WILLIAM FAULKNER'S CONCEPT OF

KNOWLEDGE BEYOND REASON

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WILLIAM FAULKNER'S CONCEPT OF
KNOWLEDGE BEYOND REASON

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Denton, Texas
August, 1964
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Critics have generally interpreted the value of William Faulkner's work in extreme terms: moderate opinions of his work are scarce, and indifference to it is apparently impossible. One group upholds the significance of his moral vision while the other derides the suggestion that he has an ethical view. But responsible critics can no longer afford simply to dismiss Faulkner's work as the product of a charlatan or a sadist. His stature as an artist was confirmed in 1950 when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Since that time, most critics have approached his work with respect and with a serious attempt to understand it. Even so, many are exasperated by his style of writing and by his subject matter, which they believe stresses decadence and perversion, or at least shows too clear a picture of the hopelessness of man's condition. Others proclaim him an authentic genius who uses style and content for a larger purpose, one which is ultimately uplifting and hopeful.
There must be a reason why critics tend to extreme evaluations of the meaning and worth of Faulkner's fiction. Perhaps the clue to the difference in their interpretations lies in the kind of knowledge they can bring to the task. Much of Faulkner's work evidently defies mere intellectual comprehension. No matter how earnestly reviewers may bring their conscious rational minds to concentrate on Faulkner's meaning, many of them seem frustrated, not able to unravel its mystery. A necessary clue to comprehending Faulkner's intention could be an awareness of the importance which he places on various kinds of nonrational knowledge.\footnote{In this study any knowledge which does not come from the rational mind will be called nonrational knowledge; it may be called intuition, instinct, emotional knowledge, or what Faulkner variously refers to as "extra sensory perception" (Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, editors, \textit{Faulkner in the University} [Charlottesville, 1959], pp. 268-269), a "sixth sense" (William Faulkner, \textit{Pylon} [New York, 1958], p. 245), or "clairvoyance" (William Faulkner, \textit{Light in August} [United States of America, 1932], p. 355). This study assumes that the basis for nonrational knowledge is unknown to the rational conscious mind, that it lies in the unconscious mind where "emotion, desire and instinct predominate rather than ideas" (Laurence F. Shaffer and Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr., \textit{The Psychology of Adjustment} [Boston, 1956], p. 451; Shaffer and Shoben attribute this definition of unconscious knowledge to Freud).} Throughout Faulkner's work there is emphasis on valuable knowledge which does not come from the rational mind. The purpose of this study is to determine the major kinds of value that
Faulkner thought nonrational knowledge could afford and to point to the clearest illustrations of these in his work; to formulate his general concept of nonrational knowledge; and to suggest influences that shaped his attitude toward such knowledge.

Several critics have mentioned separate aspects of Faulkner's work which support the contention that he was concerned with intuitive, irrational, and emotional knowledge, but apparently no one has attempted to define his total concept of nonrational knowledge. Two books which offer valuable information are Olga W. Vickery's *The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation* (Baton Rouge, 1959) and Walter J. Slatoff's *Quest for Failure: A Study of William Faulkner* (New York, 1960).

Vickery suggests that a basic attitude running throughout Faulkner's work is his view that language and logic obscure truth rather than reveal it. She believes that instinctive knowing is an important source of value and strength for certain characters in Faulkner's novels. She also points out that Faulkner is concerned with the limitations of the conscious mind; he considers that the heart provides truth which bypasses reason, logic, or verification. Emotional knowledge—the truth of the heart—is perceived intuitively.
Slatoff discusses Faulkner's extensive use of antithesis in his work, especially that between the head and the heart—logical or intellectual versus intuitive and emotional knowledge. He concurs with Vickery that Faulkner thinks the heart provides the way to truth. He declares that Faulkner wants his readers to be left with questions that cannot be resolved in rational terms.

Few other works offer interpretations which contribute to an understanding of Faulkner's concept of nonrational knowledge; those which most deserve mention are William Faulkner: A Critical Appraisal (Norman, 1951) by Modean Campbell and Ruel E. Foster, The Art of Faulkner's Novels (Austin, 1962) by Peter Swiggart, and The Tragic Mask (Chapel Hill, 1963) by John Longley.


2In future references to this work a shortened form—William Faulkner: Three Decades—will be used.

Primary sources for this study include Faulkner's novels, short stories, interviews, lectures, and speeches.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter II is devoted to a discussion of William Faulkner's attitude toward nonrational knowledge as he reveals it through his style of writing and through his characterizations. Two groups of characters are juxtaposed in this chapter in order to make clear Faulkner's disapproval of those who allow merely rational conscious knowledge to dominate their lives and his approval of those who guide their lives largely by nonrational knowledge which comes from emotional responsiveness. Still other characters illustrate his distrust of social values which can smother true personality and cut off the possibility of tapping valuable sources of nonrational knowledge. In addition, Faulkner shows through his portrayal of an idiot and an insane person that even the mentally defective and the
mentally ill may possess worthwhile knowledge which is not
dependent on the rational mind. In a final group of
characters, Faulkner reveals that subliminal clues often
compensate for reason when reason is lost through obsessions
or compulsions which block functioning of the conscious mind.
Thus Faulkner's concept of nonrational knowledge emerges
through his portrayal of characters. His concept seems to
be that a person must use nonrational knowledge to supplement
rational knowledge in order to be a complete human being.

Chapter III explores the possible sources for Faulkner's
attitude concerning the values available through trusting
irrationally acquired knowledge. Though portions of his
work show a strong resemblance to some of C. G. Jung's
psychological concepts, there is no evidence that Faulkner
ever studied Jung's work. Apparently Faulkner formed his
own concept independently as a result of personal factors
which influenced him to trust his own "extra sensory
perception" as a reliable guide.

Chapter IV offers the conclusion that if Faulkner has
made a permanent mark on the world through his contribution
to literature, it may be largely because he trusted non-
rational clues, which he called "extra sensory perception,"
to guide his work.
CHAPTER II

STYLE AND CHARACTERIZATION

William Faulkner's widely discussed, complex style of writing seems deliberately chosen to discourage readers who can bring only conscious intelligence to his work. Perhaps he meant it to be understandable only to those readers who are able to respond to it with knowledge that goes beyond that available in the conscious mind. If this was his intention, then his style certainly reflects his general attitude toward the contribution that nonrational knowledge makes to the whole man.

Several critics have observed that Faulkner's style seems designed to appeal to the feelings and emotions directly, rather than to the mind. Conrad Aiken thinks Faulkner deliberately withheld his meaning from the reader,¹ and Walter Slatoff evidently concurs, for he thinks Faulkner intended the reader to have to struggle to understand his work.² Slatoff also believes that Faulkner's style, "with

its syntactical violations, pseudo-syntax, shifting metaphors, and oxymorons,"\(^3\) indicates his "desire to transcend the usual rational processes of comprehension,"\(^4\) and that his purpose is apparently to prevent his readers from substituting language and logic for feelings.\(^5\) Dos Passos feels that Faulkner's writing "has a way of pouring directly into the bloodstream like a transfusion."\(^6\) And Baumgarten remarks that Faulkner uses language in a special way to make immediate contact with the reader so that his true meaning will not be warped by analysis in the conscious mind.\(^7\) In his opinion, such a use of language pushes the reader toward an "emotional knowing of the story."\(^8\) He thinks that because Faulkner's emphasis is on immediate perception, "his syntax works . . . almost to exclude any rational

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 241.

\(^4\)Ibid. See also John B. Cullen in collaboration with Floyd C. Watkins, Old Times in the Faulkner Country (Chapel Hill, 1961), p. 61.


\(^7\)Murray Baumgarten, "The Language of Faulkner's The Bear," Western Humanities, XV (Spring, 1961), 181.

\(^8\)Ibid.
understanding of this perception.

If Faulkner's style aims at the feelings and emotions instead of the rational mind of his reader, he evidently has a reason for bypassing the rational mind. The most obvious reason seems to be that he distrusts mere rationality, and his portrayal of characters who are dominated by their rational minds supports this view.

Faulkner's style has impressed other critics as a reflection of his view of life. Beck finds there is a close relationship between Faulkner's style and his view of life, for his style reflects meanings which are themselves, "complex, mysterious, obscure, and incomplete." Zink feels that "all aspects of form in the Faulkner novel manifest complexly a way of looking at life, a concept of reality." And Campbell and Foster make almost the

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9Ibid.

10Faulkner's portrayal of characters who are dominated by their rational minds is discussed later in this chapter.


same observation. But just what reality or point of view Faulkner is reflecting through his style is interpreted in different ways. Baumgarten thinks he is describing "the mystery at the heart of the world which ... is ineluctable," while Zink simply says he is describing human experience. Perhaps Slatoff comes nearest to understanding what reality meant to Faulkner; he believes that the hypnotic effect Faulkner achieves through his style is an attempt to speak directly to the human heart.

Since Faulkner thought it a writer's duty to present in his work the problems of the human heart and to stress the truths of the heart, it would be surprising if his style did not reflect, in a general way at least, his own attitude toward these aspects of the heart. Faulkner's style of writing does offer clues to the way he wants his reader to react to his work. Through style he appeals to the heart, which he contended could provide nonrational but valuable


14 Baumgarten, p. 181.

15 Zink, p. 394.

16 Slatoff, p. 240.

emotional knowledge, rather than to the rational conscious mind; Faulkner felt the heart to be more reliable than the mind.  

Possibly Faulkner did intend his work to be incomprehensible to merely rational readers, those who have confidence only in the logical conscious mind. Perhaps he even intended his books to be read in the way he had Ike McCaslin say God probably intended His Book to be read, not by those who must decide with their minds what truth is, but by those who read with their hearts--which already know the truth.  

William Faulkner's concept of nonrational knowledge is implied through the fate of the characters he presents in his work. His general concept seems to be that a person must use nonrational knowledge to supplement rational knowledge in order to be a complete human being. He develops this concept in a variety of ways, and the degree of humaneness achieved by most of his major characters depends on their acceptance or denial of the nonrational--intuitive and emotional--knowledge which is available to all of them.

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Some of Faulkner's most memorable characters seem to possess knowledge which is not solely dependent on intelligence available in the conscious mind. Through these characters, Faulkner comments on the kinds of value to be found in non-rational knowledge, and through his presentation of merely rational characters, he warns of the dangers inherent in relying entirely on conscious knowledge.

Faulkner has said that he does not have much confidence in the mind because it "lets you down sooner or later," but that the heart is reliable. Walter Slatoff finds that Faulkner's use of the word "heart" is inconsistent, but that "there is no doubt that he sees the heart essentially as an organ of feeling and as antithetic to the head and that he regards it, not the head, as providing the way to truth." Faulkner explains what he means by the truths of the human heart in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech; he says that they are "love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice," and that until man learns these truths of

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20 Gwynn and Blotner, p. 6.

21 Ibid.

22 Slatoff, p. 240. See also Olga Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 112.

the heart and lives by them, he will labor under a curse. 24

Through his portrayal of such rational but heartless
characters as Jason Compson, Flem Snopes, and Thomas Sutpen,
Faulkner is apparently illustrating his belief that the
conscious mind, with its rational and logical knowledge, is
not sufficient to make a man a human being. Nonrational
knowledge, stemming from the unconscious mind where "emotion,
desire and instinct predominate rather than ideas," 25
determines human nature.

Faulkner has created two well defined groups of people
to show his opinion of the kind of valuable emotional
knowledge which comes from the heart. In one group are
those who guide their lives almost solely by conscious
knowledge; the treatment of such characters in Faulkner's
fiction illustrates his disapproval of those who deny their
need to love. In the other group are those who are largely
guided by emotional knowledge; they illustrate Faulkner's
positive opinion of those who admit their need to love.

24 Ibid.

25 Laurence Frederick and Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr.,
The Psychology of Adjustment, 2nd edition (Boston, 1956),
p. 451. This definition of unconscious knowledge is from
the Freudian concept.
In the first group are characters who are primarily motivated by self-interest—"rational" characters who are insensitive to the feelings of their fellows. These characters are not concerned with the things which matter most to Faulkner: awareness of their own emotional needs as well as those of others, and their need to live in harmony with nature. The most extreme examples in this group are Jason Compson IV, Flem Snopes, and Thomas Sutpen.

These three have in common their inability to love anybody at all, and in the Faulkner canon of values, the greatest crime is failure to love. Their goals are to forward themselves materially, to acquire property or power over people, or to wrest recognition from them. All three judge society by their own warped standards. They are incapable of realizing that there are other standards; they have cut themselves off from the knowledge that humane means for evaluating their fellow men exist. Presumably, all

26 Cleanth Brooks names Anse, Flem, Popeye, Thomas Sutpen, Percy Grimm, and Jason Compson as Faulkner's villains. He finds that "a common trait in Faulkner's villains is the lack of any capacity for love. Their lack of love shows itself in two ways... their attitudes toward nature and toward women. They do not respond to nature--they may very well violate nature. In quite the same way, they have no interest in women, or use them as means to their own ends" (William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country, New Haven, 1963, p. 339).
three could have developed into warm human beings by recognizing their need to share love, but each rejected his responsibility to himself and to those in his world when he rejected opportunities to learn to love.

Faulkner has said that Jason Compson is the most vicious and detestable of his characters, the one he personally dislikes more than any of his other creations. By calling Jason sane, logical, rational, and contained, Faulkner makes his opinion of mere logic forceful through irony. A glimpse at Jason in action makes Faulkner's attitude toward him and all like him quite clear.

Jason thinks of himself as a martyr who sacrifices all his own desires for the worthless parasites in his household. The truth is that these "parasites" are people Jason should protect. Instead, Jason oppresses them all: his mother, his only sister and her daughter, his helpless younger brother, and a Negro child in his employ. Jason bullies his mother and lies to her, but she never suspects him. Though most readers are apt to feel that she deserves to be


hoodwinked precisely because she has made the repulsive Jason her favorite child, they are nevertheless apt to condemn Jason for the delight he derives from deceiving her.

Through the years Jason has always done everything possible to torture his only sister, Caddy. He not only blocks every attempt that Caddy makes to see her daughter, Quentin, but he tantalizes her by pretending to make arrangements for her to see the child. According to his warped logic, his treatment of Caddy is justified, but it is so fiendish that Dilsey, a sincere Christian who seldom judges the people around her, wonders if Jason is human: "'You's a cold man, Jason, if man you is . . . .''"29

Jason is virtual guardian of Quentin, Caddy's daughter, but he has been unvaryingly cruel to her for seventeen years, from the time Mr. Compson brought her home, when she was an infant, until the troubled current time of the Jason section of The Sound and the Fury. Jason constantly reminds Quentin of her illegitimacy and of his own certainty that she is doomed to follow Caddy's example. He never treats her as a person in her own right, but always as a symbol of her mother's shame and of his own frustrated ambitions.

29 Ibid., p. 225.
Jason has never loved nor protected the women who are dependent on him, though there is no other man in the family they may look to for help. Instead of loving them, Jason has actually used his power over them to vent his own malice. In his twisted "rational" mind, he has convinced himself that they deserve to be punished because they have deflected him from his goal.

Jason is brutal to his brother Benjy, who is especially helpless to protect himself because, though he is a grown man physically, he has the mind of a three-year-old child. Jason does not even consider Benjy a human being, but an animal. In one of his typical self-pitying interior monologues, Jason says, "God knows there's little enough room for pride in this family, but it don't take much pride to not like to see a thirty year old man [Benjy] . . . running up and down the fence and lowing like a cow whenever they play golf over there." And near the end of his version of the Compson story, Jason remarks of Benjy, "I could hear the Great American Gelding snoring away like a planing mill." It was Jason, of course, who insisted on Benjy's castration. Jason "had himself appointed the idiot's

30Ibid., p. 239.  
31Ibid., p. 280.
guardian without letting their mother know and so was able to have the creature castrated before the mother even knew it was out of the house . . . .”

Jason has tried to rationalize his mistreatment of Caddy, of Quentin, and of Benjy. Perhaps he convinces some readers that he had cause to resent them, but surely nobody can sympathize with Jason in the scene which occurs between Jason and Luster. Luster is the fourteen-year-old Negro boy who has the man-sized job of caring for and of entertaining Benjy. This responsibility has precluded Luster's having many carefree days, and besides, there is little entertainment available in such a small town as Jefferson. For these reasons the annual carnival is the high point of the year for Luster. He had the quarter that he needed for admission to the carnival, but he lost it while taking care of Benjy. Jason is the narrator of the following scene which occurs a little later:

"Ef I jes had a quarter," Luster says, "I could go to dat show."
"En ef you had wings you could fly to heaven," Dilsey says. "I dont want to hear another word about dat show."
"That reminds me," I says, "I've got a couple of tickets they gave me." I took them out of my coat. "You fixing to use um?" Luster says.

32_**Ibid.**, p. 18.
"Not me," I says. "I wouldn't go to it for ten dollars."
"Gimme one of um, Mr. Jason," he says.
"I'll sell you one," I says. "How about it?"
"I aint got no money," he says.
"That's too bad," I says. I made to go out.
"Gimme one of um, Mr. Jason," he says. "You aint gwine need um bofe."

"Hush yo mouf," Dilsey says, "Dont you know he aint gwine give nothing away?"
"How much you want fer hit?" he says.
"Five cents," I says.
"I aint got dat much," he says.
"How much you got?" I says.
"I aint got nothing," he says.
"All right," I says. I went on.
"Mr. Jason," he says.

"Whynt you hush up?" Dilsey says. "He jes teasin you. He fixin to use dem tickets hisself. Go on, Jason, and let him lone."
"I dont want them." I says. I came back to the stove. "I came in here to burn them up. But if you want to buy one for a nickel?" I says, looking at him and opening the stove lid.
"I aint got dat much," he says.
"All right," I says. I dropped one of them in the stove.
"You, Jason," Dilsey says, "Aint you shamed?"
"Mr. Jason," he says, "Please, suh. I'll fix dem tires ev'ry day fer a mont'."
"I need the cash," I says. "You can have it for a nickel."
"You can have it for a nickel," I says.
"All right," I says. I dropped it in and Dilsey shut the stove.33

33Ibid., pp. 271-272.
This entire scene is quoted to illustrate the almost unbearable tension Faulkner creates by allowing Jason himself to narrate it. It is one of the most painful scenes in all of Faulkner's work, and a large part of its horror is derived from Jason's smug approval of his own role in this cruel cat and mouse game. Jason relates the episode with pride, as if he expects applause for having taken advantage of a chance opportunity to torture a fellow human being.

Jason Compson is surely one of the most revolting characters ever recorded in literature. He is more demon than human. Jason does not just reject love; he goes far beyond that. He finds his only pleasure in trying to crush out the humanizing qualities in others by inflicting on them more pain than most human beings can tolerate. Through his characterization of Jason, Faulkner warns of the danger inherent in the rational mind of man when it is not counter-balanced by at least a small measure of love.

Flem Snopes differs from Jason Compson in at least one important respect. While Jason derives pleasure from hurting others, from trying to stifle their human qualities, Flem is unaware of the humanity of others. He sees people merely as commodities, who are useful to him in bargaining his way to power.
When Flem first appears as a young man in *The Hamlet*, he is already fully dedicated to gaining power for himself. His first action is to blackmail Jody Varner, the son of the most powerful man in the village, into giving him a job as clerk in the Varner's store. Flem is intent on forwarding his clan of relatives, but not because he cares for any of them as people. He treats them all as his possessions, to be used as he needs them, and to be discarded when they are no longer useful. Flem is utterly heartless, especially in his relationship with his cousin Ike; with his own wife, Eula; with her daughter, Linda; and with another cousin, Mink.

Flem is the legal guardian of his idiot cousin, Ike Snopes, but he defrauds him by stealing the ten-dollar inheritance Ike's grandmother left him. Flem has already used Ike's ten-dollar note to his own advantage at least three times. This particular fraud is ended when V. K. Ratliff, a sewing machine agent who seems to act as a reasonably objective commentator for Faulkner, burns the note, and suffers a financial loss himself, to prevent Flem's further using it to defraud others. Flem injures Ike in still other ways, however. Although he is financially able to help Ike, Ike must live on the charity of Mrs. Littlejohn,
the owner of the boarding house, who lets Ike sleep in her barn and who feeds him his meals as well. Flem violates innocence and trust by taking advantage of the helpless kinsman he has sworn to guard from harm.

Faulkner has shown his contempt for Flem's treatment of his wife, Eula, by making Flem impotent. He condemns Flem for his failure to feel sexual attraction to Eula, who stands as the epitome of female sexuality to most of the other men who come in contact with her. Flem's impotence evidently symbolizes his failure to feel any closeness to another person. Faulkner himself apparently intends Eula Varner to represent womanliness; she is a kind of universal earth mother. Therefore, Flem's major crime is actually one against nature, for when he rejects Eula, he is also rejecting the life-giving quality she stands for. Flem cannot even realize that Eula is a human being, one unusually capable of teaching him something of love. To Flem, Eula is simply a tool. He marries her only because such a marriage will give him bargaining power with her father, Will Varner, the most influential man in Frenchman's Bend: the marriage

Brooks finds that Flem's "greed and lust for money condemn him to a life in which the senses are starved or dormant" (p. 44).
amounts to a trade, really. In *The Town*, the second book in the Snopes series, Flem continues to think of Eula as nothing more than a commodity. The citizens of Jefferson think Eula is again Flem's bargaining tool. This time he trades her to Manfred de Spain, the Mayor of Jefferson, in exchange for two major advances in his career--first he is made superintendent of Jefferson's power plant, and later he becomes vice president of the bank where de Spain is president. But Flem is determined to become president of that bank. This time Eula alone cannot help him to get the position he wants; he must use her daughter Linda too.

According to Eula, Flem planned a deliberate campaign to entrap Linda. His former apparent complete indifference to Linda's happiness abruptly changed to seeming solicitude. Flem was using Linda, but Linda was so starved for a father's love that she did not suspect he had merely assumed the role to exploit her. Eula explains that when Flem finally agreed to let Linda attend a college, he made Linda believe that he wanted her to enroll in a school close to home because he loved her. When he asked Linda if she would forget about

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35 The third novel of the trilogy is *The Mansion*, but Eula does not appear in it; she committed suicide near the end of the second novel, *The Town*, to prevent Flem's making a permanent pawn of Linda.
the northern schools and go to the University of Oxford instead, she was so startled and happy that she flung aside the book she was reading as she stood up and said to him:

"Daddy." I [Eula is the narrator] had never seen her touch him. He was her father, she never refused to speak to him or to speak any way except respectfully. But he was her enemy; she had to keep him reminded always that although he had beaten her about the schools, she still hadn't surrendered. But I had never seen her touch him until now, sprawled, flung against his collar, crying, saying, "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!"

The reader is never allowed to see into Flem's mind; however, Flem evidently thinks it is all right to abuse the women he should cherish if he can gain more power by doing so. But his utter disregard for Linda's feelings and his callous treatment of the childlike Mink Snopes lead to his own death.

Flem deliberately turns his back on his cousin Mink, when Mink is on trial for murder. Even the citizens of Frenchman's Bend, who are finally beginning to understand the kind of creature Flem is, are horrified by his failure to help Mink. Mink is unquestionably a murderer, but he murdered because his warped sense of honor dictated his action. To him, it is inconceivable that his powerful

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cousin Flem can abrogate his obligation to a kinsman, that he can be, in short, absolutely without family honor. After thirty-eight years in prison (twenty-three of these were added to the original sentence because Flem tricked Mink into an unsuccessful jail break), Mink overcomes almost impossible handicaps in order to kill Flem. Most readers are in sympathy with Mink, and with Linda, who helps to free Mink from prison and who also helps him to escape after the murder. Flem's murder does not seem to be the cold-blooded killing of a human being. Flem, who never sees others as human beings, does not seem a real person himself, but a robot motivated by greed and lust for power.

Faulkner shows through his portrayal of Flem Snopes that the person who completely denies his heart, with its valuable contribution of emotional knowledge to his life, is not a human being at all. Flem has a cunning conscious mind. He is able to forward himself by using and outwitting people with humane qualities. They are vulnerable because they project their own humanity. They cannot believe that there are completely heartless creatures like Flem in the world, and because they cannot believe in this kind of evil, they condone it by default.
Thomas Sutpen is somewhat more sympathetically presented, in one respect at least, than are Jason and Flem, for the reader witnesses the painfully humiliating childhood experience which caused Sutpen to lose confidence in his own worth. However, in another respect, Sutpen is more monstrous than Jason or Flem. His rejection of love seems more horrible than theirs simply because, in some ways, he is an admirable person. But in trying to force acceptance of himself by the society he emulates, Sutpen loses what he seeks.

To compensate for the experience which warped him--he was literally turned away from the front door of a fine Southern mansion by a liveried Negro servant, who judged him unfit because his appearance labeled him "white trash"--Sutpen determines to become a member of a traditional and respectable community in order to prove to himself and to the community that he is as valuable a person as any there. Not only does he want to find a place for himself, but it is a major part of his plan that his descendants hold that place. To reach his ultimate goal, then, it is necessary for Sutpen to establish a dynasty. Only in this way can he keep his memory alive and wring continuing recognition, long after his own death, of his right to his hard-won place in the community.
In order to achieve his dream, Sutpen works out a logical design which he thinks guarantees its success. When it becomes obvious to Sutpen that something has gone awry, he is puzzled. Only when Sutpen is in his middle fifties does he seem aware that his design is doomed to fail. He explains to Mr. Compson (grandfather of Quentin, one of the narrators of the tale) the logical steps that inexplicably led to his current frustration:

"You see, I had a design in my mind. Whether it was a good or a bad design is beside the point; the question is, Where did I make the mistake in it, what did I do or misdo in it, whom or what injure by it to the extent which this would indicate. I had a design. To accomplish it I should require money, a house, a plantation, slaves, a family--incidentally of course, a wife. I set out to acquire these . . . ."37

Sutpen's wives were chosen or rejected in relation to his plan. According to his plan, it was only logical that he should divorce his first wife, completely put her and their son aside, deny their very humanity and his moral responsibility toward them, when he found that they would hinder the advancement of his ultimate purpose. He thought that because he had made a just financial arrangement for his first wife and their son that he had done all he

needed to for them. His second wife, Ellen Coldfield, was also a logical choice. She could help him to become a part of the community: she could furnish the respectability he needed, and with her, he could begin a second time to establish his dynasty. Nowhere is there any evidence that Sutpen felt a spark of love for Ellen.

Ironically, Sutpen himself destroys all his children--a necessary ingredient in his recipe for success--by refusing to recognize his first born child, Charles Bon. Sutpen apparently fails to see that in repudiating Charles, he is symbolically re-enacting the scene which set his own monstrous design in motion. The "mistake" in his design is that he totally committed his passion to it; therefore, he is unable either to hate or to love; not even his own children are allowed to interfere with his blueprint. It is impossible for Sutpen to see his own mistake because he judges everything by logic, and his mistake is not due to a failure in logic; it is caused by his failure to love.

If there is a special kind of communication between Judith and her father which does not need words or intellect,

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38 Brooks, p. 300.

39 Ibid., p. 299.
as Mr. Compson thinks, Judith must hope in this way to make her father aware of the necessity of love, for she knows its value and formulates her own code of life around love. Apparently Sutpen deliberately suppresses this irrational knowledge which might rescue his plan from failure—he refuses to accept any knowledge which is not logically explainable.

Sutpen thinks he is creating a permanent place for himself and his heirs in a decent community, one where they will always be welcome and where the door will not fail to open to any of them. He suppresses the memory that he was originally motivated by compassion for the lost boy that he was, and symbolically for all lost boys. His heart is overwhelmed by his rigid adherence to the logical design his conscious mind dictates. And a man without heart, even a courageous man like Sutpen, is not a complete man. Logic carried to extremes defeats Thomas Sutpen.

While the characterizations of Jason Compson, Flem Snopes and Thomas Sutpen probably most clearly indicate Faulkner's attitude toward the inhumanity of those who are


41 Ibid., p. 121.
dominated by self-interest, there are others in this category. Anse Bundren in *As I Lay Dying* has many of Jason Compson's characteristics. Anse, too, is totally self-centered. His utter selfishness dictates his unkindness to the members of his family. However, he seems to be more unobservant of their needs and rights than deliberately sadistic, as was Jason. Popeye in *Sanctuary* is an exaggerated version of Flem Snopes. Like Flem, Popeye is impotent. He is apparently meant to be a symbol of mechanization, for Faulkner never gives any evidence that Popeye is even capable of evolving into a human being.

Another group of characters, Simon McEachern, Doc Hines, and Joanna Burden (all are in *Light in August*) are compulsives, somewhat akin to Thomas Sutpen: they are all compelled to carry out some design of their own. For this reason, they are incapable of seeing people as real individuals. All of these characters see others only in relation to their own peculiar bias. They do not know themselves because they never look inward in an effort to understand their own hidden motives, which evidently shaped them into the caricatures they have become. Largely because McEachern, Hines and Joanna Burden have been unable to treat Joe Christmas (a central figure in *Light in August*)
as anything but an object to aid them in reducing their anxieties, Joe is himself unable to love. Christmas, *however*, does not really belong in the group of people who ignore or actually reject the intuitive knowledge which could come to them through their emotions. Christmas does try to know who and what he is. Indeed, he tries frantically, but he never succeeds because he becomes entangled with a series of persons who are too warped to see either themselves or Christmas as persons who need one another's love.

In contrast to those major characters who illustrate his opinion of the inhumanity which results from heartlessness, Faulkner has portrayed another group of characters who are emotionally responsive. Jason is contrasted with Dilsey; Flem with Gavin Stevens and Ike Snopes; Thomas Sutpen with his children, Judith and Henry; and McEachern, Hines, and Joanna Burden with Byron Bunch. In this way Faulkner stresses his own opinion that the head and the heart are indeed opposed to each other. Apparently Faulkner equates the "head" with the rational mind and the "heart" with the nonrational mind of man. The group which is motivated by self-interest is a group which acts on clues furnished by the rational part of the mind. The contrasting group acts on emotional knowledge. Since this kind of
knowledge does not depend on the rational mind of man, it must, then, depend on some kind of nonrational knowledge.

The difference between these two kinds of knowledge is not easy to explain, but one approach to the basic difference is that of measurement. Mankind has set up several means for measuring conscious knowledge. Though the results gained through testing intelligence are far from exact, such results are widely used by many counselors. They evidently consider that these tests offer valid indications of intellectual capacity. While some attempts have probably been made to measure love, the difficulty of trying to measure such a subjective quality is indicated by the fact that such tests as may exist are not widely used. Many attempts have indeed been made to define love, but these attempts have been left up to the poets and novelists of the world. However, the wisest of these know that their task is not to measure or even to define love, but to affirm it. Evidently no rigid rules can be formulated for measuring this emotional quality. And Faulkner upholds the value of love—-he is not troubled that it cannot be categorized, that it is not measurable. He clearly shows through his too

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rational and too logical characters that if a man denies his heart, he is scarcely a man at all, but a robot. Such a person is monstrous because, though he looks like a human being, he is not. He is pitiful because, though he could have become a human being, he did not. By juxtaposing the two groups—those who affirm and those who deny love—Faulkner obviously implies that if the head and the heart are in conflict, then it is better to let the heart take control.

Dilsey in *The Sound and the Fury* is one of Faulkner's strongest moral characters. She trusts her knowledge of people in the same way that she trusts her knowledge of religion. In her religion are many things which she must accept on faith, things which cannot be proved to the satisfaction of the head. Dilsey's wonderful depth of knowledge, then, comes to her through her feelings. Her knowledge is intuitive; it does not need to be channeled through her conscious mind to be accepted as trustworthy.

Dilsey is able to understand Benjy, who cannot communicate his needs in a way the rational mind alone can interpret. She and the other Negroes who heard the Reverend Shegog's Easter sermon could understand it because "their hearts were speaking to one another in chanting measures
beyond the need for words." The sermon itself defies logical interpretation; it is understandable only through the emotions. Dilsey is so moved by the sermon that tears stream down her face as she leaves the church.

Faulkner names Dilsey as one of his two favorite characters (the other is Ratliff) because she is brave and honest and generous. She is generous in many respects, but she is outstanding in her unselfish love for the people within her orbit. Jason seems to be the only person Dilsey cannot love, and that is doubtless because she recognizes that Jason is more demon than human.

Dilsey accepts the responsibility that accompanies unselfish love. She holds the Compson family together during Mrs. Compson's lifetime, and she tries to fill the place Mrs. Compson vacates by resigning her own responsibilities in order to spend her time in self-pity. Dilsey accepts the duties of housekeeper, cook, nursemaid, and guardian. She mollifies Mrs. Compson, soothes Benjy, tries to shield the girl Quentin from Jason's wrath, and even attempts to shame Jason into more humane behavior.

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44 Grenier, pp. 174-175.
While Dilsey remains with the Compsons, she successfully prevents Jason's complete disregard of ethical standards. Jason obviously learns nothing of love from Dilsey; but the chief thing that even checks his cruelty is his fear of her. He had learned to respect Dilsey when he realized she had divined "by simple clairvoyance that he was somehow using his infant niece's illegitimacy to blackmail its mother." It is his awe for Dilsey that causes him to support his mother and his idiot brother. Jason tries to force Dilsey to leave by withholding her weekly wages, but Dilsey stays on until Mrs. Compson's death. When Dilsey leaves, Jason commits Benjy to the state asylum for the insane and sells the family home.

Dilsey's love, based on the Christian principles which guide her life, endures in spite of rebuffs, just as Dilsey herself does, for Dilsey loves people; her feeling for people tells her that love is more powerful than reason in reaching and in helping those within her orbit.

Two apparently widely different characters reveal Faulkner's approval of those who affirm the qualities of love of nature through their love of nature's representatives.

45William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury, p. 16.
These two are Ike Snopes (in *The Hamlet*) and Gavin Stevens (as he is portrayed in *The Town* and in *The Mansion*). In setting Ike and Gavin in opposition to Flem Snopes, Faulkner clearly indicates that Flem's major crime in rejecting Eula's love was his repudiation of the life-giving force of nature which she symbolized.

Many readers feel that Ike Snopes' love for a cow is wholly repugnant, that Ike is perverted, and that this is evidence of Faulkner's concern with depicting decadence. If so, they have missed Faulkner's reason for including Ike's bizarre love in his first novel about Flem Snopes' rise to power. Flem treats Eula as a mere commodity, but Ike's actions toward his beloved cow are selfless and gallant. Ike provides his love with food and comfort; he brings her flowers with the hay he forages for her; and he even risks his life to rescue her from fire. Ike's love is in reality a much purer form of affirmation and of respect than any of the seemingly "normal" loves in the novel. Brooks believes that Faulkner is aware of the grotesque character

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of the relationship between Ike and his cow, and that is why he makes the analogy with nature quite clear, why he "insists upon associating it with the poetry of nature and the poetry of a love that is in absolute rapport with nature."\(^{48}\) Ike, like Benjy Compson, is an idiot, one of nature's innocents. He is incapable of measuring his actions in terms of moral codes; he knows only that he loves a creature which represents for him all of nature's gifts, and that he must protect her.\(^ {49}\)

Faulkner glorifies Ike's incongruous love story by relating it in lyrical prose which sets this section apart from the rest of the novel. Ike is the only one of the

\(^{48}\) Brooks, p. 180.

\(^{49}\) Faulkner's treatment of Ike's unusual love object, which emphasizes love for the female force in nature, strongly suggests his familiarity with the mythological account of Zeus' love for Io and the necessity of hiding this love from his wife Hera. To allay his jealous wife's suspicions, Zeus changed Io into a beautiful white heifer (G. M. Kirkwood, A Short Guide to Classical Mythology [New York, 1959], p. 58). But Hera was not hoodwinked. She sent a gadfly to persecute Io and force her to wander over the earth to escape its torment. Io finally reached Egypt, where she was worshipped by the Egyptians as the goddess Isis (Paul Harvey, editor, The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature [Oxford, 1962], pp. 222-223). Isis represented for the Egyptians the "female productive force of nature" (ibid.), and in this capacity her symbol was the cow (ibid.).
lovers who is completely selfless, wholly dedicated to love, and because he values love so highly, he is the only one capable of feeling "serene and one and indivisible in joy" with his love. Faulkner compares Ike's wordless passion for the cow with that of the successful lover who is in "rapport with all anonymous faceless female flesh." Ike's love story provides Faulkner with an emphatic means of highlighting the purity of Ike's sincere love, "unnatural" though it seems, in contrast to Flem's exploitation of Eula--another symbol of the productive force of nature.

In intellect Gavin Stevens seems the direct opposite of Ike Snopes, but in his own way he is as dedicated as is Ike in protecting those he loves. Faulkner's apparent concept that it is far better to let the heart take over, if a choice must be made between the head and the heart, is evident in his portrayal of Gavin Stevens. Stevens, a Ph. D. from Heidelberg, is the most intellectual character in Faulkner's novels. Gavin is a lawyer with an analytical mind which enables him to integrate and to use the information which reaches him. He exhibits a high degree

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51 Ibid., p. 207.
of intelligence in the practice of his profession; in *Knight's Gambit*, for instance, Gavin successfully solves several complex mysteries. But Stevens is not rigidly bound by the reasoning part of his mind. He does not think, or act, or express himself along rigidly consistent lines. He is not one-sided, but many-sided. Indeed, Stevens is so complex and unpredictable that his apparently superior intellect is often submerged in his emotions.

Stevens has a loving heart, and where he loves, he wholly commits himself. His love for Eula Varner Snopes and for her daughter, Linda (in *The Town* and *The Mansion*), is reminiscent of Don Quixote's knight errantry. Though his love for them involves him in some ridiculous situations, it is evident that his love is sincere and protective. He tries to shield Linda and her mother from every kind of harm, especially from Flem's violation. It really does not matter that his protection is sometimes excessive and that at other times it is unnecessary. What does matter is that he tries to protect them with his chivalrous actions and that these stem from love.

Gavin Stevens is never merely rational. He is intelligent enough to trust his heart instead of his head when these are in conflict. Stevens in love is sometimes foolish,
but he is never a heartless machine, like Flem. He never deliberately hurts his fellow man, nor does he ever make the mistake of denying his own need for love or his obligation to respect the female force in nature, which Eula and Linda represent.

Both Henry Sutpen and his sister, Judith, in Absalom, Absalom! possess in great abundance the quality which their father lacks—love. In contrast to his children, Thomas Sutpen's "mistake" stands out starkly.

The deep love which Judith and Henry feel for each other seems to make accessible to them some kind of non-rational knowledge. As children, according to Mr. Compson (one of the narrators of Absalom, Absalom!), they "'seemed at times to anticipate one another's actions.'"52 He thinks of Judith and Henry as a "'single personality with two bodies.'"53 But Henry's nonrational knowledge drives him to violent action, while Judith's dictates calm acceptance of many things which appear to be almost impossible to accept on any terms.

53 Ibid., pp. 91-92.
Henry is primarily dependent on emotional knowledge (Mr. Compson and Quentin call it "instinctive knowledge") to guide his life. In fact, his rational mind is almost totally eclipsed by the conflicting emotions in his heart. Of all Faulkner's characters, Henry is probably the one who best exemplifies Faulkner's meaning when he refers to the "problems of the human heart in conflict with itself."55

Henry is caught in a dilemma between love for his sister, Judith, and love for Charles Bon, the man who intends to marry Judith. Quentin and his friend Shreve (narrators of parts of Absalom, Absalom!) surmise that Sutpen told Henry, in an attempt to avert Bon's and Judith's marriage, that Bon is half-brother to Judith and Henry. Then they conjecture that at one time Henry was willing to allow Bon to marry Judith even though such a marriage would be incestuous. Probably Henry was tempted to let the marriage occur because, through identification with Judith, and because of his own love for Bon, he felt that their marriage would be a fulfillment of love for all three. But something caused Henry to change his mind. To prevent the

54 Ibid., p. 96 and p. 134.

marriage Henry now considers impossible, he kills Bon, but not in any calculated scheme of exploitation: "he kills what he loves and apparently for love."\(^5^6\)

Why Henry feels that the best solution to his dilemma is to kill Bon is open to conjecture. Quentin and Shreve think Henry learned from his father that Bon was part Negro and that he killed Bon to prevent miscegenation and to protect his family's honor. However, there may be another equally plausible reason for Henry's violent action. Henry apparently came to believe that Bon did not love Judith after all. Quentin and Shreve conjecture that Henry asked Bon to think of Judith.\(^5^7\) Apparently Henry asked Bon not to marry her because of the suffering such a marriage would bring her, but, the boys imagine, Bon replied that he had been thinking of Judith for the past four years, that now he would think of himself.\(^5^8\) If this interpretation is followed, then Henry evidently felt that Bon planned to use Judith as an instrument of revenge against the father who had disclaimed him. According to this view, Henry killed Bon to prevent his betraying Judith and to prevent his violation of the love both Henry and Judith felt for him.

\(^5^6\)Brooks, p. 303.
\(^5^8\)Ibid., p. 357.
In killing Bon, Henry murders one person he loves, destroys the happiness of the other, and makes himself an exile from his sister and his home. In spite of his crime, however, Henry Sutpen is apt to win most readers' sympathy because he is striving for a solution to his dilemma. Henry is so torn by conflicting emotions that he cannot think; he can only act in the way he feels is best to protect Judith. He perceives his action as the best of the tragic alternatives open to him: he acts from love to preserve what he loves.

Judith's patient love is a foil for Henry's violent love. She is able to endure the physical hardships which the Civil War imposes on the women of the South, and she can also live with the memory that her brother has killed her fiance. Through Henry's action, she, like Henry, has lost the two people she loves most. In addition, Judith must suspect that her father was somehow the original instrument of this double tragedy, for between Judith and her father there is a special means of communication which requires neither words nor intellect. Apparently Judith feels compassion for her father, because she stays with him to take care of him and of his now hollow mansion.

59Ibid., p. 122.
Amazingly, Judith never seems to be embittered by her experiences. She is like her father in many ways; she has his fine qualities of courage and determination, but in Judith these are tempered by quiet and patient love. Though she never comments on her own actions, the actions themselves indicate that she lives by her concept of love. After Henry has killed Charles and fled, and after her father's murder, Judith continues to do what she can for the remaining members of the family. She sends for Bon's son by his octoroon wife, when the boy is orphaned by his mother's death. Her concern for him eventually causes her death. While nursing him when he has yellow fever, she is herself infected and both of them die of the disease.

In attempting to interpret Judith so that Quentin can better understand the Sutpen story, Mr. Compson explains that Judith was probably able to endure her life because she had a strong personal code. He imagines it to be: "'I love, I will accept no substitute; . . . if happy I can be I will, if suffer I must I can.'" Judith's actions indicate that she lives by her code. She is moved to help others by pity and compassion and love--the qualities of

\[60\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 121.}\]
heart which her father had once possessed for a brief period. Judith suffers even more severe psychic shocks than her father, but they do not distort her.

Both Judith and Henry Sutpen guide their lives by the subliminal knowledge which comes through their emotions. Perhaps their father's cold logic repels them so much that it influences them to trust their feelings; at any rate, their characterizations amount to a forceful affirmation of the necessity of love to the human being.

At first glance Byron Bunch in *Light in August* seems to have nothing in common with either the intellectual-but-emotional Gavin Stevens or with the tragically emotional Henry Sutpen. Yet unassuming Byron Bunch is as heroic in his self-sacrifice as Henry and as chivalrous in protecting the woman he loves as Gavin. And his mature acceptance of the responsibilities which accompany the Christian creed of love is in sharp contrast to the warped behavior of Joanna Burden, Simon McEachern and Doc Hines, all of whom use their religious beliefs to rationalize their obsessive behavior.

Byron's quiet life consists in working (he even works on Saturday afternoons when his co-workers are in town relaxing), in leading the choir at a country church, and in visiting the outcast Gail Hightower. At thirty-five Byron
seems much too mired in the calm routine of his life to do anything impetuous. But when Lena Grove comes to the mill one Saturday afternoon, Byron falls in love immediately and for the first time in his life. Lena is obviously pregnant and almost as evidently unmarried, but Byron devotes his life to the loving protection of Lena from that first meeting. He finds a place for her to live; he sees that she has help when her baby is born; and he also arranges a meeting between Lena and Lucas Burch, the father of her child, because Byron is even willing to give Lena up to Burch if that will make her happy.

Though it appears that Lena teaches Byron to love, the truth seems to be that she merely acts as a catalytic agent to make him aware of romantic love. Mature heterosexual love does not grow from a barren background, but must grow out of a background made fertile by a warm and accepting attitude toward people in general. Byron exhibits this attitude when he befriends Gail Hightower, a minister who has been deprived of his calling and who is a pariah in his own community. It is evident when he repairs the roof of his landlady's home. It is particularly obvious in his role as choir leader. Byron leaves every Saturday night and "rides thirty miles into the country and spends Sunday
leading the choir in a country church--a service which lasts all day long. Then some time around midnight he saddles the mule again and rides back to Jefferson at a steady, allnight jog. 61 Byron never boasts of his kindness to others. Only Hightower knows where he goes every week end. Later Byron tries to help Joe Christmas, who is in jail for the murder of Joanna Burden, and he is kind to Joe's grandmother, Mrs. Hines.

Byron's love for people has made him especially sensitive to their needs; it has apparently given him intuitive knowledge. For instance, he knew, as certainly as if Christmas had told him, that Christmas had no money to buy food or suitable work clothes. 62 He also knew what his friend Hightower was thinking even before Hightower himself thought it. 63 And his strong protective love for Lena evidently made him aware, through nonrational channels, of the things he needed to guard her against. Before he had heard about Joanna Burden's murder, he thinks with awe: "It was like something gone through the air; . . . and he [Byron], who had not yet heard, without having to know that

61 William Faulkner, Light in August (United States of America, 1932), p. 43.
62 Ibid., pp. 30-31. 63 Ibid., p. 74.
something had happened . . . knew before he knew . . . that Lena must not hear about it."64

Quiet, unassuming Byron Bunch has long guided his life by the principles of love. His gallant and resolute actions on Lena's behalf are but an extension of the Christian creed of love which is a basic part of Byron's nature. He is in many ways a masculine version of Dilsey. He, too, is a sincere Christian who understands the meaning and responsibility of love. When Joanna Burden, Doc Hines, and Simon McEachern are measured against Byron, their distortions are immediately apparent. Each one of these three is using his religious duty as an excuse to allow him to carry out his own hidden compulsions. But Byron knows the value of emotional knowledge, and he trusts its mysterious clues to guide his actions.

Faulkner apparently intends his readers to understand that he believes that emotional responsiveness is more important in determining the humane qualities of people than calculating reason. He seems to feel that everyone has the capacity to understand his own nature and the nature of others through his emotions, and that those who deliberately

64 Ibid., p. 76.
choose to ignore this vital facet of their own personalities condemn themselves to sub-human status. He makes this opinion vivid through his portrayal of Jason Compson, Flem Snopes and Thomas Sutpen, who are scarcely more than robots because they distrust nonrational knowledge--the knowledge necessary to wholeness. On the other hand, those who act on intuition because they trust their nonrational knowledge are, for the most part, striving to become whole human beings. Though some of these occasionally appear to be foolish, unnatural, too violent, or too passive, there is no doubt that they express their love in the best way they can within their own limitations. Dilsey, Ike Snopes, Gavin Stevens, Henry and Judith Sutpen, and Byron Bunch win Faulkner's approval because they commit themselves to love.

Faulkner implies through his portrayal of Sam Fathers and Ike McCaslin an additional contribution which nonrational knowledge can make to man's understanding of his own nature.

Sam Fathers is one of Faulkner's morally strong characters, and the character in his work who probably comes nearest to epitomizing Faulkner's own attitude toward modern society. Sam rejects society's artificial standards and chooses to live in the wilderness. Significantly, Sam possesses a special kind of nonrational knowledge which is
reminiscent of the collective or racial unconscious defined in C. G. Jung's psychology. In the novel *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner describes Sam Fathers in these terms:

... a man ... whose only visible trace of negro blood was a slight dullness of the hair and the fingernails, and something else which you did not notice about the eyes, which you noticed because it was not always there, only in repose and not always then—something not in their shape nor pigment but in their expression, and the boy's cousin McCaslin told him what that was: not the heritage of Ham, not the mark of servitude but of bondage; the knowledge that for a while that part of his blood had been the blood of slaves. "Like an old lion or a bear in a cage," McCaslin said. "He was born in the cage and has been in it all his life; he knows nothing else. Then he smells something. It might be anything, any breeze blowing past anything and then into his nostrils. But there for a second was the hot sand or the cane-brake that he never even saw himself, might not even know if he did see it and probably does know he couldn't hold his own with it if he got back to it. But that's not what he smells then. It was the cage he smelled. He hadn't smelled the cage until that minute. Then the hot sand or the brake blew into his nostrils and blew away, and all he could smell was the cage. That's what makes his eyes look like that."  

Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey say that Jung's collective unconscious "seems to be the storehouse of latent memory traces inherited from man's ancestral past, a past that includes not only the racial history of man as a separate species but his pre-human or animal ancestry as well" (Theories of Personality, New York, 1957, p. 80). The similarities between some of Jung's psychological concepts and some of Faulkner's views as he expresses these in his work will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III below.

As the passage between Carothers McCaslin and his cousin Ike McCaslin continues, Ike begs Carothers to let Sam go, to let him out of the cage, but Carothers replies:

"His cage aint McCaslins ... He was a wild man. When he was born, all his blood on both sides, except the little white part, knew things that had been tamed out of our blood so long ago that we have not only forgotten them, we have to live together in herds to protect ourselves from our own sources."67

Ike McCaslin is Sam's disciple. Since Sam considers Ike worthy of initiation into the world of nature, it is not surprising that Ike, too, seems to have a type of racial memory. Ike thinks about "... the moment when the fear would take him completely: blood, skin, bowels, bones, memory from the long time before it even became his memory ... ."68

Faulkner implies that a valuable, racial-memory kind of unconscious knowledge does exist, and that it can be tapped by those who are willing to live by nature's laws. Faulkner also seems to imply in these passages that by responding to the usual social values, a person can become divorced from the primitive, archaic side of his nature. (This concept


brings to mind Jung's definition of "persona," and its possible effects on the individual.\(^6^9\)

The kind of knowledge which Sam and Ike possess cannot be acquired by academic effort, for it does not depend on the conscious mind, but rather seems to emerge when one is willing to forget those things he has learned through intellect alone. For instance, Ike, an unusually fine woodsman, has tried for years to catch a glimpse of Old Ben, the bear who symbolizes for Ike the very spirit of the wilderness. Ike finally sees Old Ben, but only after he abandons all the civilized props he has learned to depend upon. First he abandons his gun, an offensive weapon; next, his watch, which represents time control; then his compass, which symbolizes space control; and finally, he even abandons the stick which he was using as a defensive weapon against snakes.\(^7^0\)

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\(^6^9\) Hall and Lindzey define Jung's use of persona as "a mask which is worn by the person in response to the demands of a social convention and tradition . . . . It is the role assigned to him by society . . . ." It often conceals the real nature of a person--"if the ego identifies with the persona," the person may become alienated from himself; he may become "a mere semblance of a man, a reflection of society instead of an autonomous human being" (pp. 83-84). This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

\(^7^0\) The idea expressed in this sentence is original with Ralph D. Eberly, Department of English, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas; it is used here with his permission.
Faulkner explains something of his own concept of this kind of nonrational knowledge in answering a question put to him by a Japanese student when he visited Nagano in 1956. He said that at one period of his life he was so busy writing that he did not have time to stop and think about who might read his work, but that after he began to slow down he became conscious that there were people who read his books, and that this pleased him,

though they found things in those books that I was too busy to realize I was putting in . . . ; they found symbolism that I had no background in symbolism to put in . . . , but what symbolism is in the books is evidently instinct in man, not in man's knowledge but in his inheritance of his old dreams, in his blood, perhaps his bones, rather than in the storehouse of his memory, his intellect.]

This section has offered evidence of the second way Faulkner thinks nonrational knowledge can benefit those who heed it. He illustrates his point by his portrayal of Sam Fathers and of Ike McCaslin. Both Sam and Ike turn away from social values in order to find peace: such peace is contingent on self-knowledge and self-fulfillment, which they cannot find until their environment provides easier access to their special nonrational sources of knowledge.

Faulkner uses certain irrational characters to point up additional values to be found in nonrational knowledge. Two of these in particular seem to have important knowledge which they could not have gained by the use of their conscious minds. They are Benjy Compson, the thirty-three year old idiot who relates one section of *The Sound and the Fury*, and Darl Bundren, the insane son of Addie Bundren in *As I Lay Dying*.

Benjy is aware of trouble in his environment because he can "smell" it. When the Compson children were sent outside during their grandmother's funeral, Caddy climbed a tree to try to find out what had happened so that she could share the information with her brothers. But Benjy did not need this kind of proof; he already knew what had happened. Benjy is to spend the night away from home so that he will not be aware of a death in the family, but when T. P. (a family servant) comes for Benjy, Benjy says to himself several times, as if in protest at this empty gesture designed to shield him from knowledge he already possesses, "I could smell it."\(^{72}\)

Dilsey also refers to Benjy's mysteriously acquired knowledge as something he smells. On Easter morning, Dilsey decides to take Benjy to church with her to quiet him. Though the others assume that Benjy cannot be aware of the troubled family atmosphere (Quentin has robbed her uncle Jason and run off with the man from the carnival), Dilsey knows better. She realizes that this has caused his excessive restlessness and wailing. She tells Luster that Benjy will stop crying when they leave the house. "'He smelling hit. Dat's whut hit is."\(^7\)

Benjy apparently equates moral soundness with the fresh odor of trees. He often says that Caddy smells like trees. In fact, this serves as a motif throughout the Benjy section for Benjy's and Caddy's relationship. For example, when Caddy reaches adolescence and wants to attract boys, she begins to use perfume, but Benjy's unreasoning reaction to this false odor (which probably frightens him because it masks the clean odor of trees that he associates with Caddy) evokes a feeling of guilt in her. She immediately washes

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 304.\)
the perfume off in a way that suggests ritualistic cleansing.74

Lawrance Thompson sees Benjy as a kind of moral mirror for his sister, Caddy. He cites not only the perfume episode but two others as well. When Benjy escapes from the house one night and finds Caddy and Charlie kissing in the swing on the lawn, Caddy leaves Charlie with the pretext that she must quiet Benjy, but also to quiet her own sense of guilt which Benjy has again awakened by crying. When she puts her arms around Benjy, he holds to her dress and tries to pull her away. Charlie protests, but Benjy is successful in saving Caddy this time:

... Caddy and I ran ... "I wont anymore, ever. Benjy. Benjy." Then she was crying, and I cried, and we held each other ... . So I hushed and Caddy took the kitchen soap and washed her mouth at the sink, hard.75

Still later, when Caddy returns home immediately after her first complete sexual experience, Benjy senses at once the change in her and reacts violently. This causes Caddy to feel such overwhelming guilt that she shrinks away from


75Ibid.
the image of herself which Benjy, her moral mirror, reflects. But it is only after Caddy is deliberately dishonest that Benjy can no longer detect in her the odor of trees. At Caddy's wedding reception (she has married a man who does not know she is carrying another man's child) Benjy stands outside crying. When Caddy hears him and rushes out to comfort him, Benjy recalls, "Caddy put her arms around me, and her shining veil, and I couldn't smell trees anymore and I began to cry."\(^7\)

Since Benjy has the mind of a three-year-old child, it seems impossible that he could be aware of moral values through conscious intelligence. Benjy's knowledge cannot depend on reason, for he is incapable of reasoning. His knowledge is evidently intuitive.

Olga Vickery offers a suggestion which partially explains Benjy's special knowledge. She finds that one of the basic attitudes running throughout all of Faulkner's work is the view that language and logic act to obscure truth instead of to reveal it.\(^7\) Benjy is certainly not

\(^76\)Ibid.


\(^78\)Vickery, p. 8.
confused by language. He cannot speak himself, and though others speak to him, he seldom understands the meaning of their words. However, he does understand their intentions, their attitudes toward him, and their moral condition through some knowledge of his own.

Faulkner shows that he believes there is great value in Benjy's peculiar kind of knowledge. In fact, he reveals his attitude toward the other characters in the novel largely by their reactions to Benjy. Jason, who considers Benjy a burdensome, embarrassing "looney," is the character Faulkner himself dislikes more than any of his other creations. Mrs. Compson, who is ashamed of Benjy, is a cruel hypochondriac. Dilsey, who is always kind to Benjy, is one of the two characters Faulkner admires above all others. And Caddy loves Benjy. By Faulkner's standards, Caddy is not damned; she is punished through losing Benjy and her daughter Quentin. She must suffer because she has settled for pseudo-love, but in Caddy there is also the capacity for real love. Benjy's attitude affirms this, for Benjy, who evaluates everything in his world by comparing it with the clean, bright, open elements in nature, loves just three things: a pasture, firelight, and his sister, Caddy.
Darl Bundren, like Benjy, has intuitive knowledge. He knows the secrets of other people without being told and sees things without being present. For instance, Darl knows about Dewey Dell's (his sister's) pregnancy, though her condition is not yet physically apparent and she has told nobody. He is also the only person, besides his mother and Whitfield, who knows that Jewel is not a full brother to the other children in the family—that Jewel is not Anse Bundren's son. Darl realized the truth about Jewel when he found Addie (their mother) crying as she sat in the dark beside the bed where Jewel was sleeping. "And then I knew that I knew. I knew that as plain on that day as I knew about Dewey Dell on that day." 79

There is a suggestion that Darl may also have been a kind of moral mirror similar to Benjy. Vernon Tull, a neighbor, observes:

"... I always say it ain't never been what he [Darl] done so much or said or anything so much as how he looks at you. It's like he had got into the inside of you, someway. Like somehow you was looking at yourself and your doings outen his eyes." 80


80 Ibid., p. 426.
Apparently those who see themselves reflected in Darl's eyes are made uneasy by what they see. It is no wonder that almost everyone in Darl's world is relieved when he is sent to the mental hospital in Jackson. Of them all, only Cash, Darl's older brother, the steadiest member of the family, thinks of Darl's welfare instead of his own. Cash feels that it will be better for Darl in the hospital because "this world is not his world . . . ." 81 It is Cash, too, who muses about the difference between sanity and insanity:

"Sometimes I ain't so sho who's got ere a right to say when a man is crazy and when he ain't. Sometimes I think it ain't none of us pure crazy and ain't none of us pure sane until the balance of us talks him that-a-way. It's like it ain't so much what a fellow does, but it's the way the majority of folks is looking at him when he does it." 82

Darl and Jewel are away from home when Addie dies, but Darl sees all the events which occur there. He is the narrator of the sections concerned with her death. A student at the University of Virginia asked Faulkner how it was possible that Darl could give such detailed description to his mother's death while he was out cutting wood some place else. Faulkner answered:

"Who can say how much of the good poetry in the world has come out of madness, and who can say just how

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81 Ibid., p. 532. 82 Ibid., p. 510.
much of super-perceptivity . . . a mad person might not have? It may not be so, but it's nice to think that there is some compensation for madness. That maybe the madman does see more than the sane man. That the world is more moving to him. That he is more perceptive. He has something of clairvoyance, maybe, a capacity for telepathy . . . .

Though some critics think Darl may have been sane, Faulkner clearly intends Darl to be considered insane, because he presents through Darl the idea that a "mad" person may have special knowledge which is not available to the sane of this world. Darl knows things which he could not have learned solely through the use of his conscious mind.

In presenting the irrational characters, Benjy and Darl, an idiot and an insane person, Faulkner again indicates his disapproval of the usual value judgments of the social world. For those who judge by such standards ordinarily dismiss these mentally warped or under-developed people as unfit to contribute anything valuable. And Faulkner also underlines his opinion that worthwhile knowledge is often overlooked by those who seek it only in the conscious or rational mind. He insists through Benjy and Darl that misfits

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83 Gwynne and Blotner, p. 112.

may be aware of virtues and of values which often elude the so-called normal or sane people in the world.

Aside from the three major groups of characters--those who trust their emotional knowledge, those who tap unconscious knowledge by freeing themselves of civilized social rules and those who possess worthwhile knowledge partly because they are irrational--Faulkner creates characters who have the ability to go unerringly to people they seek, though they could not consciously know exactly where to look for them.

Doc Hines and Simon McEachern in *Light in August* and the reporter in *Pylon* are all obsessed with the necessity of finding someone. Possibly their inability to think rationally, because of their obsessions, frees their minds of the usual clutter of conscious ideas. Apparently such freedom allows subliminal clues from the unconscious mind to direct them to the right place. At any rate, Mrs. Hines reports that her husband, who had no idea where to look for his daughter and the man she had eloped with, took the only possible short cut that could lead him to intercept them. There was no way he could consciously have known what road they had taken, but somehow he did know. Though it was "pitch dark" when he overtook a buggy, and he could not have
known it was the right buggy, "he rode up on the right side of it . . . leaned down . . . grabbed the man that might have been a stranger or a neighbor for all he could have known by sight or hearing, . . . and shot him dead and brought the gal back home . . . ."\textsuperscript{85}

Simon McEachern's experience is similar to Doc Hines'. When he sees his adopted son, Joe Christmas, sneaking out of the house, Simon is sure that Joe's purpose is "lechery."

Simon is so bigoted that his convictions about good and evil are firmly fixed. In fact, Faulkner says that in McEachern "bigotry and clairvoyance were practically one."\textsuperscript{86} Simon seems to think he will be guided by outrage alone, without needing to use other faculties to find Joe. Evidently he is right to trust his own kind of clairvoyance because "he rode . . . straight to the place which he sought and which he had found out of a whole night and almost a whole half of a county . . . ."\textsuperscript{87} He does find Joe, who is at a dance accompanied by a prostitute.

The reporter's experience is not quite as dramatic as that of Hines or McEachern, but he manages to find the one

\textsuperscript{85}William Faulkner, \textit{Light in August}, p. 355.

\textsuperscript{86}Ibid., p. 189.

\textsuperscript{87}Ibid., p. 190.
person he seeks when circumstances almost guarantee failure. The reporter is obsessed with the necessity of finding Jiggs, the mechanic who might be able to give him information about the woman who has driven all rational thought from the reporter's mind. He dreads entering the mob at the airport, where an air meet is being held; he thinks he will drown if he goes in, but his need is so great that he plunges into the crowd: "It was as though some sixth sense, some economy out of profound inattention guided him . . . on to where Jiggs sat . . . ."

Other characters who are emotionally involved with one problem to the exclusion of everything else, and who seem to "know" things as a result of their obsessions are Rosa Coldfield in Absalom, Absalom!, who knows "something" is living in the old Sutpen place; Joe Christmas and Gail Hightower in Light in August, who know that something is about to happen to them; and Temple Drake in Sanctuary, who has the same feeling.

References to knowledge which reaches people through channels other than the rational mind are scattered throughout Faulkner's work. Most of these fall into one of the four major categories of characters who profit by

trusting nonrational knowledge, as this chapter has suggested: the kind of nonrational knowledge they all use stems from intuition, rather than reason. Awareness may come through the emotions; from a kind of collective unconscious; from intuition, instinct, "extra sensory perception," a "sixth sense," or "clairvoyance." Whatever this mysteriously acquired knowledge may be called specifically, it is not dependent on the rational mind; therefore in this thesis it has been called nonrational knowledge. Only the most typical illustrations in each category have been offered, but these make it amply apparent that Faulkner was intensely interested in the values to be found in knowledge not available to the conscious mind. His most admirable characters trust their intuition and respect natural laws rather than social laws. They are not rigidly bound by adherence to the rational mind nor to so-called civilized dicta of any sort. They are in harmony with themselves, with their fellow man and with nature, largely because they trust nonrational clues. He portrays merely rational characters as less than human. Probably one of his most persuasive arguments against mere rationality is offered through his presentation of irrational characters—idiots, the insane, or those who are temporarily irrational
through emotional conflicts or obsessions. Benjy, an idiot, and Darl, who is insane, are shown to possess worthwhile knowledge which can help others. Even the most unsympathetically handled of the obsessed group--Doc Hines and Simon McEachern--reach their own warped goals by trusting subliminal clues.

William Faulkner suggests through his style and affirms through his presentation of characters that nonrational knowledge which cannot be proved because it stems from the unconscious mind, where "emotion, desire and instinct predominate rather than ideas,"\(^9\) must not be dismissed simply because it is unexplainable. Such nonrational knowledge must be trusted; it may transform a mere being into a human being.

CHAPTER III

POSSIBLE SOURCES

Similarities between Faulkner's views as they are expressed in portions of his work and some of the psychological concepts found in C. G. Jung's theory of psychology have been remarked by several reviewers. Though some of these similarities are striking, there seems to be no evidence that Faulkner adopted Jung's concept. Carvel Collins, who detected a startling resemblance, said:

"... Much as I should like to, I have found no evidence that Faulkner ever studied Jung . . . ."¹ Campbell and Foster, who observed the many psychological patterns that appeared in Faulkner's novels, think that Faulkner did not make a detailed study of either Freud or Jung. In their opinion, "the style and mode of thinking he arrived at seems to be largely original and expressive of a unique personality . . . ."² Irving Malin investigated the relation of Faulkner's work to the psychology of Freud and


²Campbell and Foster, pp. 42-43.
Jung, and concluded that "it would be misleading to suggest that Faulkner has read and mastered the literature of these two men--in all probability he has not . . . . A writer like Faulkner can arrive at the same kind of psychological truths as an analyst intent upon helping his patients."\(^3\) Kathryn Gibbons thinks, on the other hand, that Faulkner probably was familiar with Jung's writings, but she comments that Faulkner has left the problem of influence up to his critics to determine.\(^4\) However, Faulkner has twice answered questions about his knowledge of psychology. When Faulkner was at the University of Virginia, a student of psychiatry asked him if he had any idea where he learned psychology. Faulkner replied: "No sir, I don't. Only what I have learned about it from listening to people that do know. What little of psychology I know the characters I have invented and playing poker have taught me . . . ."\(^5\) And a Japanese questioner asked Faulkner specifically about the possible influence of Jung's psychology on his work. Faulkner replied:


\(^5\) Gwynn and Blotner, pp. 268-269.
A writer is completely rapacious, he has no morals whatever, he will steal from any source. He's so busy stealing and using it that he himself probably never knows where he gets what he uses. He is influenced by every word he ever read, every sound he ever heard, every sense he ever experienced; and he is so busy writing that he hasn't time to stop and say, "Now, where did I steal this from?" But he did steal it somewhere.6

Evidently Faulkner's own general concept of the values to be gained through accepting and trusting unconscious knowledge was derived from his total experience, as he attested. But a person familiar with Jungian psychology will detect in some parts of Faulkner's work an amazing similarity between the ideas of the two men.

Probably the most inclusive resemblance between Jung and Faulkner, as Malin pointed out,7 is their mutual interest in what Jung calls the "individuation process."

The individuation process is a quest toward wholeness

6Jelliffe, pp. 72-73.
7Malin, p. 84.
or selfhood. According to Jung, the self is life's goal, which people constantly strive toward but rarely reach. Such a goal is difficult to attain because "before a self can emerge it is necessary for the various components of the personality to become fully developed and individuated." The person who ultimately reaches wholeness, then, must not "develop his intellect at the price of repression of the unconscious, nor, on the other hand, . . . live in a more

8 Hall and Lindzey (Theories of Personality, New York, 1957, p. 86) find that Jung's concept of the "self" is probably his most important psychological discovery. The self is worth striving to attain, for it "is the mid-point of personality, around which all of the other systems are constellated. It holds these systems together and provides the personality with unity, equilibrium, and stability" (p. 85). Hall and Lindzey have summarized Jung's theory of personality, with its final goal: "The total personality or psyche, as it is called by Jung, consists of a number of separate but interacting systems. The principal ones are the ego, the personal unconscious and its complexes, the collective unconscious and its archetypes, the persona, the anima or animus, and the shadow [these terms will be defined as they occur in the discussion]. In addition to these independent systems there are the attitudes of introversion and extroversion and the functions of thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting. Finally, there is the self which is the fully developed and fully unified personality" (p. 79). The individuated person has reached selfhood; individuation is synonymous with "self:"

See also Jolande Jacobi, Complex / Archetype / Symbol in the Psychology of C. G. Jung, translated by Ralph Manheim (New York, 1959): The individuation process is one of "psychic development that aims at the broadening of the field of consciousness and a maturation of the personality" (p. 113).

See also Frieda Fordham, An Introduction to Jung's Psychology (Baltimore, 1963), pp. 76-77.

9 Hall and Lindzey, p. 86. 10 Ibid.
or less unconscious state."\textsuperscript{11} Jung's own definition of the individuation process emphasizes this point:

Conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other. If they must contend, let it at least be a fair fight with equal rights on both sides. Both are aspects of life. Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too—as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game of hammer and anvil: between them the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an "individual". [\textit{sic}] This, roughly, is what I mean by the individuation process.\textsuperscript{12}

Thus Jung believes that the elements of a person's primitive and irrational nature, which are in opposition to his conscious personality, must nevertheless be integrated with it to form a whole, if he hopes to be psychologically balanced.\textsuperscript{13}

Malin finds that such a use of opposites is often evident in Faulkner's work: "Faulkner and Jung believe that man can learn the nature of his own psyche by use of an

\textsuperscript{11}Fordham, p. 77.


\textsuperscript{13}Shaffer and Shoben, p. 469.
opposing principle." According to Malin, Jung is convinced
that the hero in search of selfhood frequently meets

14 Malin, p. 90. See also Walter J. Slatoff, Quest for
Part II of this work, "The Polar Imagination," is devoted to
a discussion of Faulkner's use of antithesis. Slatoff says
that he has no psychological warrant for using the term "the
polar imagination," but that he uses the label to describe
what must be a deep-seated tendency in Faulkner's to view and
interpret experience in extreme terms and to see life as
composed essentially of pairs of warring entities" (p. 79).

See also Hall and Lindzey: They think that Jung
"believes that a psychological theory of personality must be
founded on the principle of opposition or conflict because
the tensions created by conflicting elements are the very
essence of life itself. Without tension there would be no
energy and consequently no personality" (p. 88). "Opposition
exists everywhere in the personality . . . . The contest
between the rational and irrational forces of the psyche
never ceases. Conflict is a basic fact of life" (p. 89). But
they find that Jung does not believe that personality
must always be divided against itself because of such
opposition, for he thinks "polar elements not only oppose one
another, they also attract or seek one another . . . . The
union of opposites is accomplished by what Jung calls the
transcendent function [transmutation of psychic energy through
symbols, Fordham, p. 20] . . . . The operation of this
function results in the synthesis of contrary systems to form
a balanced, integrated personality. The center of this
integrated personality is the self" (p. 89).

See also J. P. Chaplin and T. S. Krawiec, Systems and
Theories of Psychology (New York, 1961), pp. 323-324: "Jung
. . . tended to think in terms of opposites or polarities.
The individual whose dominant personality pattern is that of
introversion is unconsciously extroverted, and vice versa.
The male has in his make-up elements of femininity, and the
woman correspondingly has masculine tendencies in her
unconscious. To complicate the picture even further, mental
activity takes four dominant forms: sensation, thinking,
intuition, and feeling. Thinking and feeling are polar
opposites, and both tendencies are always present in the
individual at the same time. If his dominant mental activity
is thinking, the individual's unconscious tends toward feeling.
Similarly, sensing and intuition are opposites, and, as is
true of the other polarities, both are operative in the
individual at the same time."
archetypes which represent opposing principles in his personality, and he thinks that some of these archetypes are found in Faulkner's work. He identifies four of these:

15 Malin, p. 90.

16 Malin, p. 90. Since "archetypes" are components of what Jung calls the collective unconscious, a brief review of his concept of the unconscious may clarify their meaning. Jung describes two levels of the unconscious. The first level he calls the personal unconscious because it belongs to the individual alone; "it is formed from his repressed infantile impulses and wishes, subliminal perceptions, and countless forgotten experiences . . ." (Fordham, p. 22). The concept of a collective unconscious is one of the most original as well as one of the most controversial features of Jung's theory (Hall and Lindzey, p. 80). "The collective unconscious seems to be the storehouse of latent memory traces inherited from man's ancestral past, a past that includes not only the racial history of man as a separate species but his pre-human or animal ancestry as well . . . It is the psychic residue of man's evolutionary development, a residue that accumulates as a consequence of repeated experiences over many generations. It is almost entirely detached from anything personal in the life of an individual and it is seemingly universal. Jung attributes the universality of the collective unconscious to the similarity of the structure of the brain in all races of men, and this similarity in turn is due to a common evolution (ibid.). But racial memories are not inherited as such; what is inherited is the "possibility of reviving experiences of past generations. They are predispositions which set us to react to the world in a selective fashion" (ibid.). The collective unconscious is the foundation upon which the whole structure of the personality is erected. "What a person learns as a result of experiences is substantially influenced by the collective unconscious which exercises a guiding . . . influence over the behavior of the person from the very beginning of life. "The form of the world into which he is born is already inborn in him as a virtual image" (ibid., p. 81; the interior quotation is from C. G. Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology in Volume 7 of The Collected Works [New York, 1953], p. 188.).
the Shadow, which Jung calls the "other side of ourselves"; the Soul-Image, which Jung calls the anima or animus--the

Hall and Lindzey describe the archetype (which is also variously called a dominant, primordial image, imago, mythological image, or behavior pattern) as "a universal thought form (idea) which contains a large element of emotion. This thought form creates images or visions that correspond in normal waking life to some aspect of the conscious situation. For example, the archetype of the mother produces an image of a mother figure which is then identified with the actual mother ... The baby inherits a preformed conception of a generic mother which determines in part how the baby will perceive his mother" (p. 82). The archetype "is a permanent deposit in the mind of an experience that has been constantly repeated for many generations" (p. 82). Numerous archetypes are presumed to be in the collective unconscious. Some of these are archetypes of birth, rebirth, death, power, magic, unity, the hero, the child, God, the demon, the old wise man, the earth mother, and the animal (p. 83; footnote credit is given to C. G. Jung, _Von den Wurzeln des Bewusstseins_ [Zurich, 1954], and C. G. Jung, _Symbols of Transformation_ in Volume 5 of _The Collected Works_ [New York, 1956]).

Jung himself says of archetypes, "Indeed, not even our thought can grasp them, because it never invented them (C. G. Jung, _Two Essays on Analytical Psychology_ in Volume 7 of _The Collected Works_ [London, 1953], p. 66; cited in Fordham, p. 28).

17 Malin, p. 90. See also Hall and Lindzey: "Although all archetypes may be thought of as autonomous dynamic systems that can become relatively independent of the rest of the personality, some archetypes have evolved so far as to warrant their being treated as separate systems with the personality. These are the persona, the anima and animus, and the shadow" (p. 83). Hall and Lindzey declare that the shadow archetype "consists of the animal instincts which man inherited in his evolution from lower forms of life ... [It] typifies the animal side of man's nature. As an archetype the shadow is responsible for man's conception of original sin; when it is projected outward it becomes the devil or an enemy ..." Its vital and passionate animal
anima is the unconscious feminine nature of men and animus is the counterpart in women—; 18 the Old Wise Man, an unconscious voice which assures a man that he possesses magical power and wisdom; 19 and the Magna Mater, which acts in a parallel way on woman as the Old Wise Man does on a man. 20

18 Malin, p. 90. See also Hall and Lindzey, p. 84: "Jung ascribes the feminine side of man's personality and the masculine side of woman's personality to archetypes. The feminine archetype in man is called anima, [and] the masculine archetype in woman is called the animus . . . . They . . . . act as collective images which motivate each sex to respond to and understand members of the opposite sex . . . . But the anima and animus may also lead to misunderstanding and discord if the archetypal image is projected without regard for the real character" of the other person (p. 84). See also Hans Schaer, Religion and the Cure of Souls in Jung's Psychology, translated by R. F. C. Hull (New York, 1950), pp. 50-51.

19 Malin, p. 90. See also Fordham, p. 60: The Old Wise Man archetype may appear in various forms—a king, a hero, a medicine man, or a savior. It can become a serious danger to the personality, "for when it is awakened a man may easily come to believe he really possesses the 'mana', [sic] the seemingly magical power and wisdom that it holds . . . ." But he does not really possess the wisdom; it is a voice from the collective unconscious which needs to be subjected to conscious criticism. If he can listen to the voice and "understand that the power works through him--he is not in control--then he is on the way to a genuine development of personality."

20 Malin, p. 90. See also Fordham, pp. 60-61: "The archetype of the great mother acts in a parallel way on a
Malin thinks the shadow archetype is shown through Faulkner's portrayal of the confrontation of Hightower with Christmas in *Light in August*. Malin does not elaborate, but he probably means that since Hightower neglects the animal side of his personality and Christmas seeks his identity largely through sexual contact with women, both are unbalanced. Their meeting on the day Christmas is murdered could represent Hightower's acceptance of his shadow, for after that Hightower understands many things about himself which were formerly hidden.

He points out that the meeting of Byron Bunch and Lena Grove in *Light in August* illustrates the Soul-Image archetype. Byron's immediate love for Lena confirms the probability that she corresponds to his highly agreeable archetypal image of woman.

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woman [as the Old Wise Man on a man]. Anyone possessed by this figure comes to believe herself endowed with an infinite capacity for loving and understanding, helping and protecting . . . . She can, however, also be most destructive, insisting . . . that all who come within her circle of influence are . . . helpless or dependent on her to some degree." As with the Old Wise Man archetype, a woman who lets the great mother archetype guide her rather than possess her can develop toward selfhood.

21 Malin, p. 90.

22 Malin (p. 90.) also thought the meeting of the convict and the pregnant woman in "The Old Man" illustrated this archetype; but the convict apparently learned to distrust women when one of them exploited him, not because he had an unpleasant archetypal image of woman.
Malin also finds that Lucas Beauchamp, Sam Fathers, and Gavin Stevens have developed toward wholeness through embodying the Old Wise Man archetype. Again, Malin does not explain his statement, but apparently he believes these three allow the archetype to guide them, but not possess them, as they search for manhood. There is evidence that all three respected this unconscious voice of wisdom and allowed it to guide them toward unity.

In Malin's opinion, Lena Grove and the pregnant woman in "The Old Man," as well as Dewey Dell in As I Lay Dying are representatives of the Magna Mater archetype. Though he does not specifically exclude Eula Varner Snopes from this category, he does not mention her. Faulkner himself evidently thought of Eula as an earth mother, especially as he portrayed her in The Hamlet. Faulkner realized, as did Jung, that it is very difficult for people to become whole. Malin finds that only a few of Faulkner's characters reach "individuation." The few that he believes achieve the goal are Isaac McCaslin, Sam Fathers, the Corporal, Dilsey, and Gavin Stevens. Malin does not mention Byron Bunch in

23 Ibid.  
24 Ibid.  
25 Ibid., pp. 90-91.
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Light in August or Judith Sutpen in Absalom, Absalom!; however, these two certainly achieved wholeness of personality.

Kathryn Gibbons thinks an application of Jungian psychology illuminates Faulkner's meaning in the Quentin section of The Sound and the Fury. Her thesis is that Faulkner apparently meant to portray Quentin "as an unsympathetic character through a description of a personality which never integrates," and she proposes to show this through Faulkner's use of shadow symbolism. However, an ambiguous use of the word "shadow" in her discussion of Jungian psychology confuses the reader. In addition she frequently refers to the findings of Sir James G. Frazer and their possible influence on Faulkner's use of shadow symbolism in the Quentin section. Her application of Jungian psychology to clarify the reasons behind Quentin's suicide is, unfortunately, more bewildering than illuminating.

Carvel Collins sees another parallel between Faulkner's work and Jung's psychology. He thinks there is evidence of

26 Gibbons, p. 17.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., p. 16.
Jung's "mandala" design in Faulkner's "The Bear" (the version published in Go Down, Moses), which "seems . . . to contain in its concluding pages the design of a textbook mandala." The episode Collins refers to is Ike's visiting the plot where Sam Fathers is buried. He thinks this passage contains most of the elements which Jung ascribes to the mandala, "an enclosed space, a central point, circular motion, a square (here the burial plot with its four white corner markers . . .) and feelings of unity and synthesis which Ike achieves here . . . ." An integral part of the meaning of the mandala design is in the feeling of sublime harmony which usually accompanies it.

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29 Fordham, p. 65: "Geometric figures such as the circle, the wheel, and the square, and anything fourfold, . . . appear frequently as symbols of the self. These concentrically arranged figures are often known as 'mandalas'." Mandala is a Sanskrit word and "its symbolism includes all concentrically arranged figures, all radial or spherical arrangements, and all circles or squares with a central point." Fordham adds that "Jung found the mandala symbolism occurring spontaneously in the dreams and visions of many of his patients. Its appearance was incomprehensible to them, but it was usually accompanied by a strong feeling of harmony or peace." For many of his patients, "the round or square enclosures seemed to act like magically protective walls, preventing an outburst and a disintegration, and protecting an inward purpose" (pp. 66-67).

30 Collins, p. 4.

31 Ibid., p. 5.
When Ike visits the burial plot, he feels several conflicting emotions, but among them is at least a momentary feeling of peace until he becomes aware of Boon Hogganbeck's farcical and ineffectual attempt to preserve something of the wilderness for himself.  

In the preceding chapter of this thesis attention was called to the special knowledge which Ike McCaslin and Sam Fathers apparently possess. This was compared with Jung's concept of the collective unconscious or racial-memory. Their escape from civilized social influences was interpreted as a means both of allowing their unconscious minds to guide them toward selfhood and as a way to keep the social mask, the persona, from smothering their real personalities.  

Faulkner's concern with the necessity of accepting irrational knowledge, especially intuitive knowledge, if a person hopes to become a human being, is reminiscent of

32Ibid., p. 5. Collins also considers the passage in Sartoris where Bayard joins a group of men in drinking "moonshine" in an enclosed glade about a central spring an example of the mandala design. But Bayard seems not so much at peace as dazed from his head injury and from excessive drinking of whiskey. Collins says there are other examples of the mandala in Faulkner's work, notably in The Sound and the Fury and in Light in August, but he does not give any details.
Jung's concept of the individuation process. Both Faulkner and Jung apparently believe that some things cannot be known except intuitively. Jung says that intuition is a "'perception of realities which are not known to consciousness.'"33 He thinks that in every hopelessly blocked situation intuition "'works automatically towards the issue which no other function could discover.'"34 While Faulkner refrains from saying this outright in his work, he does definitely imply it through his handling of characters. Jung has said that intuition enables one to get at the essence of reality,35 and Faulkner has said that only the heart is to be trusted;36 he implies that it—not the head—knows the way to truth.37

Jung believes that in general, "all of the concepts of the conscious mind are compensated for by the contents of the unconscious mind. The principle of compensation provides a kind of equilibrium or balance between contrasting elements which prevents the psyche from becoming neurotically unbalanced,"38

34Ibid.
35Hall and Lindzey, pp. 86-87, paraphrase from C. G. Jung, Psychological Types (New York, 1933).
36Gwynne and Blotner, p. 6.
37Slatoff, p. 240.
38Hall and Lindzey, p. 88.
Again, Faulkner shows through his work that he evidently believes the same thing. Those characters who refuse to pay attention to any knowledge which reaches them by other than rational channels are clearly shown to be unbalanced.

One of Faulkner's characters, Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!* is remarkably similar to the kind of person Jung describes as a thinking type. Such a person is dominated by the thinking function of his personality; therefore, his actions are usually the result of an intellectually considered motive. "He believes that he is rational and logical, but in fact he suppresses all that does not fit into his scheme . . . . He both dislikes and fears the irrational, and he ... tends to become cold and lacking in understanding of human weakness."39 He can, as Sutpen did, sacrifice his family and his friends to his own principles. The thinking type "often has a strong sense of duty, and his formula for life may include much that is good, even noble, but his manner of putting it into practice will lack warmth, tolerance, and those human qualities that refuse to be fitted into schemes and formulae."40 Anyone who has read both *Absalom, Absalom!* and Jung's description

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39Fordham, p. 37.  
40Ibid.
of psychological types is apt to classify Thomas Sutpen as typical of Jung's concept of the man who is dominated by intellect.

Jung's psychology is essentially optimistic; he thinks there is constant (and often creative) development accompanying the search for completion. Faulkner's general concept of man's possibilities is similar; he thinks man will not only endure, but will prevail.

The work of the two men is probably unappreciated and misunderstood for very similar reasons. Jung's theories are not popular with most psychologists because they are "different, mystical"; his writing style is circuitous and obscure. Yet, though his theories and style of writing are irritating to many psychologists, they cannot ignore Jung. Almost the same situation exists in Faulkner's relationship with his critics.

\[41\] Hall and Lindzey, p. 78.
\[45\] This relationship was discussed in Chapter II of this thesis.
Jung attributed much that is distinctive in his point of view to the "influence of his own type and caste of mind." If Jung's concept of the collective unconscious has any validity, the images he calls archetypes are a fundamental part of every person's personality, including William Faulkner's. Since Faulkner evidently did not study Jung's theory of psychology, he apparently arrived independently at his own psychological conclusions, some of which are amazingly close to Jung's.

Personal factors which influenced William Faulkner, the man, were bound to influence Faulkner, the writer. There is no official or scholarly biography of Faulkner; however, John Faulkner's book, *my brother Bill*, offers some valuable information about him. In addition, a great deal about Faulkner's personal life appears in published interviews and lectures. Faulkner granted some interviews even in his earlier years; and after he had won the Nobel Prize, he revealed many things about himself and his work.

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47 This evidently gave him reason to believe that his work would now be fairly evaluated.
through frequent interviews and lectures. Evidence which seems to confirm the personal information gained from these sources is available through reading Faulkner's work. John Faulkner said he had never known anyone "who identified himself with his writings more than Bill did . . . . Sometimes it was hard to tell which was which, which one Bill was, himself or the one in the story. And yet you knew somehow that the two of them were the same, they were one and inseparable."^48

An author's own interests and beliefs are sure to be reflected in his work; even the most detached artist will scarcely create work which has no significance for him. Inevitably he reveals much about himself through his selection of details, through his style, through his characters, and through his subject matter.

It seems probable that several factors in Faulkner's life caused him to think he had failed to measure up to his own expectations. Chronologically, family legends were the first of these influential factors. These legends which emphasized the heroic qualities of the Faulkner men doubtless affected Faulkner's perception of himself as much as they

obviously influenced his work. The consensus is that the Sartoris clan, which figures often and importantly in his work, is Faulkner's own family. (The Sartoris family appears in several of his works, and two of his novels, Sartoris and The Unvanquished, are devoted to the Sartoris [Faulkner] family.) In his fiction the Sartorises are elevated into glamorous legend.

The focal point of the Sartoris legend was unquestionably John Sartoris, a colorful and heroic character, easily identified as Faulkner's own great-grandfather, Colonel Falkner. His life is described in such close detail in the novels that it is evident that Faulkner's sensitive imagination responded deeply to the stories he had heard about him. Colonel Sartoris "was the man whom subsequent Sartoris generations would hold as a half-god and symbolic of all that was romantic, exciting, and dangerous . . . . The events of Sartoris's life . . . became a sort of glorious textbook for his descendants to follow."50


When Faulkner was a child he was steeped in family legends, and at the heart of the legends was Colonel Falkner, a man of "fiery and imperious character."\textsuperscript{51} William's own father "was a decent man, but clearly less vital than the Falkners before him."\textsuperscript{52} It is not unusual that an imaginative boy would prefer to identify with a man like the Colonel instead of with his more ordinary father.

Faulkner seems to have patterned young Bayard Sartoris, protagonist of \textit{Sartoris}, a World War I aviator returned to his home town following the war, after himself.\textsuperscript{53} Young Bayard and William Faulkner are contemporaries; both were aviators, both were restless when they returned home, and both sought to emulate the heroic military actions of idealized great-grandfathers. Further insight into Faulkner's attitude toward his great-grandfather may be gained by observing that the fictional "young Bayard Sartoris was completely enveloped in the past. He was so absorbed in the Sartoris legend ... that he actually had little personality of his own."\textsuperscript{54}

If Faulkner did portray some of his own characteristics in young Bayard and if part of his own personality was

\textsuperscript{51} Howe, p. 10. \hspace{2cm} \textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} O'Connor, \textit{The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner}, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{54} Pyland, p. 63.
submerged in that of his great-grandfather, this might account, to some extent at least, for his tendency to play roles. If Faulkner perceived considerable discrepancy between the legendary role of his great-grandfather and his own role, as some of his behavior seems to indicate, the discrepancy apparently caused him to feel keen disappointment in himself. His portrayal of frustrated war heroes in *Soldiers' Pay* and in *A Fable* appears to give evidence of his disappointment. Further, this kind of self-devaluation often spurs a person to great activity in an effort to compensate for perceived failure. Such a reaction partially explains Faulkner's insistence that he be given an opportunity to participate in military action in World War I. Colonel Sartoris, the fictional equivalent of Colonel Falkner, behaved "with courage and ingenuity and with a patrician dignity" in the Civil War episodes of *The Unvanquished*; these actions were the ones which Faulkner sought to emulate.

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55 Faulkner's penchant for hiding his own personality behind assumed poses will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

Several versions have been given of Faulkner's efforts to get into the United States Signal Corps during World War I. All agree that though he made the rounds of recruiting stations in the United States, he was turned down because he was too small to meet their minimum requirements. At any rate, when he failed to find a place in the military service of the United States, his friend Stone secured a place for him in the Royal Flying Corps. He went to Toronto, Ontario, as a cadet. He became an "honorary second lieutenant on December 22, 1918," but that was the date of demobilization, so he relinquished his commission the day after he received it.

John Faulkner's version is that after Bill was turned down by the United States Signal Corps, he went to the British.

They needed men, and badly. He applied for training with the RFC, ... and they turned him down too. He wasn't tall enough. Bill got mad and told them he

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59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.
was going to fly for someone and he guessed if they didn't need him the Germans would take him. They needed flyers too. He asked them the way to the German embassy and the RFC man said, "Wait, hold on a minute." Bill waited and the man went inside an office and pretty soon he came back and told Bill they could use him . . . . The war ended before Bill could finish his training [but] . . . he received his commission as a lieutenant [and] . . . he had it framed and kept it on his wall . . . . It hung above the mantle over the fireplace.61

This version of Faulkner's attempt to get into the service sounds somewhat exaggerated, but apparently it accurately reflects the spirit of that attempt. In this account, Faulkner's persistence as well as his emotional reaction to being rejected again indicate that his motivations were strong. Faulkner probably felt his rejection for military service was actually a rejection of himself as a man.

Faulkner was an unusually small man, and small men often feel so defensive about their size that they go to great lengths to prove their manliness. Sherwood Anderson, at one time a close friend of Faulkner, speculated rather bitterly about his "bantam cock" qualities, moodiness, and compulsiveness, attributing them to his unusual smallness and to his "inconspicuous success with the ladies."62

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Evidently a wish to compensate for his size through heroic service was one motive behind Faulkner's determination to be accepted into military service. The most powerful motive, however, was evidently his wish to live up to the image of war hero set by Colonel Falkner. But he was never given an opportunity to prove himself in actual combat, and his own frustration is depicted through the experience of two of his fictional characters.

Soldiers' Pay\(^{63}\) opens with a presentation of Cadet Julian Lowe's frustration: "Julian . . . regarded the world with a yellow and disgruntled eye. He suffered the same jaundice that many a more booted one than he did . . . ; they had stopped the war on him. So he sat in a smoldering of disgusted sorrow . . . ."\(^{64}\) Julian remains uninterested in anything save his own interrupted military career until the terribly injured Lieutenant Mahon boards the train. Mahon's face is so scarred that sight of it makes Julian sick; however, he thinks jealously, "had I been old enough or lucky enough, this might have been me."\(^{65}\) It is inconceivable to Lowe that such a fortunate man as Mahon,

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\(^{63}\) Soldiers' Pay and Mosquitoes are more interesting as biographical information about Faulkner than as novels, according to Howe, p. 17.


\(^{65}\) Ibid., pp. 30-31.
one who had actually been in combat, could sleep. "Would I sleep? thought Lowe; had I wings, boots, would I sleep? . . . Young and dreadfully disappointed, [he] knew all the old sorrows of the Jasons of the world who see their vessels sink ere the harbor is left behind . . . "66

In 1954 (twenty-eight years after Soldiers' Pay was published) Faulkner's A Fable was published. In this novel another frustrated war hero is depicted. He is a nineteen year old English boy who has been sent to the front less than three weeks prior to the false armistice in France near the end of World War I. This young Englishman broods much as Cadet Lowe did:

Three weeks ago he was still in England waiting in Pilot's Pool for posting to the front—a certificated stationary engine scout pilot to whom the King had inscribed We Reposing Trust and Confidence in Our Trusty and Well-Beloved Gerald David . . . but already too late, gazetted not into the RFC but into the RAF. Because the RFC had ceased to exist on April Fool's day, two days before his commission came through: whereupon that March midnight had seemed to him a knell. A door had closed on glory; immortality itself had died in unprimered anti-climax: not his to be the old commission in the old glorious corps, the brotherhood of heroes to which he had dedicated himself . . . . 67

He reiterates the theme that it is too late, then muses that

66Ibid., p. 23.

some of these heroes would be

secure in immortality even while they still breathed, but it would not be his. Glory and valor would still exist of course as long as men lived to reap them. It would even be the same valor in fact, but the glory would be another glory. And that would be his: some second form of Elysium, a cut above dead infantry perhaps, but little more: who was not the first to think What had I done for motherland's glory had motherland but matched me with her need.68

By the time Faulkner wrote A Fable he had achieved prominence as a writer and gained honor through winning the Nobel Prize for literature. One wonders if Faulkner felt this to be "another glory . . . some second form of Elysium," a tarnished award because it was not the one he longed for. His achievement had not the heroic quality of his great-grandfather's.

During World War II Faulkner again wished to contribute to the war effort. He returned to Hollywood (after an absence of five years) for both patriotic and economic reasons. He still seemed to feel bitter disappointment "at having missed action in World War I and for not belonging to the generation that had fought [this] war . . . ."69

Faulkner was forty-four years old when he returned to

68Ibid., pp. 88-89.

Hollywood, but although he was "born too late for one, too soon for the other, he made his contributions to the war effort by writing several 'inspirational' short stories and by scripting patriotic pieces in Hollywood."70

Miner believes that both wars, but especially World War I, had a very important effect upon both Oxford and Jefferson (Faulkner's real and fictional home towns), but that Faulkner depicts the people of Jefferson as feeling its effects more than the people of Oxford did. He thinks this exaggeration probably reflects Faulkner's disillusion following the war.71

Faulkner may have been disillusioned largely because he perceived his own role in both wars as highly unsatisfactory. His reaction, as it is shown by John Faulkner's anecdote and by the characterization of Cadet Lowe in Soldiers' Pay and of Gerald David in A Fable, seems most comprehensible when interpreted as frustration resulting from unsuccessful attempts to compensate for his small size and for his own unheroic real-life role.

70Ibid. Some of these short stories and screenplays are "Two Soldiers," "Shall Not Perish," The De Gaulle Story, and Battlecry.

Faulkner was frustrated again when he tried to earn enough money to meet his simple needs. After the first world war he lived at home, where he had few expenses and earned a little money by doing such odd jobs as carpentry or house painting. He hoped to sell the poetry he was beginning to write, but it did not sell. In 1923 he went to New York where he clerked at Scribner's Book Store for about six months. He made no headway in that job either. Therefore, when he heard from Stone that he could have the postmastership at the University of Mississippi, he came back home. He was anything but a success as a postmaster. The mail piled up, the hours of opening and closing were vague, the records became confused or lost, and the customers' complaints were met with silence or abuse. Finally, the United States government "was obliged, in 1924, to relieve the postmaster of his duties."\footnote{O'Connor, "Faulkner's Apprenticeship," p. 4.} Faulkner submitted a letter of resignation that has become famous: Since he had already been fired, the "resignation" evidently served as formal protest and as an emotional release.

As long as I live under the capitalistic system
I expect to have my life influenced by the demands
of monied people. But I will be damned if I propose to be at the beck and call of every itinerant scoundrel who has two cents to invest in a postage stamp. This, sir, is my resignation.73

It is probable that Faulkner's failure to achieve success in any of the varied jobs he attempted offered no great threat to his self-esteem, for he considered writing his career. But his failure to earn a living did affect his life in another way.

According to John Faulkner, William's precarious financial position was one of the chief reasons why Estelle Oldham refused to marry him. Estelle's parents disapproved of him as a husband for their daughter.74 He remembers that Bill fell in love with Estelle Oldham the first time he saw her, when he was a boy. John thinks that Estelle always loved Bill too and that her family influenced her to marry someone else because Bill's prospects were poor. "Bill wouldn't even finish high school. Cornell [Franklin, the man Estelle married] was a graduate of Ole Miss, his future seemed assured in his family's business."75 This marriage eventually ended in divorce and Estelle came back to Oxford with her two children. A friend recalls,

73Ibid. 74John Faulkner, p. 160. 75Ibid.
Faulkner did not court the girls very much, I think, when he came back from the war. Estelle Oldham Franklin had married then, and she was living in Hawaii. Faulkner, I believe, was still in love with her. When Estelle divorced Franklin and came home, probably it was understood that she and Faulkner would marry.  

Estelle and William Faulkner were married in 1929, approximately twelve years after her first marriage. Faulkner must have suffered often during the years they were separated, for being rebuffed by the person one loves is among the most painful of all psychic wounds. This extremely frustrating experience almost certainly influenced his manner of presenting women and marriage in his work; his work clearly reveals a degree of bitterness toward both.

The married couples in Faulkner's work are almost always unhappy together; often they are engaged in open conflict, as Slatoff points out. He thinks Faulkner shows the relationships between husbands and wives, "with few exceptions ... as ones of mutual frustration or conflict." To support his statement, he points out that Mr. and Mrs. Compson are virtually separated; that Addie Bundren despises

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77 Slatoff, p. 111.
her husband; that Ruby and Lee Goodwin are in perpetual conflict; that Benbow has left his wife; that Hightower's wife was so frustrated by his attitude that she committed suicide; that Mr. and Mrs. McEachern are opposed in temperament and aims; that Sutpen and Ellen are incompatible; that Charlotte Rittenmeyer runs away from her husband; that Flem and Eula have nothing in common; that Armstid and his wife are usually involved in a battle of wills; and that Ike McCaslin and his wife are involved in terrible conflict in the one scene where Mrs. McCaslin appears. Though Slatoff does not mention other examples, the marriages of Donald and Margaret Mahon, Bayard and Narcissa Sartoris, Temple and Gowan Stevens, and the triangular marriage that includes Laverne and two pilots certainly are filled with as much conflict as those he names. They are possibly more abnormal than the others. This list includes almost all the important married couples in Faulkner's work. It is obvious that Faulkner's view of marriage, at least as he reflects it in his fiction, is prejudiced. One almost never finds

\[78\text{Ibid.}\]
in Faulkner's work "the happier possibilities in the
relations between men and women, the possibilities . . . of
fulfilled love." 79

Further evidence that Faulkner continued to feel hurt
as a result of the thwarting twelve-year period without
Estelle is obvious in his manner of portraying young women
in his fiction. Malin thinks the young women in Faulkner's
novels are types instead of well-rounded individuals. 80
A major group of stereotyped young women is composed of
insincere flappers who flaunt their sexual attraction with
no real intention of entering into a mature relationship.
Malin cites Temple Drake, as she is depicted in Sanctuary,
and Cecily Saunders in Soldiers' Pay as typical of this
group.

With few exceptions 81 Faulkner's young women are
warped in some manner which prevents their behaving as

79 Howe, p. 97, cited in Slatoff, p. 112. Exceptions to
this are brought out by Brooks (p. 206); he thinks there are
examples of mature sexual love in Faulkner's work: the
furniture dealer and his wife in Light in August, Jack
Houston and his wife in The Hamlet, and the Mallisons, Gavin
Stevens' sister and brother-in-law, in The Town and in
Intruder in the Dust.

80 Malin, p. 27.

81 At least one notable exception is Judith Sutpen in
Absalom, Absalom!
well-balanced, mature women might be expected to. For instance, Drusilla has resigned from her woman's role; Charlotte is so obsessed with her own concept of romantic love that she leaves her husband and children to form an extra-marital relationship with Harry; Cady is a nymphomaniac; Narcissa Benbow, as she appears in Sartoris, never seems to realize she is a wife--she prefers to live with her brother, and his marriage leaves her floundering; Margaret Powers in Soldiers' Pay refuses to marry the man who loves her, but marries a dying man instead; Patricia Robyn, the niece in Mosquitoes, runs away with a boy who loves her, but she is interested only in the adventure, not in him; Laverne in Pylon is so confused that she lives as wife to two men at once; and Linda Snopes postpones marriage in favor of an affair because she fears marriage will corrupt love. Not one of these young women is emotionally mature.

Only the older women in Faulkner's work command his respect. Probably he respects them because they have lived beyond their sexually attractive years and can no longer "use their beauty . . . to destroy men."82 Faulkner is

82 Malin, p. 38.
able to trust older women enough to let them act positively and with maturity. Among these are Dilsey and Rosa Millard, grandmothers; Aunt Jenny Du Pre, an aged widow; and Miss Habersham, a spinster in her seventies. Perhaps Faulkner's older women escape stereotyping because he can see them somewhat objectively. Probably he cannot describe young women in this way because their personalities are elusive to him; his feelings get in the way, making it impossible for him to see them as complex and well-rounded individuals.

In several places Faulkner offers generous praise of women without stipulating their ages, but apparently they are not young. In *Intruder in the Dust*, a wise old Negro man, Ephraim, advises young Chick Mallison:

"Young folks and womens, they aint cluttered. They can listen. But a middle-year man like your paw and your uncle, they cant listen. They aint got time. They're too busy with facks. In fact, you mought bear this in yo mind; someday you mought need it. If you ever needs to get anything done outside the common run, dont waste yo time on the menfolks; get the womens and children to working at it."

Very similar advice is offered to McCaslin Edmonds in "Was" (*Go Down, Moses*). Cass is a boy who is confused about the status of Tomey's Turl. When he asks Turl whether

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83 *Ibid.* , p. 27.

Mr. Hubert is going to buy him from Uncle Buck, Turl tells him that he has better protection than that: "'I gonter tell you something to remember: anytime you wants to git something done, from hoeing out a crop to getting married, just get the womenfolks to working at it. Then all you needs to do is sit down and wait. You member that.'"\(^8^5\)

The woman who does offer to help Chick is Miss Habersham, an elderly spinster. The particular woman Turl probably has in mind is Miss Sophonsiba Beauchamp, the aging spinster who is determined to marry Uncle Buck.

In at least one published statement, however, Faulkner gave evidence that his wound still smarted by making his contempt for women quite clear. He pointed out that young writers should not think of success at all, for "success is feminine. It's like a woman. You treat her with contempt and she'll come after you, all fawning and eager, but chase after her and she'll scorn you."\(^8^6\) This is the remark of a man who feels disenchantment, if not real bitterness, toward symbolical "woman." Since his analogy is to the kind of woman a man is likely to "chase after," Faulkner evidently had a young, desirable woman in mind.


\(^8^6\)Grenier, p. 170.
Faulkner showed further proof of his own feelings about young women through the stories of Ike McCaslin and of the convict in "The Old Man." Ike found peace when he fled into the wilderness, away from his young wife. She felt certain she could bribe him to forsake his principles through threatening to withhold from him further sexual relations. Ike had to relinquish his hope for a son because he could not compromise between integrity and desire. The convict in "The Old Man" also paid an exorbitant price for his freedom from a woman. He longed so intensely to escape from the anonymous mother he had rescued from the flooding Mississippi that he was happy to accept the additional ten years which were added to his term in the penitentiary at Parchman rather than remain outside with her, as she obviously wanted him to. He felt safe at Parchman among men who demanded nothing unusual of him.

Some basic distrust of young women apparently troubled Faulkner so much that he had to reduce them to types in order to characterize them. Their portraits are seldom flattering. But he could trust older women, those past the sexually alluring age. Apparently there was no emotional barrier to prevent his portraying these women honestly; therefore, they are whole human beings and some of them are among his most admirable characters.
The next major frustrating experience for Faulkner was caused by rejection of his writing. He tried first to write poetry, but it never did sell. His failure to develop as a poet was obviously a keen disappointment. At the University of Virginia he defined poetry in this way: "It's some moving passionate moment of the human condition distilled to its absolute essence." This definition is descriptive not only of poetry, but of Faulkner's emotional response to it as well.

When his first collection of poems, The Marble Faun, failed to stir any interest in readers or critics, he told his friend Stone that he was afraid little would come of his attempts to become a writer. Many years later, in 1956, Faulkner said to an interviewer, "I'm a failed poet. I tried writing poetry when I was a young man, but I soon found I wasn't a poet." He added that he felt every novelist tried poetry first, and when he found he could not write that, he turned next to the short story, and failing at that too, he then turned to writing novels. Measured by his own standards, then, Faulkner clearly considered writing novels a kind of failure.

89Grenier, pp. 168-169.
90Ibid.
His love for poetry, however, has influenced his prose in several ways. One scholar describes Rosa Coldfield's incisive capsule definitions of hope, defeat, sanity, madness, penury, [and] endurance . . . dropped parenthetically into the pauses of her breathless self-justification . . . [as] poetry in all but metre. They are reminiscent, in manner as well as idea, of the penetrating formulations of Emily Dickinson.91

Others have noticed the general poetic quality of Faulkner's prose. Warren Beck notes that what is "stilistically most remarkable in his work is the synthesis he has effected between the subtleties of modern narrative techniques and the resources of language employed in the traditionally poetic or interpretative vein."92 Florence Leaver remarks that "few readers doubt that the Yoknapatawpha novels constitute a myth,"93 but that this judgment is usually based upon an analysis of the narrative element. She feels, however, that the mythical quality is also produced by the author's poetic style, "deriving from what Welleck and Warren call 'mythic thinking--thinking in poetic vision . . . . ."94

92Beck, p. 159.
94Ibid.
Faulkner's admiration for the poetic form evidently shaped his prose, adding beauty and richness to its design. But the frustrated poet was never content with the limitations implicit in the prose form.

Though Faulkner continued to write poetry, he also began to write short stories, which were equally unsuccessful with publishers and readers. The first time in ten years of writing that Faulkner made a significant amount of money was in 1925, when he received a $200 advance on his first novel. But the novel sold poorly, and when his second novel was issued, its sales were not much better. His publisher had signed him to a three-book contract, but canceled it. Since he had thought himself finally launched as a writer, he must have been bitterly disappointed.

Certainly Faulkner felt thwarted when his writing continued to be ignored. He probably considered this the best, if not the only tool he could use to redeem his other perceived failures. Rejection of his work forced Faulkner to approach it in a new way. This is probably when he determined to write by his own standards, without regard for

96 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
the opinion of others--to trust his judgment alone, to put
his faith in his "extra sensory perception"\(^\text{97}\) to guide his
work.

In addition to the deeply personal kinds of frustration
that Faulkner endured--failure to measure up to the family
image of Faulkner males, failure to marry Estelle when
presumably he most needed her love and support, and almost
total failure to achieve early recognition as a writer--he
was also aware that the people in his community considered
him a failure. Certainly he had not made progress toward
success, as they measured it. The few who were aware of
his work evidently were offended by it.

Faulkner's hunting friend Cullen probably summarizes
the reaction of most of Faulkner's fellow townsmen. He
sometimes deeply resented Faulkner's "sordid, exaggerated
stories about people in this community."\(^\text{98}\) But he adds that
Faulkner knew that "he would have starved as a writer if he
had had to depend on the people of Oxford to buy his books.
Before he became a successful writer, I believe, he worked
and suffered a great deal."\(^\text{99}\)

\(^{97}\text{Gwynne and Blotner, pp. 268-269.}\)
\(^{98}\text{Cullen and Watkins, pp. 54-55.}\)
\(^{99}\text{Ibid., p. 52.}\)
Estelle Faulkner's bitter comment to an interviewer also indicates the reaction of the people in Oxford.

Everyone around here thought he [Faulkner] was just no good at all... Bill didn't work for a living; all he did was write... Outside of the University, I'd say there were only about a dozen people in the whole community who've ever read his books...

Faulkner knew that his work was misunderstood and unappreciated by friends and neighbors in his home town. Since Faulkner was a person deeply rooted in his region, its adverse judgment of him was bound to add to his feeling of inadequacy.

A person who considers himself a hopeless failure probably cannot achieve any of his ambitions, because self-esteem is basic to positive action. But William Faulkner, though he was strongly influenced by his own apparent failures, was nevertheless able to contribute something of real value to literature. He had sufficient ego-strength to protect himself from being trapped into apathy by feeling defeated.

Several aspects of Faulkner's behavior indicate his partial withdrawal from adverse influences in his environment which threatened his concept of his own worth and his right to be an individual.

100 Sidney Alexander, "The Nobel Prize Comes to Mississippi: How Yoknapatawpha County Sees Its Author," Commentary, XII (Summer, 1951), 177.
Faulkner's attitude toward formal education is one example of this kind of behavior. His own education and his remarks about education in his work give evidence of his feelings toward it. Perhaps it was because he depended on "extra sensory perception," one type of nonrational knowledge, that Faulkner rejected formal education. He evidently needed to develop his own special powers of perception in order to acquire the kind of education he considered important.

At any rate, John Faulkner says that Bill "did well in school through about the tenth grade, then he simply lost interest in school and a formal education." Though their parents disapproved of Bill's refusal to continue in school, "they knew it would do no good if he had made up his mind not to study. So Phil Stone guided his reading for the next two years." Stone loaded his car with books and sent Bill off in it. Bill liked to go out on a country road where it was quiet and spend the day reading. John thinks another reason why Bill was allowed to stay out of school was that Phil's guidance was good, for it put the finishing touches on the reading program that Mother had.

101 John Faulkner, p. 128.  102 Ibid., p. 130.
established in all of us . . . . What Phil picked for Bill to read was pretty much what she would have chosen . . . Plato, Socrates, the Greek poets, all the good Romans and Shakespeare . . . the other good English writers and the French and German classics.  

Although Faulkner did not finish high school, he was allowed to attend the University of Mississippi as a special student in 1919 and 1920. But again formal education evidently offended him, for he voluntarily withdrew from the university in November, 1920. One interviewer thinks he left because he wanted to avoid any possibility of ending up like Horace Benbow in *Sartoris*, who "has spent so much time being educated that he never has learned anything." But he thinks Faulkner's conception of education is best expressed by Dr. Mahon, who says of his son Donald (in *Soldiers' Pay*): "Education in the bookish sense he had not: the schooling he got was because he wanted to go, the reading he did was because he wanted to read . . . ." Donald's education seems to parallel Faulkner's own so faithfully that he might have been speaking for himself.

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103 Ibid.

104 A. Wigfall Green, "William Faulkner at Home," *Sewanee Review*, XL (Summer, 1932), 300.

105 Ibid.
In *Mosquitoes* Faulkner made an especially deadly attack on the usual method of teaching sophomore English. Fairchild, a novelist, in reminiscing about his college days, says, "The English literature course whittled Shakespeare down because he wrote . . . without pointing a moral . . . . But in spite of that I got interested in learning things." Since Faulkner preferred to read the classics away from the classroom atmosphere, Fairchild's comment probably reflects Faulkner's own attitude toward stifling methods of presenting some of the world's greatest literature.

Another significant allusion to formal education occurs in *Absalom, Absalom!* Charles Bon's awareness of the situation which exists between himself and Judith and Henry Sutpen, is

not that stupid shrewdness part instinct and part belief in luck, and part muscular habit of the senses and nerves . . . but a certain reserved and inflexible pessimism stripped long generations ago of all the rubbish and claptrap of people . . . who have not quite yet emerged from barbarism, who two thousand years hence will still be throwing triumphantly off the yoke of Latin culture and intelligence . . . .


107 *William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom!* p. 94.
This passage not only indicates contempt for formal education, "Latin culture and intelligence," but also suggests that the individual's nonrational knowledge is superior to it. Evidently this passage accurately reflects Faulkner's view. He said: "I don't have a trained mind, I've got to depend on extra sensory perception [in writing] . . . . I probably depend almost completely on it . . . ." 108

Surely it was also to protect his individuality that Faulkner became a partial recluse. He gained the reputation of being completely anti-social. He often declared that he detested more than anything else the invasion of his privacy, that he hated those who wanted to poke about in his private life. He said more than once that people should not be concerned with anything about a writer except his books. 109

Faulkner was anything but a social being, for he had no small talk, and he was often abstracted. He frequently stalked around Oxford with his pipe in his teeth, deep

108 Gwynne and Blotner, pp. 268-269. See also John Longley, The Tragic Mask, p. 8: Faulkner's "achievement is not explained by his training, education, or working methods . . . . He is not a schooled writer," as the unevenness of his work indicates.

in thought. Under these conditions he might meet close friends in the street without seeing them, or he might give them only a cursory, absent-minded nod. This kind of social withdrawal is evident in his behavior when, after the first world war, he returned to his home town of Oxford. "He might stand for hours gazing at the old courthouse, or walk about in the town in a distracted manner, lost in some impenetrable private reverie, seeing no one and replying shortly, and sometimes rudely, if some old friend or former teacher spoke to him."110

This is an example of the kind of behavior which led people to label him anti-social, and he fostered this belief. John Faulkner said that Bill's family respected his wishes that they not discuss him with others.

The only times we ever talked about him to others was to foster some of the stories he got up on himself. The three of us [Bill, John, and their mother] foisted many of them off on the public and I have seen them incorporated in what they call critical analyses.111

Faulkner once told an interviewer: "If I were reincarnated, I'd like to come back a buzzard. Nothing hates him or envies him or wants him or needs him; he is never

110Coughlan, p. 55.
111John Faulkner, p. 213.
bothered or in danger, and he can eat anything."\textsuperscript{112}

Evidently Faulkner liked to make this kind of comment in a deliberate effort to discourage those who would involve him in time-consuming social activities.

Many people considered Faulkner a profoundly cynical man because of his anti-social behavior and remarks. An observation which appeared in a popular weekly magazine at the time of his death probably reflects general public opinion concerning him far more accurately than a scholarly article could.

Against the general background of American life and culture, William Faulkner was a prickly anachronism. He had no desire to be popular or influential or to deliver a message . . . . He didn't give a damn about literary critics and their ideas or about "literary people," including the rising tribe of academic "Faulkner specialists" . . . ; he was almost as cold to praise as he was to censure.\textsuperscript{113}

An anecdote from the same source is a widely repeated tale which was used to illustrate his indifference to public recognition. It concerns his refusal to attend a dinner given by President and Mrs. Kennedy to honor Nobel Prize winners. Faulkner, then Writer-in-Residence at the University

\textsuperscript{112}\textit{Time}, LXXX (July 13, 1962), 86.

of Virginia, declined his invitation (and was the only absentee) with the explanation: "Why, that's a hundred miles away. That's a long way to go just to eat."\textsuperscript{114} Certainly Faulkner hated pretentiousness, but this means of exhibiting his own lack of it was in itself pretentious.

An unexpected observation concerning Faulkner's disinclination to attend social functions was offered by George Sidney. Sidney, evidently speaking for the majority of Faulkner's friends and colleagues in Hollywood, said they considered him one of the shyest persons they had ever met. In social gatherings Faulkner "was polite and reserved. His favorite strategy was to make himself as unobtrusive as possible."\textsuperscript{115} This comment is unexpected partly because it reveals sympathetic insight from a group of people commonly, though unfairly, branded as brassy, insensitive extroverts. According to Sidney, they did not try to make Faulkner a "hale fellow," but accepted him on his own terms.\textsuperscript{116} This understanding from such a group must have appeared quite ironic to Faulkner; strangers offered what the people in his home community would not, or could not. This turn-about

\textsuperscript{114}Ibid. \hfill \textsuperscript{115}Sidney, p. 373. \hfill \textsuperscript{116}Ibid.
doubtless brought a twinge of pain to Faulkner, who felt such strong ties with his own region that he never left it for long.

It is true, then, that William Faulkner was anti-social, but to label him a cynic is too pat. Harvey Breit, a good friend of Faulkner, found him a complex, sensitive, thoughtful, and brooding man. He thought these disparate elements made it difficult for anyone to know Faulkner, but he also thought it was absurd of anyone to speak of Faulkner (as many did) as arrogant, or rude, or violent, or to say his simplicity was a pose. He believes that what is sometimes mistaken for violence in Faulkner is actually intensity, for "Faulkner is gentle; anyone gentler would be embarrassing." Breit was aware, however, of a disconcerting quality in Faulkner: "What I think it is (though I am never sure) is simply a deep neutrality . . . . , a waiting and a listening and a seeing that is neither friendly nor unfriendly, neither encouraging nor discouraging." 

118 Ibid., p. 90.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid., p. 91.
Neutrality is a much misunderstood quality, and one which is difficult for people to accept. It is certainly disconcerting, for it defies the social convention which insists that members of a group must act in accordance with the group's standards of conduct. No member is immune from the necessity of declaring his stand—he should clearly be for or against its precepts. Faulkner's "neutrality" evidently served as insulation, a sort of buffer to shield him from commitment to group activities.

The neutrality which Breit defines also seems to mean detached observation. Every successful artist is doubtless an acute observer, but Faulkner seemed to possess this faculty to an unusual degree. He was obviously more comfortable when observing others than when he was directly involved with them. Probably he had to withdraw from the very center of activity in order to gain perspective, to assimilate meanings about society and his place in it.

A related aspect of Faulkner's behavior which points toward his partial withdrawal from society is that of posing or role-playing. For instance, after he returned from the first world war, he sometimes wandered around Oxford barefoot, sporting an overseas cap, wide army trousers, and
a monocle (this last item won him the title of count.)\textsuperscript{121}

Wearing part of his service uniform probably represented a wish to cling to a symbol of military service, which had cost him so much effort to attain. However, this does not account for the definite eccentricity, at least in a small town in the Southern part of the United States, of his wearing a monocle. A remark that Faulkner made several years after this phase of his life seems to explain this peculiarity. He said he had toyed with the idea of being an eccentric young genius: "I read and employed verse . . . to complete a youthful gesture I was then making of being different in a small town."\textsuperscript{122}

Though Faulkner admitted that he was playing a role at that time, later periods of posing were not acknowledged. These periods seemed to be marked by his style of dress. Green notes that Faulkner's personal appearance varied as much as his style of writing. "Of late he had a mustache, but he is known to have had a Vandyke . . . ."\textsuperscript{123} O'Connor affirms that "he had periods of being the cleanshaven young man who wore an army shirt without tie or coat, and, later

\textsuperscript{121}O'Connor, "Faulkner's Apprenticeship," p. 2.
\textsuperscript{122}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123}Green, p. 304.
still, of being a dandy--wearing a Vandyke, carrying a cane, being modishly garbed in a light gray hat with suit to match and chamois gloves ...."124 John Faulkner also mentions Bill's excessive interest, for a while at least, in faddish clothing. John remarked that Bill dressed mostly for comfort in later years, but that occasionally he would "turn up in some, to us, outlandish piece of clothing that had struck his fancy. One day he came to town in semiformal day dress and wearing a derby hat. None of us had seen a derby in forty years. He had seen one in New York and liked it and bought it."125

When a man plays roles, when he poses as something he is not, ordinarily his purpose is to deceive. If the posturing is not deliberate, then he probably deludes himself. Faulkner may have been self-deceived as a result of possible dissatisfaction with himself. On the other hand, if his poses were deliberately assumed, his purpose could have been to use this as another means of protecting himself from adverse social influences. For if he could keep people from knowing what kind of person he was, then

125 John Faulkner, pp. 254-255.
their image of him, as they revealed it by their reactions to him, could not be seriously harmful to his ego. After all, they would not be reacting to him, but only to a projected, make-believe Faulkner.

Another facet of Faulkner's partial withdrawal from possible adverse social influences is evidenced by his attitude toward critics of his work. Actually, he avoided discussing his work with anyone. According to Cullen, "In camp Faulkner never mentions the books he writes. As long as I have known him, he has never talked about his own business or books or writing or anything of that sort." He seemed especially determined, however, to shun discussion of his work with literary critics.

The reason held by the general public for Faulkner's refusal to discuss his work is that he was indifferent to the opinions of others. Even his wife believed he was indifferent. When an interviewer asked her whether her husband had ever seemed embittered by the frequently unfavorable reviews he had received, she said, "Not at all . . . . That's what makes Bill great. He is personally

126 Cullen, p. 15.
indifferent to what people think of him. He never reads any reviews of his books and he's never been bothered by the fact that Oxford has been totally unaware of his greatness as a writer."  

However, John Faulkner's explanation of William's refusal to discuss his work or to read criticisms of it seems much closer to the truth than the opinion that he was indifferent. John Faulkner said of his brother,  

"Bill was a tender man. He wore his heart on the outside of his sleeve. The shell he placed around himself was to protect his own feelings. When a man creates a piece of writing it is even more his than the child he begets. It takes two to make the child.  
His writing is his alone. A criticism of it is a criticism of him. Bill could not stand the hurt of adverse criticism. He simply refused to hear it. Except on rare occasions, he wouldn't even talk to anyone about his writing. He was simply protecting himself from hurt."  

John, who grew up with Bill, was in a good position to understand some of the motivations behind Bill's behavior. His is a perceptive evaluation which rings true. For those who are truly oblivious to adverse criticism would not go to so much trouble to avoid knowledge of it. Had Faulkner been truly indifferent, he could have faced the reactions  

128 Alexander, p. 177.  
129 John Faulkner, pp. 171-172.
of his critics, whatever these might have been, with equanimity. There seems little doubt that Faulkner was highly sensitive to the opinions of others and that he felt it necessary to protect himself from knowledge which might undermine his faith in himself or in his work.

Faulkner gave another reason why he did not want to discuss his work with others. He said, in 1956, that an artist should not discuss his work too much, for "if he talks then he works that much less."¹³⁰ He said he never discussed his own work with anyone because "no one but me knew what I was writing about or writing from. I always knew whether what I'd done was right and good or not. There wasn't anyone who could tell me that. If I thought it was right, then it didn't make any difference to me what anyone else thought."¹³¹ Later, at the University of Virginia, he explained his attitude more fully: "If I ever listened to a critic ... he probably did influence me ..., but I don't know that I ever listened to one, ever read one. But I'm sure that no writer is impervious to criticism. Sometimes he won't read it because he's afraid of what he might feel."¹³² This clearly indicates that Faulkner did

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¹³⁰ Grenier, pp. 170-171.  
¹³¹ Ibid.  
¹³² Gwynne and Blotner, p. 13.
care what critics thought of his work, and that he intended to protect himself from their possibly hostile opinions. Evidently such protection was necessary to maintain his own individuality—to withstand any influence which might cause him to modify his work to conform to standards other than his own.

Faulkner's concern with individuality is reflected in much of his work, where it is a principal theme. "Most frequently he emphasizes the worth of the individual in conflict with the weight and mass of Americans and their ideas . . . or the conflict between the individual and a stereotyped social order."

His most admirable characters, the ones who merit esteem—Ratliff, Dilsey, Ike McCaslin, Sam Fathers, the McCallums, and the corporal in A Fable are some of these—"belong to no groups, think for themselves, and are beholden to no man."

Longley thinks one reason Faulkner's characters are effectively portrayed is because he apparently believes their basic problem is one of self-definition. And according to Miner, he believes that

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133 Floyd C. Watkins, "William Faulkner, the Individual, and the World," Georgia Review, XIV (Fall, 1960), 238-239.

134 Ibid., pp. 246-247.

"individual responsibility is the most important goal for a man." Above all, Faulkner was concerned with that psychological process which makes an individual of a human being. In other words, Faulkner's own attitude, that a man must be an individual in order to develop his potential capacities in his unique way, is often evident in his work.

He also revealed his opinion about the necessity of individuality in interviews. When he was asked how he felt about the trend toward conformity and the loss of individualization in current society, he replied, "I have very definite ideas about that, and if I ever become a preacher, it will be to preach against man, individual man, relinquishing into groups, any group. I'm against belonging to anything . . . except the human race." In amplification, he added,

I think that there's too much pressure to make people conform and I think that one man may be first-rate but if you get one man and two second-rate men together, then he's not going to be first-rate any longer, because the voice of that majority will be a second-rate voice, the behavior of that majority will be second-rate.

Faulkner seemed to have had his own life experiences in mind.

136 Miner, p. 153. 137 Malin, p. 84.
138 Gwynne and Blotner, p. 269. 139 Ibid.
when he attempted to go even further in his definition of a first-rate man as one who "did the best he could with what talents he had to make something which wasn't here yesterday ..."  

He concluded by emphasizing that a man who held to the tenets of group conformity would not reach his goals because he would have relinquished his individuality.

William Faulkner did manage to retain his own individuality, but in order to do so he was forced to withdraw from the conforming society which surrounded him. His own experience had taught him the necessity of the individual's holding to his own concept of values. Faulkner evidently gained new faith in himself and in his values as a result of withstanding the constant pressures from his social milieu. This surge of confidence apparently made it possible for him to attempt to reach his goal.

Faulkner said that his personal goal was to leave his mark on the world.

... I think that a writer wants to make something that he knows that a hundred or two hundred or five hundred, a thousand years later will make people feel what they feel when they read Homer, or read Dickens

140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
or Balzac, Tolstoy, that that's probably his goal. Probably that's what he wants, that really the writer doesn't want success, that he knows he has a short span of life, that the day will come when he must pass through the wall of oblivion, and he wants to leave a scratch on that wall---Kilroy was here—that somebody a hundred, a thousand years later will see.  

The expression, "Kilroy was here," derives from World War II. Faulkner's choice of this phrase indicates that he may have been thinking still that his own mark must be made in "some second form of Elysium," not through courageous military action but through his writing. He employed this phrase again in acknowledging Dostoevsky's influence on his work and in praising that author. He said Dostoevsky "was one of the ones that any writer wants to match if he can, that he was one who wrote a good Kilroy Was Here." 

Faulkner knew his chance for reaching this particular goal lay in his writing. Even though he considered writing lonely work and frustrating, too, because it could never be good enough, he thought of himself as "demon-run, under compulsion, always . . . driven" to write. 

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142 Ibid., p. 61.
143 Ibid., p. 69.
144 Grenier, p. 171.
Again, what concerns Faulkner appears in his work. Slatoff notices that many of Faulkner's characters "seek desperately 'to make that scratch, that undying mark on the blank face of oblivion to which we are all doomed' (Absalom, Absalom! p. 129)."¹⁴⁵ He also suggests that the end of Faulkner's short story "Carcassonne" may be read as an allegory of the body and soul or of the struggle of the artist.

"I want to perform something bold and tragical and austere, me on a buckskin pony with eyes like blue electricity and a mane like tangled fire, galloping up the hill and right off into the high heaven of the world" (Collected Stories, pp. 899-900).¹⁴⁶

This may not only be read as an allegory of "an artist," but as an allegory of a particular artist, William Faulkner.

William Faulkner had to endure years of discouragement before his talents as a writer were ever recognized. Many serious personal frustrations threatened his feeling of self-worth. In addition, he had to resist adverse influences from his social milieu in order to preserve his individuality and maintain his self-esteem. Evidently he knew that his best chance to leave his mark on the world lay in his ability to write. And he felt that he could never become a good

¹⁴⁵ Slatoff, p. 103. ¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 23.
writer unless he developed his talent in his unique way by trusting his intuition to tell him whether his writing was good or not. Apparently Faulkner's faith in his own nonrational knowledge led him to portray through characterization some of the advantages he felt it afforded. His dependence on intuitive knowledge affected his work in several ways. First, it gave him the confidence he needed to write, then it guided his writing, and finally, it gave him a nucleus for developing memorable characters.

Though some of Faulkner's views are similar to concepts found in C. G. Jung's psychology, Faulkner's experiences evidently led him to formulate his own theory. Faulkner's insistence that intuitive knowledge as well as rational knowledge must be considered if a person is to be a whole human being is somewhat similar to Jung's "individuation process." However, Faulkner seems to go beyond Jung. While Jung declares that the rational and nonrational factors of human personality must be respected equally, Faulkner implies through his characters that he believes intuitive knowledge to be far more important than rational knowledge to the human being. Indeed, Faulkner's concept seems to be that a person's humane qualities are determined by the nonrational part of his personality.
Those aspects of Faulkner's work which seem to reflect acquaintance with Jung's ideas of the "persona," "racial-memory," and the "mandala" evidently stem instead from Faulkner's own experience. Apparently he felt that his powers of "extra sensory perception" were given an opportunity to develop when he rejected time-consuming and standardizing social and educational influences. Evidently Faulkner also found peace of mind when he learned to trust his own unexplainable knowledge. When his writing met his own standards, he finally received recognition as a writer. Faulkner apparently arrived independently at his own version of the values to be gained through trusting nonrational knowledge.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

William Faulkner's serious frustrations might have doomed him to failure if he had not learned to trust his intuitive judgment. The rebuffs he received left permanent scars, and he knew that "logic" had dictated the rebuffs. He could not get into combat action in either world war because he was too small or too old; therefore, he was unable to prove to his family and to himself that his capacity for military heroism compared favorably with that of his own great-grandfather. Next, he could not marry Estelle Oldham because he was unable to guarantee her financial support. This caused him to lose the woman he loved and hoped to marry, to another man, whose business prospects were far more predictable. Then, critics said he could not write because his work did not make sense. For many years, therefore, he failed to achieve recognition as a writer.

Occasionally he must have interpreted these frustrations as ample evidence that he could not hope to achieve any of his ambitions. But, though Faulkner was strongly affected
by his own apparent failures, he nevertheless had enough self-esteem to avoid the apathy which results from feeling wholly defeated. Instead of giving up writing, he resolved to write to please himself and to let his intuition guide his judgment of its quality.

A person with Faulkner's sensitivity and introspection would need to project many things about himself in some way that allowed self-expression. Faulkner's way was through his writing. He said he felt compelled to write. Perhaps he has Bayard Sartoris in The Unvanquished speak for him: "I realised then the immitigable chasm between all life and all print--that those who can, do, those who cannot and suffer enough because they can't, write about it."¹ Probably his writing offered substitute values which compensated for those that were denied him.

Faulkner knew, however, that his writing could not serve as a means of self-expression unless he escaped both standardization and feelings of worthlessness. Several aspects of his behavior reveal that he was determined to protect himself from further self-devaluing experiences and that he was equally resolved to preserve his individuality.

He did this by withdrawing from influences in his environment which threatened to impinge on his individual character or undermine his self-respect. First, he rejected formal education because he thought the methods ordinarily employed were stultifying. He withdrew from school after the tenth grade, but later he briefly attended college as a special student before quitting altogether. From that time he was self-educated. He evidently also had to withdraw from adverse social influences in order to maintain his own balance and to prevent possible damage to his self-image which might result from such contact.

When Faulkner abjured formal education and avoided many situations, which presumably would have enabled him to participate in an exchange of ideas, he isolated himself from two major conditions apt to shape his thinking. Apparently he felt a great need to be an individual, to be different, and he was unwilling to give credit for his peculiar talents to educational or social influences. This may be the reason he first turned to the concept of "extra sensory perception" to explain his unusual approach to writing. In retrospect, however, he probably came to realize that some kind of nonrational knowledge had indeed guided him toward success. The emphasis he places on such
knowledge in his work indicates his conviction that it is an indispensable factor of whole personality--a much surer mentor than mere rationality.

William Faulkner respected his intuitive knowledge. Apparently he was wise to trust it because he received the highest formal tribute which the world offers its writers. In 1950 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. If his work endures, if he has made his mark on the world through his contribution to literature, it may be largely because he did trust his nonrational knowledge, which he called "extra sensory perception," to guide his work.
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