influences and (2) certain organismic conditions—learned and unlearned characteristics of the individual author—and their interaction. As a means of identifying and defining more specific manipulative hypotheses for this study, the following were among the postulates assumed and considered:

1. Faulkner's responses to the Negro are classifiable quantitatively and qualitatively.

2. Faulkner's Negro character types are classifiable quantitatively and qualitatively; his depiction of the Negro is characterized then by some degree of consistency and is, therefore, possible to predict.

3. Faulkner's responses to the Negro can be inferred
from observed correlates of those responses—from the various phenomena that are known to have been associated with those responses.

4. Faulkner's responses are limited; i.e., the characteristics, however numerous, cohere together in groups of invariable connections which are finite in number. Accordingly, the number of responses the author is capable of making and the number of stimulus situations and organismic variables that may affect the author's behavior are limited.

5. Like any human responses, Faulkner's must always be determined as probable rather than certain and as characterized by variability rather than complete uniformity; the error component resulting from such variability will inevitably be present in any assessment of the author's motivations, reasons, and emotions.

6. The models for Faulkner's Negro characters are to be found in his Southern life and thought. Underlying the often derogatory and compensatory categorizing of the Negro in Faulkner's work is the overall Southern pattern of thought: the need to appeal to certain audiences, the necessity for authenticity of local scene and specific areas of time, as well as regard for the nature of the subject matter explored and the relationship of the Negro characters to it.

7. Faulkner's responses to the Negro vary at different age levels and career stages, and his efforts to characterize the Negro are reflected in an uneven progression and
are often colored by ambivalence and indecision.

8. Because of his Southern heritage, Faulkner found it difficult to reconcile himself to Negroes as more than stereotyped images. Faulkner preferred the passive, nonviolent Negro who endures humiliation and physical abuse to the image of the articulate and demanding "new" Negro of his later years. However, the dramatization of the Negro in Faulkner's work is an important psychological and philosophical link in the understanding of the "new" Negro.

9. Faulkner deals realistically with the Negro as far as he is prepared to do so; that is, if one takes a one-sided perspective, the account is both realistic and accurate.

10. Because of the circumscribed role the Negro plays in Southern life, he seldom appears, factually or fictionally, as clearly individual; many Southerners have known Negroes in only brief and restricted associations (as servants, laborers, athletes, entertainers), and their knowledge of them is based upon stereotyped and generalized acquaintances.

11. To an extent, Faulkner realized his lack of knowledge of the Negro and the impossibility of encompassing fifteen million Negroes within a few stereotyped descriptions. Faulkner uses the stereotype (Negro and other) as tools to facilitate the study and analysis of the effects of slavery and emancipation upon the Old South and the development of the New South.
Statement of Hypotheses

The foregoing assumptions, together with their several implications, provided a theoretical framework from which this study proceeded to the following five hypotheses which formed the basis for this study and which were tested against empirical data compiled:

1. Faulkner's moral view of the Negro may be revealed or observed (1) by a representative sampling of his work and (2) by specific signs, indicators, or correlates from this sampling. It is assumed that the responses of the author are approximately, and at some level of probability, representative of the larger aspects, or universe, of his total response.

2. The general classes of Faulkner's dramatizations of the Negro fall into relatively homogeneous clusters, characterized by substantial intercorrelation of responses within a cluster; therefore, reliable estimates of Faulkner's responses in toto may be described in terms of a limited number of such major clusters, and as indicators, these are determined by such characteristics as social attitudes, situational and environmental influences, and their interaction.

3. Faulkner finds it difficult to reconcile the image of the "new" Negro with the romanticized image of the Negro of the Old South, but he deals realistically with the Negro as far as he is prepared to do so.

4. Faulkner sees the hope of a link between the past and the present as a means for resolving the evils inherent in
the more sophisticated and mechanized society of the New South; his Negro characters are important elements in the societal scheme; the nucleus—the Old South.

5. Although Faulkner's responses to the Negro vary at different age levels and career stages, and his efforts to characterize the Negro are reflected in an uneven progression and are often colored by ambivalence and indecision, there is a definite continuity in Faulkner's rational speculation of the Southern "condition," as viewed in his early and later works, as well as between the relationship of this speculation and the philosophical and religious representations that lay behind the speculation.

Method of Attack

Any attempt to assess any facet of Faulkner's work should be predicated upon two considerations: (1) an understanding of or, at the least, a reconciliation with his Southern heritage and (2) an adequate cross-sectional in-depth reading of his work. The first consideration is essential because, in spite of what has been promulgated as his "liberal" views, Faulkner was a Southerner first, last, and always. The second is important because of the ambivalent probing and the fluctuating indecision engendered by the first and revealingly dramatized in his categorical depiction of "types."

As a historical inquiry concerned specifically with William Faulkner's delineation and depiction of the Negro,
the basic and immediate purpose is sixfold: (1) to ascertain any organic pattern of approach to Faulkner's portrayal of the Negro which can be determined from his work, (2) to seek an understanding of the evolution of this pattern of approach, (3) to differentiate, correlate, and substantiate this pattern of approach as one representative of Faulkner the author, Faulkner the man, or as an exemplification of both, (4) to construct a surface comparison of this pattern of approach to the approaches of some other Southern writers whenever such a comparison is pertinent or relevant, (5) to study the interresponses of Faulkner's Negro characters in their several involvements with other ethnic and societal stratifications of the Southern structure of Oxford and Yoknapatawpha, and (6) to present in one composite study, designed to serve students and teachers of Faulkner, and the inquiring reader, a running commentary on certain key Faulknerian works and criticism that have evolved out of the scholarly studies of Faulkner's work and that have greatly influenced the thinking of Faulknerian scholars.

The discussion proper has been controlled and partially organized by limitation to the three general stages of Faulkner's career as defined by Frederick Hoffman: (1) apprenticeship (1924-1929), when Faulkner vacillated about the rewards to be realized from a writing career and when he was indefinite about the kind of writer he wished to be; (2) the "time of genius" (1929-1936), when his subject matter and direction
became more stable, and he produced a succession of exceptional novels; and (3) the period of "consolidation and affirmation" (1940-1962), when the dramatization of Yoknapatawpha County was developed to its fullest, and Faulkner's statements extended beyond its borders to the realms of universals. 

In accordance with these divisional career phases, three groups of Faulkner's fictional works have been considered, and these are cited in this study (See Appendix, p. 300). These works are listed according to publication dates rather than the date of writing, and the edition cited, if it is different from the original publication, is included in brackets. Because of the audience to which this study is directed, the investigator has limited the materials chosen to those which can be more practically useful—the novel and the short story. Genre is identified in parentheses.

By reviewing works of varied chronology and genre, the investigator has attempted to achieve greater representativeness in the sample by presenting diverse facets of the images of Faulkner's Negro characters from the point of view of facilitating a more complete and objective perspective of the roles of the Negro and of Faulkner's responses to these types. An attempt at a chronological discussion has been discredited as inappropriate to this study, and since its immediate concern is Faulkner's portrayal of the Negro, concentrated and final
emphasis has been directed to those Yoknapatawpha works in which Negro characters and themes of racial conflict are proportionately important to the work— notably, *Intruder in the Dust*, *Go Down, Moses*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August*, and *Absalom, Absalom!* Finding representative materials by and about the Negro in Faulkner's work was not always easy; some have been scarcely worth the trouble, while others have been enlightening and authoritatively done. In choosing sources and interpretative essays for this study, the researcher has been biased in favor of the more contemporary. The discussions cited are of relatively recent date—the earliest was first published in 1939 and most are representative of the points of view of the "fifties" and "sixties."

The reference sources studied and cited in this investigation include, in addition to the stratified cross-sectional sampling of Faulkner's fiction, compilations of his essays, letters, lectures, and speeches. Also included are taped interviews and biographies, family and other, as available. Many of these are described in the paragraphs immediately following.

Several worthwhile general collections of critical essays on Faulkner's work are available. Two of the most useful are *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*, eds. Frederick Hoffman and Olga Vickery (Michigan, 1960), and *Faulkner: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Penn Warren (New Jersey, 1967). There is some overlapping
of content in these two books, but they are the best sources of their kind. One of the most sound and comprehensive critical works is Olga W. Vickery's *The Novels of William Faulkner* (Baton Rouge, 1959 and 1964). The 1964 edition includes a selected but thorough listing of Faulkner's criticism, including essays in magazines and some important reviews. This work contains an especially useful commentary on *The Sound and the Fury*.


Published collections of Faulkner's interviews, speeches, correspondence, and essays include *Faulkner in the University*, eds. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner (Charlottesville, 1959); *Lion in the Garden*, eds. James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate (New York, 1968); and *The Faulkner-Cowley File*, ed. Malcolm Cowley (New York, 1966), a record of Faulkner's correspondence with Malcolm Cowley preceding the latter's editing.

Thus far, no good authoritative biographies of Faulkner's life have been completed. However, a valuable and interesting, though at times contradictory, picture of Faulkner's family background and early years may be found in the books by his two brothers: Murray Falkner, *The Falkners of Mississippi* (Baton Rouge, 1967), and John Faulkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence* (New York, 1963). These are books of personal anecdotes of childhood and family, the raw materials for biography rather than biography itself. *My Brother Bill* is a more consciously literary work that relates to the Yoknapatawpha saga. Other biographical material is provided in *William Faulkner of Oxford*, eds. James W. Webb and A. Wigfall Green (Baton Rouge, 1965). According to the editors, the purpose of this text of forty personal interviews reproduced unchanged was "to catch the composite image" of Faulkner the boy and Faulkner the man and author "in a more informal way by probing the memory of those who knew him."

Several guides and indexes to works about Faulkner are available, the most comprehensive and useful being Maurice Beebe's "Criticism of William Faulkner: A Selected Checklist," which appears in the special Faulkner issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* (XIII, 1967). Irene Lynn Sleeth's "William Faulkner: A Bibliography of Criticism" (Denver, 1962) is a reprint in
pamphlet form of a listing of criticism covering the period from 1920 to early 1961. This book includes total listings of nearly nine hundred items, including books, essays or chapters in books, articles, and major reviews authored by American, British, French, Italian, Spanish, Latin American, German, Scandinavian, African, Polish, and Japanese writers.

For more current bibliographies of Faulknerian criticism, Twentieth-Century Literature, Modern Fiction, and American Literature are valuable references. Of special help to researchers interested in the study of the Negro character in American literature is A Bibliography of Doctoral Research on the Negro 1933-1966, compiled by Earle H. West (Howard Univ., 1969), which lists 1452 dissertations arranged in seven major categories covering every aspect of study relating to the Negro in the United States. The American Novel, eds. Donna Gerstenberger and George Hendrick (Colorado, 1961) lists references for criticism for all of Faulkner's novels. Also helpful to this study has been A Bibliographical Guide to the Study of Southern Literature, ed. Louis D. Rubin, Jr. (Baton Rouge, 1969). There are a few worthwhile and useful references available on the history of the Negro; more are available on the sociological problems of the Negro.

In addition, the following general background references have proved of particular value to this researcher: The Negro Caravan, Sterling Brown, et al. (New York, 1941); Images of the Negro in American Literature, eds. Seymour L.
Gross and John Hardy (Chicago, 1966); *Culture in the South*, W.T. Couch (Chapel Hill, 1934); *Neoro Voices in American Fiction*, Hugh M. Closter (Chapel Hill, 1948); *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, John Dollard (New York, 1957); *Mississippi: The Closed Society*, James W. Silver (New York, 1963); and *The Mind of the South*, W.J. Cash (New York, 1941).

Several guides containing indexes to Faulkner's characters are in print. The text employed for the purposes of this study was *A Faulkner Glossary*, Harry Runyan (New York, 1964).

The chapters which follow have been arranged in the order which best will facilitate the purposes of this study. Chapter II provides materials which the investigator considers to be necessary to a proper orientation to the reading and interpretation of Faulkner's fiction, and it attempts to describe these materials in limited detail with a view toward establishing the validity or invalidity of the persistence of the concept of the positive relationship of Faulkner's public and private worlds in so far as that relationship is unifying. Yoknapatawpha County is introduced—its social classes, social myths, and social themes are reviewed, and a discussion of its several functions in terms of Faulkner's work provided. The contrast between the Old South and the New South and the resulting social pressures are emphasized. It is not the purpose of this chapter to concentrate upon dates and other factual data which are readily obtainable in the introductions to Faulknerian criticism and other works. Chapters III and
IV contain the crux of the discussion and are concerned with the place of the Negro in Southern life and in Faulkner's fiction. Sections are allotted to the discussion of Negro stereotypes, archetypes, and archetypal patterns and to the functions of these as they are employed by Faulkner in their several relationships to the South and to other ethnic groups and as a means toward a more universal statement regarding the South. Chapter IV also contains a review of the development of Faulkner's moral perspective of the Negro and the South. Chapters V and VI end the account and include a synthesis and the summary and conclusions.

**Definition of Terms**

The definition of terms pertinent to this study and developed from the point of view which the investigator believes to be that of William Faulkner's are included in the Appendix, page 302.
CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

The Region: Oxford, Mississippi

Faulkner's Private World

William Faulkner spent his life in Oxford, Mississippi from the time he was taken there by his parents, at the age of five, from New Albany, Mississippi, where he was born. For a few brief periods he went beyond its borders for financial and personal reasons (e.g., movie writing and to live near daughter Jill in Charlottesville). His private life, in some ways, was more exciting, robust, and adventurous than the public life depicted in the Yoknapatawpha saga. It is only reasonable then to suppose that much of it became a part of the life depicted in the fictional cosmos. In the Preface of *William Faulkner of Oxford* (Louisiana, 1965), editors James Webb and A. Wigfall Green observe:

> Always present is the small world which surrounded him and which he converted into the great world because he had the sympathy to create, as it exists everywhere, the hardship and cruelty and humor and love of all humankind (p. viii).

In the same reference, Philip Stone adds:

> In the blood of William Faulkner . . . runs, whether he will or no, the blood of those who came before him.
In his thoughts ... move millions of unconscious reflections of the land which gave him birth and which has surrounded him all but a few of his years (p. 5).

Faulkner's life in the New South and his heritage from the Old South were "naturals" as resources for his narrative-structuring. Yet, in spite of the biographical attempts of Faulkner's two brothers and other biographers, his private life remains much of an enigma. Each reports incidents from a different perspective, and as a result, several discrepancies have been projected. In order to find the clues to the real personality of the man who was William Faulkner, the researcher must consider all of these perspectives. Ironically, this is true also of Faulkner's fiction--one must read the reactions, reflections, and narrations of several characters in order to arrive at the full story (a technique seen at its best in The Sound and the Fury).

The South, specifically Mississippi, was what Faulkner knew best; as a result, he used it as the setting for his works. According to A. Wigfall Green,

His point of view would have been essentially the same had he lived in any other section ... He had to use the material he had without considering the reaction of people of other sections [or even his own section] to his pictures of the South ... His purpose was to ... tell the truth about man, the truth inside the heart. The setting was incidental ... He admitted that his pictures of the South were misleading ... but he tried to show not fact but truth (Ibid., p. 132).

Faulkner's Mississippi was much like the other Southern states, that is, a region separate and apart, but in his works, the circumstances of the South are those of the nation. In the
Faulkner-Cowley File (New York, 1966), Robert Penn Warren cautions that "Faulkner's work should be regarded, not in terms of the South against the North, but in terms of issues which are common to our modern world. The legend is not merely a legend of the South, but it is also a legend of our general plight and problem" (p. 93). Faulkner refrained from predicting what would happen in his private world, but about his public world he was more articulate: the Snopes influence would overcome the aristocracy. This is a prediction which some critics (e.g., Melvin Backman) consider to be a compounding of "legend with fantasy, for not only does such a view assume the existence of an aristocratic South based on a benevolent system of slavery and characterized by humanistic values, but it finds a ready scapegoat for its ills in a tribe of Southern 'Yankees,' the Snopeses. It is more logical and just to assign the major responsibility ... to its rulers—the Thomas Sutpens."¹

¹Melvin Backman, Faulkner: The Major Years (Indiana, 1966), p. 91.

As an orientation for the chapters which follow, the investigator will discuss, in this chapter, background information about Yoknapatawpha and Mississippi and describe these materials in reference to any justifiable societal and economic correlating of the two regions. The tradition of the Old South and the anti-tradition of the New South are reviewed; thereby, the foundation is laid for the natural
antithesis which assumes a major significance in Faulkner's work.

William Faulkner was a connoisseur of Mississippian history; consequently, as Melvin Backman and others advise, in order to understand the majority of Faulkner's works, it is essential to know the "fact and legend of Southern history," how Faulkner's work mirrors this history, and the concern of his work with a "central quest . . . the quest to discover the truth about the rise and fall of the South" (Ibid.). Certainly, to appreciate fully the sociological import of Faulkner's Mississippi, it is important to become acquainted with the social structure of the population of the state, the economic image of the state, and the general pattern of the growth and development of the state. Obvious to the reader, however, should be the recognition that a discussion of these components of the Mississippian social structure constitutes, in many instances, a discussion of the same components in the entire Southern social structure.

Population

Oxford, Mississippi, which is located in the northern part of the state, has a population of about four thousand. When the Falkners moved there in 1902, its population totaled approximately one thousand. Oxford, like other small Mississippian towns, has been typically Southern in culture, in appearance, and in the attitudes of its people. Until the past few decades, Mississippi's Negro population exceeded
the white population. During the approximately fifty years preceding the Civil War, the population in Mississippi increased from 30,000 to almost 800,000. The slave population of Mississippi increased by 197 per cent, and by 1902, Negroes constituted 59 per cent of the population. In 1950, the population of Mississippi was 2,178,914. Of this total, approximately 50 per cent were Negroes. During the years 1940 to 1962, Faulkner's later years, the Negro-white ratio for the entire South had dropped from 77 per cent to 59.9 per cent, mainly because of the migration of Negroes to Northern cities and the slight increase in the white population (see Table 1, Appendix, p. 303). If it can be assumed, as it generally is, that the intensity of the race problem of any area increases in proportion to the ratio of blacks to whites, then it is obvious that the race problem has been greater in Mississippi than in some other areas, and that the response of the white Mississippian toward the Negro might have been a direct and spontaneous reaction to that problem.

The genesis of the population of Mississippi may be
traced back to three powerful Indian tribes: the Chickasaws in the north, the Choctaw in the central area, and the Natchez in the southwest. Following the Indians came the Spanish, French, and English dominations prior to the purchase of the area by the Federal Government in 1798. One of the early settlers of Mississippi was William Faulkner's ancestor, Colonel William Cuthbert Falkner (1825-1889). Although William Faulkner was three generations removed from him, his personality and career seem to have had such great impact that they obviously greatly influenced Faulkner's life and work.

The people of Oxford, like those in Yoknapatawpha, comprise four social levels: the aristocratic gentry, the country families—the yeoman farmers and poor whites—and the Negroes.

**Aristocratic Gentry.** The term used here is an ambiguous one since Southern historical events prove that most of this group were descended not from British colonial aristocracy but from the lower and middle classes. According to W.J. Cash,

> In Mississippi before 1860 a white man could lay claim to the title of gentry if he acquired the land and slaves. The importance of the established gentry lay not in their migration to the undeveloped South but in the potency of their influence upon the South's lower classes. Although some planters ... did come to the lower South, most of the men pushing into the Mississippi wilderness were from the backwoods. The plantation aristocracy served them as a symbol and goal ... of a Southerner's achievement ... But after the Civil War, the South beset by the specters of defeat, of shame, of guilt, submerged the fact and romanticized the claim of the planter. Hence was spread the legend of the Old South ... the assump-
tion that every planter was in the most rigid sense of the word a gentleman.\(^5\)

\[^5\text{W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (Garden City, 1954), p. 24.}\]

Avery Craven states: "A careful study of biographical materials and facts shows that only 7.73 per cent of the men who represented Virginia, the Carolinas, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, and Tennessee in the House and Senate from 1850 to 1860 were plantation owners or had come from families of plantation owners."\(^6\) And, as Cash observes: "Scratch the veneer of the aristocrat of the Deep South and you would find a frontiersman. It was these new planters who took over the leadership of the Old South . . . Nine-tenths of the men who directed the affairs of the Confederate government, like nine-tenths of the men who officered its armies, were not colonial aristocrats but new people" (The Mind of the South, p. 73). Certainly Faulkner was aware of this when he had Colonel Sartoris remark that "in the nineteenth century, . . . genealogy is poppycock. Particularly is America, where only what a man takes and keeps has any significance and where the only house from which we can claim descent with any assurance is the Old Bailey" (Sartoris, p. 87).

In Yoknapatawpha, the only planter who might have
sprung from aristocratic lineage is John Sartoris. There is doubt because Faulkner does not tell the reader how Sartoris came by his land. Born somewhere in the Carolinas, he is "supposed to have arrived in Jefferson in 1839 with slaves and gear and money."\(^7\) The others (e.g., McCaslin, Compson, and Sutpen) are new men who acquired their land in various and devious ways.

The only true test of aristocracy in the Old South was the possession of a certain amount of land and a sufficient number of slaves, and oftentimes the only difference between the aristocratic gentleman and his cruder cousin, the yeoman farmer or poor white, was the fact that the aristocrats possessed the ambition, the drive, and the ruthlessness necessary to conquer the frontier and to acquire the material things which would elevate their social standing. Many so-called aristocrats were illiterate, sprung-up-from-the-soil, simple men, crude and violent in their social relationships, yet paradoxically inclined toward unreality and romanticism. The aristocrat had "much in common with the half-wild Scotch and Irish clansmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries whose blood he so often shared . . . and from whom he mainly drew his tradition" (Cash, *The Mind of the South*, p. 30). Cash has estimated that the "total number of families in Virginia, South Carolina, Louisiana--in all the

regions of the little aristocracies—who were rationally to be reckoned as proper aristocrats came to less than five hundred . . ." (Ibid., p. 14).

The similarity in the character and life style of the aristocratic gentlemen of the Old South resulted in their classification as variations of a single prototype. Their society was simple and uncluttered and characterized by freedom from labor, freedom from want, and freedom from social and moral restrictions. Individualism—the right of a man to live his own life without undue interference from the law or the government—was one important characteristic of the frontiersman planter's world. In addition, he was usually imbued with the Calvinist theologies—Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian—the chivalric code, and the "Southern manner." The plantation life was self-contained and self-sufficient, and, in actuality, it functioned separate and apart from the rest of the world.

The Civil War brought an end to this life style, but the Southerner, who had yielded only to overwhelming physical odds, had yielded nothing of his frontiersmanlike ruthlessness; his determination to hold on to his own, or his loyalties to the Southern way of life. Accordingly, at the close of the War, he proceeded to re-create what had been. Edmond L. Volpe, in his Introduction to A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner (New York, 1964), writes:

The nineteenth-century world, in Faulkner's Mississippi, was a unique combination of frontier society and a fac-
simile of a plantation society in the coastal states. The pioneer emigrated from the Carolinas or Virginia because he was not born into the privileged wealthy class of that plantation society. He possessed courage, and ambition, and the strength to penetrate into the frontier wilderness and make his fortune. His ambition was to create for himself a replica of that aristocratic society from which he had been excluded by birth. He succeeded, but time and history were against him, and he watched the collapse of the world he had struggled to create (pp. 18-19).

Students who have studied the history and development of the South have long realized that legends surrounding the aristocratic element of the South have been more fabrication than truth. For an early statement see Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker's *Patrician and Plebian in Virginia* (Charlottesville, 1910), Preface and pp. 1-21. However, aristocratic Southern planters set the standards and goals for Southern culture. In actuality, they were the ruling class, the responsible men, and they were looked to by the country families, the poor whites, and the Negroes for guidance and direction, and in the case of the Negro, for subsistence.

*COUNTRY FAMILIES*. The whites of the Old South who did not qualify for the aristocratic gentry class but who furnished much of the foundation of the population structure were small-crop farmers, and they were usually classified in one group as
poor whites. Such a classification is misleading since this group consisted of two divisions, according to their distinguishing characteristics and condition in life—the poor whites who represented the least well off and the yeoman farmer at the top of this social stratification. Generally speaking, the country families were those whites of inferior stock who had been pushed down and back by the advance of the plantation system. Because it was the static system it was, once it had shut them off, it literally kept them boxed in. They had little involvement in the Southern societal organization.

The yeoman farmers were approximately midway on the social scale between the aristocratic gentry and the poor whites. This has been a group often forgotten in historical and sociological discussions because its impact on Southern society has been less than that of the aristocratic gentry, the poor whites, or the Negroes. These people were not necessarily of inferior white stock; rather, they were usually steady, independent, morally and socially responsible folk, possessing characteristics which obviously distinguished them from the poor whites often referred to as "white trash," "cracker," or "po' buckra" by the Southern Negroes because of their poor diet and attendant washed-out look. The yeoman farmers usually sprang from the same roots as the aristocratic gentry, the difference being that most of them seemed to have had little interest in or sympathy for the slave economy, and they chose their usually hard life in lieu of the more com-
placent life of the plantation.

Some country farmers were tenants on another's land; the majority, however, were freeholders who worked their own land of which Cash reports some owned as much as a hundred acres. Usually the country farmers had been forced back by the planters to the inferior soil, but they were able to harvest more than enough for their own use, their success, for the most part, depending upon the physical effort they were willing to expend. There was no open market to them, since the planter preferred dealing with the North; thus, this group had little chance of bettering its condition.

The yeoman farmer had been historically a hunter, supplementing the yield of the soil by his foraging of the forests. The destruction of the forests by the plantation system almost nullified this supplemental means of support and occupation.

Since the country families had sprung from the same roots as most of the aristocracy, it is not surprising that like them they were rugged individualists, possessing characteristics much likelier to emerge in the backwoods than in the aristocrat society where tradition, taboos, and man-made laws were operative. The prime examples of the nineteenth-century-pioneer individualist is Faulkner's McCallum family that refuses to conform to society's laws and restrictions. In this case, the family unit is the governing authority.

James Agee, in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (Boston, 1941), writes of the life of the sharecroppers whom he observed for
many weeks. This is an account which should serve to dispel the tendency of many who dismiss the essential humanity of the poor whites by reducing them to the usual stereotype often depicted as cruel to livestock, animals, and Negroes. Some, he reports, have been men of dignity and worth. The social system was more flexible than it is today, and since there was greater mobility up and down the social scale, the sharecroppers represented every possible intermediate gradation—those who had a small number of slaves, others who owned only one or two slaves and worked the fields beside them, and others who possessed no slaves but did own considerable land and livestock.

The poor white's condition (before and after the War) was often worse than that of the Southern Negro, who usually lived in better houses, wore better clothes and ate better food. The Southern Negro has usually been able to do more with his limited resources than the poor white, perhaps because his life has been such that he has been forced to do so. The poor white has been inclined to be shiftless and lazy, and he has often been landless. In the Old South, he was, as Cash states, "a free agent . . . exempted [by the reason of slavery] from all exploitation [by the planters] and from the necessity of performing menial labor" (The Mind of the South, p. 38). In spite of his poor economic condition, there was always one thing of which the plantation system could not rob him: he was a white man in the societal
scheme, and in spite of his low level of existence, he was, and forever would be, superficially better than the Southern black man. Thus, in spite of the constrictions placed upon him by the system, because of his whiteness, he shared a brotherhood with the planter which the black man could never experience. Even when he is confined to jail for murder, Mink Snopes clings to the old myths: "Are they going to feed them niggers before they do a white man?" (The Hamlet, p. 263). The white man, regardless of situation, has been considered better than the Negro.

The poor white's light skin has had yet another advantage. Whenever, and if ever, he wished to break out of the life to which society had relegated him, by diligent and persistent effort he could attain the economic position of his white aristocratic brothers, as did Faulkner's Sutpen (Absalom, Absalom!). The comforting factor, however, has been the outlook peculiar to the Old South, that if one were white "one simply did not have to get on in this world in order to achieve security, independence, or value in one's own estimation and in that of one's fellow" (Cash, The Mind of the South, p. 40). Anse Bundren (As I Lay Dying) is a good example.

The small-scale yeoman farmer and the landless sharecropper have persisted as a part of the structure of the New South, though the composition of the groups has been modified. The core of the social structure of the South has been a large body of these plain folk, who, like Faulkner's own family,
were neither rich nor poor. These people have been employed in various occupations, but the great majority have secured their food, clothing, and shelter from farming and livestock. They have had their code of values, their sense of community, and their religion, embodied physically in the little frame Protestant church.

The Negro. At the bottom of the social scale of the Old South and the New South has been the Negro. His position has been slowly altered in the New South, and his role, socially speaking, has varied from the contented slave of the plantation life to the arrogant malcontent of the post-World War I era and the "new" Negro of contemporary times.

Africans and their descendants formed the largest non-British group in the thirteen colonies and in the United States during the formative years of American language and culture. Forced immigration from Africa began in 1619, a year before the Mayflower Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock in search of religious freedom. These Africans were sold into slavery, a condition which continued for almost two hundred and fifty years, though slackening somewhat after 1808 when the Slave Trade Act went into effect. By the middle of the nineteenth century, approximately 500,000 black human beings had been uprooted from their African homeland and forcefully transplanted to America, divested of all property and human dignity. The Pilgrims have been honored in America as found-
ing fathers. In Massachusetts there were no Negroes among the Indians to meet them, but in Virginia Negroes were a part of the welcoming party, having been already ensconced as a necessary part of the Southern society. Yet, although the history books have contained information about the Indian and the white man as important components of the Old South, throughout his three and one-half centuries here, the Negro has become involved in the social consciousness of the South, and, in fact, of America, only twice: between 1830 and 1860, the period of civil strife between the North and South; and between 1954 and the present, the period of civil strife between the local and national governments.

Because of the long association of the Negro race with America, the study of West African languages and culture alongside the traditional study of Western European languages and culture would seem warranted in order to provide a more balanced view of the American heritage, as well as an awareness of the African's contribution to the language and culture of this nation, but the myth of white supremacy has long prevented America from acknowledging this heritage. The American has preferred the illiterate, cannibalistic, savage image, and certain it is that such an image has provided salve for the conscience of the South, as well as material for the writers of the South.

Anthropologists and historians now agree that Africa was probably the cradle of mankind. More often than not, the
Africans brought to this country, came from long-standing and well-developed civilizations built on the foundation of a long history. An ironic aspect of the American slave trade was that highly trained poets and musicians from West Africa must frequently have found themselves in the power of slave-owners who were less cultured and well-educated than themselves. A case in point would be the Negroes who came from the western half of Africa (especially the great medieval empire of Mali) to which over ten per cent of Negro Americans trace their ancestry. The language of Mali (Mandingo) is still spoken through much of West Africa and was spoken, either as a first or second language, by a substantial number of African immigrants to the United States. As a result, its influence can be traced in the development of the American language. Many Americanisms have an African origin, a fact recognized by such authorities as Thomas Pyles, Lorenzo Turner, and Mencken.

The African's skills in the use of language are traditional. The Western world has concentrated on a cultivation of the written word; the African has cultivated the spoken word. This articulatory skill is evident in Negro Americans today—though some might be illiterate, they are never non-verbal, a fact supported by Faulkner's Negro characters. The American has consistently failed to recognize other than a white, middle-class type of language proficiency as adequate. It is interesting that William Faulkner recognized the social significance and worth of several different dialects of the
Southern population and assigned to each an equal importance. But, of course, Faulkner was also considered to be an uneducated man by American standards.

Other meritorious aspects of the Mali civilization include a rich musical culture, based on an elaborate range of string, wind, and percussion instruments (e.g., rock gongs, iron gongs, hunting bow) and on a long professional training for its musicians (a fact which should dispel the commonly held notion that all Negroes are natural-born artists in the areas of music and dance). The Mali music is one which has survived until today and which has greatly influenced the separation of American music from European musical traditions and forms. Associated with the musical and language skills has been an unsurpassed development of art and beautiful, intricate handicrafts, much of which was destroyed by the European colonization of Africa.

Like the white Southern pioneer, the African brought to America had lived a life of independence and self-sufficiency within his clan or tribe, and he had been imbued, even in his most savage habitats, with a sense of responsibility and a feeling that some measure of law and government was necessary. For proof of this, one need study only the sophisticated tribal arrangements of the bush country. If, therefore, the less complimentary labels employed by the white Southerner to characterize the Negro have any significant meaning, such must assuredly have been a by-product of the
Southern civilization which nourished them.

Thus, in a state like Mississippi where, in most areas, the Negroes for decades have outnumbered the whites, the influence of the Negro race upon the molding and shaping of American culture cannot be discredited. As Cash expresses it:

In this society in which the infant son of the planter was commonly suckled by a black mammy, in which gray old black men were his most loved story-tellers, in which black stalwarts were among the chiepest heroes and mentors of his boyhood, and in which his usual, often practically his only, companions until he was past the age of puberty were the black boys (and girls) of the plantation—in this society in which by far the greater number of white boys of whatever degree were more or less shaped by such companionship, and in which nearly the whole body of whites, young and old, had constantly before their eyes the example, had constantly in their ears the accent, of the Negro, the relationship between the two groups was, by the second generation at least, nothing less than organic. Negro entered into white man as profoundly as white man entered into Negro—subtly influencing every gesture, every word, every emotion and idea, every attitude (The Mind of the South, p. 51).

In spite of the circumstances outlined above, the Negro has been an outsider in American society. One reason for his nonacceptance as an equal in Southern society has been the assumed inferiority of the Negro to the white man, even, as earlier stated, in comparison to the least of the whites. To the white mind, one cogent reason for this assumed inferiority has been the disparity of beauty norms. Even in contemporary society, and in spite of the "Black is beautiful" theme, few whites find anything attractive about the pure Negroid features. This attitude has been prevalent also among white
authors. One need refer only to any of Faulkner's descriptions of the "purebreed" for proof of this. The usual bears striking resemblance to that of the jungle gorilla—coal-black skin color, kinky hair, long skull, prognathous jaw, flat nose, thick everted lips, skinny shanks, flat feet (the Sambo image). The "attractive" Negro from the white man's point of view, is one who has definite Caucasian features. But, more often than not, the characteristic features attributed to the "purebreed" are not representative of pure Negroid features. No African anthropological data seem available to show any contemporary physical or personality type similar to the Southern connotation of a Sambo, and his existence might well be said to be a harking back to the early stages of the development of the homo sapiens species or a result of exaggeration and distortion within the Southern mind, and in respect to personality, a by-product of Southern social conditions.

For the Southerner (artist or man), the problem of balancing the stereotype against the real individual has been a difficult one. Examples are many and commonly known. One deserves mention, mainly because it illustrates well the irrationality of stereotyped thinking. When John Faulkner (My Brother Bill) tells of Oxford's Negroes going to William Faulkner's home to pay their respects after his death, he adds: "... and a few dusky tears fell." Even the Negroes' tears are stereotyped.
The reasons for the failure of the white man to understand the black man have been several. Because of the social and economic restrictions which perennially have been placed upon the Negro in Southern life, many whites have known Negroes only in limited roles—as servants, laborers, athletes, or entertainers. Until the past few decades, few have observed other than the public facade; consequently, the white man's typing has been what most typing is—an unconscious attempt to explain what is not fully understood. Psychologists have projected the idea that every person functions at different times and occasions of his life within the realm of five planes; that is, he confronts the world with several faces, employing each advantageously. These may be classified as: (1) the face of the person he wishes to be, (2) the face of the person he thinks he is, (3) the face of the person he thinks others think he is, (4) the face of the person he wishes others to think he is, and (5) the face of the person he really is. Because of his experiential participation in the environment of the South, the Negro has learned to effect these faces beneficially—most of the time as an involuntary reflex response. Seldom, if ever, has any person outside of the ethnic group been allowed more than a glimpse of face number five. Thus, in spite of his probings of what is often termed "black psychology," the white Southerner (or Northerner) has always been on the outside looking in. This inscrutable, impenetrable side of the Negro is reflected in the "almost
visible screen" to which Faulkner refers in regard to charac-
ters like Dilsey and Deacon (The Sound and the Fury). However,
the stereotyped actions of such Faulknerian characters as
Simon and the Negro church group (Sartoris) or Ned (The Reivers)
are not unwarranted. As Sterling Brown points out in The Negro
in American Fiction, "evidence of such stereotypes did and still
do exist, but it is just that which is at the crux of the prob-
lem, these stereotypes are seen as a group, a chorus of faces
... as forms of behavior" (p. 18).

Historically, the Southern Negro has been classified
into two broad personality categories—the "good nigger" and
the "bad nigger." Several factors have been basic to the
classification: color of skin, physical appearance, education,
family, but most important of all in the Southern white man's
mind has been blood. To the average Southerner, blood has
been an important clue to a person's actions and responses.
First and foremost, in keeping with Southern psychology, one
drop of Negro blood has made the unfortunate carrier a Negro
in spite of his possibly white skin, blue eyes, straight hair,
or other Caucasian features. According to Thomas Pettigrew,
"Racial passing . . . is dependent on the curious American
definition of a Negro as a person with even the slightest
trace of Negroid ancestry. In any biological sense, the
'Negroes' who are able to pass have in fact as many or more
Caucasian ancestors as they have Negroid ancestors. But the
critical issue is the social, not the biological definition."
Faulkner's Joe Christmas, though by every biological rule a white man, is mentally harassed and ultimately destroyed because of the ugly connotation which society has imposed on the few drops of Negro blood which he fears lurks in his veins.

Negro blood inevitably has meant primitive responses; ergo, the more Negro blood, the more primitive the response—one which in the Southern schematic design has been paradoxically good and bad. Always, from such a point of view, in all persons, white or black, "blood tells." It is no fantasy, then, that in Yoknapatawpha the whole history of families is known by each inhabitant and that great importance is assigned to genealogy, for in all Southern communities it has been the belief that "blood tells." The Southern community has had definite ingrained beliefs about what "black" blood means. The "pure-breeds," for instance, are expected to be docile, unthinking, and compliant, except when crazed by alcohol. Then they become destructive uncontrollable savages.

In keeping with the attitudes of his more universal Southern brothers, the Mississippian has used the idea of blood type as an indication of a person's ability to respond maturely to human situations, and as a means of rationalizing the paternalistic position (a peculiar hate-love relation-
ship) which the Southern white man has insisted upon for the Negro since the advent of slavery. Characteristically, then, the South has classified the Negro as three general types—"purebreed," "half-breed," and the mulatto—and his intelligence is understood to increase with the proportion of white blood. The Negro, because of his reputed biological limitations, has not been considered able to shift for himself, except when this has been expedient to the white man's interests. The Negro has been considered to be a child whom somebody had to look after. As Cash states it:

Wholly apart from the strict question of the right and wrong, it is plain that slavery was inescapably brutal and ugly . . . . It rested on force. The black man occupied the position of a mere domestic animal, without will or right of his own. The lash lurked always in the background . . . Into the gentlest houses drifted now and then the sound of dragging chains and shackles.

Just as plain was the fact that the institution was brutalizing—to the white man . . . unlimited power acted inevitably to call up . . . that sadism which lies concealed in the depths of universal human nature . . . in the common whites it bred a savage and ignoble hate for the Negro . . . serving as the very school of violence . . . . (The Mind of the South, pp. 85-86).

Faulkner's works present the plantation owner as benevolent and kindly in his treatment of his inferiors. The nearest example of Faulkner's depiction of violent treatment of the Negro by the white owner is the scene in which Old Bayard lays Caspey flat with a piece of stove wood (Sartoris, p. 80).

The problem of race relations in Mississippi has been at once the racial problem of the South, it has stemmed from
many factors, economic and social, and it has been manifested in fear—fear of the amalgamation of the races, fear of political control, fear of economic pressures, and fear of revolt and assertion. In "Mississippi History" (Southern Quarterly, V-VI, 1966/68), John Ray Skates finds this aspect of the racial problem in Mississippi an intriguing feature in terms of the fear of the white Mississippian for the Negro masses that surround him and the impact of that fear on the history of the state. He observes that "the history of Mississippi has been guided, if not determined, by the white man's fear" and that "Mississippians would have acted quite differently at several crucial times in their history had it not been for the possibility of unleashing the unpredictable forces of the Negro masses, of losing control of the social and political consequences that an independent Negro population would bring" (pp. 1-2). Skates refers to this fear as "negrophobia." This is the fear which Faulkner referred to in many of his public statements which were made following the 1954 Supreme Court decision.

In his public speeches and interviews and in his works, Faulkner suggested that amalgamation of the white and Negro races might be the answer to the otherwise seemingly insoluble problem, and he apparently assumed that the traits of the Negro race would be completely wiped out by the dominance of white genes, when he said, "I think that in a few hundred years the Negro . . . will vanish anyway. He will be assim-
10 Interview at the Tokyo American Cultural Center, reported in Lion in the Garden, eds. James Meriwether and Michael Milgate (New York, 1968), p. 182.

idea is that, like the country folk of the South, the Negro element of the Mississippian population has shared the genealogical roots of the aristocratic gentry for over a century.

In 1930, Herskovits conducted an interesting study in which he used a sample of fifteen hundred Negroes. The results indicated that already by 1860 there were few American Negroes of pure descent. Herskovits concluded that after a century of interbreeding only 20 per cent of American Negroes are unmixed, while almost 80 per cent show mixture with white or American Indian. Complicating the matter further are the several racial strains inherent in the Negro's European, African, and Indian forbears; thus, the effort to identify or separate Negro genetic traits is universally ridiculous, and the assigning of such classifying labels as "Negro," "Afro-American," "Black," or "colored" to the descendants of the original American slaves results in misnomers. The Negro in America is an enigmatic anomaly, biologically and socially. Herskovits has observed that "the use of the word "Negro" to describe him is without justification from a biological point of view. It is this very fact of mix-
ture, particularly the amount of mixture represented in the American Negro population . . . that has constituted a stumbling-block in the study of this group from other than sociological and economic points of view." Herskovits sees as complicating the problem the "considerable variation in the traits of the Europeans who compose the ancestry on the White side" and the "as great differences between the various types of African Negroes who were brought to this country, and who became the forefathers of the present colored population" (Ibid., p. 2).

Racist theorists apparently have assumed that racial purity was a fact of evidence before the present century, and only now has it begun to disintegrate by virtue of opportunity for additional social interrelationships between the races. They have maintained that interracial mixing is harmful because it will "mongrelize" the superior race because the "bad blood" (Negro) will dominate the "good blood" (white). Pettigrew makes the following observation based on his study of research related to the concept of race (summarized here in part):

There are no pure races. All of the major subspecies of the one human species, homo sapiens, share in their "gene pools" some of the genes which were once considered to be racially distinctive. Involved in the genetic process which determines the change and diversity are "genetic drift" and natural selection. In addition, "new types of genetic populations are brought about by the interbreeding of already diverse populations."

12For additional information, see Part II and the extensive bibliography of Pettigrew's A Profile, pp. 57-62.
Pettigrew gives as an "example par excellence" the Negro American, observable evidence of a cross-racial group, "different enough from each of its parent races to be considered by some anthropologists as a relatively separate race itself" (Ibid.). Therefore, it seems strange and unreasonable that in the South the myth of race superiority continues to be used as a persuasive rationalization for slavery, segregation, lynching, and other violent acts, as well as for economic exploitation.

Preconceived racial concepts symbolic of any preconceived concept (religion, superstition, etc.) which makes mind a stereotyped robot, often destroys the harbore of the concept as well as others, because such a concept is not based on reason or logic, but blind unreasoning faith. Several of Faulkner's characters are obsessed by the myths of race. Among them are Sutpen, Gavin Stevens, and the Compson men.

Sense of Community

In view of the diversity of life styles and interests in a Southern state like Mississippi, the possibility of peaceful co-existence becomes proportionately more difficult to attain. Faulkner sees the answer as the basic sense of community which has been a part of every societal structure of the Old South and which has persisted, though less forcefully, as a unifying foundation in the New South. Understanding the basic tenets of community is prerequisite to understanding the South's handling of the race problem. This is also important to an understanding of Faulkner's work and
his views of the race situation in the South. According to his brother, Murray, the world in which Faulkner grew up was "filled with a sense of belonging . . . with a sense of identity. Community was based on a series of interwoven individual relationships . . . . 13 These interrelationships, William


Faulkner emphasized as more obvious in the Old South than the New South.

Many factors were responsible for this state of affairs. One was the similar origins of the Southern whites. Although one might envy a rich planter for his possessions and power, as blood kinsman, one would not hate or compete against him. The planter was not titled, merely rich. Secondly, the poorer white was always aware that if he could not rise as a group, he could, if he took advantage of the opportunities, exerted the effort, and really desired advancement, rise as an individual. Thirdly, each social level among the whites, even the lowest, was a self-sufficient unit, posing no real threat to the other. Fourthly, the poor white took as much pride in the aristocratic legend of the South as the gentry, and lastly, and perhaps most importantly, always foremost in the poor white's mind was the knowledge that he was white, and because of that, assured always of a superior place above the Negro. For these reasons, the idea of cast was little evidenced in the minds of the whites of the Old South. More
dominant was the "Southern manner" which precluded any thought of any response less than kindliness and compassion for one's inferiors and peers. Such has been the common brotherhood of Southerners which, of course, has excluded the Negro.

Every society, since the Old Testament era, has had need of a scapegoat; in Southern society, the Negro has been inexorably designated "It." The term scapegoat harks back to William Tyndale's Bible in which it referred to one of a pair of sacrificial goats to which the community transferred its sins and so rid itself of them. The sin is civilization, man's communal imposition on nature, manifested in the South by the encroachment of the plantation system on the forests and wild life. The scapegoat is less a sinner than a tribute paid to nature, the tension between the culture of society and its base animal nature. Therefore, in the fight against natural chaos, the guilt of society is that it is society. The guilt is order, and the guilty are those whose authority imposes order. If the scapegoat is to shoulder this sin, then it is ironic that in the South he should be the Negro, since it is merely a farce to have him a child (as the Negro has been considered in the South)—the uneducated, the naive, the unaware. As was true of Oedipus, only the man of authority can expiate the sin of order. Either he must die himself, or what should be his death must indeed sink to the level of farce. The Negro, then, has been a "race doomed and cursed to be forever and ever a part of the white race's doom and
curse for its sins" (Joanna Burden to Joe Christmas, *Light in August*, p. 221). The Negro is the symbol of the curse.

Historically, the whites have banded together in their efforts to protect their mastery over the Negroes, and they have been uniformly ruthless in their exploitation of the Negroes, their assumed superiority excusing the slavery system and other evidences of suppression as the natural order of things. Cash writes, "The community and uniformity of origins, the nearness in time of the frontier, the failure of immigration and the growth of important towns—all these cooperated to cut men to a single pattern . . . the total effect of the plantation world was to bind them to a single focus" (*The Mind of the South*, p. 91). This focus has been the mastery of the Negro. In most matters individualism has been indeed preferred above conformity, but this has not been so in relation to the Negro question. In the face of Yankee critics, even the poor whites, who had no direct concern with slavery except his racial superiority which the system aided and abetted, banded with the gentry. A unified stand was first of all a defense-mechanism against the Northerner; secondly, a defense-mechanism against the Southern conscience. The legend of the planter gentry provided all, except the Negro, a facade of superiority from the heights of which they could look down with contempt at the low-bred Yankee who deigned to presume to question the life style of the more aristocratic South. The newly rich, the yeoman, the
poor white, and the aristocrat were wedded together in the belief that Southern culture was better than Northern culture and should be protected to the utmost. According to Cash,

... it was the conflict with the Yankee which really created the concept of the South as something more than a matter of geography, as an object of patriotism, in the minds of the Southerners. Before that fateful engagement opened, they had been patriots, but only to their local communes and to their various states. So little had they been aware of any common bond of affection and pride ... that often the hallmark of their patriotism had been an implacable antagonism toward the states which immediately adjoined their own, a notable example being the ancient feud of North Carolina with Virginia on one side, and with South Carolina on the other (Ibid., p. 68).

Only one issue seemed important enough to challenge the frontiersman's preference for individualistic action—the race issue.

Such was the sense of community—loyalty to the South—which prompted Faulkner during an interview in Japan in 1955 to say that the South is "the only authentic region in the United States because a deep indestructible bond still exists between man and his environment ... above all, there is still a common acceptance of the world, a common view of life, and a common morality" (Lion in the Garden, p. 71).

And, on still another occasion, to declare in a 1956 interview with Russell Howe:

My position is this ... My people owned slaves and the very obligation we have to take care of these people is morally bad ... But I wish now that the liberals would stop ... If we are pushed by the government, we shall become an underdog people fighting back because we can do nothing else ... I have known Negroes all my life and Negroes work my land
for me. I know how they feel . . . . I have people who say they are Negroes writing to me and saying, "You mean well for us but please hush . . . you do harm . . . The South is armed for revolt . . . . white people will accept another Civil War knowing they are going to lose . . . . I know people who've never fired a gun in their lives but who have bought rifles . . . . Things have been getting better slowly for a long time. Only six Negroes were killed by whites in Mississippi last year . . . . I don't like enforced integration any more than I like enforced segregation. If I have to choose between the United States . . . and Mississippi, then I'll choose Mississippi . . . . I'd fight for Mississippi against the United States even if it meant going out into the street and shooting Negroes. After all, I'm not going out to shoot Mississippians (Ibid., pp. 258-259).

In like manner, Gavin Stevens (*Intruder in the Dust*) expounds his views on the solution of the racial problem, his main thesis being synonymous to Faulkner's—that the South must protect its right to work out its own problems in its own time and by its own actions, and that all factions of the South (white and Negro) should unite against the North. Thus, the true-blood Southerner, wedded to the South, even when he has been most sincere in his commitment to the welfare of the masses, often has mistaken his personal interests and prejudices as the interest of the common good.

Before Joe Christmas dies (*Light in August*), he re-affirms the Negro's circumstance as the symbol of the white man's guilt—the Negro in the power of the white Southerner (symbolized in Percy Grimm) who has equated service to his South with his own unconscious prejudices. Thus, in the death scene, we revert to the symbolic weapons—the pistol, the symbolic weapon of the white man, and the knife, the
symbolic weapon of the black man.

Economic Pattern

Until the early nineteenth century, much of Mississippi was undeveloped woodland. The area did not become a state until 1817. The advent of the cotton gin in 1820 made the production of cotton a profitable enterprise, and the plantation, the railroad, and the slavery system were natural results. The old Indian trading posts, which had been the marks of civilization until this time, developed into flourishing towns. As W.J. Cash describes it:

... it was actually 1820 before the plantation was fully on the march ... It is impossible to conceive the great South as ... more than a few steps removed from the frontier stage at the beginning of the Civil War. It is imperative ... to conceive it as having remained more or less fully in the frontier stage for a great part--maybe the greater part--of its antebellum history (The Mind of the South, pp. 10-11).

Agriculture. Of greatest importance to the economy of Mississippi has been the development of agriculture which began with the practices of the Indian who passed on to the settler a number of native crops and agricultural skills. By the early 1800's, gins were in general use, and these, combined with the favorable climate and suitable soil, served to make cotton the dominant crop. By 1834, Mississippi was the leading cotton production center in the United States, producing more than 1,000,000 bales in 1859. Over 97 per cent of the state's population was rural, and almost all were producers of or directly dependent upon cotton (McLendon,
"The Development of Mississippi Agriculture," *Social Science Studies*, p. 4). The production of cotton resulted in the need for cheap labor, and between 1830 and 1840, the slave population had increased 197 per cent, and most of these were settled in the southwestern quarter of the state (Miles, *Jacksonian Democracy in Mississippi*, pp. 123-124).

The predominance of cotton as a money crop continued well into the twentieth century, after which the picture of agriculture changed in terms of land utilization, number and size of farms, and the use of these farms. More and more people in Mississippi were acquiring land up to the Civil War, and since that time, the incidence of small-scale farming has continued. Table 2, page 83, provides information relating to these changes during the period 1850 to 1964. The data included suggest that from 1850 to 1930 there was a trend toward an increasing percentage of small-crop farmers. Since 1930, there has been a steady decline (the exception, 1940), which can be explained by competition from industry and the decline of cotton as the main source of farm income.

The change in the agricultural pattern reflected a change in the social pattern and vice versa. The land, no longer cultivated by slaves, was divided into small units, and these were farmed by sharecroppers. The manor house was no longer the center of society. After the War, Negroes could not be exploited as openly as before, but as a source
TABLE 2a

Percent of Total Land Area in Farms, Percent of All Land in Farms Devoted to Cropland Harvested, Percent Change in Number of Farms, and Average Acre Per Farm in Mississippi Selected Years, 1850-1964

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent of Total Land Area in Farms</th>
<th>Percent of All Land in Farms Devoted to Cropland Harvested</th>
<th>Percent Increase or Decrease in Number of Farms</th>
<th>Average Acre per Farm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>-21.0</td>
<td>162.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>-36.0</td>
<td>134.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>-14.1</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>-9.5</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>-5.5</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>121.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>155.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>192.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>369.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>308.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of cheap labor, they have been no less important to the economic system. Most had not been trained to be independent or subsistent in the evolving social structure, but one means of livelihood and dignity open to them was small-crop farming. Since the War, many freed Negroes have taken their places as either tenant farmers or land owners.

Table 2, page 83, shows that between 1900 and 1954 there was a continual decrease in the total number of farming units; there has been a slight increase since 1954. Table 3, page 85, provides statistics related to farm ownership and farm tenancy during the years 1910 and 1964. Although the number of farms has decreased, the number of fully-owned farms increase and farm tenancy decreases sharply after 1950. The percentage of farms owned by Negroes is obviously smaller than the percentage owned by whites, and in addition to being a reflection of the Southern Negroes' economic condition, this could be an indication of the extent of migration of the Negro to the North during these years (see Table 1, Appendix, p. 303). The percentage relationship is approximately and proportionately the same over the range of years.

Industry

The upsurge of industry in Mississippi began in the pre-statehood era with the consumption of forest trees for industrial uses and the establishment of the textile mill. Bettersworth reports that "under French, British, and Spanish rule the pine tree was already linked with Mississippi's in-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent Fully Owned of Total Farms</th>
<th>Percent Partly Owned of Total Farms</th>
<th>Percent White Owners of Total Fully Owned</th>
<th>Percent Colored Owners of Total Fully Owned</th>
<th>All Tenants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>25,634</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>43,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>99,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>129,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>156,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>192,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>217,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>225,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>175,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>179,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aFrom Kenneth Grubb, Southern Quarterly, p. 106.*
industrial progress," and that the value of textile products was $22,135 in 1850 and $261,000 in 1860. This compares with the $2,000,000 contributed by lumber in 1869. Of the period 1876-1908, James McLendon writes:

The timber industry had always been the leading one in Mississippi, and after 1880 it expanded phenomenally. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, lumber production, for instance, increased 713 per cent, railroad mileage jumped from 1,127 to 2,934 or 260 per cent, and capital invested in all industries rose 757 per cent ("Development of Mississippi Agriculture," p. 6).

As in most states, industry in Mississippi was hard-hit by the Great Depression. The textile mills were the first to begin to suffer. Wage cuts and shut-downs were fairly common. Under the New Deal, federal subsidies (e.g., the Industrial Act of 1936 and welfare payments) enabled the State to maintain its balance.

Today, although statistics show growth trends in industry, most measures of economic activity in Mississippi are still well below the national average, and the per capita income, which was below the $2,000 level for 1966, remains the lowest in the United States. A smaller portion of the workers in the state are employed in the relatively high in-
come occupations than in the United States as a whole. Rela-
tively low-paid workers, such as farmers, domestic and unpaid
family workers, and the self-employed, account for 36 per cent
of the total in Mississippi compared with the 16 per cent in
the nation. Table 4, page 88, which was prepared from various
issues of The Survey of Current Business, enables the reader
to examine further the non-agricultural economic trends of
Mississippi and the changing relationships between the sources
of the economy. The data emphasize the role of agriculture as
a minor source of personal income in the state and point up
the role of the federal and state governments as a major
source of personal income. Table 5, page 89, shows a gradual
increase in the percentage which manufacturing income contrib-
uted during the period 1956-1965. The figures would indicate
that progress in manufacturing has been slow and relatively
unsuccessful. These figures, in conjunction with the data
presented in Table 4, explain the crux of the economic prob-
lems of Mississippi. In the face of the failure of the agri-
cultural economy, the alternative was a turn to industry.
Although the state harbors plentiful natural resources within
its borders, the development of industry requires, in addition
to a suitable site, capital, a lucrative market, and trained
workers, persons interested in using the South as their base
of operation. The result has been unemployment and the eco-
nomic fear which is referred to by John Skates ("Mississippi
History," Southern Quarterly) and which is also mentioned by
**TABLE 4a**

Total Personal Income and Major Components Thereof
Mississippi, 1956-1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Personal Income ($1,000)</th>
<th>Percent Farm Income of Total</th>
<th>Percent Government Income Disbursement of Total</th>
<th>Percent Private Non-Farm Income of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Federal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>3,712</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>3,328</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>3,183</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>24.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2,889</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>13.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
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<td>11.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>2,116</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>2,047</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*From Kenneth Grubb, *Southern Quarterly*, p. 110.*
### TABLE 5a

Industrial Sources of Civilian Income Received by Persons Participating in Current Production, and Percent Selected Components are of Total, Mississippi 1956-1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total ($1,000)</th>
<th>Percent Manufacturing of Total</th>
<th>Percent Wholesale and Retail Trade of Total</th>
<th>Percent Services of Total</th>
<th>Percent Government of Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>2,885</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>2,657</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>2,525</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>2,263</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>2,155</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2,033</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>2,023</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
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<td>1,799</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>1,645</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

aFrom Kenneth Grubb, *Southern Quarterly*, p. 111.
William Faulkner in several of his interviews and speeches.

The Southern states, including Mississippi, have devised several plans to attract industries from the North or to persuade local capital to build factories. One such plan is the Mississippi Plan originated by Governor Hugh White and which authorizes counties and municipalities to issue bonds for the building of factory plants, which are handed over without cost to manufacturers who will provide machinery and operating capital. Taxes are suspended for long periods, and every effort is used to keep labor costs extremely low. The wages have often fallen below the levels fixed by the Wage and Hour Act, which has been enforced with laxity in the South. Cheap labor continues to be an important component of the Mississippi economy, one which affects heavily those people least able to bear its consequences—the poor white and the Negro.

The Region: Yoknapatawpha County

Faulkner's Public World

Twelve of William Faulkner's novels and fifty-seven of his short stories are set in Yoknapatawpha County, and these dramatize the development of a Mississippi county from the formative stage when it was yet inhabited by Indians to the Second War era when it grew to a more cosmopolitan center. Yoknapatawpha is peopled with representatives of all levels of Southern society—Sartorises, Compsons, Tulls, McCaslins,
Bundrens, Snopeses, and Beauchamps. Of his invention, Faulkner said:

... the whole output ... of an artist's work had to have a design ... Beginning with *Sartoris* I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about ... and that by sublimating the actual into the apocryphal I would have complete liberty to use whatever talent I might have to its absolute top ... .

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Though Yoknapatawpha was a fully developed region at the time that Faulkner introduced it in *Sartoris*, its history mirrors the gradual social and economic development of his native Mississippi, a development which MacLure divides into three periods--the ancient, the medieval, and the modern--and which he describes as follows (underlining the investigator's):

The antique world is peopled by the Chickasaws ... . Remote ... dignified partners of the wilderness ... their symbol the bear ... . The age of chivalry began with the irruption into the wilderness of the Anglo-Saxon barbarians, the reckless bandits and daring settlers who founded the old Southern houses ... . established a feudal order ... . their symbol, the centaur, the man on a horse ... . The modern age began with the Reconstruction; ... dominated by the Snopes ... . The modern symbol ... . the automobile ... .

---


In all its aspects, Faulkner's mythical county is typically Southern. Located in the Delta country of northern
Mississippi, its county seat, Jefferson, is described as seventy-five miles south of Memphis on a clay road and on the Illinois Central Railroad between Chicago and the Gulf of Mexico. Its area, 2,400 square miles, supports a population which according to the 1936 census was composed of proportionately more Negroes than whites—9,313 Negroes and 6,298 whites. Its life revolves around the courthouse square which, as in most Southern towns, serves as the center of activity, as well as a symbol of community.

In his prefatory statement to Act One of Requiem for a Nun, pp. 40-42, Faulkner celebrates "community" in the following manner:

"... the courthouse: the center, the focus, the hub; sitting... in the center of the county's circumference... symbolic and ponderable, ... protector of the weak, judicate and curb of the passions and lusts, repository and guardian of the aspirations and the hopes... costing nothing but the labor and... most of that was slave... But not altogether slave, the boundmen, the unfree, because there were still the white men too... who had grown from infancy among slaves, breathed the same air and even suckled the same breast... black men and white, the same aim and hope, which they did have as far as the Negro was capable... the slave's simple child mind had fired at once with the thought that he was helping to build... probably the biggest edifice he had ever seen, that was all but this was enough..."

The courthouse is the symbol of the cooperation of men working and living together, a symbol "bigger than any because it was the sum of all, it must raise all of their hopes and aspirations level with its own aspirant and soaring cupola" so that they could believe "that men, all men, ... were
a little better, purer maybe even, than they had thought, expected, or even needed to be" (Ibid., p. 42). As the South was built, so was the courthouse built, and as the Southern Negro has never been quite wholly accepted as an insider because of his supposed inferiority, so the Yoknapatawpha Negro with "his simple child's mind" is unable to share equally in the "same aim and hope." In spite of this, symbolized in this scene are the independence, the endurance, and the brotherhood of the South. This is a community which Faulkner seemed to say will prevail, in spite of its faults, because the symbol of its justice results from within (community cooperation) and is not imposed from without as the golden dome of Jackson in the Introduction to Act II purports.

By 1861, pioneering settlers had permeated Yoknapatawpha and created out of the wilderness a thriving community, the social foundations of which were a recognizable facsimile of the plantation societies of Virginia and North and South Carolina.

Population

In Yoknapatawpha, only a few Indians of pure ancestry remain. The rest have been assimilated into either the white or the Negro race, a condition observable in the Indian names prevalent among the old families and in the physical features of the Negroes. These Indians counted only to a small extent in the settling of Yoknapatawpha. The county was settled by the Sartorises (old families) and the Sutpens (new men) who,
after the War, sought to rebuild the county in its pre-Civil War image. Before the Civil War, then, the population structure of Yoknapatawpha was, like its Southern counterparts, a tripartite division: Negro slaves, wealthy plantation owners, and the poor whites (the landowners and non-landowners). There were intermediate social groups among the elite, the country families, and even among the Negroes whose social status was often decided by the position of the white family to which they belonged, or by whether they were "field niggers" or "house niggers."

After the War, another and more threatening social group was added as a result of the invasion and exploitation of the Yankee. Many of the landless poor whites were not averse to being used as pawns by the Yankee invaders. Because they were often necessary to the planter and, more important, were insiders, they were able to exploit him and often thereby to raise themselves socially. In Faulkner's works, this character type is embodied in the Snopes image. As Faulkner explained, "By the beginning of the twentieth century Snopes were everywhere; not only behind the counter of grubby little side street stores patronised mostly by Negroes, but behind the presidents' desks of banks . . . and in the deaconries of Baptist churches, buying up the decayed Georgian houses and chopping them into apartments . . . These elected the Bilboes; . . . their origin was in bitter hatred and fear and economic rivalry of the Negroes
who farmed little farms.\textsuperscript{18} In Yoknapatawpha, as in the South generally, the efforts of the new men to rebuild the Old South were defeated by the Reconstruction era Yankee and the Snopes-type poor white, who, although not as competent as the Sartorises and Sutpens, had the advantage of being unrestricted from unscrupulous action by the code of the old Southern tradition. Because of their attempt to live up to the code, the later-generation Compsons and Sartorises are lacking in the strength and ruthlessness necessary to cope with the modern Snopes society.

In Yoknapatawpha, the plantation gentry is represented by the Sartorises (notably John and Old Bayard and Miss Jenny), McCaslins, DeSpains, Stevenses, Compsons, and Sutpens. Among the rural families are the Ratliffs, Varners, McCallums, Bundrens, Armstids, and Tulls. The Negroes stem legitimately from a few old Negro families and illegitimately from the old white families. All the elite white families are new men, who obtained their land in various and sometimes devious ways and, like their Mississippi counterparts, their careers are colored by violence and determination. Melvin Backman observes that in an effort to differentiate between the aristocratic and new families, Faulkner made a social distinction between Sartoris and Sutpen: "Sartoris did not

arrive until a few years after Sutpen. . . Sartoris's origin was aristocratic. . . Sutpen's was plebian. . . Sartoris is a much more traditionally romantic figure than Sutpen. . . Sartoris represents . . . a projection of the legend . . . Sutpen represents the reality" (Faulkner: The Major Years, pp. 95-96). In A Faulkner Glossary, page 266, Harry Runyan reports that Sutpen began his life at the frontier in the mountains of West Virginia and sprang from a family of poor whites of Scottish and English forbears.

The great majority of Yoknapatawpha's inhabitants are the small-crop farmers, and as in the Mississippi society, they play background roles. Yoknapatawpha is not without the perennial Negro sections: Freedmantown and Nigger Hollow, sometimes called "The Hollow." The Negro people cover a broad range of stereotypes from Simon, the loyal, foot-scraping, childish, "white folks nigger," to Deacon, a Northernized and clever opportunist, who assumes the Uncle Tom role of ubiquitousness and garrulousness whenever it is expedient and whenever the stance is useful to exploit the Southern students in Connecticut who enjoy the old superior white-subordinate Negro relationship.

In Light in August, Joanna Burden, a Yankee, in her explanation to Joe Christmas of her orientation to the Negro race, states that her father told her that every white child is born crucified on a black cross. The black cross has been interpreted by many critics as the black race. This has led
many to suppose that this is Faulkner's point of view; thus, it follows that he does not like Negroes. According to Robert Penn Warren, in *Two Decades of Criticism* (Michigan, 1951), "This is a misreading of the text. It is slavery, not the Negro, which is defined . . . as the curse . . . , and the Negro is the black cross in so far as he is the embodiment of the curse, the reminder of the guilt . . ." (p. 85). In some of Faulkner's works (e.g., *The Unvanquished*), there is the indication that the roles are reversed. That is, the blacks become a burden on the whites. The struggle of the Negro in Yoknapatawpha County becomes the struggle of the depressed everywhere. Faulkner's microcosm extends beyond to the universal problem and heralds the world of darker peoples to come.

Though the idea of community is prevalent in Faulkner's works, there is often tension between the social groups. One source is the Snopes group which is considered by the old families to be immoral and codeless. In the text *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner*, Edmond Volpe writes:

... the aura of evil that Faulkner creates about the group is far in excess of the evil it actually does . . . . any reader of the Yoknapatawpha County fiction has witnessed more cantankerousness, stupidity, malice, selfishness, cold-bloodedness, viciousness, immorality, and crime of all kinds in Jefferson among the Sartorises and Compsons . . . than the entire Snopes clan could possibly commit (p. 309).

This is the in-group conflict with the out-group which diminishes as individuals from the out-group prove themselves. The
Snopeses, because of their backgrounds, are able to deal with the society of the modern South, and they threaten to take over. Some do become important citizens of Jefferson.

The tension between the landless poor whites and the Negroes is often a manifestation of fear and envy in the case of the first and a matter of contempt in the latter. Relations between the more successful yeoman farmers and the Negroes are likely to be amicable and friendly. In contrast, in Beat Four inhabited by poor whites, no Negroes are seen unless their purpose there is to perform some menial labor for the whites or they are passing through. The Negroes' contempt for the poor whites is usually due to the latter's pretensions to superiority—a circumstance which in Absalom, Absalom! inspired the exclamation: "Who him Wash, calling us niggers?" (p.281). The poor whites' attempts to exploit the Negroes often meet with failure, and although the Negroes might be persuaded for a while, the Snopes types are usually outdone by a common understanding between the Negroes involved. The roles reverse, and the white man is the outsider. An example is found in Faulkner's short story "Centaur in Brass" (Collected Stories, pp. 149, et seq.) in which Flem Snopes attempts to pit Tom Tom against Tomy Turl in his effort to further his own interests. After a period of dissension, the two Negroes discuss the situation, and as a result of this communication, they decide to band together against Flem.

In Faulkner's works, the sense of community is obviously
important. The principle is based on the idea that all the people of an area bear some special social relationship to the community—a condition which in Faulkner's mind should inspire loyalty and pride. This relationship might not always be a good or complimentary one, but it is significant in terms of its contribution to the strengthening of the social structure. For instance, in Light in August, the relationships of the characters to Yoknapatawpha County range from pariah and exile (Joe Christmas) to accepted responsible citizen (Byron Bunch). Bunch's contribution to the social order is obvious; Joe Christmas's is not so obvious unless the reader recognizes his function as scapegoat. Faulkner's approach seems to be based on the idea that the sense of community vanishes with the on-thrust of sophistication and materialism; accordingly, it is almost nonexistent in large cosmopolitan areas. As Cleanth Brooks describes it, community is "the field for man's action and the norm by which his action is judged and regulated" (The Yoknapatawpha Country, p. 69).

Community does not negate social division; it condones it. In Yoknapatawpha County, social levels are determined by birth, heritage, and material wealth. The lines are clearly drawn. Negroes grow up knowing "their place," and most of them stay in it. But Faulkner emphasizes the belief that the sense of community oversteps these boundaries on occasion, and common loves, hates, needs, and fears often replace the more sterile criteria as determiners, as is illustrated in the
scene of the Christmas dinner in the Negro cabin where just for a moment Young Bayard catches a glimpse of the real meaning of human fellowship (Sartoris, pp. 277-278). The idea is made plain again in The Mansion. When Mink attends a Protestant service in Goodyhay's church, among the congregation is a "big Negro woman." Mink inquires whether they "take niggers too," and he is told, "We do this one ... Her son had it too just like she was a white woman, even if they didn't put his name on the same side of the monument with the others" (p. 277).

In the same way that the Civil War destroyed the economic foundations of the South by eliminating the slave system and its concomitant plantations and money crop, so the War destroyed the economic foundations of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, and in the interests of self-preservation, the aristocratic families often are forced to resort to actions on the same moral level as the Snopeses, but the facade of social distinction remains apparent. These acts are performed under the cloak of traditional ritual, and the sin is rationalized by the necessity. A prime example is Miss Rosa Millard's illegal horse trading in The Unvanquished which she conducts with the help of Ringo, a Negro, and Abner Snopes, a poor white.

In spite of the shift of interest in the economic system after the War, the Negro remains a central figure in the economic structure. His problems are merely redefined. The Southern farmer continues to find him important to the labor
market since he can make a living from his land and crops only when he has peonage to do the work. This is a part of the "fear" described by John Skates ("Mississippi History," Southern Quarterly)—the fear that the Negro, if he is exposed to more lucrative advantages, will cease to work for low wages. The plantation owner, accustomed to a house full of servants to provide for his every need and being no longer able to command this, is equally dependent upon cheap labor. Often, the wages of house servants in Yoknapatawpha County, as in the South, are paid wholly in terms of food left from the white man's table, a drafty shack, and the white employer's cast-off clothes. Therefore, the idea of community, though meritorious to a degree, also leads erroneously to the South's strong sense of itself as a homogeneous region capable of handling its own problems and caring for its own.

Functions

Faulkner's small "postage stamp" serves many functions in his social saga. Peter Swiggart pinpoints a few of these in the statements which follow:

1. It serves as the aggregate of the characters, events, and social themes found in isolated County novels.

2. It is a clear analogue or microcosm of the deep South, sharing that region's history and tradition.

3. It serves as a vehicle for social and moral commentary, enabling Faulkner to explain the South's tragic failure.

4. It comprises a single prose epic in which the opposition of history and allegory is effectively re-
solved.

5. It provides the reader help in comprehending particular novels.¹⁹


To these functions might be added another: Yoknapatawpha County provides a paradoxical image of the legend of the past and the reality of the present.

Several critics have stated unequivocally that "Yoknapatawpha County is really Lafayette County, Mississippi where Faulkner lived, except for a few significant changes."²⁰


haps no fiction is all imagination nor is history all fact. The intention of this investigator is not to prove that Jefferson is an identical replica of Oxford or Lafayette (nor is this considered to be especially important to this study or to Faulkner's work), but that as Faulkner's public world, it is a composite of the typical Southern town and a good portrait of the Southern community (which is important to this study and to Faulkner's work). As G.T. Buckley has said:

What he has generally had in mind ... is a composite abstraction of a half dozen small county-seat towns of extreme North Mississippi, specifically such places as Ripley, New Albany, Pontotoc, Holly Springs, and Batesville. They are all much alike, under five thousand in population, mere trading centers, and service points for their rather sparsely settled outlying areas.²¹
Yoknapatawpha County might be summarized as a County which, like its Southern counterparts, stubbornly refuses to forego its past—the long wounding history of slavery that has shaped it. The timeless people are its inhabitants, as mysteriously committed to that past era as the place. Faulkner, not liking the conditions he found in his native South when he returned from his travels after World War I, created a "postage stamp" cosmos of his own where the past could survive for yet a little while until the inevitable present broke in and assumed dominance. Like Huck Finn, Faulkner in Yoknapatawpha "lights out for the territory" knowing full well that he has "been there before." For a while, Yoknapatawpha forms a precarious link between romanticism and reality. It constitutes the point at which past and present, the private and public worlds, collide. And with the coming of the Snopeses, the present once again asserts its shocking inevitability, once more involving Faulkner in a scene not of his making.
CHAPTER III

THE NEGRO IN FAULKNER'S WORK

Patterns of Classification

The Southern writer cannot ignore the Negro in his writings because the part he has played in Southern culture is an integral part of that culture. In this instance, the Southern writer is faced with a difficult task because his encounters with real Negroes have usually been surface and circumscribed, and his knowledge and understanding of them are usually inadequate to assure a realistic depiction.

From Sartoris, the first book in which Faulkner depicted the Negro with any degree of personality, it is evident that he goes further with his Negro characters than most Southern writers, and from that point on, he uses them in several roles. For the most part, however, Faulkner concentrates on one facet of the personality of these characters—whichever is most functional to his purpose.

Critics and scholars have categorized Faulkner's Negro characterizations in numerous and various ways (detailed and general). This investigator, having assumed (1) that the general classes of Faulkner's dramatizations of the Negro fall into relatively homogeneous clusters, (2) that these general
clusters are characterized by substantial intercorrelation of responses, (3) that reliable estimates of Faulkner's responses may be described in terms of a limited number of such major clusters, and (4) that these responses (and the major clusters) are determined by such characteristics as social attitudes, situational and environmental influence, and their interaction, has classified Faulkner's pattern of delineation quite generally as stereotypes and archetypes, to be further divided—first in the detailed discussion of each group and again in the section of this chapter which deals with the thematic roles which Faulkner assigns these groups. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the character and thematic delineations which Faulkner employs in his works and to relate these to the social and economic factors discussed in the previous chapter.

**Stereotypes**

Faulkner, like other Southern writers, simplified the task of dramatizing the Negro by categorizing and describing him in platitudinous ambiguities, resorting often to such statements as: "like their race," "peculiar to their race," or " as is true of their race." These statements are used more in his earlier novels than the later, although he imposes even upon the individualistic personality of Lucas Beauchamp the symbolism of Lucas's razor with which he attacks Zack Edmonds as being representative of the weapon of his race, a symbol made manifest by Gavin Stevens (Intruder
Faulkner's efforts to develop the Negro character have been reflected in an uneven progression from the simple stereotype to a more social and psychological character.

Stereotypes are not without literary and sociological value. Certainly this is true of Faulkner's use of them. Tischler writes, "As mass-heroes or as symbols of alienation or of the search for identity, they are exciting material for literature . . . as reflections of changing attitudes and social patterns, they provide an interesting link between sociology and literature."^1 Authors have resorted to stereotyping as the most efficient means of making a social or moral statement about a local scene or specific area of time. It is obvious that they function in this manner for Faulkner.

The qualities of Faulkner's stereotypes are derived from the stereotyped thinking of whites who, like Joanna Burden, have seen the Negroes not "as people but as a thing"—a "black shadow in the shape of a cross" (Light in August, p. 221). As one writer has had one of his characters to express it, "Niggers do just three things—fight, fornicate, and fry fish."^2 In like manner, Yoknapatawpha County Negroes are expected to display certain typical responses to given

^1Nancy Tischler, Black Masks (Pennsylvania, 1969), p. 82.

stimuli. A goodly portion could hardly be classified as rational or normal. Examples from Faulkner's works are numerous. One purported stereotyped characteristic of Negroes is that they will eat anything. Callie Barr, Faulkner's childhood Mammy, is reported by Malcolm Cowley in The Faulkner-Cowley File (New York, 1966) to have suffered a stroke after having eaten green watermelon (p. 107). In My Brother Bill (New York, 1963), John Faulkner reports (underlining, the investigator's): "You could get most any Negro to take charge of the butchering for the chitterlings. All Negroes and some whites too seem to love them" (p. 51).

Several factors can be identified as arbitrary criteria for stereotype stratifications. Among them: skin color, physical appearance, education, family, and, above all, blood. Historically, in the Southern thought, this has been true. Sexuality or other extremes of emotional response have been clear indications of Negro blood, as are laziness, stupidity, dishonesty, and complacency. Intelligence, common sense, or rebelliousness against one's lot in life, on the other hand, must of necessity be the result of his white blood. In addition, Southerners recognize degrees of behavior as having a connection with the amount of Negro or white blood. The proclivity of some of Faulkner's characters to this point of view has led some readers to suppose that their view is to be equated with Faulkner's. For example, Gavin
Stevens often is considered to be the spokesman for the author. Therefore, when in *Light in August*, he accepts Hines's statement that Joe Christmas was sired by a Negro, and when he assigns, in spite of his purported liberal and rational stance, arbitrary values to black and white blood, some readers have assumed that Faulkner was of the same opinion. Some (e.g., Aaron Steinberg and Charles Glicksberg) have classified Faulkner's concern as an obsession which negated, on his part, any objective view of the race situation. About the subject, Faulkner himself stated on several occasions, once in an interview:

I believe that people should not be treated unjustly just because they happen to be red in color or black in color... What I don't like is the fact that these people who insist on economic balance not being disturbed, use such base means... they would tell you that a different kind of blood runs in the Negro's veins from the white man's veins. Everybody knows that blood's blood...

---


In conjunction with this point of view, Faulkner seems to emphasize in his fiction that in reality the conflict is between the individual and the restrictions of society rather than race or blood type. Consequently, since society presumes one set of behavior for whites and another for Negroes, it follows that those unfortunates who have mixed blood have the most complex social problem of all.

Faulkner extends and reverses the blood theme by his
projected thesis that having endured the suffering attendant to their persecution in America, Negroes, as a race, embody the character strengths necessary to salvaging the world from its deteriorated condition. But, at the same time, it is important to recognize that the Negro characters referred to in this manner are usually persons of unmixed blood-types who range from the coal-black apelike wife of Charles Etienne Bon to a "housebroken," spiritually complaisant, loyal Mammy-type Dilsey.

Occasionally, a multi-sided Negro character is found in Faulkner's works. An example is Lucas Beauchamp (Intruder in the Dust) who deliberately refuses to act like a "nigger." Ned McCaslin (The Reivers), on the other hand, seems at times to welcome the occasion to act like a "nigger," but on close inspection, it becomes obvious that he assumes the role expected of him only when it is expedient and usually when he is around white folks. At one point in the novel, young Lucius Priest observes of Ned: "He was not Uncle Remus now. But then, he never was when it was just me and members of his own race around" (p. 182).

Male Stereotypes. Negro males in Yoknapatawpha County are typically mild (typically for the South, that is) and seldom violent. The violence is usually demonstrated by Faulkner's middle and lower-class whites. As Nancy Tischler explains it: "By destroying family ties, parental responsibilities, stable male-female relationships, and cementing
only ties to the white aristocrat, the system has emasculated the Negro male" (Black Masks, p. 51). The brute-Negro stereotype prevalent during the 1920's and 1930's is suspiciously absent in Yoknapatawpha County. The scenes of rape of white women by blacks which permeate Southern literature are not to be found, although Negro women are sexually used and abused by white men.

Even though physical violence is a characteristic of some of Faulkner's mulattoes, the cause may be assigned more to the need to react positively to societal pressures rather than to racial characteristics. Violence in the Negro is explained to be a result of frustrations or unreasonable restrictions. A prime example is Rider, a two-hundred pound young man of simple tastes whose young wife of a few months has suddenly died. His grief is such that he loses all control and becomes destructive. At no time does he attempt to hurt anyone or to escape the law, but he cannot restrain his emotions. After drinking too much, he kills a white man, and he is lynched. While he is in jail, he rips the steel door out of the wall and walks away, saying "It's awright. Ah aint trying to get away ... Hit look lack Ah just cant quit thinking. Look lack Ah just cant quit" ("Pantaloons in Black," Go Down, Moses, pp. 158-159).

As perceived by the white man, the Negro in such instances is the epitome of the "man" empty of feeling who lacks total response to the vicissitudes of life and to other
people. He is considered to be incapable of grief and suffering. Accordingly, Rider's display is viewed by the local sheriff as a lack of respect for his dead wife and for the law, and his retort is typical: "His wife dies on him. All right. But does he grieve?" (Ibid., p. 155). Cleanth Brooks has observed that the sheriff does not understand the depth of Rider's grief because he himself could not feel it. Rider displays a capacity for grief and an intensity of emotion that the "cultured" man could never realize. In like manner, Charles Mallison responds with amazement when Lucas, whose wife has died, passes him on the street, looks through him, and does not recognize him. His remark: "He was grieving. You don't have to not be a nigger in order to grieve" (Intruder in the Dust, p. 25).

Female Stereotypes. As is true of Faulkner's white characters, although stereotyped, Negro women, more often than not, are symbols of strength and common sense. It is from them that productivity derives, whether this refers to those women who nourish the population of the South (literally or symbolically) and who sometimes amend its culture and history, those who endure like Clytie, Judith Sutpen's mulatto half-sister, who "continued long beyond Judith's death as the guardian of her master's (white father's) house" (Absalom, Absalom!), or Dilsey (The Sound and the
Fury), who keeps the Compson family together "for not the hope of reward but just because it was the decent thing to do."

Dilsey is the ultimate Faulknerian example of what has been the most popular Negro stereotype from a literary and social point of view. Nancy Tischler (Black Masks) calls the type the "faithful retainer." Mostly, though not always, in Faulkner's spectrum, these women assume the responsibilities necessary to sustain the white families that once owned them, sometimes at the expense of the neglect of their own families and always with extreme self-sacrifice. White Southerners like to believe that this faithfulness is mainly because the Negroes feel an attachment, a loyalty, a responsibility and gratitude, and a sense of identity with the white families which the Negroes are loath to sever. Accordingly, Faulkner writes of his old nurse and family servant, Callie Barr: "Free these many years but ... declined, refused to leave. Nor would she accept in full her weekly Saturday wages ... the indomitable unsurrendered old women holding together still, thirty-five and forty years later ... women, who like the white ones, declined to give up the old ways and forget the old anguishes."


Simon (Sartoris) is another example of the "faithful retainer." An aged Negro and lifelong servant of the Sar-
tories, he lives for, by, and because of them, emulating John Sartoris (Ole Massa) who, although dead, remains an influencing figure. Simon talks of the "old days," and he believes that the cure for all of the family's and society's ills is the restoration of Southern life to the law and order he knew within the plantation system. Of Narcissus's new baby he says, "Yessuh . . . Dey's swelling and rejoicing now. De little marster done arrive . . . en de ole times coming back . . . We gwine wake 'um up, now . . . Like in Mars' John's time . . . ." (p. 293).

The loyalty of the "faithful retainer" is illustrated once more in "There Was a Queen" (Collected Stories, pp. 727 et seq.). By the time this story takes place, only women are left in the Sartoris household—Narcissus, Jenny (now old), and Elnora (alluded to as the mulatto sister of Bayard II). Elnora appoints herself the head of the house and silently denounces Narcissus thus: "I dont need no help . . . because it's a Sartoris job. Cunnel knowed that when he died and tole me to take care of her [Jenny] . . . Not no outsider from town. It's little you done for anybody since you came out here. We never needed you" (pp. 728-729).

Paralleling their real Southern counterparts, some of the Negroes in Yoknapatawpha County consider themselves the appointed arbiters in the event of family conflicts. Rachel, the cook for Harry and Belle Mitchell, takes Harry's side when he is prohibited by Belle from playing a set of
tennis on his own court, saying: "Whyn't y'all go'n and play, ef you wants? . . . What you let that woman treat you and that baby like she do, anyhow? . . . You ought to take and lay her out wid a stick of wood. Messin' up my kitchen at fo' o'clock in de evenin' . . . ." (Sartoris, p. 161).

In Faulkner's works, the Negro's protection of the white families sometimes lends an ironic twist to the stereotyping in relation to the Negro's treatment of the "po' buckra." Feeling obligated to protect his quality white folks from the poor whites, the Negro goes to any extreme necessary. Wash faithfully carries vegetables and fish to the big house while Sutpen is away fighting the War. Although this is the only food which keeps Mrs. Sutpen, Judith, and Clytie alive, Clytie does not allow Wash to come into the house when he delivers the food: "Stay right there, white man. Stop right where you is. You aint never crossed this door while Colonel was here and you aint going to cross it now" (Absalom, Absalom!, p. 281).

Not all of the Negroes feel this loyalty. Loosh eagerly awaits the fall of Vicksburg, and as soon as this occurs, he announces, "I going. I done been freed; God's own angel proclaimed me free and gonter general me to Jordan. I dont belong to John Sartoris now; I belongs to me and God" (The Unvanquished, p. 85). Loosh leaves, but Faulkner has him return later, disillusioned by the Yankees' way of life and happy to be home. A more dramatic manifes-
tation of the Negroes' desire for freedom is their massive march to the river as they shout, "Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Hit's Jordan we coming to" ("Raid," The Unvanquished, p. 96).

Post-War Negro. As early as Sartoris, the germinal volume of the Yoknapatawpha County saga in which present time is indicated as the second decade of the twentieth century, some of the Negroes are beginning to show an interest in something other than "their white folks." However, at this point, there is little need for them to do much more than think and wish. Most are without funds or the training to make themselves self-sufficient, and life is much the same everywhere. An example is Simon's son, Caspey, who before the war "had been Simon's understudy in the stables and general handyman about the place... Then the draft had got him and bore him to France... as one of a labor battalion..." (Sartoris, p. 64). This exposure to the world prompts Caspey to avow:

"Kill Germans, den do yo' oratin' den tol' us. Well us done it... I dont take nothin' offen no white man no mo'... lootenant ner captain ner M.P. War showed de white folks dey can't get along widout de cullid man. Tromple him in de dus', but when de trouble bust loose, hit's 'Please, suh, Mr. Cullid Man, you is de savior of de country.' And now de cullid race gwine reap de benefits of de war, and dat soon." (Ibid., pp. 65-68.).

By the time of "There Was a Queen," Caspey is in jail for stealing.

There is no obvious recognition of this inevitable change in the Negroes in Faulkner's white characters' treat-
ment of them, or if there is, there is a concerted effort to ignore this change, and they continue to think of and to act toward the Negroes as possessions. They still command and abuse them or treat them as feelingless, brainless pets. For the most part, the Negroes respond appropriately. Explaining to Narcissus in the presence of Isom (Simon's grandson) her nonsuccess with her flowers, Aunt Jenny places the blame on Isom's stupidity:

"When we dug 'em up last fall . . . I'd put a red one in Isom's right hand and a yellow one in his left. Then I'd say, 'All right . . . give me the red one.' He'd never fail to hold out his left hand, and if I just looked at him long enough, he'd hold out both hands. 'Didn't I tell you to hold that red one in your right hand?' I'd say. 'Yessum, here 'tis,' and out would come his right hand again. 'That aint your right hand, stupid,' I'd say. 'Dat's de one you said wuz my right hand a while ago,' Isom says. 'Aint that so, nigger?' Miss Jenny glared at Isom who . . . performed his deprecatory effacing movement behind the slow equanimity of his grin.

"Yassum, I speck it is."

"You'd better . . . Now how can anybody have a decent garden with a fool like that?" (Sartoris, p. 62).

The Negro in the South has lived his life as a stereotype. As Melvin Backman observes in Faulkner: The Major Years (Indiana, 1966): "He lives and dies . . . rejected by a white society . . . Obsessed by an abstraction, these people cannot understand the Negro as human being; and the Negro, in turn, cannot respond as human being" (p. 85). The Southern tradition in literature has demanded that the Negro should be portrayed as Quentin describes him—not as a person but a "form of behavior." The actions of Simon, or Isom,
or the Negro church group (Sartoris) are not, as Sterling Brown points out, altogether fantasy. Such Negro persons did and still do exist; the fallacy is that these individuals are assumed to bear the characteristics representative of an entire group.

Compared to the white characters, there is little variation in Faulkner's works in their roles or personalities. Most are merely variations of a prototype. They play minor roles, and often only a change of name is sufficient to facilitate a change of scene. But Faulkner portrays these characters sympathetically. At most times, their better qualities are obvious. Faulkner's depictions of Negroes might well be a drama of potentials. The Negroes are what they are because society has made them what they are. Given a different environment, they might have been different.

Archetypes

Faulkner's attempts to recognize human needs and emotions in his Negro characters result in two groups of this second category of his fictional scheme—the tragic hero and the comic hero, fundamentally defined according to the classical archetypal requisites. A third group—the "new" Negro—is alluded to more than dramatized.
Longley makes a distinction among tragedy, comedy, and villainy in this way:

Many men . . . under internal or external pressure go to extremes . . . When this extremity causes harm or destruction to themselves or to others . . . the result is tragedy. When it harms only themselves and the effect is humorous, the result is comedy. When the human figure engages in extremes of conduct without any emotional or personal commitment or involvement, the result is villainy . . . even though the human man is predestined to some pitiful and terrible fate, that fate is justified by the actions the human man performs, choose to perform because he is paradoxically free . . . to choose his actions and in choosing precipitate his fate.


In a subsequent statement, Longley admits that not more than a hairline of difference separates villain from tragic hero. Longley's definition of the three classifications is important to the discussion which follows.

Faulkner's tragic heroes, though contemporary in demeanor and appearance, are molded according to the classic pattern. Like Sophocles's Creon, Shakespeare's Coriolanus, or Melville's Ahab, a Joe Christmas, a Nancy Mannigoe, and a Dilsey Gibson, though individual examples of the tragic figure, each in his way structures a magnificent design, each persists in this design even when convinced of its failure, and each fails grandly. Too late each recognizes defeat, but in the true magnificence of the classical hero, each accepts the consequence of his actions.

Sean O'Faolian defines the Hero as "a purely social
creation ... a socially approved norm represented by a socially acceptable character ... on the side of the church, the family, the law ... or at least he is after he had been permitted a certain license to roam in order to entertain us, and had duly returned to the bosom of conventional behavior ... By classical definition, the tragic hero is, in addition to the characteristics cited above, one of noble birth or position whose hubris leads to his downfall. Nevertheless, he evokes pity and fear in the beholder of his actions and his fate. Often he is confronted by widespread hostility or an element of nature which he must confront with courage. The usual result is destruction and martyrdom. Most often mystery surrounds his birth. In its proper usage, the term hero carries a meaning beyond that designated by the literary connotation. The hero in the technical sense must be dead. But there are many interpretations of dead in contrast to the living, and authors have extended these interpretations to suit their particular purposes.

In less complex times when traditions and definitively stratified life styles distinguished inexorably between good and evil, these definitions were workable, and most novelists subscribed to them. The meaning over the years has been amended. Only persons who have wrought or suffered in some extraordinary way and by their endurance have thereby en-

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Sean O'Faolian, The Vanishing Hero (Boston, 1957), pp. xii-xiv.
larged the scope of humanity are considered to be hero cali-
ber. The human shortcomings of the type are not glossed
over. There is no perfect hero, but if society is to bene-
fit from his teachings, it must be willing to take his faults
as well. Historically, it has been observed that the hero is
one who ignores prudential considerations and pursues instead
his independent course; lesser characters often advise a more
compromising or conforming course. The hero is by nature
self-assertive; the saint is self-effacing. The two are
never synonymous. Faulkner, accordingly, does not presume
to give his tragic figures saintly qualities, even though
some critics have been inspired to refer to some as "Christ
figures."

The several ramifications of the foregoing remarks to
Faulkner's fiction should be obvious. His tragic heroes,
though they differ in some ways, correspond to many of the
basic characteristics of the universal exemplars of the
type. Among his works one may find an Oedipus, a Hamlet,
an Achilles, a Ulysses, a Christ, but because of Faulkner's
modernity which is shrouded in the cocoon of the past, his
heroes are identical to none of these. Faulkner's univer-
sality is enhanced by his employment of universal techniques
to dramatize his fabulations—the mask, the questing journey,
the initiation rite, and many others. If the reader applies
the classical definition without giving due consideration
to Faulkner's purpose and stance, the heroes in his novels
are not always easy to identify. This circumstance has led
to a long debate among critics about Faulkner's "so-called" tragic heroes and their qualifying characteristics.

For some time contemporary writers have denied the restriction projected by O'Faolain's definition--adherence to social and moral values. This change has made the identification of the hero infinitely more difficult since the modern hero is prone to be a mere caricature of the traditional stereotyped hero. His actions are often determined by his own heroic image of himself rather than by fate or exterior environmental circumstances. Consequently, he is forced to make a choice: to rebel or to conform. Subtly, the hero and the villain have changed sides. Society has become the villain by imposing such complex and ever-increasing restrictions upon man that it has become impossible for him to perform as a man; it follows that his stance is often a ridiculous one.

The eighteenth-century hero reflected a radical change. Although functioning compatibly with society by reason of the popularity of rationalism, he faced a new opposition in the form of himself imbued by a new and disturbing form of discontent and embodied in what O'Faolain terms the Anti-Hero. Likewise, the Southern novelists who have written between the early 1900's and the present have been less able to write and think as socially integrated citizens. They have been forced to be more or less isolated receptives. The New South, devoid of the security of the surface force of tradition and its attendant ordered and unified life styles, has offered no
satisfying substitute guide for the "good life" and no sense of a satisfactory long-term goal. The traditional hero, then, has necessarily been replaced by the Anti-Hero, "a much less tidy being deprived of social sanctions . . . always represented as groping, puzzled, cross, mocking, frustrated, isolated in his . . . attempts to establish his own personal code" (The Vanishing Hero, p. xxix). His ambition to embody his society's ideals is continually frustrated by his failure to understand its guiding rules. As Longley expresses it:

"The modern tragic hero must be one they [modern readers] can accept as typical of both the age and themselves . . . The lives of all of us, from intellectual to illiterate may be defined as a constant process of testing, a searching for values . . . not Hamlet's to be, but how to be, the discovery of a way to be on any basis at all. The problem of the individual is one of definition . . . one must begin with definition of self. The modern hero will find his failure in his inability to achieve self-definition, and his hamartia will be the persistence in a gravely mistaken estimate of his personal relationship to the cosmos" (The Tragic Mask, pp. 174-175).

The ultimate Anti-Hero is Faulkner's Joe Christmas, who is made even more tragic because his struggle against society leads only to ever-increasing difficulty for himself and for others. Certain universal hero archetypes and archetypal patterns are common to the type, thereby relating it to the motifs and themes which recur in the myths of various eras and locations, lending it a universal meaning, eliciting comparable psychological responses, and serving similar cultural functions. Among these are the Questing Hero, the
Initiated Hero, and the Sacrificial Scapegoat—three motifs prevalent in Faulkner's works.

Although the evidences of the similarity of Faulkner's tragic hero to his predecessors are obvious and several, the differences are equally obvious. In some instances, he resembles the Camusian rebel who, because he cannot accept history as it is, must destroy reality in order to affirm his own existence. Most often he is the ordinary day-to-day social conformist, who is constantly seeking integration with whatever eludes him, a condition which critics often mistake for submissiveness.

The germinal characters for this modern reaction of complacency and insecurity are to be found in Scott's nineteenth-century Waverley novels in the persons of Captain Edward Waverley, Nigel Olifant, and Harry Bertram—models of "correct responses" to society's system of values, to law and order, right reason, prudence, and restraint. The Waverley heroes seek to conform with, rather than revolt against, society—to subordinate their individual ideas to whatever ideologies will make them accepted and conventional members of mass-society. Like the Waverley counterparts, many of Faulkner's tragic heroes strive to identify with a code of behavior which at first inspection seems to be reality, but their complex environment makes them uncertain of what constitutes this code or how to apply it.

The Southern tradition, which once provided the guide-
lines, has all but vanished, except in the minds of the people, and it has not been replaced by a stabilizing substitute. The response to this instability Faulkner defines in terms of the lawlessness (exploitation, lynchings, personal violence) and the superficiality (ritual of tradition) of Yoknapatawpha County and the involvement of his otherwise passive heroes in its disturbing milieu. Faulkner's thesis is that modern civilization is in danger because many of our inherited values concerning nature and the rights of man, the structure of human society, and the meaning of the human venture have increasingly become confused and then separated from our everyday lives and decisions. The key solution Faulkner propounded in "Individual Man" who must learn to practice love, compassion, and human brotherhood. The Negro as the "Sacrificial Scapegoat" is made more tragic by society's lack of these virtues.

The South of Faulkner's novels is depicted as a product of a computerized society where a family name, a person's blood type, or a superficial label is emphasized far out of proportion to the human heart-and-soul essence of the person that these superficial elements supposedly represent. In an effort to reach the doubtful mean, the modern man reduces his conscious self to a "nothingness." To serve society's utilitarian end of the collective good, the passive hero alters his consciousness of self to a something which is not equivalent to natural man; and as a symbol of soci-
ety's ideal of the sacred inviolability of traditional conventions, he cannot rebel because of the necessary condition of the subordination of individual will to social good.

By the mid-twentieth century, the time Faulkner is writing in earnest, the estrangement of society has proceeded so far that fictional characters need not travel to foreign lands to find themselves surrounded by hostile people. Faulkner has dramatized quite cogently that a sojourn within the same county often becomes a terrifying ordeal, in which case, the county is symbolic of the cosmic as well as the finite. The characters are exposed to the discomfort of feeling themselves to be not fully defined individuals, literally because of their lack of identity, and they are often doomed to the endless anxiety of personal incompleteness and social ostracism.

In "It Must Be Important," Morris Baja, in an inter-

9 Morris Baja, "It Must Be Important," The Antioch Review, XXIV (1964), pp. 323 et seq.

esting, though at times ambiguous, approach to the problem of social individuality, emphasizes race as the basis for identity. His discussion seems predicated on the erroneous assumption that the term Negro identifies the characteristics of the American Negro as a population or individual, scientifically or unscientifically, geographically, tribally, nationally, regionally, or ethnically--an assumption discredited by known biological and social data. At the
beginning of his article, Beja concentrates on the importance of Negroes—fictional and nonfictional—knowing that being Negro must be important. As the article progresses, the reader becomes aware that the title and the thesis are incidental rather than crucial to a survey discussion of the characteristics of Southern literature.

Beja points out that the Negro themes, whether in the novels of white or black modern writers, have remained that of the quest for identity. Although this is certainly a valid statement, one might note that the "quest for identity" theme is not a Negro theme, but one older than Oedipus and one which carries universal connotations. Beja suggests as a primary cause for the popularity of this theme the "old truth that a man is largely what other people think he is" (p. 329). He states that the attitudes toward Negroes in our consciousness naturally parallel the attitude toward Negroes in our fiction; therefore, the "black man is envisioned ... less as a person than a Social Phenomenon ..." (p. 323). He concludes, therefore, that as Faulkner responds in part to the North's image of the South, so Negroes respond according to the white man's image of them. Faulkner himself verified that Southern authors are conscious that they are "playing" to a white audience, but it is rather far-fetched to suppose that contemporary Negroes are "playing" to a white audience.

Beja feels that although it has become commonplace to
claim like James Baldwin that the "American Negro can no longer . . . be controlled by white America's image of him," he "continues to be affected by that image and to react to it . . . . The fact of his color is . . . one of the controlling elements of his life . . . he cannot help but feel that the question of whether or not a man--or a fictional character--is a Negro is an important one, that it must be important" (p. 329). The author has obviously not experienced the "not knowing" and all of its consequences nor even "the knowing" and all of its consequences. It is important to know why it must be important. The search for identity is the search for the "I-Am." Knowing who one is, is more important than knowing what one is--finding one's niche in society because of who one is, not what one is; functioning and being accepted because of who one is rather than what one is. Negro does not identify; it is the who with which the American black man must identify, if with anything at all. The problem, then, is one of ego-identity, which for the American black man cannot be attained by race-identity, since most have no race identity. The term Negro is an anomaly. It does not identify. Its meaning is relevant to time, place, and the persons involved.

The Faulknerian heroes who survive are usually realistic in their acceptance of the evil in the world, as well as the good. For them, then, the moral question is how to adjust to a world which makes such seemingly unreasonable
demands upon them. They are seekers, but they come to recog-
nize the limitations of man as man, and they do not separate
themselves Ahab-like from the chain of being in their seek-
ing. In the end, they must acquiesce to the reality that
because they are men, and men have limitations, they can
never be aware of the real essentials necessary to Absolute
Truth. The Ahab-type heroes demand to know what a thing is;
the usual Faulknerian heroes depend a great deal on faith.
An example is Dilsey. As a means of restoring the proper
equation between the contraries of life—practice and theory,
good and evil, heavenly doctrine and earthly doctrine—Dilsey
arrives at the conclusion that a man's religion is one thing
and his practical world quite another, and although he can
not always comprehend, he can believe. The characters of
opposite point of view are usually concerned with self.
Joe Christmas looks inward and is consumed by his own im-
portance in the scheme of life; Dilsey, because of her faith,
possesses the ability to look outward and to be concerned
with all.

Faulkner's hero wants nothing more than to reach the
epitome of humanity—what Faulkner terms the "I-Am." Faith
proceeds from dependence or companionship, and sometimes
worship (e.g., Dilsey and the Easter Sermon); never from
alienation of self. The Faulknerian hero's search is a
probing for a reasonable life. As Joe Christmas reflects
as he walks through the streets of the Southern town and
views the groups of family people relaxing on their porches
in the summer night: "That's all I wanted . . . That don't seem like a whole lot to ask" (Light in August, p. 100).

The search from Faulkner's point of view is perpetual, and it requires continuous action, risk, decision, and involvement. Since knowledge does not mirror or reflect the world, but shapes and modifies it, man cannot hold a spectator view of reality. Life's values are discovered and tested in the process of living. It is appropriate, therefore, that the Dilseys should survive at the end to speak like Hamlet's Horatio to the "yet unknowing world / How these things came about . . . / Of accidental judgments . . . / Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause / And purposes mistook / Fallen on the inventors' heads . . . ." (Hamlet. V.ii.390-397). It is appropriate that the Dilseys are heard throughout Faulkner's work as those who have experienced--objectively and subjectively, passively and non-passively--all that the other characters perceive, all that the readers perceive, and all that the Dilseys perceive. Their insight tells of the world's evil as well as its good. Faith, the Dilseys might say, is found in manifold places--in the processes of nature, in history, in the social order, but most important of all, in the human heart. The message the Faulknerian heroes impart seems to be not a lack of hope, but the faith that man can endure.

The modern tragic heroes have changed because the world has changed; consequently, modern authors attempting
to employ the universal constants must restate them in completely modern terms. Most often these are not men of noble birth or high position; more often they are ordinary, everyday men fighting for existence. The emphasis has been shifted from the level of nobility to embrace all humanity. Each life, no matter how impoverished, miserable, or low-born, is considered worth saving, and the tragedy, as Faulkner sees it, is in the failure of society to respond to this challenge. Often when help is extended, the tragic characters, like Nancy Mannigoe (Requiem for a Nun), are beyond the help of anyone and can respond only in ways more harmful to themselves and to others, thereby compounding their own tragic conditions. Thus, in Light in August, when Faulkner presents Joe Christmas as an object of pity and fear, society is the villain and Joe Christmas the victim. The readers' response must be based on a recognition of universal guilt, and their judgments must be tempered with compassion.

As a scapegoat tragic figure, Joe Christmas is much like Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas (Native Son), intentionally depicted by his creator in his worst light as an exemplar of the type of monster society produces when it alienates any person, any group, and prevents that person or group from assuming a place in the great chain of being. Such a character, the author seems to say, is beyond help and beyond response to the human effort when the help and effort is finally extended. Unlike Dilsey, who identifies herself as God's chosen, or Lucas, who identifies himself
as a McCaslin, Joe Christmas has nothing more than an unknown quantity with which to identify.

In Faulkner's fiction, the emphasis is on the characters' responses to the situation rather than the situation. Thus, one might ask: Are Lucas's arrogance and pride tragic flaws? A tragic flaw is usually an acceptable, and even desirable quality, which has been allowed (most often inadvertently) to develop out of bounds, mainly because of some hope of personal gain. Longley says in *The Tragic Mask* that "in the Faulkner canon, one of the major symbols for the corruption of innocence is the onset of finance capitalism, which denudes the countryside, and the involvement with the machine, the agent of dehumanization" (p. 184). This is true of Lucas and his money-finding machine which seems to mesmerize him by its dubious promise of power through a capital (buried treasure) which he really does not need, but which, nevertheless, has some unexplainable hold over him. In his searching, he denudes the countryside. On a small scale, this is the parallel of the more major characters involved with this theme. His pride and arrogant stubbornness almost lead to Molly's death and the destruction of his family. The difference is that because of Molly, the moral catalyst, Lucas is led to see the error of his ways before it is too late, and he is saved from destruction because he is able to control his hubris in order to act upon his more humane commitment to Molly. His humane concerns prove to be stronger than the mechanical rituals. Molly is
Lucas's link to life.

Molly asks Roth Edmonds to arrange a "voce," because as she says, "I'm afraid he's going to find it." Molly is afraid that by destroying God's earth he might evoke a curse. Lucas's pride coupled with an unreasoning addiction to the money-finding machine makes it impossible for him to give in to his wife, and he tells Roth, quietly but firmly, "I'm the man here. I'm the one to say in my house" ("The Fire and the Hearth," Go Down, Moses, p. 120). For Lucas, the moment of recognition and peripeteia occurs in the courtroom—Lucas, having recognized his stance as one which can lead only to corruption and destruction, nevertheless allows the divorce proceedings to continue to within moments of the final pronouncing of the decree before he is able to yield, but the next day he asks Roth to get rid of the "symbol"—the money-finding machine. This he does in a speech in which his humanity is manifest after all: "I don't want to never see it again. Man has got three score and ten years on this earth, the Book says. He can want a heap in that time and a heap of what he can want is due to come to him, if he just starts in soon enough. I done waited too late to start . . . . I am near to the end of my three score and ten, and I reckon to find that money aint for me" (Ibid., p. 131). It seems that this arrogant man who has always fought for his right to be a man recognizes that his manhood emanates from within and not from surface possessions; that there is only so much one man can attain in life—only so
much one can change—and to push beyond that limitation is the ultimate tragic flaw.

It is typical of Faulkner that recognition occurs first in Molly as discerning woman. Sensing her husband's ultimate corruption, she asks for the "voce" as a means to save him. The corruption of Lucas is not complete—he is able to recognize before it is too late that his obsession with the machine is not only possessing and enslaving him, but that it is also destroying his home as well. It is Molly, the embodiment of the Christian norm, who makes him aware of the error of his purported ways.

One can agree with Cleanth Brooks (William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country, p. 253) that "Lucas has a real lust for power much like . . . Thomas Sutpen and Old Carothers. There is nothing . . . that he wants to buy with the treasure . . . he wants the money as a symbol of power." However, the money as a symbol of power must be interpreted as a symbol of recognition. But one cannot reasonably agree with Brooks's continuing statement that "Lucas is obviously a lonely man and values power as an adjunct of his independence" (Ibid.). Lucas is not a lonely man, and although he is forced by his code not to mingle on Saturday night with the town-going Negroes or with the whites who would deny him recognition until he proves himself a "nigger," his pride in himself and his family, even if for the most part it is a kind of ancestor-worship, is an attitude of self-pride and self-sufficiency. Lucas does not need the
money to prove himself a worthy person, but like his white ancestors, he is not above the temptation to acquire something for nothing or to accumulate more than his needs require, even at the cost of the violation of nature and human life. His values are Old Carothers values; his response is to a recognition of money as the symbol of the McCaslin life style. The same response makes the gold watch fob and the gold toothpick important symbols of his style.

In Faulkner's scheme of the human condition, his tragic heroes wear many faces, and they are more often its innocent victims than its generators. Negro characters, because of the real-life roles they have been forced to play, serve as prolific expediters for the exposition of life's tragedies which Faulkner expounds. Within the body of Faulkner's work, two supportive archetypal patterns often occur—the sacrifice of the scapegoat and the initiation ritual. The Negro plays an important part in these roles.

The Negro tragic heroes in Faulkner's novels are made more tragic by their Negroidness. They alone have the unique position of possibly being rejected by all the cultures with which they have had any connection—the white society, the African society, and, if they have enough white blood in their veins, the Negro society.

Although Faulkner does not negate the recognition of man's choice, because of the circumscribed life Negroes have been forced to follow in the South, the idea that they are more victims of society than generators of their fate is more
apparent and feasible, and even those guilty of quite heinous crimes engender pity and fear and are brought home amidst the aura and fanfare of heroism. A case in point is the grandson of Molly Beauchamp who, having gone to Chicago to seek his fortune, is electrocuted after having killed a Chicago policeman. Molly, insists that her grandson was forced by the Southern community to go to "Pharoah's land" in order to find a good life, and she asks that his body be returned "home" for burial. The guilt-ridden community, led by Gavin Stevens, responds in its attempt to reinforce the claim of the Southern community as a homogeneous entity which cares for its own. The newspaper editor, merchants, and clerks contribute money which makes the return and burial possible, and at Molly's insistence, an obituary is published in the newspaper. Although she cannot read it, she likes the sound of it.

Another important illustration of the victim of society is in the character of Nancy Mannigoe, a prostitute, a dope-addict, and finally a murderer--another character as despicable as Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas and, one must assume, intentionally made so by Faulkner for shock value. It is as if to say that these desperate subhuman characters are the products of a society which finds manifold ways to alienate or imprison the spirits of mankind; these are the native sons nourished by that society. Nancy, though reprehensible, is seen to be involved in a life not of her making, and her response is a desperate plea for the right to sur-
viva. Among her crimes is an affair with a man who is one of Jefferson's white community pillars, Mr. Stovall. When she asks him publicly to pay her for her services, he knocks her to the pavement and kicks out several of her teeth. Jesus, her husband and the most ineffectual person in her life, is ironically the person who should be able to provide support. When Nancy asks him to stop hanging around the Compsons' kitchen where she works, he answers: "I can't hang around white man's kitchen... White man can come in my kitchen, but I can't stop him" ("That Evening Sun," Collected Stories, p. 292). Jesus, unlike Lucas, bows to the white man's double standard.

Nancy is not a Christian woman like Dilsey. At times she seems more concerned about self than others. Her excuse for her failure or sins is: "I'm just a nigger" (Ibid., p. 297). She is dependent and maudlin ("When yawl go home, I'm gone."). Yet, Faulkner, like Richard Wright, would have his readers view Nancy as one of society's tragedies—a woman fallen as a result of environmental circumstances rather than personal inadequacies.

Thematic Structure

Like his character patterns, Faulkner's fictional themes evolve naturally out of the culture and heritage of his nonfictional South. The possibilities are numerous and as endless as the variations of human relationships. Among those more naturally typical of the milieu peculiar to South-
ern society and those most significant in terms of the sub-
jects expositad by Faulkner through the Negro characters
in his works are three which may be generally categorizad
as: (1) Modern Society as a Wasteland, (2) Racial Conflict,
and (3) The Sense of Community. Theme I embodies such sub-
themes as individualism versus conformism, man as the pris-
oner of an unsympathetic society, and the widespread and
many-faceted theme of alienation—one which dominates the
middle years of Faulkner's career. Racial confrontations
are most notably obvious between black and white, but also
exist between "quality" and "trash." Inherent in this topic
are the attendant themes of the primitive versus the civi-
lized. Also important to Faulkner's social statement is the
overall principle of endurance—its necessity, its importance,
its fundamental relationships to the Faulknerian approach to
the ills of society. The latter theme encompasses such minor
areas as the initiation rites, father-son relationships, and
the importance of the class system to the South's ordered
societal scheme.

Modern Society, A Wasteland

The comparison of the New South to the Old South has
been a popular source for thematic development. In his
exploration of the wasteland themes, Faulkner's primary
concern is past time and present time and the constant need
for a reconciliation of the two if the malaise that affects
the twentieth-century South is to be arrested. In a more
universal sense, his stories which embrace this theme become parables of the unattractive condition in which man finds himself in a wasteland in a world in which he is faced with the overwhelming challenge of the fight for existence, even though he has a feeling of personal inadequacy, a sense of insecurity because of past failures, and an awareness of the circumstance of isolation. His response is often a resort to physical violence as a defense mechanism—a violence made meaningful only in its sadistic function as ego-booster or as a flimsy foundation for the fabrication of superiority, authority, or power.

Sociologists early recognized the link between insecurity and violence, and such Faulknerian critics as Hyatt Waggoner have recognized the sociological comment on this Southern condition in Faulkner's work (e.g., "Dry September," Collected Stories, pp. 169 et seq.). Others, like Waggoner, have posited this psychological motivation for violence as the explanation for the stimulation for the lynch mobs and other overt sadistic acts prevalent in Faulkner's South. Faulkner sees slavery as the root cause of this sickness, and his works are an examination of the failure of man-made laws or of the few white men of goodwill to stem the tide of unmitigated evil which has been its result. Faulkner sees the solution in those few "enduring" characters, mainly
Negroes, whose efforts are also prohibited from coming to harvest by the counteractions of such agents of evil as a Jason Compson (The Sound and the Fury), a Flem Snopes (Snopes trilogy), or a Percy Grimm (Light in August).

Faulkner dramatizes the deterioration of the American South through his depiction of the deterioration of the old Southern families. The statement is made obvious most often because of Faulkner’s efforts; sometimes in spite of him. As Faulkner said of Dilsey during an interview at the University of Virginia:

Once these people come to life, . . . they take off and so the writer is going at a dead run behind them trying to put down what they say and do in time . . . They have taken charge of the story. They tell it from then on. The writer has just got to keep up with them and put it down . . . I think he himself never knows just what they might do and say next.11

11 Faulkner at the University, eds. Frederick Gwynn and Joseph Blotner (Charlottesville, 1959), p. 120.

In Faulkner’s scheme, the older families of tradition are confronted by the “invading” newer families. The Sartoris family represents the beginning of Faulkner’s use of families as a means of making his statements about the merits and demerits of tradition, and he carries the history and exploits of this family through four generations of Sartorises, embracing the pre-Civil War, the Civil War, World I, and post-World War I eras to the present. One impressive symbol of the breakup of this traditional society is the Negroes’ dramatic march to the river in “Raid,” The Unvan-
The loyalties of the Negroes are usually with the older families, but these loyalties, it must be recognized, are a respect for the values for which the older generations stood, whether in actuality or in semblance, and the Negroes have little empathy and regard for or faith in the often morally bewildered and intellectually weakened younger generations. Simon, the old family retainer in *Sartoris*, emulates the good and bad characteristics of Colonel John, the first of the Sartorises in Yoknapatawpha County, a plantation-owner, soldier, adventurer, and expeditor. Simon accompanied Colonel John to the War. In their minds, Negro servants of the Old South assume the same status and prestige as their employers. Simon with his tilted cigar stub indulges in a brief and colorful altercation with another Negro sitting at the wheel of a car parked before a hitching-block in Jefferson: "Dont block off no Sartoris carriage, black boy ... Block off de commonality ef you wants, but dont intervoke no equipage waiting on Cunnel or Miss Jenny. Dey won't stan' fer it" (*Sartoris*, p. 37). Though his curiosity is aroused by Bayard III's fast automobile, and he must admire it, generally Simon considers him a "young fool" bent on destroying all that "Ole Marster" worked for.

In like manner, Lucas Beauchamp (*Intruder in the Dust*), with his "gold toothpick such as his own grandfather had used," "the hat ... a worn handmade beaver such as his grandfather had paid thirty and forty dollars apiece for,"
"the heavy gold watch chain looping across the bib of his overalls," and his ideas about not wanting "no field hand nigger picture" of his wife in his house, is following the example of his grandfather, Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin. In "The Fire and the Hearth," Lucas challenges the younger Carothers (Zack) Edmonds (Lucius McCaslin's great-grandson and Lucas's white kin) to treat him like a man. As Lucas explains to his white hecklers: "I aint a Edmonds. I dont belong to these new folks. I belongs to the old lot. I'm a McCaslin" (Intruder in the Dust, p. 19).

Nancy Mannigoe, the Compsons' laundress and sometimes cook, fears her husband's assault because she has been having affairs with white men. After failing in her efforts to seek the help of the Compson adults, she tries to save herself by gathering the Compson children around her, but the effort is ineffectual because the children do not understand. Neither do the Compson adults. In an interview reported in Faulkner in the University, Faulkner explained that Nancy's husband was named Jesus "to emphasize the point . . . that this Negro woman who had given devotion to the white family knew that when the crisis of her need came, the white family wouldn't be there" (p. 21). In answer to Nancy's pleas for help, Mr. Compson answers in typical Southern paternal fashion: "He's probably in St. Louis . . . got another wife by now and forgot all about you . . . . There's nothing for you to be afraid of now. And if you'd just let white men alone" ("That Evening Sun," Collected Stories,
The Negroes' loyalty is not always reciprocated by the younger generation of Southern whites.

Another example is Dilsey (The Sound and the Fury) whose confrontations with the younger generations of Compsons, epitomized in Jason, is a classic indictment of the values of the twentieth-century Southerners. Olga Vickery, Melvin Backman, and others have perceived Dilsey as a character of simplicity—"an old Negro servant who derives her life's purpose from the servant code of the Old South"; thus, they equate her power to endure and to serve with her loyalty to the Compson family, since in Faulkner's novels it is "in simple people or in old women who identify themselves with a family" that the attributes of love and compassionate understanding are found. Accordingly, "Dilsey's simplicity and family identification make her immune to the malaise and materialism that afflict Faulkner's twentieth-century world."¹²


Though to a degree Backman's statement is true, one cannot discount as unimportant Dilsey's faith or her ability to maintain faith in a world in which she is most assuredly not "immune to the malaise and materialism that afflict Faulkner's twentieth-century world." Dilsey is a servant to the Compsons, but in her mind, she is a servant to God. Dilsey's religious beliefs are traditional; an understanding of this
is necessary to an understanding of the Dilsey type. Dilsey is not unfeeling. The frustrations and griefs of life are as real to her as they are to the white Southerner, and just as many retreat into romantic worlds by various means, she retreats into a pseudo-consistent world anchored by faith—one which provides a congenial means of building an adequately functioning existence within the larger hostile environment which imposes frustration and grief. Its solid foundation is faith built upon the religious illusion that the universe is basically moral and good; that it follows a wise and noble plan in which every person's place has been preordained, and that it is a universe in which good is bound to triumph. Her simplicity allows her to believe.

Dilsey contemplates no change until her "final reward." Any change would probably be her destruction. As James Baldwin aptly states: "Any real change implies the breakup of the world as one has always known it, the loss of all that gave one an identity, the end of safety . . . unable to see and not daring to imagine what the future will now bring . . . one clings to what one knew, or thought one knew; to what one possessed or dreamed one possessed."13


And, in the words of Pope: "Say not man's imperfect, Heaven in fault / Say rather, man's as perfect as he ought / His knowledge measured to his state and place / His time a

The principles which Dilsey upholds are traditional, but standards have changed. Consequently, she is considered by some to be a caricature just as Don Quixote, the upholder of romantic chivalry. But although unsupported by the standards of Yoknapatawpha County, she continues to perpetuate courage, honor, pride, compassion, pity—the foundations of the edifice on which the entire history of man was founded and on which it must endure.

Dilsey has a goal: Heaven. Perhaps she has heard murmuring in her ear the same voice which Socrates speaks of in *The Crito* as "the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic." And like Socrates, that voice prevents her from hearing any other. Such is the testimony of Faulkner's Dilsey.

In his attempt to dramatize the emptiness, the unproductivity, the meaninglessness of the modern South, Faulkner often resorts to farcical methods. Characters are depicted as remnants of the tradition of the Old South or as empty vessels or shells. Bodies, particularly those of the women, are described as infertile and nonproductive, and they are often referred to as shells, "bundles of rotten sticks," sunken, gaunt, "flac-soled," fallen. Such descriptions are typical of the Dilseys, the Mollys, and their white counterparts, the Aunt Jennys and the Rosa
Millards—women who possess the last vestiges of the moral fiber of the Old South. It is plain that Faulkner would have us know that their bodies will not be progenitors of offspring which will carry on these qualities.

One additional way in which Faulkner stresses the "South as a Wasteland" theme is through the ritualistic effects he incorporates into his works. In an effort to find some direction in an era of misdirection and uncertainty, the natural responses of the Southerner has been to strive to hold on to the familiar—tradition. For example, Quentin (The Sound and the Fury) is concerned about superficial matters even to the moment of his suicide—a time when such trivialities should have been least important.

A traditional act, however, becomes more harmful than good when its usefulness is outmoded by societal changes, a fact which Faulkner is careful to emphasize in many of his works. Tomey Turl ("Was," Go Down, Moses, pp. 3 et seq.), three-quarters white and certainly not a slave-image, entering into the spirit of the "hunt" runs away at intervals during the year to visit a love-object, Tennie Beauchamp, a slave girl on the next plantation. The hunt is on, although it can only at best be a caricature of the real thing—Tomey Turl knows he will not be punished and, most importantly, Uncle Buck and Uncle Bud, his owners, know that he is not running away. However, strict observance of the ritualistic tradition is important—proper dress, proper preparation, proper ceremony. The irony is that Tomey Turl is in control
of the situation. The chase becomes a meaningless farce rather than a practical act.

In like manner, Sutpen's grand design to build himself a pseudo-world is a caricature of the plantation culture. The strengths of three years out of the lives of himself and his "black savages" result in a beautiful facade reminiscent of the unproductive and unnatural glory of British eighteenth-century show: "... it was finished ... down to the last plank and brick and wooden pin ... Unpainted and unfurnished ... twelve miles from town and almost that far from a neighbor, it stood for three years more surrounded by its formal gardens and promenades, its slave quarters and stables and smokehouses; ... and ... formal beds where there would be no flowers for four years yet" (Absalom, Absalom!, p. 39).

A classic example of the ritualistic conventions to which the Yoknapatawpha Southerners cling even when the reason for the convention is long forgotten is Rosa Millard's portrayal of the facade of the aristocratic Southern "gentlewoman" and her treatment of Ringo and the other Negroes in The Unvanquished. Though Ringo, intelligent and shrewd, is the equivalent of her business partner in the stolen horse business and she his partner in crime, in the church scene, Ringo is relegated to the gallery section with the other Negroes to remain until he receives permission from Miss Millard to descend to the white folks' first floor to give
his financial report—a report which Miss Millard herself is incapable of calculating.

The contest between past and present is again amply exposited in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (Collected Stories, pp. 119 et seq.). The characters are dramatized according to their several responses to life and to the changes which have occurred in the Southern society. There is Emily Grierson, a Jefferson spinster, who kills her Yankee lover, Homer Barron, and sleeps with his body until her own death. She is described as having been a "tradition, a duty, and a care." There is also Colonel Sartoris, dead, but still alluded to as a person having much influence on the town. It was he, Emily says, who explained to her that she has "no taxes" and who avoided the semblance of charity by inventing a tale which "only a man of Colonel Sartoris's generation and thought could have invented ... and only a woman could have believed." The old Negro servant, Tobe, is representative of the past, and the present is denoted by the narrator, a spokesman for the town, and by the new Board of Aldermen. An additional point of view is offered in the person of Homer, a Northern construction foreman who embodies the Yankee's attitude of general scorn and disrespect in his response to Emily Grierson and, in a larger sense, to all that she stands for in the South.

In the first sentence of the story, Emily is described as "a fallen monument" to a tradition of Southern gentility
which "no one save an old manservant . . . had seen in at least ten years." The death of her father, symbolic of the death of the Old South, marks the beginning of her downfall which is climaxed by the attitude of the Yankee Homer toward her dilemma. Homer "liked men and . . . was not a marrying man."

A foil character is the lone Negro, a man of all work, who waits on Miss Emily in the manner to which she has been accustomed. He is the invisible man when prudence dictates it, the scapegoat for the South's ills when it does not. "He talked to no one, probably not even to her, for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse." This is a fitting assessment since in actuality the Negro's voice as that of the uninvolved segment of society has been unheard in the South. Tobe's is a role of mere existence. Accordingly, it is also fitting that after Miss Emily's death "he disappeared . . . walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again," as if he had never lived, and of course he had not. He is a nonentity, a thing kept alive only in the tradition for which Miss Emily Grierson stands. When this tradition dies, he is no more. Because of the newer, younger people with ideas different from those of Colonel Sartoris, "who had fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the street without an apron," and the changing societal scene, augmented in the "garages and cotton gins which had encroached and obliterated the more august homes of the neighborhood," the like of the old family retainer would
eventually be a part of the past and would not be "seen again."

Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" is a good study of the conflict of the traditional Old South and the anti-traditional New South, and it provides justification for Faulkner's prediction—namely, if the South is pushed to choose between submission to the North and the Federal government on one side and death as the alternative, it will choose death. Emily's world, throughout, continues to be the past, and when she is threatened with desertion and disgrace, she not only takes refuge in that world, but she also takes Homer with her in the only manner possible—death.

Absalom, Absalom! is Faulkner's most comprehensive statement about the South as a wasteland. It examines the sickness inherent in the New South and finds the root of the cause of that sickness and all its attendant evils in the system of slavery. Some critics have observed parallels


in the grandiose rise and subsequent fall of the hero, Thomas Sutpen, and the rise and fall of the South. Others have recognized similarities in the chronology of events in the personal drama of Charles Bon and Henry Sutpen and the chronology of the War. Volpe observes: "They meet in 1859, fight the
Yankees together for four years, and when the South is defeated and the War to end slavery is done, Henry discovers that Ben has Negro blood and he kills him . . . . less than a month after Lee surrendered at Appomattox. The moral crime which initially brought on the War is thus repeated."


Incumbent in Faulkner's examination is the design of Greek tragedy; Fate takes its toll in the end. Absalom, Absalom! is structured by Faulkner as an ironic monument of death to the South's grand design. In the arrangement of the graves, Sutpen's body is surrounded by his Negro descendants. Clytie, Sutpen's mulatto daughter, his idiot grandson, and the aged and broken Henry are the last to occupy the imposing mansion. When Clytie sets fire to the mansion and she and Henry are burned to death, only the idiot Jim remains as evidence of Sutpen's dream and as a symbol of the decay of the tradition of the Old South.

The Prisoner of Society

In conjunction with the themes of the past, the condition of the individual in the sophisticated society of the New South is one of Faulkner's central concerns. All of his works deal to some degree with some aspect of rejection and alienation and their moral consequences for society.

Man is imprisoned by society in many ways; by the
circumstances of his color, religion, social and economic level, and nationality, to name a few, and one or more of these determinants may cause him to be boxed in or shut out from the mainstream of humanity. The theme of divided and alienated humanity in Faulkner's work is reflective of the "Lost Generation"—man as the pawn of society approach of the Virginia Woolf-T.S. Eliot-Ezra Pound literary circle. However, Faulkner's approach is never as nihilistic as the approach of this group, except perhaps in Sanctuary.

Joe Christmas is the classic Faulknerian exemplar of the prisoner of society. He is described variously by critics as "mulatto," "Negro," "man of mixed blood," or a "white man who believes he is a Negro." Alfred Kazin describes him as "the most solitary character in the pages of American fiction . . . an abstraction seeking to become a human being."^16

Faulkner does not identify Christmas's race. His concern seems not to be a presupposition of his racial genealogy, but the recognition that whatever his race, the social issues with which he becomes involved, or with which he involves himself, are representative of the conditions which society provides for the "idea" of Negro.

In Christmas's case, his stereotyped thinking is a result of his childhood upbringing, which is dominated by absolute and fanatical concepts about race, religion, and
good and bad imposed by his grandfather, Euphues Hines, and later by his foster-father, McEachern. His grandfather makes a pure and definite racial division between men—black and white. As God's chosen to avenge "the Lord and the white race," McEachern is reflective of the Puritan Calvinist who makes a sharp division between the chosen (the Elect) and the lost (the damned). Doc Hines, in effect, kills his daughter because he has the suspicion that she bore a half-Negro child (Joe). He spares the child in order to set him up as an example of the "curse," and much like Hawthorne's Chillingworth, he spends the remainder of his life pursuing him in order to observe his revenge. But, as Edmond Volpe observes: "Obsessed . . . like all the pursuers . . . he is, in reality, the pursued . . . Formerly a competent and capable workman . . . he destroys his effectiveness and usefulness and embraces a life of poverty and degradation" (A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, p. 162). By both Hines and McEachern, Joe Christmas, the scapegoat, is crucified, but each in his own way rationalizes his persecution by the belief that he is avenging God's name and serving the Lord.

Faulkner depicts Joe Christmas as one who is both victim and criminal, as one who cannot relate to his society, and as one who, as a result of his lack of identity, cannot establish his direction as a human being. He is a character with a choice, nevertheless, but a choice almost negated
and made iminently ineffectual by the malaise of the mind of the society of which he seeks to be a part. Olga Vickery observes that

Joe is forced into the ritual of pursuit and lynching performed . . . by a society which has been elaborating it for generations . . . . The basis of this pattern is Jefferson's conviction that the individual can only become a member of society by permitting himself to be classified according to race, color, geographic origin . . . . Created by man, these categories become creators of man . . . . They establish social identification as the necessary prerequisite to human existence . . . . A verbal pattern of classification . . . becomes a myth, a social order not to be challenged . . . . The word "Negro" is a compressed myth just as the stock response to that word is a compressed ritual . . . . Men like Joe Christmas . . . who can neither fit nor be fitted into these categories, are either sacrificed to or driven out of the society . . . .

Society is not the entire cause of Joe Christmas's fate. He could pass for white, but he prefers to say that he is a Negro. At the same time, society is responsible because Joe's experiential background governs his response.

In contrast, Longley sees Christmas as a man exercising total freedom of choice. He writes:

He may have heard of determinism but he does not believe in it; in the face of those joyous theories of self-exculpation formulated by present-day psychology and sociology that presumably give the individual the right to scream, "It's not my fault!" . . . . His preference is much nearer the dreadful freedom of the existentialist: since existence is prior to essence, the individual is totally free and totally accountable for his own view of things, for with total freedom comes total responsibility (The Tragic Mask, p. 196).
Of Christmas, Faulkner said: "He didn't know what he was, and so he was nothing. He deliberately evicted himself from the human race because he didn't know what he was. That was his tragedy...there was no possible way in life for him to find out" (Faulkner in the University, p. 72). Joe is the "invisible" man (in Quentin's term, a "shadow")—obvious as a symbol; not obvious as a person. If, as Longley says, the first task of human existence is self-definition (The Tragic Mask, p. 195), Joe is the optimum example of one who proceeds to define himself and then attempts to pattern his life upon that definition. His effort to identify the "I-Am" is impossible and a failure from the start, not only because there are few genealogical facts in the background, but because his absolutist outlook makes it necessary to draw final and definite and pure lines in this definition. To be human, he feels, means that he must be either black or white; thus, he proceeds with an Ahab-like compulsion to seek the "final" answer. Unlike Dilsey, though tragic she is, Christmas cannot relate to race, religion, society, nature, nor even the family of man. He is a part of that ambivalence, "the curse." Dilsey knows who she is—a child of God. When discussing Benjy's planned change of name with Caddy, she says,

"Huh... Name aint going to help him. Hurt him, neither. Folks dont have no luck, changing names. My name been Dilsy since fore I could remember and it be Dilsey when they's long forgot me."

"How will they know it's Dilsey, when it's long
forgot, Dilsey," Caddy said.

"It'll be in the Book, honey . . . Writ out."

"Can you read it, Caddy said.

"Wont have to, . . . They'll read it for me. All I got to say is Ise here." (The Sound and the Fury, p.77)

No explanation of why she is who she is seems necessary. Hers is a response based on an unshakable faith. Dilsey accepts, Joe resists.

Joe's alienation, the result of the boxed-in existence imposed by his society, results in a never-ceasing cycle of frustration. Faulkner emphasizes this alienated state by the lack of communication or meaningful relationships between Joe and the other characters, major and minor. To most, he is indeed invisible. When Brown is informing on Christmas, he looks through the barber shop window directly into the face of Christmas standing unnoticed among the crowd, but he does not see him. In his desperate bid for recognition, Christmas taunts (he tells Alice, the prostitute, of his alleged Negro blood) and flaunts (the escape rope dangling in front of his foster-parents' window). After one escape from the house by way of the rope, he says, "I wish he would follow me and see me get into the car . . . I wish he would try to stop me" (Light in August, p. 150).

When Joe gets attention, it is the wrong kind. Doc Hines, his grandfather, sees him as an object of revenge; Joanna Burden, his white mistress, sees him as the object of a cause. In spite of her liberal facade, to Joanna he is
always "Negro." Even in their most intimate moments, the thought uppermost is that he is "Negro," and wild and panting, she would breathe: "Negro! Negro! Negro!" McEachern views Joe as an object of religious sacrifice, and Mrs. Hines "had no hope of saving him when she came . . . all she wanted was that he die 'decent,' . . . Decently hung by a Force, a principle; not burned or hacked or dragged dead by a Thing" (Light in August, p. 390). (To the extent that Joe Christmas is a scapegoat, a Christ figure, one may conclude that Mrs. Hines is a Mary, mother-of-Christ-figure.) The dietician at the orphanage where Joe spent his early years sees him as a "nigger bastard." She shows him recognition only when he interrupts her lovemaking with Charley, the young intern from a nearby hospital, and she is afraid that he will tell (Ibid., pp. 105-106).

Joe's alienation is an extension of that experienced by other characters. Cleanth Brooks writes in The Yoknapatawpha Country that "we are never given any proof that Joe Christmas possesses Negro blood for the sufficient reason that Joe would have become what he became whether he had an infusion of Negro blood or not. The pressures that mold him . . . have . . . nothing to do with biology as such. The decisive factor is the attitude that the world takes toward Joe and the attitude that he takes . . . " (p. 50). The warping of his mind and spirit is the result of his public environment. Faulkner emphasizes this point in the
scenes involving the dietician, the Negro gardener, Doc Hines, Mr. McEachern, and Joanna Burden. The biological matter is quite irrelevant. As Hoffman observes: "The great tragic force in Joe Christmas comes from the clash of his private world and the world at large."  

Joe's responses are shaped by outside external forces, and his inner conflicts are a result of these. His responses are defensive. He cannot respond to kindness; he rejects gifts, mainly because he does not wish to be obligated to anyone. He is suspicious of those who show compassion or friendship, and he refuses to become involved with mankind.

In the effort to make a moral assessment of Joe, such critics as Richard Chase, John L. Longley, George O'Donnell, Malcolm Cowley, and Robert Penn Warren have classified him as villain, Christ figure, Snopes type, Puritan, anti-hero, tragic hero. Faulkner said:

I think that you really can't say that any man is good or bad ... man is the victim of himself, or his fellows, ... nature, ... environment, ... He tries to do the best he can within his rights ... Joe's only salvation in order to live with himself was ... to live outside the human race, ... but nobody would let him (Faulkner in the University, p. 118).

Other examples of the prisoner-of-society type include Clytie, whom Rosa Codfield describes as one who in the very pigmentation of her flesh represented that debacle which had brought Judith and
me to what we were and which made of her that which she declined to be just as she had declined to be that from which its purpose had been to emancipate her . . . perverse inscrutable and paradox free, yet incapable of freedom . . . (Absalom, Absalom!, p, 156).

Another, Sam Fathers, a descendant of a Chickasaw Indian chief, must live as a Negro because he has Negro blood in his veins (Go Down, Moses). In addition, there is Charles Bon whom Volpe describes as "a refinement of the reaction-to-rejection pattern" (A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, p. 210), and his son Charles Etienne.

Man's struggle to recognize the "I-Am" in the sophisticated society of the New South is one of Faulkner's central themes. The threat to this recognition is inherent in the minds of the men who compose this society. Man's individuality, having been absorbed by impinging society, is a lost element. In the case of Negroes, the situation is fostered by the stereotyping which allows them to function as mere tools in their involvement in the society of the South.

**Individualism**

In contrast to the prisoner-of-society types are those few Faulknerian characters who strive to retain their individualism in the face of organized society—the right of men to make their own decisions, plan their own fortunes, direct their own fates. Individualism, in Faulkner's novels, seems to be reserved for those who have remained in the yet
undeveloped backwoods (e.g., the McCallums). These charac-
ters recognize no man-made authority above their own. They
live close to nature, are self-sufficient, and depend upon
no one. Any interference from outside forces is taken as an
insult to their natural intelligence. In all instances, the
Faulknerian individualist is opposed to the restrictions of
modern society, moral righteousness (organized doctrine and
otherwise), moral rigidity, conventions and traditions.

Edmond Volpe writes:

The standard of individualism . . . seems to be
that of the nineteenth-century pioneer who epito-
mizes the free man, in control of his destiny as
much as any human being can be . . . in a universe
governed by chance . . . Theirs is a patriarchal
society in which the family is the social unit
. . . . physical strength, courage, and skill in
the woods are prime requisites (A Reader's Guide
to William Faulkner, p. 21).

In Faulkner's works, the lone Negro individualist is
Lucas Beauchamp (Intruder in the Dust). His counterpart in
The Reivers seems to be Uncle Parsham, who shares his charac-
ter description with Lucas. Because Lucas refuses to act
the part of a "nigger," the town is upset: "We got to make
him be a nigger first. He's got to admit he's a nigger.
Then maybe we will accept him as he seems to intend to be
accepted." Lucas said "'ma'am' to women just as any white
man did and 'sir' and 'mister' to you if you were white but
who you knew was thinking neither and he knew you knew it
but who was not even waiting, daring you to make the next
move, because he didn't even care" (Intruder in the Dust,
p.18). Most of Faulkner's Negro characters act in accordance
with the Southern whites' stereotyped image of them, and they seldom express a personal feeling or point of view toward the white man or the South unless these are complimentary.

Unlike the stereotyped Negro man who is lacking in control of his family, Lucas intends to be the man in his family, a social unit the importance of which is symbolized by the fire on the hearth in the short story of the same name. Lucas proves his manhood when Chick Mallison takes refuge in his home after a "dunking" in the creek (*Intruder in the Dust*), and more dramatically in the confrontation with Zachary "Zack" Edmonds, who takes Lucas's wife to the big house to suckle his infant and to care for the house and his needs after his own wife's death in childbirth. Lucas goes to Zack and tells him: "I wants my wife. I needs her at home . . ." He is determined to assert his manhood even if it means his death. His code of honor is the same code of his ancestral grandfather, one which he respects and which he expects all men, black or white, to respect. Accordingly, Lucas refuses to act on command, and he reserves the right to make his own decisions and to act the part of a man. Like his white counterparts, the great-grandsons of the pioneers of the South, Lucas recognizes and accepts his responsibility as a member of a socially "aristocratic" family, but unlike them, he has not lost the physical and moral courage to cope with the post-War world. Because of Faulkner's emphasis upon the ability of the Negro race to endure, one might
assume that he intends this quality in Lucas to be interpreted as his Negro heritage, aided and abetted by the influence of the moral strength of his wife, Molly.

Contrary to Morris Baja's thesis in "It Must Be Important," (supra, pp. 125-127), it is not important to Lucas to be a Negro. It is important to him to be a man. It is important to the community that he must act the part of a Negro. The same might be said of Joe Christmas. It is important to be something, and since his Southern society makes the strong dividing line between black and white, in his desperation, Joe Christmas tries to relate to both.

Consequently, Lucas could be viewed, as some critics have perceived him, as having little sense of obligation to the Negro race. Cleanth Brooks aptly states it thus:

We may be tempted to see in Lucas a champion of Negro rights. . . Lucas is basically a strong-minded individual with pride in himself, but his loyalty is not so much to his race as to his family. He is . . . proud of being a McCaslin. . . he imitates . . . carefully the stance of his white ancestor. . . He is no would-be martyr . . . no crusader for civil rights; he is the tough and fearless old aristocrat who makes no concessions, who manages to keep his courage and his dignity under the most difficult situations. . . (The Yoknapatawpha Country, p.283).

Faulkner is careful to emphasize that Lucas does have pride in himself no matter what his race may be. After all, this is what the racial issue is all about: whether men should be able to find their places in the world as men, be allowed to live as men, and be allowed to take the responsibility of men, regardless of their race, color, or creed.
If Lucas is proud of being a McCaslin, this pride is predicated on the fact that he is, first, proud of who he is. (This is an identity which includes his Negro blood.) He is unlike Joe Christmas who does not know who he is, or Charles Etienne de Saint Valery, who does know, but who is made to feel ashamed of who he is. His pride in his white ancestor is due, secondly, to the restricted life which Lucas has been forced to live. His is before the "black is beautiful" era and is in the time when the image—the standard for worth, pride, and social position—is the white man's standard. As Lucas can recognize a man, he seems to wait for the same recognition of himself by the community; although his words are tinged with meaning, he exercises his authority, not blatantly or militantly, but with quiet courtesy and calm, and unruffled civility.

Lucas makes no concessions except to love (of Molly), and there is little love which he receives from the white man—even from his white relatives, who almost fear him. Therefore, Lucas is neither stoical nor is he courting disaster by his silence while he is in prison. He knows the Southern system, and he is intelligent enough to recognize that if any one is to believe his account of the murder, it must first be proved and then related by a white person. In support of this is Miss Habersham's explanation:

"Naturally he wouldn't tell your uncle. He's a Negro and your uncle's a man... Lucas knew it would take a child—or an old woman like me; someone not concerned with probability, with evidence."
Men like your uncle and Mr. Hampton have had to be men too long, busy too long ..." (Intruder in the Dust, p. 89).

It is to be through the compassion, understanding, and endurance of the women and the unspoiled faith of the children of the South that the solution to its problems is to be found.

Lucas is the man of tradition; in contrast, Joe is the epitome of the "new" Negro without tradition, roots, or stability in a society in which he must find some means of functioning.

Race Relations

As W.J. Cash has explained, the matter of racial conflict had little import for the Southern pioneer. With the beginning of the plantation system came the beginning of the racial problems which developed as the system developed and which were not solved by the War which was fought to solve them. In Absalom, Absalom!, Faulkner writes:

... there was a country all divided and fixed and neat with a people living ... all divided ... because of what color their skins happened to be and what they happened to own ... a certain few men not only had the power of life and death and barter and sale over others, but they had living men to perform the endless repetitive personal offices ... that all men have had to do for themselves since time began and would have to do until they died ... (Absalom, Absalom!, pp. 221-222).

Few, white or black, resist the system, but the conflicts persist as each group tries to assume its place in Yoknapatawpha County.
In Yoknapatawpha, as in Faulkner’s South, the idea of white supremacy is rampant. The poor white, dissatisfied with his lot in life, rationalized his position by channeling his resentment into a hatred of the Negro. The Negro becomes the scapegoat for all. Some students of Faulkner have taken another view and see in his depiction of Lucas an old Negro . . . who wants to be innocently lynched, to add his own blood to the South’s dishonor, as his last act of contempt for his oppressors . . . He is not successful because of the intense need of several white people to prevent his martyrdom, and not only in Lucas’ private interest, but in their own interest as white men who already have more shame than they can bear . . . .


In addition to wondering how a person can be “innocently” lynched, one must recognize that contempt and arrogance are poor attributes of a martyr. Lucas does not pretend to be a murderer. This would have been foolhardy in his Southern environment—a fact which he understands well and one supported by Cleanth Brooks (The Yoknapatawpha Country, p. 283) and other critics. Lucas harbors no wish to be lynched nor does he possess the sophistication necessary to a martyr’s philosophy. His is not a death wish, and certainly he does not seek to shame the South. In a paradoxical sort of way, Lucas is proud of his Southern heritage. Contrary to Hardwick’s statement, in the novel, Faulkner dramatizes no “intense need” on the part of “several white people” to prevent
martyrdom. Rather, it is a reluctant effort in the image of a white boy, a black boy, and an old woman, and the effort is made not in Lucas's "private interest" nor even "their own interest as white men." The motive for action in Charles Mallison's case is a selfish one. He sees the opportunity to even a score, to swing the balance to his side, and to restore his sense of white superiority by putting Lucas in his place (that of a "nigger"), by eliminating any obligation to the Negro for an old favor—a meal and a warming fire at his hearth.

Hardwick continues: "Lucas, or the mass Negro, has at last conquered the South by giving the white man an unendurable burden of guilt" (p.246). This idea is reinforced by Gavin Stevens's comment to his nephew:

"Lucas will ultimately get his can of tobacco; they will insist on it . . . He will receive installments on it for the rest of his life . . . and not just Lucas but Lucas Sambo since what sets a man writhing . . . is not having injured his fellows so much as having been wrong . . . we shall watch right here in Yoknapatawpha County the ancient oriental relationship between the savior and the life he saved turned upside down: Lucas Beauchamp once the slave of any white man within range of whose notice he happened to come, now tyrant over the whole county's white conscience" (Intruder in the Dust, p. 199).

In his private world, Faulkner did not recognize the growing change in the South as a moral victory engendered by the Negroes, but as an inevitable development of the evolution of the South's changing society.

Another example of the struggle for white supremacy is the Yoknapatawpha poor white, who is apt to equate his status
with that of the aristocratic white even though his economic level is often beneath that of the Negro. Accordingly, Sutpen (Absalom, Absalom!) is angered by the white-coated butler's refusal to allow him entrance to the planter's mansion through the front door. He is obsessed with the idea of revenge which becomes the motivation for his grand design. In another story, "Barn Burning," Abner Snopes, to show his contempt, wipes his manure-covered feet on the white rug which covers his employer's foyer floor, and in Absalom, Absalom!, Wash, a poor-white handyman, takes Sutpen's drinking with him in his lonely hours as an assurance of the inevitability of total acceptance which he has always assumed; therefore, Wash looks the other way when Sutpen begins an affair with his teenaged daughter, hoping that such a liaison will lead to a marriage between the two or will, at the least, cement his relationship with his employer.

Many of the racial problems of the South are a result of stereotyped characteristics assigned to the racial groups. These result in purely social definitions which have little or nothing to do with biology. Faulkner's works carry the implication that the term "nigger" is a creation of the mind of the white man, and that its connotation makes the Negro an outsider not because of any inherent fault but because such a person as the term implies does not fit into the societal design. For example, in Absalom, Absalom! Sutpen divorces his wife not because of any outward fault but because of her Negro blood. She would be a hindrance to his design. He
says: "I found that she was not and could never be, through no fault of her own, adjunctive or incremental to the design which I had in mind, so I provided for her and put her aside" (p. 240). For the same abstract reason, Roth Edmonds in "The Fire and the Hearth" makes a break in his friendship with Henry Beauchamp by elevating himself to the bed and leaving his friend to sleep on the pallet on the floor. And again in *Absalom, Absalom!*, as Henry Sutpen contemplates his mulatto half-brother, he thinks:

... there but for the intervening leaven of that blood which we do not have in common is my skull, my brow, sockets, shape and angle of jaw and chin and some of my thinking behind it ... obscured a little by that alien blood whose admixing was necessary in order that he exist is the face of the man who shaped us both of that blind chancy darkness which we call the future ... (p. 317).

In creation after creation, Faulkner dramatizes the myths and tragedies which result from the social definition of *Negro*. One of the most cogent ironies is the act of the spinster, Rosa Codfield (*Absalom, Absalom!*), who, having never met Charles Bon, falls in love with her mental picture of him and spends "her visits to Sutpen's Hundred looking for his footprints in the garden." She is a Southern flower, pure and undefiled, in love with a Negro because his appearance in her mind does not identify him with "Negro." Her niece, Judith, could love a man with Negro blood while she was unaware of it, but although she seeks to expiate her guilt by committing herself to the raising of her lover's son by an octoroon mistress, she is not able to overcome the heritage
of prejudice with which her Southern environment has imbued her. Clytie is equally intent on making Charles Etienne recognize that he is "Negro." Clytie is Judith's mulatto half-sister, and in the end, she is her only companion, but most important, Clytie is a Negro; consequently, the social divisions are never truly erased. This is a situation perpetrated by Clytie and manifested in the sleeping arrangement which is effected—Charles Etienne on a trundle bed between Judith's larger, higher bed and Clytie's pallet on the floor, an arrangement which she insists upon "with a sort of invincible spurious humility." In the same novel, it is ironic that Henry is not affronted by the possibility of incest if Charles Bon should marry his sister Judith, but the thought of miscegenation is more than his Southern conscience can bear.

In *Light in August*, Doc Hines goes about the County holding revival services in remote Negro churches, saving souls and preaching white supremacy, "interrupting the service to enter the pulpit and in his harsh, dead voice and at times with violent obscenity, preach to them humility before all skins lighter than theirs, preaching the superiority of all the white race, himself his own exhibit A in fanatic and unconscious paradox" considering that he "very nearly depended on the bounty and charity of Negroes for sustenance," a fact which his Southern conscience refuses to assimilate (p. 299).

As other examples, Bayard (*Sartoris*) and his friends
take three Negro musicians with them to serenade their ladies. On the way, they drink a jug of whiskey. In the beginning the whites drink from the jug, and the Negroes, because there is no container, drink from the breather-cap which they remove from the engine of the car. After a few drinks, the breather-cap is forgotten, and all take turns drinking from the jug.

In "Dry September" when Minnie Cooper, a half-mad neurotic spinster, complains of a rape which never took place, a Negro, Willie Mayes, is lynched, although it is quite clear that he is not guilty. It is enough that he is "Negro" and has the assumed capability for such an act. One staunch citizen says: "Did it really happen? ... What the hell difference does it make? Are you going to let the black sons get away with it until one really does it?" (Collected Stories, pp. 171-172. When the town's barber makes an ineffectual effort to defend the Negro, he is accused of the unpardonable sin of taking a "nigger's word before a white woman's," and he is labeled a "nigger-lover." "Do you mean to tell me you are a white man and you'll stand for it?" (Ibid., p. 171).

According to the account in The Unvanquished, Ringo and Bayard are born in the same month, suckle the same breast, and sleep and eat together for so long that Bayard says, "Maybe he wasn't a nigger any more or maybe I wasn't a white boy any more ... (p. 8). Ringo is an example of the capabilities of the Negro when he is brought up like a human being. Faulkner dramatizes Ringo's intelligence and, at
times, his superiority to Bayard, which disparages the tradi-
tional code of white superiority. Granny works with Ringo as
her unofficial business partner, and she grows to trust and
respect him, but in her Southern conscience, he is first and
foremost a Negro. She refuses to deviate from the old social
order. Though Ringo obviously sees how ridiculous this facade
is, he goes along with it, but when he speaks to Bayard of his
decision not to revenge his father's death, he notes the
social difference when he says, "We could bushwhack him . . .
Like we done Grumby that day. But I reckon that wouldn't suit
that white skin you walks around in" ("An Odor of Verbena,
The Unvanquished, p. 251).

The Negro image and the reality are seldom the same.
Nevertheless, the image has been applied as a norm to an
entire group. Negro blood automatically negates any recog-
nition of the individual human being. To accept anything to
the contrary would mean a turning away from the cherished
traditions. Therefore, in "Pantaloons in Black," having
observed Rider's surprising display of grief, the sheriff
attempts to defend the Southern image of the Negro as not
quite human when he says:

"Them damn niggers . . . it's a wonder we have as
little trouble with them as we do . . . . they aint
human. They look like a man and they walk on their
hind legs like a man, and they can talk and you can
understand then and you think they are understand-
ing you, at least now and then. But when it comes
to the normal human feelings and sentiments of human
beings, they might just as well be a damn herd of
wild buffaloes" (Go Down, Moses, p. 154).
But, as Sterling Brown admits, the stereotyped image has often found its counterpart in real life. Sometimes these are double roles assumed for the white man's benefit. The same is apparent in Yoknapatawpha County. An example is Ned (The Reivers), an Uncle Remus type, capable of only a "he-he-he" comment when the audience seems to indicate it, but as Lucius observes, when he is in his presence or among members of his race, he is a different person—a man of the world, a ladies' man, and one who shows especial talent for planning and executing financial deals. Likewise, Old Simon (Sartoris) is a foot-dragging, wheedling, obsequious Uncle Tom type when he wants his way with the white folks (e.g., the church money), but he becomes a swaggering, boastful personality among his own people.

Faulkner does not concentrate entirely on the negative side of the situation. Some good efforts are made by the Yoknapatawpha residents to effect a reconciliation between the races. Usually these are more chance incidents than concerted efforts, which in itself is an indictment. One illustration occurs near the close of The Reivers. Uncle Parsham and Lucius Priest assume Jim and Huck Finn roles. Lucius breaks down from weariness and excitement, and he is comforted on the shoulder of Uncle Parsham who talks to him like a father figure. Lucius addresses Uncle Parsham as "sir." Later Lucius elects to sleep in the same bed with Uncle Parsham. The only drawback that he sees in the arrangement is not that Uncle Parsham is a Negro but
One of the most poignant scenes in Faulkner's works is that in which Bayard shares Christmas dinner and toasts with a Negro sharecropper family.

The Negroes drank with him, amicably, a little diffidently—two opposed concepts antipathetic by race, blood, nature and environment, touching for a moment and fused within an illusion—humankind forgetting its lust and cowardice and greed for a day. "Chris'mus," the woman murmured shyly. "Thanky suh" (Sartoris, p. 277).

For the most part, in Faulkner's works the whites respond nonviolently to their Negro dependents. Regardless of the trials they impose upon them, the Negroes are treated with kindness, compassion, and patience. They assume a paternalistic attitude toward their burden. Yet, Loosh's answer to Rosa Millard's query about his reason for telling the Yankees the hiding place for the family silver is more cogently explicit:

"You ax me that? . . . Where John Sartoris? Whyn't he come and ax me that? Let God ax John Sartoris who the man name that give me to him. Let the man that buried me in the black dark ax that of the man that dug me free" ("Raid," The Unvanquished, p. 85).

Community

In Yoknapatawpha as in the actual South, the idea of "community" plays a significant role. Everyone has his place in the societal scheme, and each in his way makes his contribution to the good of the community. Faulkner sees the South as a region capable of handling its own problems, even the Negro problem which most Southerners, like Joanna Burden,
consider to be an unsolvable curse: "You must struggle, rise . . . But in order to rise, you must raise the shadow with you. But you can never lift it to your level" (Light in August, p. 222). In an interview reported in the New York Herald and republished in Lion in the Garden, Faulkner is quoted as saying that "the Southern Negroes would be better off under the conditions of slavery than they are today" (p. 20). The reporter interpreted this remark as a "benevolent autocracy" which Faulkner considered to be the "ideal condition for the Negroes." Faulkner continued: "I never heard . . . about a lynching in the slave days . . . The Negroes would be better off because they'd have some one to look after them. I don't think it would be as good for the white people as for the Negroes to have slavery come back . . ." (Ibid., p. 21). The blame is placed on the Northerner who, in the act of freeing the irresponsible, childlike blacks, made them their responsibility as they had never been before. In another interview Faulkner stated that his belief was "that one state . . . has no business compelling another state . . . to correct its ills . . . the state itself must correct those ills" (Ibid., p. 161).

Evidence of the "burden" of the Negroes is plentiful in Faulkner's work. One of the most dramatic illustrations is Rosa Millard's assumption that as a Southern aristocratic lady hers is the responsibility of caring for the Negroes and the poor whites and "carrying out the instruc-
tions of Colonel John" in the absence of the planters who
are fighting the War (The Unvanquished). Within the princi-
ple of community, even the least are provided for, and they
serve their function in return. This is true of Old Het, a
seventy-year-old inmate of the poorhouse who sees her role
as follows:

"There's some folks thinks all I does, I tromps this
town all day long from can-see to can't, with a hand
full of gimmee and a mouth full of much oblige. They
are wrong. I serves Jefferson too. If it's more
blessed to give than to receive ... this town is
blessed to a fare-you-well because its steady full
of folks willing to give anything from a nickel up
to a old hat. But I'm the onliest one I knows that
steady receives. So how is Jefferson going to be
steady blessed without me steady willing from dust-
dawn to dust-dark, rain or snow or sun, to say much
oblige?" (The Town, p. 245).

"The community," Cleanth Brooks says, "is everywhere"
in Light in August. "It expresses itself through Mrs. Arm-
stid emptying her china bank and knotting the coins into a
sack for Lena; through the sheriff . . . ordering the thrill-
seekers away from his examination of the Negro witness"
(The Yoknapatawpha Country, p. 53). Yet, no matter how
strong Faulkner's sense of the community may be, his aware-
ness of the importance of the individual is still dominant.
Joe Christmas is more alone, for not only does he cut him-
self off from whatever community he possesses, but he engages
in a kind of underground war with society and himself.

The in-group of a community usually fears the out-
group which is seeking to become the in-group, and the
response of the in-group is often a desperate attempt to
protect its interests rather than a rational response to the
given situation. In The Hamlet, Mrs. Littlejohn upbraids
Ratliff for his out-of-the-ordinary concern about Ike Snopes's
(a twenty-one-year-old idiot's) love for a neighbor's cow.
When Ratliff discovers that people are paying money to
Launcelot (Lump) Snopes to watch the idiot make love to the
cow, he makes the Snopeses get rid of it:

"So that's it," she said. "It aint that it is,
that itches you. It's that somebody named Snopes
... is making something out of it and you dont
know what it is. Or is it because folks come and
watch? It's all right for it to be, but folks
mustn't know it, see it."

"Was," he said. "Because it's finished now.
I aint never disputed I'm a pharisee ... You
don't need to tell me he aint got nothing else
... Or that I can sholy leave him have at least
this much. I know that too. Or that besides, it
aint any of my business. I know that too, just
as I know that the reason I aint going to leave
him have what he does have is simply because I
am strong enough to keep him from it. I am
stronger than him. Not righter. Not any bet­
ter, maybe. But just stronger" (p. 201).

Ratliff's statement explains much of the code of the South.

In Faulkner's latter works, the outsider is a con­
stant threat to Yoknapatawpha society. Jody Varner in
exasperation demands of Flem Snopes: "I want to make one
pure and simple demand of you and I want a pure and simple
Yes and No for a answer: How many more is there? How much
longer is this going on? Just what is it going to cost me
to protect one goddam barn full of hay?" (Ibid., p. 68).
This statement is an echo of Faulkner's, for in his view of
the South the Snopes types also were a source of fear to
him. He said: "Of the Snopes, I'm terrified . . . They are the men that can cope with the new industrial age . . ."

*(Faulkner in the University, pp. 80 and 197).*

Although Faulkner was aware of the importance of Southern community, he was more concerned about the individual, since community is dependent upon individuals and their ability to relate one to the other.

The Negro in Relation to Faulkner's Methodology

The several roles of the Negro characters evolve naturally out of the societal structure of the South and the various themes which are attendant to this structure and with which Faulkner is concerned. Perhaps because of his technique of dramatizing the Negroes either as antitheses or parallels to the white characters, Faulkner projects the human race as a unit in its struggle against universal conflicts, antipathies, and evil.

In a revised edition of an address given at the University of Oxford (1965), Robert Penn Warren observes that Faulkner presents

two types of characters, beginning in *Sartoris;* psychopathological characters related symbolically to a social situation . . . the doomed ones and . . . the groups who have some sort of grasp on the world and represent some sort of continuity with life—the older people of the upper class, like Old Bayard, the grandfather, and Miss Jenny, the yeomanry (the McCallums and V.K. Suratt, later Ratliff), and the Negroes . . . (*Faulkner: The South, the Negro, and Time,* A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 251.).
Examples of the first group are Joe Christmas (Light in August) and Popeye (Sanctuary). Warren feels that Faulkner's perception of sex and money as a significant part of the downfall of the "monsters" might be traced to Dante. He expresses it thus:

In the Seventh Circle Dante places those damned for crimes against nature, and among such homosexuals and usurers, both of whom sin against the fecundity of nature. With Faulkner we can read homosexual as one who makes sex meaningless and for usurer finance capitalism—and the sin in both instances is the sin of reality, the sin of abstraction, the lack of reverence for nature (ibid., p. 235).

Such characters, according to Faulkner's methodology, are involved in what he terms "modernity."

Faulkner places his values with the Old Order, and he concerns himself with personal and public responsibility. He dramatizes these values through those characters whose response to life is characterized by action and leadership. According to Faulkner's depiction, members of the later generation—offspring of the Old Order—are characterized by their inability to act, which is made manifest by their inability to find some meaningful relationship to society and to life. These live not by act but by word. Race and social position seem not to be important as determinants for this character division, and the Negroes (e.g., Dilsey and Lucas) are usually representative of the ideals which Faulkner considered important to the survival of the South or of mankind. Therefore, the "primitives," manifested in Faulkner's Negroes, Indians, and idiots, are important to Faulk-
ner's methodology. Like Shakespeare, he often places the cogent messages in the mouths of such characters, a technique which becomes apparent early in Faulkner's writing career. These characters "tell it like it is," without romanticizing or rationalizing. Much like Lear's fool, the Negroes are looked upon by the Yoknapatawpha County whites as without the intelligence "to carry a straight story," therefore, they are not to be taken seriously. But out of their mouths may be expressed the words of a wisdom unperceived by less discerning characters, which forewarns, foretells, forecasts. But this is a wisdom which few within the confines of the narrative take seriously. In this role, the Negro characters play many parts: they exemplify polarities and parallels, and they serve as religious, moral, and humanistic catalysts.

Polarities

In Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, there is dramatized a polarity of the natural and unnatural characters—between those with the capacity for unselfish love and the ability to relate to mankind and to life and those who are loveless, withdrawn, and alienated. Many of the characters of the latter group have in some manner been deprived of the usual amount of childhood love, and they have been rushed into a "coming of age"—a recognition of the evils of the world. In addition to the above distinctions, Faulkner distinguishes between the types of love. Of this, Backman
writes: "Love seems to lend characters their maturity, power, and ability to act because this love gives them an identity" (Faulkner: The Major Years, p. 106). An example is Dilsey. An exemplification of the opposite approach is Joe Christmas. There is a difference between the doomed and morbid love between Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden and Dilsey's love for the Compson children, especially her love for Benjy. Like Addie Bundren and Jewel (As I Lay Dying), Dilsey "does not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and truth" (I John 3:18). Unlike some of Faulkner's white female characters who strive to hold onto an illusion—the surface amenities which publicly proclaim their status of Southern "ladies"—Dilsey does not need superficial evidence since her actions speak louder than words.

Dilsey's absence of sexuality is the opposite of the epicene females (Caddy, The Sound and the Fury; Temple Drake, Sanctuary; Cecily, Soldiers' Pay; and Eula Snopes, the Snopes trilogy) who symbolize fecund woman and who bear all the physical attributes of productivity, but whose lives engender death and destruction. In one description of Dilsey, Faulkner writes:

Dilsey opened the door . . . and emerged . . . precipitating not so much a moisture as a substance partaking of the quality of thin, not quite congealed oil . . . her myriad and sunken face lifted to the weather, and one gaunt hand flacc-soled as the belly of a fish . . . .

The gown fell . . . across her fallen breasts, then tightened upon her paunch . . . her skeleton rose, draped loosely in unpadded skin . . . the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin
or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts . . . (The Sound and the Fury, pp. 281-292).

In the same manner, Lucas Beauchamp is a counterpoint to Isaac McCaslin. Each is admirable in his own way, but although Roth Edmonds speaks of Lucas as being "more like Old Carothers than all the rest of us" and as "contemptuous, as Old Carothers must have been, of all blood black white yellow or red, including his own," the principles by which the two men live are different and even, at times, stand in contradiction (Go Down, Moses, p. 118). Lucas sees Ike as a person who betrays his own blood and allows Cass Edmonds to play upon his sympathies in order to get him to give up his inheritance.

Several critics have pointed out that in Light in August all characters are related to the community in some way. Some function as opposites. Among these are Lena and Joe Christmas, who nevertheless share in their backgrounds several likenesses—both are orphans, both escape from home by crawling out a window, both are betrayed in love, both have personal problems for which they seek some reasonable solutions. But their responses to life differ widely. Lena has the will to live; Joe the will to die. Lena, because of her naive faith is never unsure of herself in spite of her troubles. Joe is a sort of Young Goodman Brown type, who seeks the ultimate truth and finds instead only doubt, despair, and further alienation. Lena accepts the help and concern of the community; Joe rejects it. Ilse Dusoir Lind writes: "He had to reject all bonds because he bore
within himself 'the psychic weight of multiple rejections—rejection before God, rejection as a Negro, rejection as a human being.'


Faulkner emphasizes Joe Christmas's alienation as not wholly his responsibility—that it is the connotation his Southern neighbors place on Negro blood that makes him respond in self-hate and with an equal hatred for his fellow-men. Unlike Sutpen, who directs his feeling of social inadequacy against others, Joe directs his against himself. Peter Swiggart describes Christmas's reaction as "the self-destructive moral rationality," a term he concludes Faulkner applies "not only to religious and sexual obsessions, but to habits of thought residual from the South's long Protestant tradition." He feels that the majority of the males in Faulkner's works are puritan in stance "committed to the rationalization of experience, or the effort to fit the ebb and flow of events into logical categories . . . by rational means."

Sutpen's inhumane treatment of his half-Negro son may be traced to his Puritan beliefs or, as Faulkner expresses it, the belief "that the ingredients of morality were like
the ingredients of pie or cake and once you had measured them and balanced them . . . it was all finished and nothing but pie and cake could come out" (Absalom, Absalom!, p. 263). In contrast, Lucas Beauchamps's salvation is inherent in his ability to recognize a distinction between adult puritans and representative primitive nature. The unnatural characters are cold and unbending and in opposition to those characters that seek to fulfill a natural role in an unnatural world. Because of their inability to face reality—the present—head-on, they usually emphasize past concerns. Therefore, Dilsey, who does not shirk from reality, is able to see the proper relationship between the past, present, and future. In addition, she is able to confront the truth. In contrast, Hightower (Light in August) cannot find contentment in the present because he attempts to find the truth through the rational self. Dilsey, on the other hand, accepts on faith. According to Edmond Volpe, the "peace that passeth understanding" is not for Hightower" because "he recognizes forces beyond man's control . . . Since the human mind cannot understand these forces, Hightower continues to resist life . . . he escapes . . . into his dream" (A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, p. 167).

Parallel

In addition to their function as polarities, the Negro characters are also used as parallels to the white characters and to each other. For example, Butch, the sheriff in
The Reivers, and Percy Grimm and Joe Christmas in Light in August have much in common, but their situations and responses differ. All are alienated from the community of which they seek various ways of becoming a part. All are forced to extreme means in an effort to accomplish this: Grimm by donning a uniform and appointing himself the protector and defender of the community; Joe by defying every part of that community; and Butch by hiding his inadequacies behind a badge and a gun. Each in his career resorts to violence, and, as time goes along, like Sutpen, the design "is not what he wanted to do but what he just had to do . . . whether he wanted to or not" (Absalom, Absalom!, p. 220). Christmas, like Charles Bon, tries to gain recognition by violent action. Butch's badge is his attempt to belong, and as a symbol of the superficial prestige objects men acquire, it is, in his mind, a passport to everywhere. As Ned observes:

"A man that never had nothing . . . one of them little badges goes to his head . . . Except it aint the badge so much as the pistol, that likely all the time he was a little boy, he wanted to tote . . . Now with that badge too, he dont run no risk of being threwed in jail and having it took away from him . . . ." (The Reivers, pp. 185-186).

Another parallel to Joe Christmas is Charles Etienne Bon. Each is characterized by a sense of inadequacy caused by a society which emphasizes that inadequacy by imposing a stereotyped thought pattern and which stimulates the characters to resort to drastic procedures in an effort to secure
revenge from that society. Each is obsessed by the "closed doors" which he faces; each devises an elaborate plan, however superficial, to open them. Both, the victims of mixed blood, become symbolic representatives of confused actions, motives, and purposes—one type of blood working against the other—since they cannot identify with either the white or Negro blood.

The character of Sutpen is further exemplified through the response of his part-Negro son, Charles Bon, whose short career is a mirror-image of his father's—"a personage who . . . has an octoroon 'wife' whom he is prepared to repudiate along with his child by her," thereby repeating the rejection theme. "Charles too is seeking acceptance . . . It is denied him, as it was his father, for the sake of the design. Like his father, he stands beyond good and evil" (Cleanth Brooks, The Yoknapatawpha Country, pp. 302-302). But Brooks also recognizes several dissimilar traits: "Bon is Byronic, rather than the go-getter; spent, rather than full of pushing vitality; sophisticated, rather than confidently naïve . . . Bon is a fatalist . . . Sutpen believes in sheer will . . ." (Ibid., p. 302).

Charles Bon is also an obvious parallel of Major Saucier Weddell ("Mountain Victory," Collected Stories, pp. 745 et seq.). Both are chivalrous, gracious, and courtly, and both lose an arm in the War. Both are of
mixed birth, and both are killed violently to protect a sister from the stereotyped idea of "Negro" that dominates the thinking of the murderers. Both ask very little of life— Bon to be recognized as his father's son and Weddell to be given shelter for himself and his Negro manservant for the night in order that he might be enabled to see home again. Because of their mixed blood, and for no other reason, they are granted nothing but death.

Ringo shares the initiation theme with Charles Mallison, Vardaman, Young Bayard, and others. All are innocents who reach maturity after various life experiences which occur during a mythical initiation journey—Charles in search of Gowan's murderer, Vardaman on the trip to Jefferson to bury his mother, and Bayard during his service in World War I. Ringo, unlike most of Faulkner's other young characters, has the power to act, even if within the confines of his race, a fact which emphasizes the merits of action as against the ineffectual verbal-sparring of some of his white Yoknapatawpha counterparts. Consequently, he is the opposite for Bayard III, Quentin Compson, and Horace Benbow, the heroes who evince varying degrees of frustration and disillusionment in their attempts to struggle against society.

The types of Negro characterizations in Faulkner's works are few, and the personalities attendant to each, simplified and carefully structured, are employed over and over in the author's effort to exposit his several themes.
Molly and Dilsey obviously share similar characteristics and may be seen to have a common resemblance to other old-servant types in other works (e.g., the Negro soldier's mother in *Sartoris*, the mammy in *The Reivers*, and Rosie in "That Will Be Fine"). Also, Lucas Beauchamp (*Intruder in the Dust*) and Uncle Parsham (*The Reivers*) are described in similar manner. Both carry a gold toothpick and silver watch, both are proud and independent, both are self-sufficient, both are dignified and able to stand up for their own rights and to demand respect, and both live by a social code reminiscent of the Old Order. The sanctity of their homes is symbolized by the fire on the hearth, and their racial pride by the atypical portraits of their wives.

Dilsey has been compared to and contrasted with other Faulknerian characters—Lena Grove and, according to Swiggart and Waggoner, Nancy Mannigoe. Nancy describes God thus: "He dont want you to suffer. He dont like suffering neither. But he cant help Himself ... He dont tell you not to sin, he just asks you not to. And he dont tell you to suffer. But he gives you the chance" (*Requiem for a Nun*, p. 277). Waggoner concludes that "her statement connects her with Dilsey, who acted as a Christian but did not talk about the belief that made her so different from the Compsons ... Like Dilsey, Nancy is a sympathetic character. Her words have power and authority because she is a redeemed character ..." (*William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World*, p. 277).
p. 224). But Nancy, in spite of her view of God, can hardly be considered a counterpart to Dilsey. Swiggart and Waggoner have apparently overlooked the motivation for their separate actions. One is inspired to save life by destroying it; the other to save life by preserving it. While both are concerned with a degenerating society and the need to take some definite action to rectify it, their purposes and approaches are not the same. Dilsey, because of her religious orientation, acts the only way she knows how, and Nancy, because of the circumscribed life she has been forced to lead, acts the only way that she knows how. Nancy's will to endure is much like the desperation of Sutpen's architect, "nowhere to go and no hope of getting there: just a will to endure and a foreknowing of defeat but not beat yet by a damn sight ..." (Absalom, Absalom!, p. 257).

Faulkner by his method of characterizing Negroes and whites in juxtaposition seems to say that the conditions of man are universal and transcend race, social position, and all other surface considerations.

Religious and Moral Norms

One of the important functions of the Negro characters in Faulkner's work is as religious and moral catalysts. For example, Dilsey serves as an ethical norm thereby lending explicitness to Faulkner's point of view. Her religion is universal and one not based on formal doctrine. The church in The Unvanquished is a house of superficial rituals
and conventions. In Dilsey's church all are welcome to worship together as one chain of humanity, regardless of racial or class differences. In The Unvanquished, the old Southern traditions of class levels are imposed. In Dilsey's church, no one, except perhaps Frony, is embarrassed by Benjy's presence.

In contrast to some of Faulkner's other characters and in keeping with his thematic structure, Dilsey sees time as the present which encompasses the past and the future. According to Faulkner, there is no was, just what is. Dilsey meets life as it comes; there is no maudlin delving into the past. She does not retreat from time as, for example, do Quentin, Hightower, or Bayard III, nor does she try to get ahead of time as Jason does. She accepts time as the context in which she functions. Accordingly, she is able to say "I seed-de beginnin, en now I sees de endin" (The Sound and the Fury, p. 313).

As a catalyst, Dilsey serves as an objective observer, and as Olga Vickery observes:

Dilsey . . . becomes through her actions alone the embodiment of the truth of the heart which is synonymous with morality. The acceptance of whatever time brings, the absence of questioning and petty protests enables her to create order out of circumstance rather than in defiance of it (The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 30).

About as close as Dilsey comes to complaining is "I does de bes I kin . . . Lawd knows dat . . . Dis long time, O Jesus . . . Dis long time" (The Sound and the Fury, p. 332). Olga
Vickery continues: "In a sense, Dilsey represents a final perspective directed toward the past and the Compsons, but it is also the reader's perspective for which Dilsey merely provides the vantage point" (The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 32). In the same way, Lucas, as another of Faulkner's religious and moral norms, exhibits no urgency to come to grips with his Negro blood. As Faulkner expresses it in Go Down, Moses, p. 104, he is able to resist the "curse" simply "by being the composite of the two races which made him . . ." Lucas accepts both past and present.

Dilsey, though representative of the good people, is nevertheless not a saint. Faulkner does not attempt a simple delineation between good and bad characters, nor between good and bad in terms of black and white characters. He does not explain the human virtues in terms of race. Dilsey herself harbors no such notions. When her grandson, Luster, describes the Compsons, "Dese is funny folks. Glad I aint none of em," she answers, "Lemme tell you somethin, nigger boy, you got jes es much Compson devilment in you es any of em" (The Sound and the Fury, p. 292). Cleanth Brooks has observed that poverty and her status as a member of a deprived race do not . . . assure her nobility, but they may have had something to do with her remaining close to a concrete world of values so that she is less perverted by abstraction and more honest than are most white people in recognizing what is essential and basic (The Yoknapatawpha Country, p. 344).

Ike McCaslin (Go Down, Moses) also refers to the Negro race
as freer of moral corruption than the white race and as the logical race to save the white race. In other Faulkner works, the theme is expanded (e.g., *Intruder in the Dust* and *Requiem for a Nun*), and the emphasis is upon the South's attempts to use the Negroes as scapegoats to expiate its own guilt. For example, Lucas (*Intruder in the Dust*) is accused by a group of Southern whites of a crime of which one of their leaders is himself guilty. In general, Faulkner's Negro characters show less false pride and more discipline of self than his white characters.

Although Negroes are usually portrayed by Faulkner as admirable and imbued with the ability to endure, not all of his Negro characters have been "moved" by the Christian verities, nor do they practice these at all times. Examples are prevalent. One is Luster, who performs his duties around the Compson household and attends church each Sunday mainly because Dilsey demands that he do this. Unlike Dilsey, he *does* expect reward. Luster's interests are clearly elsewhere. He is capable of prideful actions, public "show," and self-aggrandizement, as is manifest in his strut when he dons his new straw hat on Easter Sunday and his amusing antics when he is given a chance to drive the Compson carriage. ("Les show dem niggers how quality does.") In like manner, Lucas for all his proud and arrogant ways is not beyond secreting a whiskey still in the woods near his cabin nor is he above gambling all, even Molly, in his
worship of the money-finding machine which he calculated would bring him sudden wealth.

Dilsey herself is not a saint. The reader is told little of her private life, but from what there is, the reader can assume that she is aware of life's evil. As Faulkner dramatizes the morality of his characters, in the same way, the overtly amoral characters display degrees of morality. Andrew Lytle writes:

Every man has that within him which saves or damns, but . . . Faulkner seems to be saying . . . he is never saved or damned absolutely. The scales forever shift their alternate weights. Man endures his situation not because he is immortal; he is immortal because he endures. What he endures is every degree and gradation of his dual nature.22

22Andrew Lytle, "Regeneration for the Man," Sewanee Review (Winter, 1949), pp. 120.

Michael Millgate concurs: "Dilsey endures, but her endurance is tested not in acts of spectacular heroism but in her submission to the tedious, trivial . . . and wilfully inconsiderate demands made upon her by the Compson family."23 Critics have been much concerned with the passive submission which Faulkner's "enduring" characters seem to display. As Faulkner explained of his Negro characters: "They will endure. They are better than we are" (Faulkner in the University). To emphasize this point, Faulkner often uses the Christ
figure (which in his works is no Christ figure at all but merely allusion to the Christ story), by which he, like other contemporary writers, takes advantage of universally known ideas. The Christ story is used metaphorically to strengthen the human story. Such characters act out of faith. As Nancy says, "I don't know. But I believe" (Requiem for a Nun, p. 281). For the same reasons Faulkner often uses church scenes or references to religious doctrines as metaphorical tools which serve as touchstones to the degree and quality of the moral consciousness of a character.

Critics have debated the merits and demerits of Faulkner's "enduring" characters. As Robert Penn Warren observes, "One might interpret Dilsey as merely the comforting illusion of black forgiveness which the white man must cling to" (A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 258). Nancy Tischler sees Dilsey as "basically the elements of the old Negro mammy stereotype. To Faulkner she was a 'force, a symbol of endurance, a nostalgic reconstruction of remembered past'" (Black Masks, p. 34). Waggoner views Dilsey as one "who in her innocent ignorance ... continues to live by what was once, according to St. Paul, 'foolishness to the Greeks' and is still foolishness to Jason" (William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World, p. 60). Olga Vickery perceives Dilsey as one whose "endurance has strength to suffer without rancor as well as to resist, to accept as well as to protest ... to challenge the validity and efficacy of
Jason's world by a passive and irrational resistance to which he has no counter... By working with circumstance... she creates order out of disorder." Vickery sees in such a stance "no room for passivity and pessimism" (The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 47). And, as Faulkner stated in an interview in Japan, "to theorize about an evil is not enough. Someone, somewhere must do something... rather than philosophize about it" (Lion in the Garden, p. 126). Dilsey in her way acts well her part.

It is Peter Swiggart's point of view that "the moral function Dilsey and Lena Grove are given cannot really be described by such eulogistic terms as 'truth,' 'honor,' or 'understanding,' which imply at least some degree of conscious awareness. Faulkner's primitives are usually distinguished by their total lack of rational sophistication, and when they act morally they really cannot be conscious of doing so" (The Art of Faulkner's Novels, pp. 47-49). Malin states that "Faulkner waxes eloquent about the Negro's ability to endure and that as a result man's voice will endure long after the 'last ding dong' of civilization." He questions what good such endurance will be since man must exist in civilization.24 Hoffman interprets the

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same statements not to mean that man is "saved because he has the power of grace within him but... being human,
he is capable of goodness and that the balance is ... in favor of his survival" (William Faulkner, pp. 110).

The key to Faulkner's characters who endure can be traced to what he calls the "central I-Am"--their unique consciousness of self. Dilsey is "de Lawd's chile," a status she gives to all, even the idiot Benjy. Dilsey endures because her goal is an end to existence on this earth, with all its travails and vicissitudes, and a beginning of the life she envisions in Heaven. Waggoner has observed that Vardaman (As I Lay Dying) and Dilsey have what has sometimes been called "the perfect faith of the little child" (William Faulkner: From Jefferson to the World, p. 67). Dilsey is not an an "Innocent." She is completely human. Hers is a religious, not a natural faith--her divinity is not transcendent. Faulkner is aware of the moral contradictions of man, but he asserts that they will endure and prevail over all. In contrast to Dilsey, Jason and Joe Christmas hate all--a situation which stems from their hatred of self. The Negro has always experienced hardships and in spite of this has reserved the ability to love and to hope. The barrenness of his existence has negated the embracing of false securities.

Faulkner's characters who endure are more often than not women, and, in addition to white characters, particularly those who are middle-aged or above, this is a role assigned to almost all of the Negro women. Only these appear able
to make an effective compromise between past and present and between illusion and reality. Faulkner makes an effort to give these characters, as representatives of moral awareness, positive social roles.

Faulkner's works are crowded with Negro characters of several degrees and kinds of the same prototypes—the Dilseys, the Caspeys, the Uncle Parshams, the Neds, the Nancys, the Joe Christmases, and young boys like Ringo, McWillie, and Lycurgus. Each serves his specific function. Faulkner indicates by his method of dramatizing the black and white characters in the same situations and with the same problems that as Gavin Stevens comments in *Intruder in the Dust*, they are all "poor sons of bitches" struggling for survival. The condition of man is universal, and it transcends race, social position, or creed.

The purpose of this chapter has been to show (1) the patterns of characterization employed by Faulkner to depict his Negro characters, (2) the manner in which Faulkner uses these characters to expedite his several themes, and (3) the way in which Faulkner's character delineation lends itself to groupings which are determined by tradition, environment, and other societal determinants. The chapter which follows will discuss Faulkner's moral view of the Negro.
CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAULKNER'S MORAL VIEW
OF THE NEGRO

For Southern writers, the problem of recognizing Negro stereotypes as individuals has been difficult, because they are Southerners as well as artists, and their human prejudices are likely to dominate. Critics have debated Faulkner's response—his moral view of the Negro, the manner of the development of his view, and the extent to which it permeates his works. Some feel that the view projected by Faulkner in his latter years was always a part of his philosophy or moral code, and that it failed to find expression in earlier years only because of the author's inexperience as a writer. Others argue that Faulkner's moral view, as manifested in the Nobel Prize speech, evolved gradually and slowly as he matured. A definitive explanation seems unimportant; what does seem important is a valid statement of that view based on the recognition that as a Southerner, Faulkner, as a man dedicated to the South and as an artist committed to the responsibility to try to improve the life situation of peoples everywhere, must surely have experienced a certain amount of conflict in his efforts to reconcile the two.
Authors' implied meanings are often more significant than the stated words. As William Taylor expresses it:

Part of a great writer's greatness is his penetrating and unique vision of man and his world, and its expression in language of power and beauty. His works are more than explicit statements; they are alive with implications. What he may mean, but does not say explicitly, can be as important as the thematic statements that seem to shout from his pages.¹


This statement is no less true of Faulkner, who, in addition to narrating a story, presents a psychological and sociological study of his characters, of his South, and, on occasion, of himself.

It is the purpose of this chapter to review Faulkner's writings, his private life, and his philosophical and religious beliefs in an effort to structure a valid statement of his moral view as it relates to the Negroes in his public and private worlds.

Situational and Environmental Influences

Faulkner structured his fictional County in the image of the Southern culture from whence he came. He said: "I was using what I knew best which was the locale where I was born and had lived most of my life."² Yoknapatawpha County becomes,

²Frederick Gwynn and Joseph Blotner, eds., Faulkner in the University (Charlottesville, 1959), p. 3.
therefore, a frame of reference for his thematic development. Too often critics have concentrated on the factual, historical aspects of Faulkner's work in deference to the art. The temptation is great since the description of class, occupation, geography, and history is vividly and realistically rendered, and surely Faulkner contributes a worthwhile historical and social view of Mississippi and the South, but since he was more concerned in his writings with the condition of man than with historical fact, the Yoknapatawpha saga should not be taken as a pure and accurate record of historical events. Cleanth Brooks cautions:

Faulkner's critics are prone to confuse matters by saying that since the fiction is good, the "facts" are correct, or that since the facts are incorrect, the fiction is bound to be poor. . . . Faulkner is primarily an artist . . . His readers . . . must be able to sense what is typical and what is exceptional . . . his novels are neither case studies nor moral treatises. They are works of art.3


And Faulkner, in answer to a query about a historical indiscretion, is reported by Malcolm Cowley in The Faulkner-Cowley File (New York, 1966) as having said: "I don't care much for facts, am not much interested in them, you can't stand a fact up, you've got to prop it up, and when you move to one side a little and look at it from that angle, it's not thick enough to cast a shadow in that direction" (p. 89). Yet Faulkner did not deny that Yoknapatawpha County mirrors the
influence of his Mississippi in its physical aspects. Its history, its population, and its social problems. On another occasion, Faulkner said: "I don't believe in inspiration. I always write out of personal experience . . . events I've been present at . . . stories I've heard from people."\(^4\)


However, the facts are important only as they provide a frame in which the fiction becomes more real.

Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha is based on what he lived and experienced in Oxford, and the originals for several of his characters were his ancestors and relatives. For example, "Damuudy," the affectionate name for his grandmother, was assigned to the dying grandmother of the Compson children whom Caddy views through the window, from her perch in the tree, in the first scene of \textit{The Sound and the Fury}. Faulkner patterned his mammy characters after Caroline Barr, better known as Mammy Callie, who came to the family when they moved to Oxford. She is reported as born in slavery and when freed refusing to leave her "white folks." Murray Falkner reports that when she died her coffin was brought to William Faulkner's living room where "amid her friends and loved ones, white and black, Bill 'rared back' and preached her funeral sermon."\(^5\)

The Faulkners speak of Mammy Callie with affection. She had "an everlasting loyalty and devotion," "a chair by the fireplace," and "her own table in the kitchen." Substitute more appropriate words for chair and table and one would have the same kind of statements one might make with reference to a loyal and well-protected family pet. Mammy had a "formidable imagination" and a "good memory of the old days" which served to furnish William Faulkner with many stories about events in Lafayette County, especially those dealing with whites and blacks (Ibid., p. 11). John Faulkner recalled that "it was by the yardstick of his memory of Mammy that Bill measured integration." If this is true, this statement supports Faulk-

_ner's statement that "the Southerner, he dont love the Negro in quantities, but he will defend some particular Negro" (Faulkner in the University, p. 220).

In his Yoknapatawpha County, Faulkner's heroes are usually two or three generations removed from their pioneer ancestors and the plantation society, but the aura of legend which survived these heroes served as their norm for judging their own worth, establishing values, and confronting the world. Likewise, William Faulkner was three generations removed from his ancestor, Colonel William Cuthbert Falkner, who pioneered in Mississippi, and his personality and career obviously greatly influenced the author and his work.

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The difficulties of Faulkner's third-generation heroes are the difficulties of Faulkner—wedded to the past (the Sartoris world), living in the present (the Sutpen-Snopes world), and having to reconcile the two. Like his heroes, his response is marked by ambivalence and vacillation. Volpe notes:

Unfortunately for them they come to maturity in the twentieth century . . . they are idealists and puritans . . . intelligent, sensitive, and introspective. When these young men collide with the reality of twentieth-century existence, they are shocked, outraged, and confused; there is the young hero's simultaneous rebellion from family tradition and his intense need for the security that the family provides.  


The third-generation men are not the rugged, individualistic types of the pioneer ancestors, and because of the atmosphere engendered by a softer life, they have grown complacent and unable to focus upon or become involved in the economic and social concerns of the human masses. They have grown away from the earth. The soil into which Faulkner projected some redemptive powers has become farther and farther removed from their life styles.

Robert Coughlan describes Faulkner's father as a kindly man who . . . lacked fire . . . the fire that drove the old colonel had burnt itself almost to an ash. The old instincts were there . . . but they were feeble . . . He was a kind, good-humored man who made a living and had some admirable qualities. On the other hand he was not even a pale carbon of his grandfather, and the circumstances under which he and his family lived differed from
the aura of physical and spiritual grandeur in which the old colonel had moved.8


When Faulkner's books began to sell, he purchased a farm seventeen miles out of Oxford. A portion of it was farmed by three Negro families whose cotton Faulkner purchased. Faulkner was especially proud of the humane way he treated these families. Some critics have viewed Faulkner's acquisition of his estate (purchased after the farm), on which stands a plantation-like house (circa 1840) and which includes a smokehouse and the remnants of slave quarters, as an attempt on Faulkner's part to bring back the idyllic past. The view was shared, in part, by Faulkner's brother, Murray, who said of his earlier farm: "Bill and John had a farm . . . Every Fourth of July they'd have a barbecue and singing . . . lots of Negro singers . . . Bill liked to live like that . . . he'd just stand there and listen and dream . . . ."9 An


uncomplimentary and irate columnist, angered by Faulkner's arrogance, described his thus: "The author . . . who is forty-two, looks like a country squire and there's reason why he should. When he isn't putting nasty people on paper he bosses his cotton plantation near Oxford, Mississippi" (Lion in the Garden, p. 39). But, of himself, Faulkner
I don't hold to the idea of a return. That once the advancement stops then it dies. It's got to go forward, and we have got to take along with us all the rubbish of our mistakes and our errors. We must cure them; we mustn't go back to a condition, in which the dream made us think we were happy, we were free of trouble and sin . . . . (Ibid., p. 101).

There is little doubt that Faulkner's concern with many of his fictional themes results from his experience in his native South. When Faulkner returned from the war, he brooded about the decline of his South, and he fixed upon his immense "design"—Yoknapatawpha County—a mythical kingdom and a parable of all the South. Faulkner, the sole owner and proprietor, manipulated the inhabitants to serve his legendary story of a South which, although he obviously loved it, he does not purport to be a "Garden of Eden." Its major function is to provide a practical point of illustration from which to reflect upon the code and culture of the Old South in the face of the New South and to seek some reconciliation between the two. He takes the "was" and attempts to assimilate it into the "is."

Faulkner's Moral View of the Negro

Cowley says that "it is incorrect to say that the Nobel Prize changed Faulkner overnight from an unknown to a celebrity," but he admits that it did make a public man of him" (The Faulkner-Cowley File, p. 103). However, the statements he made in acceptance of the Prize have lived
to serve as the crux of what has been considered to be his moral view. Following this speech, Faulkner became more outspoken in terms of social issues, particularly about the racial problems with which his South was concerned. However, Faulkner was not always consistent in his statements; his personal response toward an interviewer or a mood was excuse enough for a distracting answer. A wide and inclusive study of his fiction, as well as his speeches, interviews, and lectures is necessary to a final interpretation of a representative Faulknerian moral view of the Negro. The task is made even more difficult by the lack of a smooth chronological development among his works. Cleanth Brooks has pointed out that

... what makes it most difficult to see a development in Faulkner's attitude ... is the fact that Sartoris (which Irving Howe feels gives us Negro stereotypes) was published in 1929 and that The Sound and the Fury, with its portrait of Dilsey, one of Faulkner's most sympathetic Negro characters, surely "conceived in warmth" and "developed in depth," appeared in the same year (The Yoknapatawpha Country, p. 385).

Faulkner's concept of the two sides of man is important to an understanding of his view of man. He recognized a conflict between natural man and "civilized" man, between the intellectual man and the spiritual man, between mind and soul. Natural man accepts; civilized man questions and opposes. Key statements of the Nobel Prize speech manifest these ideas. Among them are Faulkner's remarks that

... the writer must leave no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the
heart...love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. Until he does so...he writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and...without pity or compassion.

Until he learns these things, he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man...I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion, and sacrifice and endurance.10

Faulkner believed that it is the writer's responsibility to "help man endure" by reminding him of the verities and truths which must be the foundations of any successful society. Faulkner uses Negro characters in his fiction to point up these principles, and in their roles of pathos or heroism, even those less endowed with the verities than others, assume an admirable stance.

Frederick Hoffman emphasizes that in relation to Faulkner, the terms verities and truths "represent a...secular assertion...they do not appeal either to religious support or to theological sanction, nor do they quote religious documents."11 Consequently, another stumbling


words of wisdom and moral direction in the mouths of the "good" characters. Accordingly, there are no totally "good" characters in his fiction. Many critics have considered Gavin Stevens to be one of Faulkner's favorites—a projected image of himself, particularly in Intruder in the Dust, but as Cleanth Brooks points out, the earlier chapters should have negated this idea. "Gavin Stevens occupies no privileged position in Faulkner's novels...sometimes he talks sense...sometimes nonsense. Doubtless, what he says often represents what many Southerners think and what Faulkner...at one time or another, has thought. But Gavin is not presented as the sage and wise counsellor of the community" (Yoknapatawpha Country, pp. 279-280). In The Faulkner-Cowley File, Faulkner is reported as having remarked that "Gavin Stevens...was not speaking for the author, but for the best type of liberal Southerner; that is how they feel about the Negroes" (p. 110).

Manifestations of Faulkner's Moral View in His Fiction

Early critics see the Negro characters in Faulkner's fiction as only stereotyped scene-fillers, typical of the anonymity usually assigned to Negroes in real life during these years. Later critics have begun to see Faulkner's intentions beneath the stereotyped surface. Faulkner's attitude toward the Negro is reflected in his depictions
in his fiction, as well as in the personal statements which he made on the subjects of race and the racial issue in his speeches, his interviews, and his lectures. This section of this study will be concerned with Faulkner’s fiction in a discussion divided according to the career divisions set forth by Frederick Hoffman (supra, pp. 40-41). The fiction will be discussed in conjunction with the nonfiction, and the approach is predicated by the assumption that although Faulkner’s responses to Negroes vary at different age levels and career stages, his moral view may be revealed by a representative sampling of his work and by specific signs, indicators, or correlates from this sampling. Thus, it is further assumed that these responses are approximately, and at some level of probability, representative of the larger aspects of his total response.

Faulkner’s moral view is manifested in three stages of "heroic positions" which his characters assume, which Faulkner outlined at the University of Virginia during an interview, and which Gwynn reports in Faulkner in the University, page 246:

1. The first says this is rotten, I’ll have no part of it, I will take death first. [Examples are represented in the suicides of Quentin Compson and Bayard Sartoris.]

2. The second says, this is rotten. I don’t like it. I can’t do anything about it, but at least I will not participate in it myself. [Examples are Ike McCaslin and Hightower]

3. The third says, this stinks and I’m going to do something about it. [Examples are Mallison, Gavin Stevens, and Ratliff.]
Some critics have equated these steps with Faulkner's own moral development; others have seen them as an indication of his literary development. In either case, these stages are significant to the discussion which follows.

Apprenticeship (1924-1929)

The works of this period include two small volumes of poems and two novels—*Soldiers' Pay* (1926) and *Mosquitoes* (1927). These early works are exploratory and are typical of the work of a beginning writer who was making "a youthful gesture . . . of being different in a small town." The plot narratives are farcical and, at times, piecemeal; the style is stilted, and the characters are incompletely drawn. The one extended character in *Soldiers' Pay* is Doc Mahon, who seems to have an approach to life which helps him to see beyond the evil in the world to something more meaningful. This meaning Doc seems to find in nature symbolized in his garden.

Seldom are Negroes mentioned in these early works and then only as artificial props—background scenery for the white characters—or as sources of humor. In *Soldiers' Pay*, Faulkner's Negroes are characterized by "white teeth like a suddenly opened piano," "slow emphatic voices," "careless ready laughter," laziness, loyalty to the whites, "the frank
odor of unwashed bodies," "foot-shuffling," and ignorance, and they comply with the white characters' orders without complaint or protest. In one scene "the hourly quota of negro children" pass the Mahon house on their way to school "seemingly free of all compulsions of time or higher learning" to be taught by a "fattish negro . . . who could take a given line from any book from the telephone directory down and soon have the entire present personnel chanting it after him . . . " *(Soldiers' Pay, p. 115)*. In another scene, the entire description of the chauffeur is encompassed in the statement "the negro driver's head was round as a cannon ball." Otherwise, he sleeps.

For the most part, references to Negroes are merely narrations of ethnic jokes and anecdotes. In most cases, Faulkner accounts for the validity by adding that these statements are typical of the race.

One Negro character in *Soldiers' Pay* who is referred to as "Auntie," bears an early resemblance to Mammy Callie and to Dilsey. She is one of the few characters in the book who are capable of compassion and love, but these good qualities are overridden by the less complimentary characteristics which Faulkner assigns her and because these qualities come to the forefront as a result of her addiction to the past. "Aunty" obviously lives in the era of the Old South, and she sees the Mahons as her "white folks" and Donald Mahon, a mortally wounded soldier, as "my baby." She sees only
Donald and what in her mind he stands for, and in deference to
the white man, she ridicules her nephew, although he too is in
Army uniform and standing within hearing of her (p. 170).

In spite of the shallowness of the plot of Soldiers' Pay, several themes are introduced which become fixed sub­jects for Faulkner's future works. One is the theme of alien­ation. Each of the characters is alienated from the others
by some circumstance, sometimes of his own making, usually
beyond his control. Even in this early novel, Faulkner
depicts the circular tendency of rejection which he brings to
a climax in later works. Its effects extend through time;
the violated become the violators; the crucified become the
crucifiers. The sin, the guilt, is passed from one genera­tion to another. In his works, but especially in Requiem
for a Nun, Faulkner emphasizes that once the pattern of life
is set, there is little that men can do to alter it. The
consequences of the deeds of one generation are borne by each
succeeding generation, and each increases the guilt by adding
anew to the original sin. The only hope for salvation is in
men themselves. As Gavin Stevens expresses it: "The past is
never dead. It's not even past" (Requiem For a Nun, p. 92).
To Temple and Gowan, who consider the death of their infant
daughter at the hands of Nancy Mannigoe a punishment for
their earlier sins (Sanctuary), Gavin explains that sin and
guilt can never be paid off: "Everyone must, or anyway may
have to, pay for your past; that past is something like a
promissory note with a trick clause in it which, as long as nothing goes wrong, can be manumitted in an orderly manner, but which fate or luck or chance can foreclose on you without warning" (Requiem for a Nun, p. 162).

The only character who can bridge the gap is as Volpe describes him "the Negro, primitive and unsophisticated, who expresses in his singing the longing which the white man, sophisticated and cut off from his roots in the world of nature cannot even identify" (A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, p. 56). The singing mentioned in the above quotation alludes to an important symbol in Faulkner's works: the Negro church, the Negro religion, the Negro song. In the final pages of Soldiers' Pay, Doc Mahon and Joe Gilligan pass near a Negro church and hear singing, and the shabby church "becomes beautiful with mellow longing, passionate and sad." This scene is similar to the Easter Sunday service in The Sound and the Fury and to the "sound of singing from the distant church" which pervades Light in August.

In spite of the extreme stereotyping, at some points the Negroes are portrayed as having more admirable qualities than some of the whites. An example is the porter on the homeward-bound train, who, even under the pressure of ridicule, shows more control and courtesy than his white hecklers.

Faulkner's writing began after the World War I years, and the theme of the "Lost Generation" of post-war years is included in this first novel in conjunction with Hemingway's
"unreasonable wound" symbolism. The archetypal journey and initiation rites are symbolized by Donald's sojourn into war territory where he receives a wound, which is at the same time physical and psychic and which irrevocably changes the course of his life. This wound is symbolic of the unreasonable, unpremeditated, unsuspected vicissitudes of life. All who bear this wound in whatever form are automatically members of the post-war "Lost Generation." Outside the dance hall, Gilligan watches as Cecily walks between the car and the lighted dance hall, and he remarks, "You can see right through her." The Negro chauffeur rouses from his sleep long enough to say, "Dat's de war" (Soldiers' Pay, p. 208). The war is blamed for all the "Lost Generation's" troubles, sins, and shortcomings.

Negroes are not important to nor evident in Faulkner's second novel, Mosquitoes, since in it he satirizes all alienated persons, regardless of race. Two additional themes are introduced: the threat of passing time and the inadequacy of rhetoric as a substitute for action. These themes are increasingly important to Faulkner's later works. Some characters are made ineffectual because of their proclivity for words in lieu of action, or some who act, act too little or too late. Gavin Stevens is the most notable example among Faulkner's characters. Addie Bundren (As I Lay Dying) is concerned about the inadequacy of words as an expression for human emotions. Most of Faulkner's third-generation characters are talkers rather than doers. The most dramatic
manifestation of this point is included in the short story, "Odor of Verbena" (The Unvanquished, pp. 243 et seq.).

Druscilla Hawk Sartoris hands Young Bayard the family pistols, fully expecting that he will find his father's murderer and avenge his death. Bayard goes to meet his adversary empty-handed and armed only with words; consequently, he incurs the ridicule of most of the town, including his lifelong Negro friend, Ringo. The code of the South demands a violent retaliation for a violent act. However, by his action Bayard does not reject the tradition of the South; instead, he modifies it to make it more applicable to the present. This seems to be Faulkner's intention in relation to the South—to weld the past and the present in order to insure the future.

A communication act requires an encoder, a decoder, a mutual subject, and a mutual interpretation. It is the last mentioned which usually breaks down. Men usually hear what they wish to hear. Accordingly, speech more often obscures the truth than it illuminates it, and as Faulkner wrote in Mosquitoes, "Ideas and thoughts become mere sounds to be bandied about until they are dead" (p. 186). In this novel, the younger people usually take little part in the long discussions which occur in several scenes. They prefer to act instead. Faulkner emphasizes excessive "talk" as a crutch or cover-up for people's inadequacies; particularly is this true of those who have reached the comfortable stage of middle-age.

In later works, the Negroes (particularly the women)
are inclined to prefer action to words. Dilsey never talks about being a Christian, she acts the part of a Christian. Lucas, unless pressed, does not talk about being a McCaslin, he acts the part of a McCaslin. Molly becomes impatient with Roth Edmonds's "talk," and she takes matters in her own hands in the case of the money-finding machine. Nancy Mannigoe, failing with words to persuade Temple to give up her plans to run away with a man other than her husband, acts by murdering Temple's baby. Faulkner seems to say that some action, whether it be good or bad, is better than no action; that is, that man must involve himself in life; he cannot be an observer. Nancy's action can hardly be considered an admirable one, yet life often demands drastic action when talk has failed. Although the baby's life and Nancy's life are sacrificed, the town, Temple, and Gowan are made aware of the reason for Nancy's need to act, even if they cannot accept the act. When they do become aware, it is too late to save Nancy or the baby. At the jail Temple says to Nancy that she waited "too late and too long . . . not only for you, but for me too, already too late when both of us should have got around to running, like from death itself, from the very air anybody breathed named Drake or Mannigoe" (Requiem for a Nun, p. 270).

In an address to his daughter's graduating class, Faulkner said, "It is not man in the mass who can and will save Man. It is Man himself created in the image of God"
(Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters, p. 123). In another speech to another graduating class, Faulkner said, "What's wrong with the world is it's not finished yet . . . . only man can complete it . . . Not God, but man" (Ibid., p. 135).

Often Faulkner's characters act too late; the result is ineffectual. In a later work (Light in August), Hightower, disillusioned by his fellowmen, elects to become an observer of life, separate and apart from the evil of the mainstream of humanity. When he finally is led by Byron Bunch to see his responsibility to involve himself in Joe Christmas's trouble, his action is too late and too ineffectual to help Joe. In like manner, in "Dry September," the barber, Hawkshaw, tries to save Willie Mayes from his lynchers by ineffectual rhetoric. Recognizing that his words have no effect upon them, he excuses himself from further responsibility by jumping from the car, publicly exonerating himself by refusing to take a part in the situation.

Faulkner's early novels, though lacking in literary value, provide the seeds for the important work of the subsequent stages of his career. Although he seems to view the Negro, at this point, as a "thing" rather than an individual, there is the possibility that his approach is more reflective of the times and of what Faulkner knew his audience expected of an author who wrote about the Negro during this period rather than of his own point of view. Yet, Faulkner made many of the same types of stereotyped statements about
the Negro in his private life, even at a later time, and there are evidences that Faulkner enjoyed the role of paternalistic benefactor. On many occasions, he spoke of the Negro as being childlike and irresponsible.

Time of Genius (1929-1936)

During this period, Faulkner produced an unbelievable number of books which have been evaluated by critics as the best of his work. In this second division, the themes initiated by him in the first division are continued and extended.

Sartoris, published in 1929, is the first novel set in Faulkner's fictional County. The present time is indicated, as in several other novels, as the second decade of the twentieth century. Though not the best of Faulkner's works, the novel is important because it serves several functions in the Yoknapatawpha saga. Many of the characters and character-types, major themes, situational incidents and places important to the subsequent novels are introduced and extended. The legend of the Old South and the anti-tradition of the New South become important antitheses. Sartoris introduces one of the pivotal families of the Yoknapatawpha works and a delineation of various societal groups: the aristocratic gentry (Sartorises), the yeoman farmers (the McCallums), the new invading group (the Snopeses), and the Negroes.

The themes germinated in Soldiers' Pay and Mosquitoes...
are continued. The debut of the machine, the symbol of mechanized civilization in the image of Bayard's red automobile, points up the conflict between the machine-centered New South and the land-centered Old South. Young Bayard purchases one of the first sleek, shiny new automobiles in Yoknapatawpha, and although Old Bayard resists the temptation for a while, he is soon won over, gives up his twice-daily rides in the family carriage (much to coachman Simon's disgust), and allows himself to be driven to and from the Jefferson bank (where he is president) in the car. Aunt Jenny, family matriarch, eventually succumbs, and Simon, who has been the driver of the carriage but cannot chauffeur the car, shakes his head in despair as he reflects on the deterioration of "quality folks."

So many themes are encompassed in the novel that it is difficult to pinpoint any one as being the most important. One, however, which cannot be overlooked, is the ever-present theme of the conflict of the past and the present. The novel points up the obvious changes of the twentieth-century world by contrasting it with the Old South, and it elaborates the effects of these changes upon the generation caught in the middle of the transition. Faulkner sets his values in the past—the ante-bellum South, representative of the traditions which mark the "golden age," and the "Eden" from which man was ejected as a result of the curse of slavery. Although, to a degree, Faulkner romanti-
izes the past, he is aware that clinging to the past for tradition's sake can become a social hindrance. Tradition must be amended and modified in terms of change unless it is to be forfeited altogether. As Byron Bunch says in *Light in August*, "when anything gets to be a habit, it also manages to get a right good distance away from truth and fact" (p. 64).

Melvin Backman writes that "the novel *Sartoris* is a family chronicle that nostalgically ... evokes in the midst of a diminished present the glamorous heroism of a Southern family of the Civil War years." He sees the tension of the novel as not "a struggle between classes ... but a state of mind of young Bayard ... of the 'lost generation'" (*Faulkner: The Major Years*, pp. 2-5). In a Jefferson tavern Bayard talks of the war: "Not of combat, but rather of a life peopled by young men like fallen angels, and of a meteoric violence like that of fallen angels, beyond heaven or hell and partaking of both: doomed immortality and immortal doom" (*Sartoris*, p. 126).

The New South is depicted as experiencing a deterioration in character and the moral and social values which are manifested in Colonel Sartoris, Aunt Jenny, and Old Bayard. The third-generation victims are caught between the romantic legend of the past and the reality of the present. In *A Faulkner Glossary* (New York, 1964), Harry Runyan explains that "Bayard means a gentleman of great
courage and honor, and derives from the knight the Chevalier Bayard (1473-1424) . . . The name spelled with a small letter . . . also means a stupid and blindly reckless person" (p. 142).

In the romanticized Old South, the Sartorises are cavaliers—brave, adventurous, reckless—defenders of their traditions and women with their very lives. They live in large mansions and own slaves, who, of course, are treated as members of the family. Simon's use of the church funds to impress his mistress and the paternalistic stance of Old Bayard when he repays the money serve as a mirror of the "legend" of the paternalistic relationship which has persisted long after slavery. The society of Colonel Sartoris is a society of action. After the war, no matter what their economic circumstances, they continue to cling to the idea of aristocracy in their minds, and in the minds of some others, they continue to represent "quality." However, the younger men reveal a weakening of the male character, and they are made ineffectual by their rigid commitment to a stalemated tradition.

The central theme of Sartoris is alienated man. As Backman points out, there is no "middle generation." The present is "a time of despair and malaise, the past a time of heroism and purpose" (Faulkner: The Major Years, p. 11). Correlated with the theme of alienation is the "talk-action" theme. In Sartoris, Horace Benbow, intelligent, idealistic, sensitive, and compassionate, is yet no man of action.
These qualities are further manifested in Benbow's performance in *Sanctuary*. His is a tendency to substitute words for action, and when he acts, he acts too little or too late.

In contrast to these rather depressing themes is the McCallum family—Anse and his six sons, a family of men isolated from the center of "civilized" Jefferson only because they desire to be. Like the Negro characters, Faulkner depicts the McCallums as capable of endurance, mainly because of their existence close to nature. Theirs is a life of simplicity, symbolized in the fire on the hearth which is later used in much the same manner in relation to Lucas Beauchamp. Their authority is man; their security, themselves.

As early as *Sartoris*, Faulkner includes evidence that the idyll of the Southern legend is not as idyllic as it might seem, and even the last traces of the Old Order are nearly extinct. This he dramatizes in the malcontents (e.g., Caspey and Bayard III). Bayard's is the third-generation's feeling of guilt for having betrayed his heritage because he feels incapable of effecting the code. Caspey, the son of Simon, returns from service in France full of "uppity nigger freedom talk" as Simon calls it. Other evidences are in the imminent invasion of the Snopeses. Abner, the first of the Snopes clan, is introduced in *Sartoris* as a young man who does odd jobs around the Sartoris plantation. He sets the tone for the Snopeses to come. He is shot in
the foot by Colonel Sartoris when he tries to steal one of the Sartoris horses. The Snopeses' condition is represented as being far worse than that of the Negroes since the Negro servants assume the same status and prestige as their employers.

In *Sartoris*, Faulkner's dramatization of Negroes vacillates from the conventional to slight indications of a compassionate study. He begins with the stereotype who occasionally is imbued with humane qualities. An example is Simon, whose position in the Sartoris family is on one hand much that of a beloved pet and on the other a foil for the family's shortcomings. He knows how to be subservient and get his way with the whites, but when he is with his own race, the "face" seldom seen by his "white folks" appears, and he becomes a quite different person. At this point in Faulkner's work, the mulatto has not yet reached its tragic proportions. Elmora, the stereotyped mellow-voiced, hymn-singing cook, goes about life without incident or conflict. Most of the Negroes in *Sartoris* are depicted as similar to the black minstrel figures which Faulkner sketched for his school publication and by which he gained some fame. They shuffle, they grin, they sleep, they commit adultery. In other words, they do everything a Southern society would expect them to do. Cleanth Brooks writes that "*Sartoris* is not an argument about what the relation between the two races ought to be, but a rendering of the actuality of its time, in which the relationship is presented as it was in all its complexity and with
all of its aspects: good, bad, and indifferent; pathetic, cruel, or tender" (The Yoknapatawpha Country, pp. 113-114).

Yet, even in this early book, there are indications that Negroes are dramatized as the social and moral norms and are antithesized to some of the less stable white characters. Examples are Bayard III's guilt feelings after he intentionally and cruelly frightened old Simon when he takes him for his first automobile ride and, of course, Bayard's Christmas dinner with the Negro family in its poor and simple cabin.

Sartoris is the first book of Yoknapatawpha County in which Faulkner depicts Negroes with any appreciable degree of personality. Though stereotyped, they are characterized more distinctly than any other of the white characters, the exception being Aunt Jenny, whose dominant personality traits, one must observe, could be Dilsey's. For the most part, Faulkner's characters at this stage in his career do not come alive and are mere reflections of the romanticized personalities of the Old South. Yet, it is obvious that Faulkner's Negroes are able to cope with whatever life brings them, mainly at this point, the reader gathers, because they, like the whites, romanticize the past as a direction for the present. Their viewpoint, however, is not nihilistic or escapist, as is true of the white characters. The Negroes face life because circumstance has forced them to do so, and in some cases, at least, because they have a goal—Jordan. For them, the past and the present
seem to merge and become one. Earth's mechanical time is unimportant, as it is for Dilsey. In contrast, Faulkner's white characters are obsessed by time as though its passing is feared because it will eventually catapult them into the unknown.

*The Sound and the Fury* was published in 1929, the same year as *Sartoris*, but although it is concerned with most of the same themes, the leap from an amateurish account to a stylized one is remarkable, to say the least. In the Compson family is mirrored once again the drama of decay and degeneration which, though negatively presented, explicitly indicates that although the man of the New South and the new generation are unable to trust their own fellowmen—not even their kinsmen—there was a time when this was not the case, and that a return to this state must come from Man.

Faulkner's account of the history of the Compson family may be gleaned from a reading of several of Faulkner's novels. In 1813, Jason I obtained the Compson land from the Indian Ikkemotubbe, the father of Sam Fathers (*Go Down, Moses*) by trading a racing mare for a square mile of land in the center of what becomes Jefferson, the county seat of Yoknapatawpha County. As time goes on, modernity encroaches upon the estate. The land is sold piecemeal, sometimes because of necessity, but more often for personal gain. A portion, the old stables and slave quarters, becomes the golf course along the dividing fence of which Benjy likes to loiter and
watch the golfers. It was sold in order to finance Quentin's matriculation at Harvard. Quentin, in a state of despair because of his inability to adjust to modernity, commits suicide at the end of the first year. Benjy rides the family of the remainder of the estate by setting fire to the house and in the process destroying himself. Jason and his mother move to Jefferson, and in time, Jason, the childless bachelor, ends the line of Compsons. After his father's death, it is Jason who assumes, though unwillingly, the responsibility of the family's support in order that his mother may continue to live to some extent the kind of life to which she had been accustomed before War, "not because he loved her but (a rational man always) simply because he was afraid of the Negro cook, Dilsey, "whom he could not even force to leave, even when he tried to stop paying her weekly wages" (The Sound and the Fury, p. 17). It was not until 1933 that Jason was able to say, "In 1865 . . . Abe Lincoln freed the niggers from the Compsons. In 1933, Jason Compson freed the Compsons from the niggers" (The Sound and the Fury, p. 18).

Characters, black and white, are juxtaposed in order to expedite the themes introduced in earlier works. As a result, the reader is presented the negative and positive sides of life. Joseph W. Hunt states that

the Quentin-Caddy-Mr. Compson line of action embodies the theme of the loss of meaning. The dominant emphasis is not simply that meaning is absent, meaning was once and is no longer present. The Jason-Miss Quentin line of action ironically embodies the theme of the
absence of meaning. There is no problem here of the loss of meaning . . . there is no acknowledgment that traditional interpretation of experience ever did have validity . . . the presence of endurance of meaning emerges from the . . . two major lines of action through the characters of Benjy and Dilsey . . . not as causal agents but as refractory agents through whom the actions appear as theme symbolically embodied in their characters. The refraction of the Quentin-Caddy-Mr. Compson action through the character of Benjy . . . gives rise to the theme of the presence of meaning. The refraction of the Jason-Miss Quentin action through the character of Dilsey . . . gives rise to the theme of the endurance of meaning.13


The first theme is developed in Quentin's and Jason's sections; the second is characterized by Benjy but ultimately developed in Dilsey's section. Juxtaposition of the positive and negative themes occurs in all four sections. Dilsey's section brings both themes into focus, and, through her moral view of life, the second theme emerges as dominant.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Quentin, as the epitome of the alienated character, is the central figure. Backman, in *Faulkner: The Major Years*, has observed that Quentin might be compared with Eliot's Prufrock, another weak and sensitive intellectual. Both view themselves in the light of their knowledge of great religious and literary personalities. Quentin expects life not to be merely meaningful in a way which will relate to his traditional ideas derived from the past. Life and people are tried according to those rigid standards and found wanting.
Onco the code of the Old Order is demolished by reality, the Compsons, having nothing to substitute in its stead, are lost souls, and theirs is a fight against time in their introspection of self. Dilsey, recognizing a universal time, is the only character in the novel not obsessed by time or mechanical time-pieces. There is no hurry in her actions because her religious beliefs have assured her that she has all the time in the world. Thus, she takes time to perform the little compassionate acts which the other characters are too busy to perform. Dilsey shows a respect for all human life, even the least, as is manifest in her devotion to Benjy, the idiot Compson whom none of the other members of the family have the time or the inclination to care for. The exception is, of course, Caddy, but when she leaves, Dilsey is the only one left to love him and to express her love in deeds. Jason considers him another useless mouth to feed, Mrs. Compson vacillates in a cycle of guilt-rejection, and even the Negro children assigned to serve as his companions see him as a nuisance. Only Dilsey is able to view him as a human being because she recognizes him as God's own. She says to Benjy, "You's de Lawd's chile anyway. En I be His'n too, fo long, praise Jesus" (The Sound and the Fury, p. 333). Dilsey can furnish Benjy's need: love. He is not fooled by his mother's erratic false displays of affection.

Dilsey remains with the Compsons because she sees it
as her moral duty to hold together the remains of the family. ("Ef I dont worry bout y'all I dont know who is.") This is no loyalty-to-white-folks response, but rather a response to the day when God will set her free, as the Emancipation Proclamation and all the other man-made laws could never do, a fact cogently stated in Dilsey's "Dis long time, O Jesus ... Dis long time" (The Sound and the Fury, p. 332).

Dilsey's merit is her ability to endure, and in this quality she embodies Faulkner's message "that man will prevail, will endure, because he is capable of compassion and honor and pride and endurance" (Faulkner in the University, p. 5). In an interview, Faulkner was asked why more of his characters go down than survive. Faulkner's answer: "That's all right ... That they go down doesn't matter. It's how ... It's to go under when trying to do more than you know how to do ... ." The pioneers went under well; the third-


...generation, for the most part, do not go under well. Again at the University, Faulkner said: "Man will cling to life, that in preference—between grief and nothing, man will take grief always" (Faulkner in the University, p. 25). An example is the slave in "Red Leaves" (Collected Stories, pp. 313 et seq.), who, in order to get away from his pursuers, allows a snake to strike him in the arm, saying, "I'm already dead, it doesn't matter ... ." but with death imminent, he finds
that he prefers any of life's problems to the unknown, death.

In connection with the "endurance" theme, experience is seen to have importance. Quentin says, "Father said a man is the sum of his misfortunes . . . time is your misfortune" (Absalom, Absalom!, p. 123). And, in "The Old People," Faulkner wrote: "Experience is good . . . even suffering and grieving is better than nothing. But you cannot be alive forever and you always wear out life long before you have exhausted the possibilities of living" (Go Down, Moses, p. 186). Grandfather Priest (The Reivers, p. 121) states his definition of intelligence as "the ability to cope with environment; which means to accept environment yet still retain at least something of personal liberty." On several occasions, Faulkner expressed much the same observations as those expressed by Quentin and Grandfather Priest. In an interview he said, "Disaster seems to be good for people . . . if they are too successful too long, something dies . . . then they have to collapse with their own weight, which has happened with so many empires . . ." (Lion in the Garden, p. 108). This could be a fitting epitaph to the Old South. Faulkner felt that the poet aided man in his struggle to endure, and he considered books to be important for the reason that they "last longer than the bridges and the skyscrapers" and are the best way "man has discovered . . . to record the fact that he does endure, that he is capable of hope . . . he can show tomorrow that yesterday he endured. He knows that since his
own yesterday showed him today that he endured . . . after he is gone someone will read what he has done and can see what man is capable of believing" (Ibid., p. 103). Thus, Faulkner relates the past, the present, and the future, or as Gavin Stevens says, "Yesterday today and tomorrow are Is: Indivisible: One . . . It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago" (Intruder in the Dust, p. 194).

The "endurance" theme is synthesized in the Easter sermon in the Negro Baptist church when Reverend Shegog, "like a worn small rock" speaking in a voice "sonorous . . . with a sad, timorous quality" describes the crucifixion of Jesus:

"Breddren! Look at dem little children settin dar. Jesus was like dat once. He mammy suffered de glory en de pangs . . . Listen breddren! I seos de day. Ma'y settin in de do' wid Jesus on her lap . . . I hears de angels singin de peaceful songs en de glory . . . sees Ma'y jump up, sees de sojer face . . . We gwine to kill yo little Jesus!"

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

"I hears de wailin of women en de evenin lamentations; I hears de weeping en de crying en de turnt-away face of God . . . day don kilt my Son! . . . When de Lawd did turn His mighty face . . . I sees de darkness en de death everlastin upon de generation . . . Den lo! Breddren! . . . What I see? . . . I sees de resurrection en de light, sees de meek Jesus saying Day kilt Me dat ye shall live again; I died dat dem what sees en believes shall never die . . . I sees de doom crack en hears de golden horns . . . en de arisen dead whut got de blood en de ricklicshun of de Lamb!" (Tha Sound and the Fury, pp. 310-313).
The theme is the innocent child crucified by the world. Quentin tries to ward off life by living in the past. Dilsey and Reverend Shagog use the past as a guide to the future.

In *The Sound and the Fury*, having recognized the failure of strict adherence to tradition, Faulkner questions this approach, and he tries to project a more stable meaning for life. This sojourn into reality left him little time for the romantic moonlight-and-magnolia picture of the South which he presents in *Sartoris*. Time and the ability to love are the touchstones by which each character is measured. Some turn inward to self; others turn outward to mankind and life. Faulkner said that one thing that is wrong with the South is "there are too many Jasons... who can be successful, just as there are too many Quontins... who are too sensitive to face its reality" (*Faulkner in the University*, p. 17), and that "man will always be unjust to man, yet there must always be people, men and women who are capable of the compassion toward that injustice and the hatred of that injustice, and the will to risk public opprobrium, to stand up and say, 'This is rotten, this stinks, I won't have it' " (*Ibid.*, p. 148).

Irving Howe has observed that in *Sartoris* and *The Sound and the Fury*, the tone is "dominated by the feeling of alienation, and that in *As I Lay Dying*, there is a turning to people, community, as if he Faulkner wished to emphasize that the dependence upon emotional attachments
and upon people is necessary to the recognition of our identity." As Faulkner continues to probe into the

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ridiculous state of man in an unpredictable world in As I Lay Dying, two of the sub-themes explored in previous works are dominant: the talk-action theme and the power of love. These themes are treated from a universal point of view, and Negroes are mentioned only once when they are met on the road by the Bundren family.

In Sanctuary, a sensational novel which Faulkner frankly admits he wrote for its selling value, he returns to the characterization of Negroes as stage props used in relatively unimportant positions. Since they are saddled by the usual stereotyped qualities, these characters have little personality. The exception, perhaps, is Minnie of the gold tooth, Madame Reba Rivers' maid, who appears also in The Mansion and The Reivers. Although Sanctuary is a novel of violence, Faulkner mentions it only once in relation to Negroes (the Negro who murdered his wife by almost completing severing her head). Most of the violence is attributed to whites who are of the lower classes or mentally retarded, the ultimate violence being the corn-cob rape of Temple Drake by an impotent Popeye. The Snopes clan is introduced more fully than in the previous novels in the persons of Clarence and his nephews. In contrast to
the Negroes, they are made to seem ignorant and pretentious while the Negroes are merely unfortunate.

Several critics, among them Irving Howe and Lawrence Kubie, state that although the revised edition of *Sanctuary* was not published until after *As I Lay Dying* appeared, it belongs in its conception and subject after *The Sound and the Fury*, since its theme is alienation of the individual from society. This theme is emphasized by the setting: the backstreets of Memphis which include the houses of prostitution and scenes of crime against nature and man. Every character is in some way crippled, mentally or physically or socially, and consequently is unable to function effectively in society.

Faulkner's collection of short stories, compilations of single publications, are important as supplementary and complementary accounts to the themes of the novels of Yoknapatawpha County. The stories, like the novels, are characterized by common themes, characters, and setting. Some are more concerned with the issues surrounding the Negroes in the South than others and these (exceptions, those previously discussed in detail) will be reviewed in the paragraphs which follow.

"Wash" (*Collected Stories*, pp. 535 et seq.) introduces Wash Jones, a Snopes type, whose story appears in chapters of *Absalom, Absalom!* Although Wash sees himself as equal to his white boss, Sutpen, the Negroes look on
him with contempt and call him "white trash" behind his back. Wash is the front man for Sutpen's shady deals. When Sutpen opens a store where he "dispensed kerosene and staple foodstuffs and stale gaudy candy and cheap beads and ribbons to Negroes or poor whites of Wash's kind," Wash is assigned the job as clerk and porter. In the end, Sutpen repays this loyalty with betrayal. An important story is "That Evening Sun" (Ibid., pp. 289 et seqq.), which introduces Nancy Mannigoe, later given a key role in Requiem for a Nun, and her husband, Jesus. Faulkner states that although Jesus is a "valid name among Negroes in Mississippi," the choice was a "deliberate intent to shock . . . to emphasize a point . . . that this Negro woman who had given devotion to the white family knew that when the crisis of her need came, the white family wouldn't be there" (Faulkner in the University, p. 21). And, in Requiem for a Nun, they are not there until it is too late.

"Elly" and "Mountain Victory" are short treatises which feature characters of mixed blood who are destroyed because of their interest in white girls. In the first story, the allegation is true; in the second, it is mere suspicion, but suspicion proves enough. "Elly" takes place in modern Jefferson, but although they bear new names, the character types are not new. Paul is suspected of being a Negro because of his slightly thick lips and curly hair. Elly, offspring of an old Southern family, finds him physically attractive, but her matriarchal traditional grandmother
forbids her to see him: "Look at his hair, his fingernails if you need proof . . . No blood of mine shall ride with him . . . " (Collected Stories, p. 218). The grandmother is representative of the Old South: Elly, of the new generation. Paul is much like Joe Christmas, alienated and unable to receive or return love, and like the Joe Christmas types of later works, he is lacking in the usual gentlemanly amenities toward women which are often found among the Southerners. He uses Elly much as she uses him. Also like Christmas, he cannot relate to whites or Negroes. In "Mountain Victory," Saucier Weddell is a forerunner of Charles Bon-gallant, polished, educated, sophisticated. His one flaw is his French and Indian blood.

"Was" features Uncle Buddy and Uncle Buck, sons of Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin. They repudiate slavery by moving the Negroes into the unfinished big house and occupying the slave quarters themselves. However, they are not wholly weaned from tradition since they act out the superficial ritual of locking the Negroes in by nailing shut the front door, knowing full well that the back door and windows are still open. They feel that the Civil War would be necessary because the South did not contain enough Bucks and Buddies to free even "some of His lowly people . . . God loved the South enough to ensure that it would lose. For God had found that the people of the South could . . . learn nothing save through suffering". (Collected Stories, p. 286).
In many ways the short stories were trial pieces for the larger works to come.

Light in August is Faulkner's seventh novel. It is the first in which he emphasizes the racial problems of the South and the second in which the Negroes figure importantly, if not in terms of characters then in terms of theme. The characters are mainly poor whites; the Negroes' roles are only incidental. The time of the novel is 1929-1932, and it concerns itself with several characters whose lives are thrown together by happenstance, but who, nevertheless, have great impact one upon the other. Its thematic center is "the crippling clutch of abstract concepts upon the mind and soul of the human being. These concepts, imposed in childhood, enshroud the individual's attitude toward life . . . The concept of racial superiority, with its attendant fear and guilt, molds and controls the individual . . . Though the novel deals with the particular forces at work in the South . . . it is fundamentally a study of any absolutist view . . ." (Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, p. 173).

The theme of the alienated self assumes the dominant position in Light in August. This theme is embodied in Joe the epitome of alienation. His assumption that he is a Negro is motivated by his childhood experiences. The pattern of rejection begins even before he is born. His grandfather rejects him as the "nigger bastard of bitchery" and
the "Lord God's abomination." Once when quite young, Joe said to a Negro worker at the orphanage, "I aint a nigger," and the Negro answered, "You are worse than that. You dont know what you are. And more than that you wont never know. You'll live and you'll die and you wont never know" (Light in August, p. 336). The dietician at the orphanage calls him a "nigger bastard." Joe is motivated by his obsessive need to identify, and in his mind this identity can be determined only by race. To Joe, it is more important to know what he is than who he is, and in his world, the two have been represented as the same.

Several critics have noted that Faulkner's characters are often overly concerned with blood. Blood functions in several ways in Faulkner's works: as symbols of goodness or evil, social level, racial divisions, the stain of guilt, or brotherhood. Although Faulkner makes a distinction between white blood and Negro blood, or aristocratic blood and poor-white blood, it is Faulkner's characters who draw the line of distinction between the two. A notable example is Gavin Stevens's lengthy speech on page 393 of Light in August and similar speeches in Intruder in the Dust. Of Joe Christmas and the murder, the womenfolk in their kitchens say, "He dont look any more like a nigger than I do. But it must have been the nigger blood in him" (Light in August, p. 306). Faulkner recognized that in the South the idea that there is a difference in blood has often served as the
excuse the Southerners use for their personal inability to accept Negroes as equals. By assuming his Negroidness, Joe places himself in a position that exposes him to all the stereotyped ideas attendant to the term. Joe is raised in the South as a white Southerner, yet because of an abstract concept, he is denied the dignity of white Southerners. On occasion, Faulkner emphasizes in his works that relationships between the races can transcend racial barriers. That this does not happen in Joe's situation is as much his responsibility as society's. He has been dehumanized, and when he arrives in Jefferson "one Friday morning" three years before the murder with a "quality ruthless, lonely, and almost proud," and "a pretty risky look for a man to wear on his face in public" (Ibid., pp. 27-28), he is already beyond help. Joe is much like other of Faulkner's alienated young men. In their desperation to relate they rebel against society and sometimes resort to violence. The result is just the opposite of the intention--after a period of masochistic existence, the end is death or defeat. They are a combination of victim and criminal. Their inability to face life is usually symbolized by their impotency with women or abnormal queasiness when they are confronted with the sexuality of women. Although they expend their lives seeking a place among humanity, at the same time they pull away from humanity. Joe Christmas cannot accept a kindness with good grace. One must earn everything or become obligated, and to be obligated
is to place oneself in a position where, as he expresses it, "They would have had me." Accordingly, all humane gestures are efforts to compromise him. (An act of love merely engenders his hatred.) For the same reason, he rejects women— their tenderness and love.

One lacerating force in Christmas's life is Joanna Burden, who is ruled by a fanatic missionary-like obsession to do something for Negroes. Hers too has been a life of isolation; her need is as great as his. Consequently, she acts for the wrong reasons, and her effort is bungling and ineffectual. Joe's relationship with her results in a deepening of his hatred of man and society. This is dramatized in the violent scene following Joanna's suggestion that Joe allow her to pay for his education at a Negro school in order that he might become a Negro lawyer. To Joanna, Joe has always been "Negro," a belief which whetted her sexual appetite as much as it complimented her missionary zeal.

Faulkner does not negate man's right of choice. Joe has a choice, but choices are made in terms of one's experiences, total life reality, and the circumstances in which one finds himself. Joe Christmas's plight is a rebuke to the conscience of society—its institutions and traditions—and if one thinks of him as a potential instead of an actuality, it is a statement of the useless waste of human effort and life which a society founded in any area on absolutist standards can engender. The concept, Faulkner
seems to say, exists apart from the reality.

Whether or not he is a Negro, Joe lives and dies as the mulatto rejected by society. As Backman explains:

The Southern extremists, Hines and Grimes, would kill him; the Yankee sympathizer, Joanna, would bed with him. Obsessed by an abstraction these people cannot understand the Negro... they will crucify Christmas and raise a cross to him "Since to pity him would be to admit self-doubt and to hope for and to need pity themselves" (Faulkner: The Major Years, pp. 85-86).

Thus, Joe submits to death, seeming in his last hours to welcome it:

He just lay there, with his eyes open and empty of everything save consciousness, and with something, a shadow about his mouth. For a long moment he looked up at them with peaceful and unfathomable and unbearable eyes. Then his face, body, all seemed to collapse, to fall in upon itself, and from out of the slashed garments about his hips... the pent black blood seemed to rush like a released breath... the man seemed to rise soaring into the memories of the onlookers forever and ever. They are not to lose it, in whatever peaceful valley, beside whatever placid and reassuring stream of old age, in the mirroring faces of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. It will be there musing, quiet, steadfast..." (Light in August, p. 407).

Thus, in the depiction of Joe, among others, one message seems cogently evident: man, the highest form of life, has not learned--has not really wanted to learn--the one elementary principle which other forms of life seem to know instinctively, the preservation of self and one's fellowmen. Man continues to destroy himself and others.

The novel which most cogently explores the racial problems and which best mirrors the development of Faulk-
nor's moral view of the South and its racial problems is Absalom, Absalom! (1936). The time of the novel is approximately 1887-1910. The title is from II Samuel 18:33, which includes the story of King David, who, like Sutpen, lost his sons through fratricide. Melvin Backman sees some similarity between this novel and The Sound and the Fury, which was published seven years earlier: "The Sound dealt with the fall of a family; Absalom, Absalom! deals with the fall of a society ... it is a social issue rather than a personal one" (Faulkner: The Major Years, p. 88).

The theme of alienation and its attendant guilt-cycle continues to be prominent in Absalom, Absalom! One generation after the other assumes the guilt and perpetuates it for the next. Like King David, Sutpen refuses to recognize his son (Charles). Because he is a mulatto, he feels that this will be a hindrance to his "design." Henry (Sutpen's white son) acts in like manner when he kills Charles for the same racist principle—the fear that a mulatto might marry his sister, Judith. The fact that Judith would be marrying her half-brother is far less upsetting to him. He kills to prevent miscegenation, not incest.

In the classical manner, Sutpen's magnificent plan is a defiance of the scheme of things. After the death of Sutpen's mother, the family "slid back down out of the mountains"—a move which began a slow but steady disintegration of the family. As soon as the family is settled
in the valley as sharecroppers, Sutpen experiences his initial realization of the tension which exists between the poor whites and the Negroes:

the certain flat level silent way his older sisters and other women of their kind had of looking at niggers, not with fear or dread but with a kind of speculative antagonism not because of any known fact or reason but inherited, by both black and white... the sense... of it passing between the white women in the doors of sagging cabins... and the niggers in the road... which was not quite explainable by the fact that the niggers had better clothes than he or his father and sisters had ever owned (Absalom, Absalom!, pp. 228-234).

Ruthlessly and without concern for whomever he might hurt, Sutpen structures his "design" to acquire whatever, in his view, would give him the recognition he desires. The liveried Negro at the front door who sends him, a white boy, to the back door is his motivation. His is a need to change the arrangement at the front door—to prove to all Negroes that he is better than they and to other whites that he is as good as they. To accomplish this goal, Sutpen tries to cut off all aspects of his past which do not fit into his plans. As his fortunes unfold, it is obvious that the statement Faulkner is making is that the past and present are one and the same; accordingly, the past cannot be denied. Sutpen's past in the image of Negro genes returns to haunt him to the end as the guilt of the Southern white men continues to haunt them. Sutpen's desperate desire for a son is a desire for immortality—a wish to leave his mark upon time by producing a dynasty in his name, a ritual proof of the
"I-Am." When all else fails, his desperation leads him to the final effort: mating with Wash's daughter. Although Sutpen looks down on Wash as poor-white "trash," their roots have stemmed from the same stock; thus, he returns to his own.

In its import, Sutpen's tragedy is more classical than modern. He steps out of the confines of the ordered life and defies the gods by his attempt to be a god. His is the tragedy of an absence of feeling for others, white or black. He uses those who can further his plan, and he casts aside those who cannot. In the Greek cultural scheme, a moral sin required a retributive punishment. Sutpen's punishment is in like kind and just. His undeniable past, which he seeks nevertheless to repudiate, relentlessly destroys his "design" until the only vestige left is Jim Bond, his great-grandson and a mulatto idiot, signifying nothing. As in classical tragedy, the original sin is perpetuated by one generation after another, and those involved are both the victims and the doers.

Like the Southerners he represents, Sutpen cannot understand that his failure is due to his attempt to amend the natural structural pattern for human existence. Some critics have debated whether Faulkner intended Sutpen as a symbol of the South; others have argued whether he might authentically be called a Southerner. Melvin Backman
observes:

Thomas Sutpen, who transplanted his slaves from Haiti to the Mississippi wilderness and transferred the wilderness to a plantation, was part of a large historical movement... the movement of slavery from the islands to the mainland and from the Eastern seaboard to the Southwest. His marriage to Ellen Coldfield signifies the union of the frontiersman and puritan, a union which would give birth to the very character of the South. Frontier violence would be yoked to fundamentalist religion, frontier individualism would be wedded to the puritan conscience (Faulkner: The Major Years, pp. 101-103).

Ellen Coldfield does not represent aristocratic lineage. The one thing she has which Sutpen desires is respectability in the name Coldfield. But although her father is a steward in the church, he is not beyond reproach. Sutpen tells Mr. Compson of the suspect business deal he persuaded Coldfield to enter with him. In the end, Coldfield refuses to accept his profits. Later, he, like Ike McCaslin, he repudiates the Southern cause, but he does nothing more about it except to nail himself in the attic where he remains for the rest of his life. Coldfield feels no guilt about the lot of the Negroes. He does not particularly like Negroes, as is manifest in his treatment of his servants: "Mr. Coldfield and Rosa would get into the buggy and depart, Mr. Coldfield first docking the two negroes for the noon meal which they would not have to prepare... charging them for the crude one of leftovers which they would have to eat" (Absalom, Absalom!, p. 66). Thus, Coldfield's repudiation is different from that of Uncle Buddy and Uncle Buck ("Was") or that of Ike McCaslin. Not liking the situation, he removes himself from
its presence and makes no effort to improve it. His objection to slavery is that it was not a businesslike basis for a society; the South had "erected its economic edifice not on the rock of stern morality but on the shifting sands of opportunism and economic brigandage" (Ibid., p. 260). Hating himself, his kinsmen, and his South, he refuses to be further involved in the situation.

Although Negroes play the scapegoat roles in *Absalom, Absalom!*, Faulkner depicts them with irony. Charles Bon is the epitome of the cultured gentleman. He is far more sophisticated and cultured than Sutpen's white son, but, like Saucier Waddell, who is also cultured and sophisticated, he must be shot by a Mississippi country bumpkin because the few drops of nonwhite blood in his veins make him an imminent threat to Southern white womanhood. As Faulkner implies in his works, it was the Southern white woman which the planter was protecting when he used Negro women as a source of sexual pleasure. Although in the Old South an outside family was more the rule than the exception, and the wives and sweethearts knew of the reality, to recognize an offspring publicly was unheard of. The general reaction of all was to accept and ignore. To elevate the black "family" to the level of "house niggers" was as close to acceptance as the code would allow. An apt example is Sutpen's Clytie.

As a scapegoat character, Charles Bon's mulatto son by his octoroon wife is the Joe Christmas type who struggles
against society knowing full well that he cannot win. He could pass for white, but he refuses to solve his problems in this way. Instead, he seeks to establish his identity with the black race by marrying a coal-black woman and to attain recognition through violent acts. Like Joe Christmas, he courts death, seemingly preferring this to his miserable existence.

Hyatt Waggoner has pointed out that one meaning to be gleaned from *Absalom, Absalom!* is that "when the Old South was forced into a position where it must make a choice, it chose to fight in the face of certain destruction rather than to accept the Negro as an equal in society." This view is reminiscent of Faulkner's statement concerning the choice he would make if forced to decide between the South and the Negroes. However, such a decision would have been difficult for Faulkner. As Backman expresses it:

Faulkner would not only have to work his way out of the distortions wrought by Southern legend and pride and . . . repudiate the uncritical allegiance and assent demanded by a closed society . . . Torn by loyalty and guilt, by the desire to suppress and the need to conform, he could only cry out against his burden (Faulkner: The Major Years, pp. 95, 96, and 112).

Faulkner in such a situation might well have been like Quentin Compson, who, when asked by his friend Shreve why he hates the South, answers, "I dont hate . . . I dont. I dont.
"I don't hate it. I don't hate it" (Absalom, Absalom!, p. 378).

When Absalom, Absalom! ends, the problems are unsolved, but Shreve predicts the solution:

"It took Charles Bon and his mother to get rid of Old Tom, and Charles Bon and the octroooon to get rid of Judith, and Charles Bon and Clytie to get rid of Henry; and Charles Bon's mother and Charles Bon's grandmother to get rid of Charles Bon... it takes two niggers to get rid of one Sutpen, don't it?... Which is all right... it clears the whole ledger... except for one thing... You've got one nigger left. One nigger Sutpen left... you can't catch him... you don't even always see him... you will never be able to use him...

......

In time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere... of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again... But it will still be Jim Bond, and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings" (Ibid., pp. 377-378).

The Unvanquished, though not published until 1938, takes us back a little, since, with the exception of two stories, it is a composite of short narratives published earlier. The theme is the heritage of the past in relation to the Sartorises as told by Bayard II. Although the major Negro character, Ringo, is depicted with compassion and understanding, when the book is read in its chronological place, it serves as a contrast to the later novels. For example, in some of the earlier stories, Faulkner finds it necessary to explain to the reader that the fact that Ringo is a Negro does not matter. In addition, the "good" Negroes are loyal and remain with their white masters; the ungrateful "bad"
Negroes, like Loosh, leave as soon as they are freed by the Yankees.

The situation depicted in the Bayard-Ringo relationship, although it embodies the aura of a fairy tale, is not unrealistic. Faulkner seems to say that such a relationship is possible because its lasting quality is based on mutual respect. This, too, is a drama of potentials—the potential of Ringo's mind if his society would give him a chance to develop it, the potential of friendship which cuts across racial divisions, the potential of loyalty which is sustained by mutual concern and respect rather than force, and the potential of man's ability to endure.

Various stereotyped beliefs are obvious in *The Unvanquished*. The slaves are contented participants in the slave system, and the South is depicted as a defenseless region exploited by the North which leaves destruction in its wake. The slaveholders are like Rosa Millard—kind and paternalistic in their treatment of the Negroes. Also prominent in this book are Faulkner's references to stereotyped characteristics which are "typical" or "true of the Negro race."

"An Odor of Verbena," the final story in *The Unvanquished* was unpublished until it appeared in this volume. It is by far the best of the group. It deals with the theme of the conflict of the traditional code of the Old South and the anti-traditional New South. Bayard's responses dramatizes Faulkner's belief that when tradition becomes
useless it must be amended to relate to the times if it is
to survive at all. Accordingly, Bayard decides not to avenge
his father's death by killing Redmond, the murderer. When
he goes to Jefferson to meet him, he goes unarmed. The
decision is not an easy one for him, a Southerner raised
under the influence of the code, and in the end, he cries
in regret for the lost past. For as Gavin Stevens says:

"For every Southern boy fourteen years old . . .
there is still the instant when it's still not yet
two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863, the
brigades are in position . . . the guns are laid
and ready . . . the furled flags are already
loosened . . . and Pickett . . . looking up the
hill waiting for Longstreet to give the word . . .
it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun . . .
there is still time for it not to begin . . . yet
it's going to begin . . . we have come too far with
too much at stake . . . the absolute edge of no re-
turn . . . (Intruder in the Dust, pp. 194-195).

Period of Consolidation and Affirmation (1940-1962)

Faulkner's concern with racial issues is obvious in
most of his novels, but not until the third stage of his
career does he formulate some definite philosophy. Waggoner
has divided this latter stage into three parallel develop-
ments: "a new stress on the moral functions of art, a grad-
ual change of emphasis from despair to affirmation, and a
tendency to make his themes explicit through the use of
spokesman characters" (William Faulkner: From Jefferson to
the World, p. 213). Waggoner is of the opinion, as are some
other critics, that Faulkner spoke through his characters.

The Snopes trilogy, though an important work, is not
especially important to this discussion since the Negroes
included are assigned few and unimportant roles. Neverthe­
less, this is a good exploration of the conflicts of the
social levels of the South, mainly the aristocrats and the
poor whites. The latter are used as the counterparts and
the antitheses of the Negroes. Their roles are often re­
versed, and the white man finds himself working for the Negro,
who treats him with kindness and consideration. One example
is Mink Snopes. Needing a meal, he seeks work at a Negro
sharecropper's cabin where he finds the entire family pick­
ing cotton in the fields. He works side by side with them.
("The only difference was that for the last thirty-eight
years there had been a shotgun and a bullwhip at the end of
the row.") He shares the meager supper with the family ("I
don't charge nobody to eat at my house"), and he sleeps in
their cotton truck covered by a tarpaulin.

Some poor whites rise to the uppermost height of the
social ladder. This could possibly be construed as an in­
dictment of the aristocratic Southerner. In the South, if
one is white, it does not require brains, birth, or inherited
wealth for a person to be a success. All that is required
is the ambition to take advantage of all opportunities and
the ruthlessness to override all persons who stand in the
way. As an example, Flem Snopes (The Hamlet) arrives penni­
less in Frenchman's Bend. By the time he is murdered by his
cousin, Mink (The Mansion), he has made his fortune and become
an important citizen of Jefferson.
The Mansion includes a picture of another side of the racial situation—the liberal white in the character of Linda Snopes Kohl, who sets about to do something for the Negroes. She has been to war, she has been liberated, and she seems committed to concern herself with the welfare of the underdog. She visits the black schools of Jefferson with the plan "to establish a kind of competitive weekly test, the winners, who would be the top students for the week in each class, to spend the following week in a kind of academy with white teachers" (The Mansion, pp. 223-224). The plan meets with mass resistance from the Negroes, who fear trouble for themselves and for Linda. The Negro principal, one of the few college-educated Negroes in Faulkner's fiction, visits Gavin Stevens in an effort to stop her:

"You are not ready for it yet, neither are we... we have got to make the white people need us first. In the old days you people did need us in your economy if not your culture... But that was the wrong need... So it couldn't last... now you don't need us... we have got to make a place of our own in your culture and economy... Not you to make a place for us... just to get us out from under your feet... or to get our votes... but us to make a place... by compelling you to need us... So that you will not just say Please to us, you will need to say Please... you will want to say Please... tell her to leave us alone. Let us have your friendship all the time... But keep your patronage until we ask for it (The Mansion, pp. 224-225).

Embodied in this speech, in addition to the Negro's pride, is Faulkner's belief that the world owes no man anything, "that you reached the throne if you deserved it and not otherwise" (William Faulkner of Oxford, p.7). Linda Snopes is repre-
sentative of Faulkner's third heroic position (see page 207),
but like so many well-meaning whites, she goes about this in
the wrong way—doing for the Negro instead of allowing him to
do for himself.

The development of the moral theme of the Snopes
trilogy covers a span of seventeen years, the period which
elapsed between the first and the last volumes. In *The
Hamlet*, the racial and social groups are presented as con­
flicting entities, but by the end of *The Mansion*, the con­
flicts have begun to smooth out, mainly because the charac­
ters have begun to view each other more as individuals than
stereotyped groups and, in addition, as individuals having
a common problem in their struggle for survival. Volpe (*A
Reader's Guide to William Faulkner*) points out that one
theme which pervades *The Mansion* is that expressed in
Goodyhay's brief prayer: "Save us, Christ, the poor sons of
bitches" (p. 271). The statement is reiterated by Miss Reba,
the whorehouse madam, and by Gavin Stevens when he speaks of
Flem's impotency and Linda's complicity in Flem's murder.
It recognizes all men, good or bad, rich or poor, as exist­
ing in the same earthly predicament. Consequently, no man
can set himself apart as better than another, as judge of
another. Survival over evil is inherent in the all-embrac­
ing view of humankind and an "acceptance of one's responsi­
bility for the guilt and evil which plagues the world."
It is by involving oneself with the human race that one
finds salvation.

Faulkner's last novel, *The Reivers* (1962), includes characters which represent all levels of Yoknapatawpha's society. In like manner, it includes Negroes of all degrees and kinds: prostitutes, young boys, domestics, land-owners, men of the world. These characters Faulkner dramatizes with sympathy and understanding. They are not caricatured, and they embody the admirable qualities that Faulkner customarily attributed to his Negro characters. Cleanth Brooks considers the Negroes' virtues as fundamentally private virtues:

With regard to the world at large, Faulkner's Negro characters face problems unknown to the white characters... What distinguishes men like Ned and Uncle Parsham... and... Lucas... is their ability to carry the special burden imposed on them by a caste society. They succeed in maintaining their dignity though they are denied the usual resources of pride and the ordinary protection that men use to guard self-respect. To hold on to good humor and good sense and yet avoid cringing and truckling servility calls for sanity, imagination, and moral courage (*The Yoknapatawpha Country*, pp. 356-357).

In order to command dignity, Negroes often have to take physical risks in a world primed to see the worst in them. As one example, Brooks mentions Dilsey, who "has to cope with the problem. She forces Jason... to fear and respect her though she is armed with little more than a dedication so evident that Jason... is overawed" (*Ibid.*, p. 357). Ned McCaslin (*The Reivers*) uses his wit and a subtle language between impertinence and courtesy in order to maintain his dignity. In other words, the Negroes in
Faulkner's fiction, as their Southern counterparts, employ whatever "face" is most appropriate or necessary, depending upon the situation in which they find themselves. The difficulty is that, unlike Faulkner, who was reasonably able to recognize the individual beneath the mask, most Southern whites assume that this is the individual.

*Go Down, Moses* (1942), an important focal point in the development of Faulkner's social and moral view, consists of seven stories. Three of these deal specifically with the problems of the Negroes in the South: "The Fire and the Hearth," "Pantaloon in Black," and "Go Down, Moses." The stories are united by two basic themes: social relationships of the races in the South and the denuding of the land by modern societal demands.

*Go Down, Moses* includes a gamut of Negro character types. There is Eunice, the slave, who drowns herself when she finds that her daughter is pregnant by Old Carothers, the same white man who fathered her. This union of Carothers with the slave woman begins the Beauchamp mixed-blood line which produces, among others, Lucas, the proud Negro who fights for his rights as a man: "I'm a nigger ... But I'm a man too ... The same thing that made my pappy made your grandmaw" (*Go Down, Moses*, p. 47). Lucas protests against the white man's accepted prerogative over the black man's wife. Fonsiba, another Beauchamp, in an effort to escape the poverty of bondage, marries an educated Negro and goes North to live
in the poverty of freedom. Appearing in "The Bear" is Roth Edmonds's mistress, who has borne him a son. She is representative of the Negro who can no longer be bought off as a means of expiating the South's guilt. She prefers and demands recognition of herself as a person and as the mother of Roth's son. But as Ike McCaslin says, "The time has not come ... Maybe in a thousand years ... But not now" (Ibid., 255). This statement is reminiscent of Faulkner's caution to the N.A.A.C.P. and the Negroes to take it slow and to be patient.

*Go Down, Moses* embodies, in addition to a variety of characters, a variety of meanings. Dominant is the idea that all races—Indians, whites, Negroes—must live together on the land which God has provided. Each has a responsibility to the other and to the land which is not man's to do with as he pleases, but which has been placed in his trust. The twin brothers, Buck and Buddy McCaslin ("Retreat" and "Was"), believe that land does not belong to people but that people belong to the land. In Sutpen's childhood world (*Absalom, Absalom!*), the land belonged "to anybody and everybody." The Indians held the land communally, but the plantation system changed that.

The stories in *Go Down, Moses* emphasize the natural genuine feelings which exist between white and Negro children and which dissipate as they grow older. This change is seen to be a result of their growing awareness of the differing
stereotyped connotations which the Southern society imposes upon races and social levels—connotations which are in direct opposition to God's communal scheme. The feeling of brotherhood between whites and blacks is destroyed before it has a chance to solidify. At the age of sixteen, Ike McCaslin ("The Bear") reads about his black kin which was sired by his grandfather. The result is a growing disillusionment with the image of the South which leads him to repudiate the McCaslin land, because as he explains, "the Southern planters were all Grandfather... They had denied the heart's rights to their black kin... the humility and pity and suffering and pride of one another" (Ibid., p. 258). He sees the McCaslin history as a "whole land in miniature, which multiplied and compounded was the entire South... the whole edifice founded upon injustice and erected by ruthless rapacity..." (Ibid., p. 293). Old Carothers set the stage for the life style of incest and miscegenation which persists from one generation to another, which is common to the South, and to Faulkner's novels, and which comes full circle in the offspring of Roth and his mistress. To seek a better existence, most of the Negro offspring of the McCaslin family leave the South.

The question of Issac's action (repudiating the land) as a noble one depends upon interpretation—whether mere rejection and transcendence of evil is a positive or negative action or whether more positive action is desired. Faulk-
ner's response was Melvillian or Hawthornian—that is, that mere repudiation is a negative stance and is not sufficient involvement in the stream of life. This response is manifest in Faulkner's portrayal of the Hightowers and Horace Benbows. In Paris, Faulkner said that "a man ought to do more than just repudiate. Ike should have been more affirmative instead of shunning people" (Cynthia Grier, "The Art of Fiction"). Several critics have agreed. Among them is Olga Vickery, who says that "in rejecting sin, Isaac also rejects humanity . . . holds himself aloof from close human ties . . . Man must leave the Garden . . . in order to discover his humanity . . . Isaac is virtuous but ineffective" (The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 178).

The theme of endurance is equally important to Go Down, Moses. When asked how long the land would be cursed, Isaac answered, "It will be long . . . But it will be all right because the Negroes will endure (p. 299). Like Faulkner, Isaac posits the idea that if the Negro is patient—and he must be—everything will right itself. Isaac extolls the virtues of the Negroes. When edmonds speaks of their promiscuity, emotionalism, and instability, Isaac counteracts these indictments with praise of their endurance and "pity and tolerance and forbearance and fidelity and love of children . . . whether their own or not, black or white" (p. 295). Gavin Stevens in Intruder in the Dust makes a similar statement, as did Faulkner on several occasions, one during an
The curse is brought full circle when Roth Edmonds's mistress, the mulatto granddaughter of Tennis's Jim, Old Carothers's Negro grandson, brings her and Edmonds's son to Isaac's tent. Isaac is upset when he recognizes that she is a Negro and his kin, and he exclaims, "Take it . . . Take it out of my tent . . . " (Go Down, Moses, pp. 78-79). Roth, like his ancestor, has committed miscegenation and incest, if unwittingly, and he tries to atone by giving his mistress and offspring cash, just as Old Carothers had paid his in the past with money and land. But this Negro is educated and intelligent and cannot be bought off. Ike shows some compassion for the girl when he touches her hand. Since there is still the ingrained Southern rejection of the girl as a Negro and the hard shell of prejudice dominates, this is an act he finds difficult. She must help him by moving her hand toward his.

In Go Down, Moses, the Negroes act as moral and social norms for the white man, and in this role, they point up the attitudes of a world caught up in time, in addition to amplifying the slow evolution of Negro-white relationships. The McCaslin-Edmonds-Beauchamp family serves as the focal point which illustrates the history of the development of Southern culture from the ante-bellum past to about the beginning of the Second World War.

Intruder in the Dust (1948), though not the best of Faulkner's novels, is important to this discussion because
of its emphasis upon racial and social problems of the South. In terms of themes, approach, and development, it bears an obvious relationship to *Go Down, Moses*. Its time is set as 1935 or 1940. The tone is regional, and the novel involves a study of the ambivalence experienced by the liberal Southerner, who recognizes in his heart of hearts the humanity of the Negro but, at the same time, finds it difficult to cast aside the prejudice derived from his Southern heritage.

Because of the time the novel appeared, many have considered it more a political statement from an indignant Southerner rejecting the FEPC than a work of art. Faulkner propounds the argument that the South must be allowed to work out its own problems without interference from the North, a statement which he repeated often in his private life and which Gavin Stevens reiterates when he says, "I'm defending Sambo from the North and East and West--the outlanders who will fling him decades back . . . by forcing on us laws based on the idea that man's injustice to man can be abolished over-night by the police . . . injustice is ours, the South's. We must expiate and abolish it ourselves, alone and without help not even . . . advice" (*Intruder in the Dust*, pp. 203-204). In like manner, Faulkner said: "The curse of slavery . . . and intolerable condition . . . the South has got to work that curse out and it will, if it's let alone. It can't be compelled to do it" (*Faulkner in the University*, pp. 79-80). And once again Gavin Stevens echoes Faulkner in his long
statement on pages 153-156 of *Intruder in the Dust*, which projects the importance and wisdom of defending the South as the only homogeneous region. This statement ends with another echo: "We—he and us—the Negro and the white man—should confederate: swap him the rest of the economic and political and cultural privileges which are his right, for the reversion of his capacity to wait and endure and survive. Then we would prevail" (*Intruder in the Dust*, p. 156).

Faulkner often expressed the idea that children and old women are more compassionate and understanding than adult males, mainly because they do not mix these emotions with the logic with which males are prone to approach a problem. Ephriam, Alack Sanders grandfather, advises: "Young folks and womens, they aint cluttered. They can listen. But a middle-year man . . . they cant listen. They aint got time. They're too busy with facts . . . If you ever needs to get anything done outsied the common run, dont waste your time on the men folks; get the womens and children to working at it" (*Ibid.*, pp. 71-72). Accordingly, Gavin Stevens, an intellectual, often loses, in his veraciousness, the principles in which Faulkner believes. Gavin's is the approach of words. Yet, he serves as the mentor for his youthful innocent nephew, Chick Mallison, who, in his initiation to life, is trying to resolve his mixed feelings about his historical Southern heritage and his personal belief that somehow this is not enough. In his seeking, Mallison takes matters into his own
hands and goes beyond what is expected of him. With Mrs. Habersham and his Negro companion, Aleck Sanders, he becomes the doer and eventually the guide for Gavin's own development. Gavin asks Mallison: "When did you really begin to believe him . . . Maybe I'm not too old to learn" (Ibid., p. 126).

Though disillusioned by his society, Charles Mallison does not shut himself away from humanity as Isaac McCaslin does. He decides to involve himself, and in this way he seeks to improve the situation. Lucas serves as moral and social catalyst for Mallison, Gavin Stevens, and the unthinking mob as they wrestle with their preconceived, stereotyped beliefs that because Lucas is a Negro, he is capable of acting in a certain way (in this case murdering) and he is guilty. Lucas is specifically, suspiciously, significantly, and intentionally silent. The mob and Gavin proceed according to what is expected of them; Mallison defies the social code and conventions and does the unexpected (he proceeds to prove Lucas innocent). As Olga Vickery observes: "There are three segments of society, Faulkner seems to say, the liberal white Southerner who acts, the female of the species, and the Negro himself, represented by Aleck Sanders, who must take the cooperative responsibility for change" (The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 156). Aleck Sanders is forced by the circumstance of his subordinate role to become involved, though his wish is to make himself anonymous in the Negro community until the trouble is dispersed. Faulkner once said: "My Negro boys
down on the plantation would fight against the North with me
... I have known Negroes all my life ... I know how they
feel ... I have people who say they are Negroes writing
... You mean well for us ... but you do harm" (Lion in
the Garden, p. 258). Aleck Sanders reiterates the Negroes'
desire to remain uninvolved in his comment about the Jeffer-
son Negroes' attitude toward Lucas: "It's the ones like Lucas
makes trouble for everybody" (Intruder in the Dust, p. 85).
It is true that any person who dares to act or speak contrary
to the accepted standards of a society constitutes a threat
of unrest. But the neutral response of the Negroes of Jef­
ferson is no more effectual than the surface response of the
majority of the whites.

Like their real Southern counterparts, the people of
Jefferson, regardless of class, band together, for right or
wrong, in their effort to defend the white man and exact a
judgment against the Negro. As a free Negro intent upon
demanding his place in the society, Lucas is representative
of the threatening "out-group." As Faulkner once said in an
interview, "The South is composed of several levels and
classes of people each with its own life style but all capa­
ble of cohesive action in the face of a threat to the South­
ern way of life. Their differences then become as one"
(Lion in the Garden, p. 123). From the above statement, one
might deduce that in spite of one's race, education, or posi­
tion in life, the customs and conventions of one's cultural
heritage are most significantly responsible for the struc­
turing and ordering of one's philosophy. Miss Habersham, Aleck, and Charles Mallison are representative of the exception to these customs and conventions, although from the beginning their involvement might have been more one of necessity than commitment. Miss Habersham because she and Molly Beauchamp grew up together "almost inextricably as sisters," Charles because of his compelling need to obligate Lucas by cancelling his own obligation, and Aleck Sanders because he has no choice.

Lucas's appearance and behavior do not allow society to classify him according to the Negro myths or other qualifying labels. His is a personal identification independent of race. He avoids the stereotyped behavior of the "nigger." Consequently, his presence is an aggravation to Yoknapatawpha County, merely because it is representative of a threat and a defiance of the caste-ordering of the societal pattern on which the County operates. Accordingly, the mob is elated by the chance which Lucas's unfortunate predicament presents to judge and sentence him as the murderer of a white man, since this will prove their classification of him as "nigger."

Gavin Stevens's verbal prowess is important to this work only as it relates to Charles Mallison's action, as it illuminates his action, and as it places it in some workable context. Gavin admonishes Charles that it is important that men continue to believe that "a human life is valuable simply because it has a right to keep on breathing no matter what
pigment . . . and are willing to defend that right at any price . . . with enough ones willing to be more than grieved and shamed Lucas will no longer run the risk of needing without warning to be saved . . . " (Intruder in the Dust, p. 244).

In like manner, Faulkner in his latter years seemed to embrace this advice. He decided to become one of the "doers," and he began to speak out against the evils of the South, while at the same time he clung tenaciously to his right to defend it.
CHAPTER V

SYNTHESIS

The South was William Faulkner's native land. He had a feeling for and about the land that was both realistic and romantic; in Faulkner's thinking, the preservation of it was closely related to the salvation of Man. Thus, the natural, unsophisticated, unspoiled character gains importance in Faulkner's narrative scheme as the man of endurance, as a link between the past and the present, and as one who will be able to prevail over the evils of the technical and materialistic modern society. Faulkner's feeling about the South was one that perhaps the reader cannot understand. For as Quentin Compson says to his friend, Shreve: "You can't understand it. You would have to be born there."

Sartoris is the first important book of the Yoknapatawpha saga since it presents the location, characters, and many of the themes with which Faulkner would be concerned in the subsequent works. In the second phase of his career, he uses these as a means of exploring the human condition. In the third phase, beginning with The Hamlet, Faulkner concentrates on three concerns: the invasion of the Snopes type, the Southern problem as it relates to Negroes (especially after the War), and the attempt to find a solution to this
problem. The pivotal setting is the South with which Faulkner was thoroughly familiar, since he had the advantage of first-hand knowledge of its history, heritage, and tradition. Frederick Hoffman has described this knowledge as "a curious mixture of the practical and the romantic" and Yoknapatawpha County as "a genuinely convincing setting for the elaborate development of moral fable and legend of universal human circumstance" (William Faulkner, New York, 1961, p. 21).

The themes of Faulkner's fiction are many, and they cover the whole human experience. They are used by Faulkner as a means of defining and ordering this experience. Perhaps the most dominant theme is an archetypal one—the displacement of innocence by experience. This theme is obvious to some degree in most of Faulkner's works. As John Longley explains it in The Tragic Mask:

Under the pressure of the times, each character commits actions he or she knows are wrong, and the wrong never goes unpunished . . . they begin in the noblest kind of human love and human loyalty . . . completely untainted by any notion of self-profit or self-aggrandizement. The characters whose innocence has been destroyed must . . . repair his loss of innocence or himself be destroyed. These actions are violent . . . extra-legal and have implicit in them a defiance of order (pp. 178-181).

In most of Faulkner's fiction, the matter of time is significant to the organic whole—one part depends upon the other so thoroughly that a complete reading of the work is necessary before the final understanding can be reached. As Olga Vickery has pointed out, time, in Faulkner's scheme, "is constantly weaving a pattern in opposition to the 'de-
sign," whether inherited or self-created, that the individ-
ual seeks to live by . . . " (The Novels of William Faulkner,
Baton Rouge, 1959, p. 92). In all situations, man must
reckon with time. As Gavin Stevens says in Intruder in the
Dust, "Time is all man had . . . all that stood between him
and the death he feared and abhorred" (p. 37). Accordingly,
its use becomes important in Faulkner's works, but more in
relation to the consciousness of the characters than in terms
of narrative development. Literal time has little importance;
it is the pressure of past upon present and present upon
future. Any moment out of time is but an integral part of
the continuum of history. Its importance is manifested in
the individual experience. As Faulkner expressed it to an
interviewer: "Time is a fluid condition which has no exis-
tence except in the momentary avatars of individual people.
There is no such thing as was--only is. If was existed,
there would be no grief or sorrow" (Lion in the Garden, eds.
Meriwether and Milgate, New York, 1968, p. 255). Time is
not a fixed condition; it is the sum of the combined intel-
ligence of all men.

According to Frederick Hoffman, "Faulkner's genius is
not concerned with discussing a 'representative world' of
specimens and types. Classes of people, economic strata,
political maneuvering are not important . . . [his works]
are the means of a deep examination of the urgent drives and
the moral imperatives of man . . . " (William Faulkner, p. 23).
Faulkner seems to say that because the individual often resists recognizing the disorder of the modern world, he finds himself in difficulty—a difficulty he tries to circumvent by adopting a rigid and unreasonable response to life based on some principle of tradition which results in little more than a surface adjustment. Irving Malin states that Faulkner's "own region . . . is grounded upon ideals as abstract and inhuman as the personal design . . . the social and religious system resembles personal compulsion in that it does not allow individual Southerners to realize their own potentialities for human completion" (William Faulkner: An Interpretation, Stanford, 1957, p. 6). Faulkner implies that the victory of the North did not change the traditional order—that the emphasis merely shifted from the institution of slavery to Negroes as the cause of the South's problems. The freed Negroes have been by far more of an object of fear than the slaves ever were. Stereotyped standards have been employed to rationalize that fear. For example, Lucas, though he is obviously "different," is placed in the connotation of "nigger," and when he is unluckily discovered beside the murdered body of a white man, he is considered to be automatically guilty because he is a "nigger."

Because of this abstract thinking, response to the Negro is standard and pre-determined, and the ever-present threat of miscegenation, another important Faulkner theme, is
for advice and help when she is experiencing some difficulty. Although Dilsey is one of Faulkner's more important characters, the reader is told little about her private life except that she leaves the Compsons' kitchen, goes to her cabin, shuts the door, comes out of the cabin the next morning to return to the Compsons' kitchen; or, on occasion, that she is ill and that Nancy Mannigoe is substituting as cook whenever it is convenient to the story plot for Nancy to appear.

Faulkner seldom mentions Negroes who have "accomplished." The rare exceptions include such characters as Uncle Parsham (The Reivers) or the "college-bred principal in The Mansion. And this in spite of the fact that many Negroes had succeeded in all areas and on high levels before Faulkner's writing career ended. On several occasions, Faulkner admitted that the white man can never know the Negro. He himself dealt realistically with the Negro as far as he was prepared to do so. If one takes a one-sided perspective, the account is both realistic and accurate.

In Faulkner's design, individuals are marked by their ability or inability to come to terms with life. The responses of the Negro characters are often ambivalent—a wish for freedom (to live as one pleases, usually in emulation of the white man's life style) and a counter-wish for the paternalistic atmosphere to which they have been accustomed. Faulkner's opinion seems to have been that the Negroes prefer the latter role. In Yoknapatawpha, they try their wings
"up North," but they soon return "home" disillusioned by the Yankees' treatment of them. In Faulkner's fiction and in the South, Negroes have four choices: to remain and submit, to remain and engage in a constant struggle (as did Joe Christmas), to go North where one can live unidentified as white (if one is white enough), or to endure. For the most part, Faulkner's characters endure. The less white blood in the character's veins, the less problem, according to Faulkner. He speaks in his private life of the blood of the races as being one and the same; nevertheless, in his fiction, blood types are deliberately kept at antithetical poles—warring one against the other. Only on rare occasions (e.g., Lucas) do they fuse harmoniously. But even in Lucas's case, references are made to his McCaslin blood and his Negro blood, and it seems implied that whatever good qualities Lucas possesses stem from his McCaslin blood. These two bloods, constantly at war, keep the characters of mixed blood torn asunder. However, in his characterizations, Faulkner has not drawn a definite dividing line between "good" and "bad." At the University of Virginia, he stated:

I've never tried to set up what might be a pattern to measure irrational human behavior . . . All human behavior is unpredictable and, considering man's frailty . . . and . . . the ramshackle universe he functions in, it's . . . all rational . . . . I think that you really can't say that any man is good or bad . . . man is the victim of himself . . . his fellows . . . his own nature, or his environment . . . He tries to do the best he can within his rights (Faulkner in the University, eds. Gwynn and Blotner, Charlottesville, 1959, pp. 25-26).
The ability to endure is the characteristic which Faulkner emphasized as admirable.

Faulkner often said that he did not use his characters as personae, but it is obvious that at times he does. Their statements are often, as has been shown in the previous chapters of this study, a repetition of his public statements with little deviation of tone or mode of expression. The similarity is most noticeable when Faulkner speaks through his characters on the race issue. But Faulkner said: "I listen to the voices . . . and when I put down what the voices say, it's right. Sometimes I don't like what they say, but I don't change it" (The Faulkner-Cowley File, New York, 1966, p. 114). At the University of Virginia, Faulkner explained that the writer does not have the time to identify with a character, and if a character expresses what the author believes, this then becomes the character's (Faulkner in the University, pp. 25-26). About Gavin Stevens, the character with whom Faulkner has been coupled most often, he said: "He knew a good deal less about people than he knew about the law . . . he had a good deal less judgment than his nephew did" (Ibid., p. 140), an assessment which this investigator explores in Chapter IV. Continually, Faulkner denied that he consciously spoke through his characters or that their thoughts were his. Yet, his brother, John, writes in My Brother Bill (New York, 1963):

There is somebody who goes into every piece of writing and that somebody is the man who writes it. I
have never known anyone who identified himself with his writings more than Bill did. He seemed to be as much a part of the story as were the characters in it. Sometimes it was hard to tell which was which . . . (p. 275).

The traditions of the Old South serve as the touchstone for Faulkner's system of values, and as he manifests these in his dramatizations, man's worth is not dependent upon surface, artificial standards, though these are the yardstick in contemporary society. For example, Sutpen is born in the mountains where the distinctions among men are established on the basis of what a man is, not on the worth of his material possessions. It is not until this family descends the mountain to the underworld of civilization that he becomes aware that there are other measures. Faulkner placed his faith in the verities of the heart--pity, courage, honor, pride, compassion. At the University of Virginia, he said that

they are not virtues, or one doesn't try to practice them . . . simply because they are good. One . . . tries to practice them simply because they are the edifice on which the whole history of man has been founded and by means of which . . . as a race he has endured . . . despite his frailty because he accepts and believes in those verities (Faulkner in the University, p. 133).

Thus, Faulkner rejected the Puritan emphasis on righteousness and rigid, sober living for the sake of religious ritual; his emphasis was on human will. Man must gain his salvation by individual effort. In this way, Faulkner believed that man would endure and prevail, whatever the cost.
The William Faulkner of the 1950's was in some respects a different man from the Faulkner of his youth. In his latter years, he began to speak out on important issues. In *William Faulkner of Oxford* (Louisiana, 1965), he is reported in the words of Earl Wortham, the Negro blacksmith in Oxford, to have said: "You all is good people and all, and I'm going to try to prepare a way for it to be easier on you than what it is been" (p. 168). The Faulkner family took little responsibility for William's actions or words. John explains that Bill "was as hardheaded as the rest of us . . . What he said and did that . . . was it. He never made explanations . . . Though his sayings and doings did not suit us, we made no move to oppose him . . . " (*My Brother Bill*, p. 219). In the essay "A Note on Sherwood Anderson," Faulkner commented that in order "to be a writer, one has first got to be what he is, what he was born . . . You have to have somewhere to start from then you begin to learn" (*Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters*, ed. James Meriwether, New York, 1968, p. 8). Faulkner said of himself that he felt that he had passed through three stages in his attitude toward people [and] his own characters: "The first stage . . . when you believe everything and everybody is good . . . the second . . . when you realize no one is good. Then at last you come to realize that everyone is capable of almost anything--heroism or cowardice, tenderness or cruelty" (*Lion in the Garden*, p. 32).
It is obvious, however, that Faulkner loved the South while at the same time he, like Quentin Compson, hated its less complimentary qualities—the intolerance, injustice, and the hatred. Faulkner said in an interview: "It's my country, my native land and I love it . . . . it has its faults and I will try to correct them . . ." (Faulkner in the University, p. 83). Although he clung to the "gentle life" and the "pleasant memories" of "those years of long ago," Faulkner recognized that the present time is one of meaningless movement for anyone who is unable to relate the past to the present and to see its prophecy for the future.

Faulkner was a product of his Southern environment and of the legend which permeated his formative years. He could not fully escape direct conditioning. He lived in Mississippi most of his life; he loved it as his inherited land and the South as his inherited tradition. Yet, it is obvious that in his latter years he, like his third-generation heroes, came to realize that there was much to be condemned in the social pattern of the South, not so much because the design was wrong, but because of what too many white Southerners tried to do with the design. He recognized that in the New South rigidity of organization, social or religious, could lead only to destruction and further disaster. His sympathies were definitely with the generation which would have to face the problems engendered by the rigidities of the past. However, the ambivalence of his
mind in terms of solutions, responsibilities, and loyalties continued to plague him to the last. He was aware of the wrongness of the design, but he could understand, and even romanticize, the need in men's minds to continue it. Malin observes that a "person with a design cannot change because he cannot part with whatever value his design can offer. He is doomed . . . His [Faulkner's] novels rebel against those patterns which equate rigidity with order and do not permit a man to prove that he has the strength to stand alone" (William Faulkner: An Interpretation, p. 11). This statement marks the difference of a Sutpen and men of Faulkner's caliber; their fundamental beliefs remain in conflict.

In the sometimes seeming "change of heart" or "recognitions" inherent in Faulkner's novels, there is not so much a rejection of Southern mores as a pointing of the way to a reconciliation of the Southern code with contemporary circumstances, a recognition of the need to adjust the code to meet these changes, and a realization that without such change the code will be lost because it cannot survive as it once related to the past. The verities are not denied but are merely heightened by the awareness that certain conditions no longer exist and that a good trait can become a tragic flaw if it is allowed to function without restraint or rational concern. Repeatedly, Faulkner dramatized that without such restraint the code becomes no more than a surface symbol as it does in the situation in which Rosa Millard is
involved in *The Unvanquished*. This is exemplified by her divided efforts to cling to the romantic past and to survive in the realistic present. If Faulkner's recognitions have any purpose, they show that the verities are timeless and therefore pertinent to all times and places. At the University of Virginia, Faulkner said that

> the New South has got too many people in it and it is changing the country too much... it gets rid of the part of Mississippi that I liked when I was young, which was the forest. Though it's foolish to be against progress because everyone is a part of progress... Probably anyone remembers with something of nostalgia... his young years. He forgets the unpleasant, the unhappy things that happened, he remembers only the nice things... (*Faulkner in the University*, p. 98).

As Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha saga progresses, the demise of the aristocracy becomes more and more obvious, and a new dominant middle-class, composed of the rising Snopes type and the Negroes, develops to take its place.

Faulkner's novels are testimony to the failure of the Southern society to amalgamate the freed Negroes. The legal freedom is never truly realized. Faulkner seemed to feel that Southerners were much like Joanna Burden: they had begun to assume the attitude that perhaps conditions could not be changed "because the Negro would be incapable of change."

Faulkner's statements vacillate and, occasionally, are contradictory. Many instances are mere generalities, but in spite of this, it is possible to recognize his point of view. At the University of Virginia, he made the following statement which again is reflective of the attitude of Joanna
Burden, but it is reflective also of Faulkner's vacillating beliefs about the distinguishing characteristics of blood: "Perhaps the Negro is not yet capable of more than second-class citizenship. His tragedy may be that so far he is competent for equality only in the ratio of his white blood" (Ibid., p. 210). Though Faulkner denied that he believed in a distinction of blood, the emphasis of his novels makes it plain that his concern, although not the obsession some critics would make it, is not completely objective. In his public statements, as well as in his fiction, Faulkner assigned personality characteristics and racial potential to white and Negro blood. Though his characters may speak for themselves, at times they seem to speak for and with Faulkner.

In the last quoted statement, one interesting usage is the word competent. One must be competent for equality; it is not an assumed right or a recognized condition, but a condition earned. In an interview in 1958, Faulkner said that the Negro is not competent for equality because he could not hold and keep it even if it were forced on him with bayonets; that once the bayonets were removed, the first smart and ruthless man, black or white, who came along would take it away from him, because he, the Negro, is not yet capable of, or refuses to accept, the responsibilities of equality . . . the white man must take him in hand and teach him that responsibility . . . that, in order to be free and equal, he must first be worthy of it and then forever afterward work to hold and keep and defend it (Ibid., p. 211).
In 1971, many Southerners use the same argument as their reason for withholding equal opportunities from the Negro. As discussed earlier in this study, the history of the African Negro has proved that he did not come from a stock of irresponsible or uncivilized people. The ironic aspect of Faulkner's statement is that the white man, whom he depicts, for the most part, as being without the verities he prizes so much, is to be the one to teach the Negro responsibility. As an added requirement, Faulkner states that the Negro "must learn to cease forevermore thinking like a Negro and acting like a Negro" (Faulkner in the University, p. 212). In Faulkner's mind, peaceful relations between the races mean conformity to the white man's standard and life style. The responsibility for reconciling the two races, Faulkner saw as that of the South's, since those persons in the South who, "having grown up with and lived among Negroes for generations, are capable in individual cases of liking and trusting individual Negroes"; consequently, the white Southerner "alone can teach the Negro responsibility of personal morality and rectitude," because, Faulkner adds, "what he must learn are the hard things—self-restraint, honesty, dependability, purity" (Ibid.). The history of the Southern white man does not show that he has been particularly strong in these areas.

Murray Faulkner expressed bewilderment at the statements purported to have been made by his brother which indi-
cate that he considered the races to be equal. He explained that William Faulkner "never said anything in his presence to indicate any such conviction" (The Falkners of Mississippi, Baton Rouge, 1967, p. 191). And, of course, Faulkner did not say that he considered the races to be equal. That man should be able to assume the responsibilities of an involved citizen seems to be the connotation he assigned to equality. Faulkner often spoke of liberty or freedom or equality as a responsibility rather than a right; a privilege, rather than a license.

In a statement to Virginians at the University of Virginia, Faulkner expressed his idea of how this competency could be attained as a specific program of education designed for Negroes which would require them to "pass the board" (an entrance examination) in order to prove their competency to obtain an education. Failure would relegate them to trade schools or the Army. This plan is typical of the impassable barriers which Southerners have placed in the way of Negroes. Faulkner considered education to be the common ground of the white and Negro races, and he said, "We have got to find some mutual ground to meet on, not socially so much as economically, and of course that implies education, culture—that is, the Negro can be equal without having to come in and sleep with you" (Faulkner in the University, p. 218). In Absalom, Absalom!, Henry Sutpen, too, considers Charles Bon an equal, even in some instances a superior, until he is made aware of
Charles Bon's Negro blood and his intention to marry Henry's sister. The miscegenation is a matter which Henry cannot reconcile with his Southern beliefs.

In his plan for uplifting the Negro, Faulkner spoke more in terms of training than educating. On one occasion, when describing the freed Nego, he chose to use the unfortunate analogy of "unbridled horses" loose in the streets. This analogy was chosen, as he later explained, because the horse can be trained:

We'll assume that while the horse was a slave... he was a docile, well-behaved horse. But then... the burden of slavery was lifted from him and he was suddenly free... he is still capable of being a docile member of society, but the condition in which he was compelled to be a docile member is gone... we will have to establish a new condition in which he is docile not through pressure but because he himself wants to be (Ibid., p. 213).

When he was questioned about the irresponsible white people and the possibility that they might need to be educated, Faulkner's remarks became more vague:

The white man has got to be himself capable to teach the Negro to be more responsible than he... But... the Negro is not going to wait right now while the white man educates himself in order to educate the Negro. We've got to do both at the same time (Ibid., p. 213).

In accordance with his concern about the need of education for the Negro, Faulkner set up a Foundation using the Nobel Prize money which he designated "to be used for worthy young people." He emphasized "the need for young colored boys who showed good possibilities... to get an
education that would enable them to come back and teach their
own people" (Faulkner of Oxford, pp. 186-187).

Like John Skates, Faulkner saw the reluctance of many
Southerners to act to help the Negro's condition as a fear of
"a noisy minority... that will go to any length before
they will risk in any way improving the Negro's class condi­
tion, for economic reasons" (Faulkner in the University,
p. 213). In Faulkner's South, as in Yoknapatawpha, this is
largely the poor unsuccessful white man who "sees the Negro
with the same sort of land he's got, with poorer tools and
not as much credit as he's got, make a better job of it... His only superiority over the Negro is not economic...
It's because he's white... and he's going to do everything
he can to keep that Negro black, because it makes him feel
good" (Ibid., p. 223). However, Faulkner recognized the
merits of action over words. In relation to the racial
issue, perhaps he might have followed his own advice and
allowed his life to show more action than words. In spite
of his goodwill toward the Negro and his desire to expiate
the untenable conditions under which he is forced to exist,
Faulkner could act only within the confines of his heritage,
his society, and his race. He assumed the burden, but he
experienced difficulty recognizing the Negro as equal to the
white man. Social acceptance was difficult for him.

Faulkner felt that there should be leadership from a
state like Virginia because the "liberals in Mississippi are
hemmed in... by the sort of people that burn crosses and whip Negroes and compose lynching parties," and he is afraid in the face of their threats (Ibid., p. 222). However, Faulkner emphasized that every man has a "responsibility toward mankind... toward people that have not been trained to do right..." (Ibid., p. 236), a belief which Gavin Stevens reiterates in Intruder in the Dust and the effecting of which Faulkner considered mandatory to the salvation of the South. Faulkner, in his private life and his public life, placed the emphasis on the dignity of individual man. Accordingly, he expected the Negro to share in the responsibility for his uplifting. In an interview, Faulkner stated that "man has got to accept freedom or accept servitude—one of the two completely... there cannot be degrees of human freedom..." Because of his own upbringing, he never had sympathy for those who complained of their own lot and expected others to improve it. He said: "All men are born with the equal right to attain freedom, not to be given freedom... and keep it as they are responsible. People should not be given anything as a free gift" (Lion in the Garden, p. 114). Somehow one must wonder how Faulkner related this statement to the American Negro whose freedom was taken from him and who has not been granted the full opportunity to regain it.

Faulkner saw the race problem as basically an economic one aggravated by the difference of skin color. As he expressed it: "Much of the economy... is based on an inner
quality of man . . . It's no longer a question of caste . . . of money, . . . now it's a question of skin, and they wish to continue an economy in which they make a certain profit because a certain amount of the population, because of the color of the skin, is compelled to live in a little [humble] fashion . . . ." (Ibid.).

Faulkner saw the solution as patience: The "only practical way to do it . . . people must be calm . . . the victims of the injustice, must . . . have the patience" (Ibid.). The Negro must endure. Consequently, in his speeches and letters, he admonished the Negro and the N.A.A.C.P. to go slow and not to give the white man "the advantage of a chance to cloud the issue by that purely automatic sympathy for the underdog simply because he is under" (Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters, ed. James Meriwether, New York, 1965, p. 107).

In the somewhat dubious statement which follows, Faulkner advocated the nuisance threat as more effective than martyrdom:

Every day . . . send to the white school to which he was entitled by his ability and capacity to go, a student . . . fresh and cleanly dressed, courteous, without threat or violence, to seek admission; when he was refused I would forget about him as an individual, but tomorrow . . . send another one, still fresh and clean and courteous, to be refused in his turn . . . until the white man . . . must recognize that there will be no peace . . . until he himself has solved the dilemma (Ibid., p. 109).

The Negro child is to be presented for approval much the same as an avocado—without emotion, without response. As long as it is necessary, the Negroes are "to send another one" and
"forget about" the discarded specimen. Decency, quietness, courtesy, cleanliness, and dignity are the bases for acceptance; hence, the specimen should be chosen with care. The Negro must be patient and adjust his psychological responses to assure a continuation for as long as it is necessary to show the white man that "there will be no peace until he himself has solved the dilemma." The Negro is to prove his humanity, learn to deserve equality, and learn responsibility, which in essence means the right to the opportunities which other men accept without question.

In a subsequent letter (Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters, p. 107), Faulkner attempted to explain his statements. He distinguishes the Negro as individual and the Negro as race: "Not the individual Negro to abandon or lower one jot his hope and will for equality, but his leaders and organizations to be always flexible and adaptable to circumstances and locality in their methods of gaining it." The validity and sagesness of this statement lessen when one contemplates that it was offered almost one hundred years following the War which supposedly assured the Negro his freedom. In his distinction of the Negro as individual and the Negro as a group, Faulkner seemed to recognize the individual as a manageable threat. By suggesting individual rather than group action, perhaps he recognized the same situation which gave the white Southerner power over the Negro. In his best paternalistic tone, Faulkner advised the Negro to trust the
"goodness" of the white man and to avoid "violence" and "demanding methods," another irony to a people whose very advent into America was colored by violence and demanding methods.

Finally, Faulkner commiserated with the Negro about the fact that the white man has not taught him "cleanliness and independence and rectitude and reliability"; consequently, the race must lift itself by its own "bootstraps" to a level of competency "for the responsibilities of equality" so that the race can "hold on to it when it gets it." The Negro's tragedy is that "these virtues of responsibility are the white man's virtues," yet, the Negro must "be his superior in them" (Ibid., p. 112). Faulkner wrote as if the virtues he dramatized in his fiction as universal and God-given have in private life been placed in the keeping of the white man or, at least, are peculiar only to his race.

Before the Negro was forcibly brought to this country, he had evidenced in his own country his capability for assuming responsibility. Present-day Africa furnishes further proof. When the colonizing countries (e.g., Great Britain) have had the foresight to allow the opportunity, the African Negro has accepted and utilized it; in sections where the opportunity has been denied (e.g., South Africa), the African Negro has exercised the "patience" and "passivity" to which Faulkner refers and for the same reasons that the American Negro has exercised these--because the circum-
stances imposed by the white man have forced him to. The white colonist, like the white Southerner, has not exhibited a superior life style based on racial or physical reasons, but one assured by force and violence. As Faulkner's Ratliff says, "he is no better, merely stronger."

John Faulkner points out that his brother never voiced any anguish over the fact that some of the family had held slaves. He "believed that though the Negroes had been freed they were still our responsibility" (The Faulkners of Mississippi, p. 191). Therefore he cared for Mammy Callie and Uncle Ned until their deaths and also any of the Negroes "who felt they had a claim on him because they'd worked for him." He lowered the prices of groceries in his store "because it was not the Negroes' fault that prices went up and he wasn't going to penalize them for it" (My Brother Bill, pp. 195-196).

Many of Faulkner's statements, though ambivalent and vacillating, have been logical and practical. In response to the "separate but equal" principle of Mississippi's answer to the Supreme Court's decision on school segregation, he suggested one good school system rather than the addition of a "not good enough" Negro system to an already "not good enough" white system, and one which "makes no distinction among pupils except that of simple ability" (Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters, pp. 92 et seqq.). He saw as a tragedy the impasse resulting from the "two
apparently irreconcilable facts": the 1954 Supreme Court decision and the Southerners' declaration that white and Negro pupils would never sit in the same classroom. His hope was in those people "who not only believe they can be reconciled," but who love the South. Faulkner did not equate the bettering of the Negroes' condition with the doom of the white race: "What the Negro threatens is not the Southern white man's social system but the Southern white man's economic system... established on an obsolescence—the artificial inequality of man..." (Ibid., p. 96).

In the article cited above, Faulkner spoke in a glowing statement of the Negro's advances in society; later, he juxtaposed his praise with a further questioning of the Negro's equality and competence for equality, using as supportive evidence Thomas Jefferson's and Abraham Lincoln's beliefs that the Negro was not yet competent for equality. Faulkner cautions that ninety years later "nobody can say whether their opinions would be different." However, he recognized that in spite of this doubt, "with the support of the Federal Government the Negro is going to gain the right to try and see if he is fit for equality. And if the Southern white man cannot trust him with something as mild as equality, what is the Southern white man going to do when he has power—the power of his own fifteen millions of unanimity backed by the Federal Government—when the only check on that power will be that Federal Government which
is already the Negro's ally?" (Ibid., pp. 97-98). His feeling seemed to be that Negroes are not equal, but that their equality had been forced upon the South by the Court's decision, and as he said on another occasion, when you have snow, you deal with snow:

It may be that all of us curse the day when the first slave was sold into this country, but that's too late now—to live in this country . . . and to be against giving a man equality . . . that he's capable and responsible for is like living in Alaska and being against snow—you've got snow. It's foolish to be against it—you've got it (Faulkner in the University, p. 223).

To the end, Faulkner's moral view was erratically developed. On one hand, he spoke of the American Negro's "naked grandfather . . . eating rotten elephant or hippo meat in an African rain-forest" (Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters, p. 96), and four months earlier he had declared "that there is no such thing as an Anglo-Saxon heritage and an African heritage. There is the heritage of man" (Lion in the Garden, p. 257). Although Faulkner's moral view of the racial issue vacillated, he succeeded by his statements in alienating most Southern conservatives and many Northerners. To the South, he was a traitor; to the North, an indignant Southerner. Though, in relation to the average Southerner, he was a liberal, in relation to the race issue, he must nevertheless be classified as a Southern conservative. His responses were calm and practical, straddling the middle line.

Like Abraham Lincoln, Faulkner's moral vision of the
Negro included the Christian principle of equality of all mankind, but this included the Negro mainly because in Faulkner's or Lincoln's environment, immediate or otherwise, he could not be ignored. This view does not assure a love or genuine concern for the Negro. His presence has been an untenable situation to be dealt with. Accordingly, in a manner which can be likened to Lincoln's concern for the nation, Faulkner's solution was to "emancipate" the Negro if this were the only way to save the South, but if Mississippi—the South—could be saved without such an action, this would be acceptable. Also, if it came to a choice of saving Mississippi, the Southern white community, or the Negro, Faulkner would choose Mississippi, the Southern white community, the Negro, in that order.

The racial issue of the South in Faulkner's work can be approached as a metaphoric crystallization of the more extensive overall human problems of the New South which extend into all facets of societal difficulties—economic, moral, psychological, social. The Negro problem is considered to be the curse of the South which has engendered all other problems. The one and total solution Faulkner recognized as a humane approach facilitated by love, and the recognition of the humanity and frailties of all types— the Snopeses, the Sartorises, the Joe Christmases, the Lena Groves, the Lucas Beauchamps, the Dilseys. These "sons of bitches," Gavin says, are all in the same boat; consequently,
their responsibility is to each other. The question in Faulkner's mind was how to effect this solution and how to reconcile it with the deeply ingrained Southern prejudices. The hope, Faulkner seemed to say, is in Man himself—in his simple faith in himself and in his fellowman. The most natural and simple expression of all Faulkner posits as the humanity of man, uncomplicated by the outer pressures of a complex society and predicated on a simple faith in man's ability to endure and to be increasingly better than he thinks he is. Humanity, Faulkner seemed to say, is manifested by an outward extension, a reaching out of personalities rather than a morbid, self-seeking introspection which can lead only to annihilation, unbearable unhappiness, and eventually nihilism. The choice is Man's. The answer is individual while at the same time depending upon community action; action rather than rhetoric or surface manifestation is the means.

In Faulkner's approach, the problem of man's inhumanity to man breaks out of the mold of the South, and it becomes the universal problem of man's inhumanity everywhere, regardless of race, color, or social class—a condition which Faulkner emphasized as leading man to grief and destruction. The stability of the Church, the Old Order, or the simple natural life is no longer present, and man must find his stability—his reason for being—elsewhere. Faulkner's suggestion to man was that he should seek within himself,
but himself as a social creature. This adjustment must be marked by man's tolerance of human frailties which are evident in all of Faulkner's characters—black and white, rich and poor, social and anti-social. This is the sympathetic view epitomized in Dilsey—an idealistic approach which, although it recognizes the power of human nature, denies the possibility of attaining the ultimate because of human nature. Involvement is mandatory. Dilsey's understanding of the human race stems not from a knowledge about them, but a knowledge of them. Dilsey's approach represents an extension of her faith. She does not retaliate in hatred because of the burdens imposed upon her by the Compsons' inadequacies; instead, she loves them much as a mother loves best her offspring who is the least richly endowed. To Mrs. Compson, who badgers her, she gives a mother's love and protection; to Jason, who hates her, she gives a mother's tolerance and love; and to Benjamin, who needs her, she gives love.

Faulkner's mythical Yoknapatawpha County is the frame for the dramatic story of the disintegration of the Old South and the development of the New South—a social procedure beset by all the problems by which humanity is characterized. In most of his novels, Faulkner included at least one character who represents the responsible concerned citizen who involves himself in the stream of life even when failure is imminent. In like manner, Faulkner involved him-
self in his public and private worlds. He recognized the "snow," but he did not know what to do about it, and he was trying not to have to make the decision.

Faulkner loved his native Mississippi. He wrote in the essay, "Mississippi," which originally appeared in Holiday in 1954 and was reprinted in Essays, Speeches, and Public Letters, and is excerpted here in part:

"Home again, his native land; he was born of it and his bones will sleep in it, loving it even while hating some of it . . . he hated the intolerance and injustice; lynching of Negroes . . . the inequality . . . the bigotry . . . But he loves it, it is his . . . Even while hating it . . . Loving all of it even while he had to hate some of it because he knows now that you don't love because you love despite; not for the virtues, but despite the faults (pp. 36 et seq.)."
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The central problem of this study was to explicate further those aspects of Faulkner's life important to his literary career by bringing additional light to bear on the significance of that data to his response to the Negro, individually and as a race, in the factual and fictional worlds of which he was a part.

As a historical inquiry concerned specifically with Faulkner's delineation and depiction of the Negro, the basic and immediate purpose was sixfold: (1) to ascertain any organic pattern of approach to Faulkner's portrayal of the Negro which could be determined from his work, (2) to seek an understanding of the evolution of this pattern of approach, (3) to differentiate, correlate, and substantiate this pattern of approach as one representative of Faulkner the man, Faulkner the author, or as an exemplification of both, (4) to construct a surface comparison of this pattern of approach to the approaches of some other Southern writers, whenever such a comparison was pertinent or relevant, (5) to study the inter-responses of Faulkner's Negro characters in their several involvements with other ethnic and societal stratifications of the Southern structure of Oxford and Yoknapa-
tawpha, and (6) to present in one composite study, designed
to serve students and teachers of Faulkner and the inquiring
reader, a critical commentary on certain key Faulkner works
and criticism that have evolved out of the scholarly studies
of that work and which have greatly influenced the thinking
of Faulknerian scholars.

For the purposes of this study, it was assumed that:
(1) the general classes of Faulkner's dramatizations of the
Negro fall into relatively homogeneous clusters, (2) that
these general clusters are characterized by substantial
intercorrelation of responses, (3) that reliable estimates
of Faulkner's responses may be described in terms of a
limited number of such major clusters, and (4) that these
responses (and the major clusters) are determined by such
characteristics as social attitudes, situational and envi­
ronmental influences, and their interaction. Accordingly,
Faulkner's response to the Negro would vary at different age
levels and career stages.

The study was limited to the three general stages of
Faulkner's career as defined by Frederick Hoffman: (1) the
period of apprenticeship (1924-1929), (2) the "time of
genius" (1929-1936), and (3) the period of "consolidation
and affirmation" (1940-1962). In accordance with these
divisional phases, three groups of Faulkner's works of
varied chronology and genre were considered and have been
cited in this study (see Appendix, p.300).
Some of the principal findings, though not momentous nor necessarily new, do reinforce previous findings and are significant to the study:

1. Faulkner was torn between the South of his heritage and the South of his real life, and he spent the major years of his adult life seeking an understanding and reconciliation between the two.

2. Faulkner recognized that in relation to the Negro ethnic group, the white man has always been the outsider; consequently, he was concerned about the inability of the white man to understand the Negro—a condition which he recognized as one basis of the racial problem.

3. Faulkner showed great compassion for the Negro as the "underdog"; however, his primary concern was for his native land and the deteriorating conditions which the curse of slavery had brought to it.

4. Faulkner was committed to the due process of law; he also recognized that human nature was sometimes a more cogent agent and that man-made laws could not take precedence over moral law.

5. Faulkner believed in the dignity of the individual, and he placed the responsibility for the solution of the Southern problem on whites and blacks—the whites being given the responsibility of teaching and the blacks the responsibility of enduring.
6. Faulkner placed his values in the past, but he recognized that tradition, if it is to survive, must be amended to serve the present. Accordingly, he held to the principle that the past, the present, and the future are one and the same—a continuum of the experiences of mankind.

7. Faulkner made a distinction between liberty and license. Equality and freedom are responsibilities to be earned.

8. Faulkner's characters are, for the most part, dramatized as stereotypes, and they are limited more by thematic structure and literary audience than by Faulkner's personal response.

9. Faulkner employs Negro characters as moral and social norms who, although they cover the range of human frailties, are most often assigned admirable virtues. They, like Shakespeare's fools, often dispense subtle words of wisdom.

10. Faulkner's villainous characters are seldom Negroes; the mulatto, confused by his mixed blood, is the most nearly villainous type.

11. Faulkner's dramatization of the Negro, reflective of the development of his moral view of the Negro, is ambiguous and vacillating, and it varies at different points of development from the early exploration to the affirmation of his later years.

12. Faulkner was a Southerner first, last, and always;
his native South took precedence over all other considerations. His image of the Negro was largely provided by the complacent loyal servant types; he found it difficult to relate to the more articulate demanding types of his later years.

13. Faulkner was serious in his concern about the Southern problem, and he responded as far as he was able within the confines of his heritage, culture, environment, and moral values.

The findings of this study warrant the following conclusions:

1. Faulkner's moral view of the Negro is observable by specific signs, indicators, or correlates in a representative sampling of his work. However, because of the contradictions and vacillations, these clues must be viewed with caution.

2. The responses of the author were approximately, and at the same level of probability, the responses of the man. These responses were determined by social attitudes, situational and environmental influences, and their interaction.

3. Faulkner's Negro characters may be classified in homogeneous clusters characterized by substantial intercorrelation of responses within a cluster.

4. Faulkner found it difficult to reconcile the image of the "new" Negro with the romanticized image of the contented Negro; yet, although he was not able to condone, he
recognized the reasons for the response of the "new" Negro.

5. Faulkner envisioned a link between past and present as a resolution of the evils inherent in the New South; his Negro characters are important elements in the societal scheme; the nucleus—the Old South.

6. Faulkner dealt realistically with the Negro as far as his background allowed him to do so.

7. Although Faulkner's moral view of the Negro varied at different age levels and career stages and his efforts to characterize the Negro were reflected in an uneven progression, there is a continuity in his rational speculation of the Southern "condition," as reviewed in his early and later works, as well as between the relationship of this speculation and the philosophical and religious representations that lay behind this speculation.

Implications of the study regarding further investigation of the problem are: (1) the compilation of authoritative and representative biographical materials of Faulkner's private life and (2) more scholarly investigations and interpretations of Faulkner's works such as Cleanth Brooks's _The Yoknapatawpha Country._
FAULKNER'S WORKS CITED

These works are listed in accordance with the divisional phases outlined by Frederick Hoffman (see pages 40-41). The titles are arranged according to publication dates rather than the date of writing, and the edition cited, if it is different from the original publication date, is included in brackets.

Group I—Apprenticeship (1924-1929):


Group II—Time of Genius (1929-1935):


Collected Stories of William Faulkner (Short Stories). New York: Random House edition, 1950 [Reprinted from These 13 (1931) and Dr. Martino and Other Stories (1934)].


300


Group III—Consolidation and Affirmation (1940-1962):


Go Down, Moses and Other Stories (Short Stories). New York: Random House, 1942.


DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Faulkner's Private World—Most students of Faulkner prefer to think of Yoknapatawpha County, his own dramatized microcosm of the Deep South, as his private world and his public world as that reflected in his personal life and background in Oxford, Mississippi. For the purposes of this study, the classifications have been reversed: Yoknapatawpha becomes Faulkner's public world and Oxford his private world. This change has been made for the following reasons: (1) Faulkner himself considered his life in Oxford private, and he resisted the press, biographers, and others to keep it so, and (2) factually speaking, the public knows less of Faulkner's involvement in Oxford than is known of his involvement with the culture of Yoknapatawpha County.

2. Faulkner's Public World—Please see explanation above.

3. Old Negro—The patient, good-natured, loyal darkie type who assumed the facade of contentment; as a result, he was thought to be immune from the usual frustrations and emotions which beset other men.

4. New Negro—The articulate and sometimes demanding Negro of Faulkner's latter years, sometimes educated, always concerned with his rights. His economic values are those of the white man, and his frustrations at his inability to attain his wishes often lead to a violent response.

5. Endure—To recognize evil; to be able to live with it; to withstand it, even in the face of hopelessness.

6. Mulatto—The old familiar formula: white half, reason; black half, emotion—the cliche which connotes the tragic mulatto stereotype.
The following tables, based on census data, show the increasing distribution of the black population throughout the major regions of the country.

The percentage of each region's population that is black:

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<td>United States</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.6</td>
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<td>9.8</td>
<td>West</td>
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<td>8.9</td>
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<td>5.1</td>
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<td>South</td>
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<tr>
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The amount and proportion of the black population living in each region:

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<td>U.S.</td>
<td>22,672,570 (100)</td>
<td>18,871,831(100)</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>15,042,286(100)</td>
<td>12,865,518 (100)</td>
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<td>Northeast</td>
<td>4,342,137 (19.2)</td>
<td>3,028,499(16.0)</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>5,018,182(13.4)</td>
<td>1,369,875 (10.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Central</td>
<td>4,571,550 (20.2)</td>
<td>3,446,037(18.3)</td>
<td>N. Central</td>
<td>2,227,876(14.8)</td>
<td>1,420,318 (11.0)</td>
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<td>West</td>
<td>1,694,625 ( 7.5)</td>
<td>1,085,688( 5.8)</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>570,821 ( 3.8)</td>
<td>170,706 ( 1.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>12,064,258 (53.2)</td>
<td>11,311,607(59.9)</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>10,225,407(68.0)</td>
<td>9,904,619 (77.0)</td>
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BIBLIOGRAPHY
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BOOKS


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DISSEPTIONS


OTHER REFERENCES: BACKGROUND, BIBLIOGRAPHICAL, COLLECTIONS


