

A STUDY OF WILLIAM FAULKNER'S POOR WHITE CHARACTERS

By

NANCY DUKE KNOX

Bachelor of Arts

Northeastern State College

Tahlequah, Oklahoma

1957

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of
the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
August, 1960

JAN 3 1961

A STUDY OF WILLIAM FAULKNER'S POOR WHITE CHARACTERS

Thesis Approved:

Clenton Kiehn

Thesis Adviser

Donald Gibson

Samuel H. Woods, Jr.

Robert Menden

Dean of the Graduate School

458124

PREFACE

While taking a course in the modern American novel, I became interested in the writings of William Faulkner. Further reading revealed that the poor white characters in Faulkner's fiction are one group which has received little criticism. Since this is also the group which particularly interests me, I chose it as the subject for this thesis.

I wish to thank Dr. Clinton C. Keeler for his help and encouragement in the writing of this thesis. I also wish to thank Dr. Samuel H. Woods and Dr. D. Judson Milburn for their help.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE VARNERS	9
III. THE SNOPESES	19
IV. THE BUNDRENS	33
V. COMPOSITE OF CHARACTERS	43
VI. CONCLUSION	63
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	72

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The study of Faulkner is the most challenging task in contemporary American literature for criticism to undertake."¹ Certainly, anyone who has read various reviews of one Faulkner novel or more than one critical appraisal of Faulkner's work has found contradictions. Hundreds of articles and many books have been written, but as Harry Campbell and Ruel Foster point out, before 1951 "only a very small number of critics had done competent criticism on Faulkner; among the important of these are Conrad Aiken, Warren Beck, George Marion O'Donnel, Malcolm Cowley, and Robert Penn Warren."² Most of the rest were content to issue general statements of condemnation or qualified praise without any attempt at achieving sufficient understanding of the work. In the last decade the men named by Campbell and Foster have been joined by others in a more competent and intensive critical study and evaluation of Faulkner's novels and short stories.

During his Writer-in-Residence stay at the University of Virginia, Faulkner, answering questions concerning his writing, continually emphasized his interest in people.

¹ Robert Penn Warren, "William Faulkner," Forms of Modern Fiction, ed. William Van O'Connor (Minneapolis, 1948), p. 143.

² Harry M. Campbell and Ruel E. Foster, William Faulkner: A Critical Appraisal (Norman, 1951), pp. 10-11.

Q. Do you have any trouble remembering, say, a short story that you might have written in 1925 or something like that?

A. I remember the people, but I can't remember what story they're in nor always what they did. I have to go back and look at it to unravel what the person was doing. I remember the character though.

* * *

Q. Mr. Faulkner, these characters that follow you along, do they come to a natural conclusion, or do you have to kill them off, or do they tell the story and that's the end of it, or what?

A. No no, they exist. They are still in motion in my mind. I can laugh at things they're doing that I haven't got around to writing yet. No, that's where the rules of the craft come in, that someone, some editor, has got to give the whole thing unity, coherence, and emphasis. To start at a decent starting place and then stop it somewhere at a logical, reasonable place. But the characters themselves are walking out of that book still in motion, still talking, and still acting.³

In view of these statements made by Faulkner himself, I feel that a critical study of his characters is necessary to an understanding of his work. A major obstacle which seemingly has prevented the undertaking of critical study in this area lies in the attitude of early critics who lost themselves in the difficulties of his style or quickly catalogued him as a foremost member of the "Cult of Cruelty."⁴ One example of the opinion of many otherwise reputable critics regarding Faulkner's characters was expressed by Alfred Kazin:

They live, they live copiously and brilliantly; but they live by the violence with which Faulkner sustains them, by the sullen, screaming, intensity which he breathes into them (often with Faulkner's own gestures, fury, and raging confusion of pronouns) by the atmospheric terror which incloses them. They live because they are incredibilities in action, because they have been scoured to death before they reach the grave, so that one sees them always in the posture of some frantic relinquishment and irrevocable agony, the body taut and the soul quivering in death.⁵

³Fredrick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, eds., Faulkner in the University (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1959), pp. 49, 197-98.

⁴Alan R. Thompson, "The Cult of Cruelty," The Bookman, LXXIV (1932), 477-87.

⁵Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds (New York, 1942), p. 460.

Later, broad patterns, such as George Marion O'Donnell's Sartoris-Snopes, or traditional values versus the modern world,⁶ or Irving Malin's theme of rigidity,⁷ were superimposed upon the novels and characters. In these and other similar interpretations, one suspects that only those characters who fitted or could be shaped into the pattern were selected as examples.

Mary Cooper Robb suggests that the correct attitude to assume toward Faulkner's method of character presentation is similar to the mood a person experiences when he moves to a new town. He knows he will not meet everyone at once, even at a social gathering. At the time of his arrival he is at an intermediate moment in the life of the town; things have already happened of which he has no knowledge, and other things are in progress. Some events take place because of almost forgotten causes, and some conversations mean nothing to him but mean much to another person. Some people he soon knows well, others he meets and may or may not know better later. He cannot realize what anyone is like, or capable of doing, until a crisis occurs; and when one does occur he may not recognize it. If he leaves the town for several years and then returns, he may see things he missed before and revise some of his earlier opinions.⁸

⁶George Marion O'Donnell, "Faulkner's Mythology," (reprinted from The Kenyon Review, Summer, 1939, pp. 285-99) William Faulkner, Two Decades of Criticism, eds. Fredrick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (East Lansing, 1954), pp. 49-62.

⁷Irving Malin, William Faulkner, an Interpretation (Stanford, 1957), pp. 1-14.

⁸Mary Cooper Robb, William Faulkner: An Estimate of his Contribution to the American Novel (Pittsburg, 1957), p. 7.

This idea, at first glance, may seem pedestrian, but it possesses merit. Unlike some authors who present their characters from one point of view or in a consistent manner, Faulkner employs almost all the different methods of characterization, sometimes all in one book. Many characters are described completely in straight editorial commentary at their first appearance; at other times only those characteristics necessary at the moment are given. All the characters in one story are seen through the eyes of one person; another time the point of view shifts among several characters. One person is characterized by action, speech, and thoughts; another is presented by two, or perhaps only one, of these methods. One person is viewed humorously, and another is presented seriously. Also, mood and situation usually have great bearing on all the characters. When all these methods and qualities are combined with the fact that one character, such as Mink Snopes, appears in the action of several stories and that his actions in one story may be the result of circumstances in a previous story, great demand is placed on the reader. However, each story is complete within itself; having read the earlier work adds enjoyment but is not a necessity.

Who are these people about whom Faulkner writes? The bulk of his work depicts the lives of the people of Yoknapatawpha, a mythical county situated in northern Mississippi. According to a map which is included in the appendix to Absalom, Absalom!, Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, covers an area of 2400 square miles, has a population of 6298 whites and 9313 Negroes, and William Faulkner is the sole owner and proprietor. In the center of the county is Jefferson, the county

seat, and the north and south boundaries are the Tallahatchie and Yoknapatawpha rivers. Part of the inhabitants of Jefferson are professional men, store keepers, and laborers; in both Jefferson and the surrounding area live the descendants of the antebellum aristocracy, the Negroes, and the few remaining mixtures of white and Chickasaw blood; in the outlying district are the farmers and woodsmen.

Faulkner has written sixteen books which are concerned with Yoknapatawpha County and its people. The novels are Sartoris (1929), about the Sartoris family, which states many of the themes to be developed later; The Sound and the Fury (1930), about the Compson family; As I Lay Dying (1932), about the death and burial of Addie Bundren; Sanctuary (1931), the story of Popeye and Temple Drake; Requiem for a Nun (1932), about Temple's later life; Light in August (1932), of Lena Grove's search for the father of her unborn child and of Joe Christmas; Absalom, Absalom! (1936), about Colonel Sutpen and his ambition to found a dynasty; The Unvanquished (1938), interrelated stories about the Sartoris dynasty; The Hamlet (1940), The Town (1957), and The Mansion (1959), which comprise the Snopes clan trilogy. Books of short stories are Go Down, Moses (1942), These Thirteen (1931), Dr. Martino and Other Stories (1934), and Knight's Gambit (1949), many of which, plus other stories first published in magazines, appear in Collected Stories of William Faulkner (1950).⁹

Malcolm Cowley divides Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha series into a

⁹Malcolm Cowley, Introduction to The Portable Faulkner, (reprinted from The Portable Faulkner, The Viking Press, Inc., 1946), eds., Hoffman and Vickery, p. 67. (List brought up to date.)

number of cycles or sagas according to the people: one about the planters and their descendants, one about the townspeople of Jefferson, one about the poor whites, one about the Indians, one about the Negroes.¹⁰ Many of the people in these interrelated cycles possess striking and lifelike characteristics; at the same time, each group suggests social, economic, and cultural significance. One novel, such as The Hamlet, may be principally concerned with one cycle and contain only incidental references to others; another such as Absalom, Absalom! may include several cycles.

In an article in which he discusses Cowley's edition of Faulkner's work, Robert Penn Warren says, "I shall make bold--and in the general barrenness of criticism on Faulkner it does not require excessive boldness--to list and comment on certain topics which seem to me to demand further critical study." Two of these topics are the poor white and the Negro characters.¹¹ Further study confirms this opinion, and of the two topics the one which interests me more is the poor whites and their role. As Warren points out, a not uncommon misconception of the poor whites is that they are synonymous with Snopes or Snopesism. Others besides Snopeses populate the ranks of poor whites--men like the independent McCallum brothers, the hypocritical Preacher Whitfield, the practical Cash Bundren, or the neighborly Vernon Tull. Not even all Snopeses are bad; there are Eck and his sons, Wallstreet Panic and Admiral Dewey, who are honest, honorable, and hard working. In The Hamlet, Faulkner describes these lower class or poor whites as those who. . .

¹⁰Ibid., p. 68.

¹¹Ibid., p. 88.

. . . came from the northeast, through the Tennessee mountains by stages marked by the bearing and raising of a generation of children. They came from the Atlantic seaboard and before that, from England and the Scottish and Welsh Marches, as some of the names would indicate--Turpin and Haley and Whittington, McCallum and Murray and Leonard and Littlejohn, and other names like Riddup and Armstid and Doshey which could have come from nowhere since certainly no man would deliberately select one of them for his own. They brought no slaves and no Phyfe and Chippendale highboys; indeed, what they did bring most of them could (and did) carry in their hands. They took up land and built one-and two-room cabins and never painted them, and married one another and produced children and added other rooms one by one to the original cabins and did not paint them either, but that was all.

Their descendants are a product of and an extension of this environment.

County officers did not bother them at all save in the heel of election years. They supported their own churches and schools, they married and committed infrequent adulteries and more frequent homicides among themselves and were their own courts, judges, and executioners. They were Protestants and Democrats and prolific; there was not one Negro landowner in the entire section. Strange Negroes would absolutely refuse to pass through it after dark.

The purpose of this thesis is to study the lower class whites, individually and collectively, and to determine their relationship to Faulkner's work as a whole. In the following chapters I shall divide the poor whites into clans for individual character analysis: pre-Snopeian Will Varner and his family, who appear in all three books of the Snopes trilogy; the Snopes tribe, around whom the trilogy revolves and some of whom appear in Sartoris, The Unvanquished, Sanctuary, and a few short stories not included in the trilogy; the Bundrens of As I Lay Dying; various clans and individuals such as the McCallums and the Tulls, Ratliff and Bookwright, who participate in the action of several stories but who either cannot be classified as major characters or are major characters in only one story. After having analyzed the presentation of these characters, I shall determine their relationship to each other, to the other cycles, and to the Yoknapatawpha series.

In this way I hope to achieve a more complete understanding of the work and thus to be better able to judge its worth.

CHAPTER II

THE VARNERS

In the Snopes trilogy, particularly the first book, a clan of major importance is the Varners: Will and Maggie, their children, Jody and Eula. These earthy, sometimes vulgar, often comic people fill the position of leading family of Frenchman's Bend and the county. The initial physical description and character delineation of each occurs in The Hamlet. Will and his wife are constant in their progressive development from the first to the last novel, as is Jody; however, Eula's characterization seems, from the first, contradictory and not entirely satisfactory. Never is the reader allowed to view the inside of any of their minds; all impressions must be gained through other methods of characterization.

The pre-Snopesian Will Varner is characterized primarily by actions and speech, but another device, almost as important, is the attitude which the people of the county express toward him. He is "thin as a fence rail and almost as long, with reddish-gray hair and mustaches and little hard bright innocently blue eyes. . . shrewd secret and merry, of a Rabelaisian turn of mind." He owns or holds mortgage on almost all the good land in the county, owns all the business in Frenchman's Bend, and is farmer, usurer, veterinarian, and political boss. At the same time he appears lazy:

. . . he did nothing at all (his son managed all the family business) and spent all his time at it, out of the house and gone before the son

had come down to breakfast even, nobody knew where save that he and the old fat white horse which he rode might be seen anywhere within the surrounding ten miles at any time. . .

Someone once said of him that "a milder-mannered man never bled a mule or stuffed a ballot box." Ratliff, who is shrewd and cautious himself, trusts Varner's judgment so much that, depending on it, he allows himself to be drawn into one of the oldest of con games, the rumor of buried treasure.

Since Will declines to accept "any such theory as female chastity" and is himself having an affair with a tenant's wife, his reaction to Eula's pregnancy is not surprising. He approaches the problem from the logical viewpoint and quickly finds a husband for her in the person of Flem Snopes. Since respectability is the question, Eula's feelings are unimportant, and even in this instance Will attempts to profit by giving Flem the Old Frenchman's Place as Eula's dowry. He has earlier described it as "my one mistake. The one thing I ever bought in my life I couldn't sell to nobody."

The relationship between Varner and Flem Snopes is never completely clarified. That Varner recognizes Flem's superior abilities seems logical; working together at the yearly settling of accounts, they "resemble the white trader and his native parrot-taught headman in an African outpost." Their cooperation is mutually profitable. Varner is initially forced to aid Flem by the "barn burning" threat posed in Ab Snopes, which hiring Flem alleviates; however, that he values one barn full of hay enough to allow an incompetent person to continue working for him seems contradictory to his character. He utilizes Flem's abilities to increase his already established wealth. When Flem leaves Frenchman's Bend, Varner still maintains his rank as

"chief man" of the county, but Flem has out-manuevered him in two distinct situations—by selling the Old Frenchman's Place, which Varner could not do, and by both helping Varner and getting money from him, which no one else could do. That a man who has lived and succeeded by his wits would dislike being outdone, especially when everyone realizes it, does not seem at all unlikely. Years later, in The Mansion, when Varner learns that his granddaughter has been tricked into promising her part of his money to Flem and that Flem also has done nothing while Eula has carried on her romance with another man, his rage and frustration know no bounds. In order to secure his money from Flem, Varner is again forced to aid him, this time in securing the bank presidency.

Varner may be compared with the robber barons of the past. He is shrewd and capable enough to have built and maintained his baronetcy, but he has human failings. Laziness prompts him to place responsibility in the hands of his less competent son; he observes a double standard of morals—one for himself and one for other people. Once in action, he moves rapidly and purposefully, but he is too inclined to "wash his hands" of matters which others can handle. His money and power provide him economic independence which the descendants of aristocratic families have lost, but he evidences no interest in class distinctions, morals, or aesthetics. His supremacy is based solely on money and the power and ease which it brings, and he maintains this position through the comfortable knowledge that most people are neither so shrewd nor so ambitious as he. However, when confronted by a man who possesses comparable ability in addition to singleness of purpose and no human failings, he loses his own game.

Mrs. Maggie Varner is depicted through the author's commentary; also, the reader sees her in action once and hears her silence Jody's ravings about Eula with:

It was you insisted she had to go to school. . . I raised eight other daughters, I thought they turned out pretty well. But I am willing to agree that maybe a twenty-seven-year-old bachelor knows more about them than I do. . . Did you bring me that cinnamon?

After her outburst at her son and daughter when Eula's pregnancy is discovered, there is no evidence of further concern. She leaves the finding and securing of a husband for Eula to Will.

Maggie is a "plump cheery bustling woman who has borne sixteen children and who still wins prizes for preserving fruits and vegetables at the annual county fair." She is interested in being the best housewife in the county and derives satisfaction from knowing that she is. She also finds physical pleasure from the actual labor of housewifery. She reads nothing, but comments and moralizes upon everything; the church and its preacher she manages much as she does her own home. Hers is the complacent, positive world of the wife of the chief man of the county; she knows nothing except her home, household chores, and children; but neither her husband nor the community expects her to know more.

Jody Varner, the ninth child, is characterized in every way except through his own thought. The contrast between him and his father is clearly drawn. Jody is "prime, bulging, and slightly thyroidic," an invincible bachelor who already promises a large belly but now manages to "postulate something of the trig and unattached cavalier." He sets himself apart from the other men by wearing a "glazed collarless

white shirt fastened at the neck with a heavy gold collar-button beneath a suit of good black broadcloth."

Jody's intense concern with his sister's training and chastity causes him to appear grossly ridiculous at times. He forces his parents to send her to school, then must transport her to and from the building every day on horseback, which is inordinately embarrassing to him. Labove, the teacher, sees what the brother "will doubtless be the last to discern," that Lula will not and does not need to study. Furiously, Jody considers himself to be the sole protector of Lula's chastity; he accompanies her to church and to her friend's homes, and after nagging his mother into putting her in corsets, he "would grasp her each time he saw her outside the house, in public or alone, and see for himself if she had them on." Jody's jealous vigilance ends in frustration when Lula becomes pregnant while still unmarried.

Jody's other source of frustration is Flem Snopes. After Flem has forced Jody to hire him as store clerk, Ratliff observes to Will Varner that there are only two men who can risk fooling with Snopeses, "and just one of them is named Varner and his front name ain't Jody." This estimate proves to be accurate as far as Jody is concerned. Flem usurps Jody's position as Uncle Will's second-in-command, and Jody not only does not know how to combat the threat, he does not realize what is occurring until too late. When Jody tends the store and Flem replaces him at the cotton gin, the other men notice something in Jody's eyes that had not been there previously. It is a "shadow, something between annoyance and speculation and purest foreknowledge which was not quite bafflement yet but was certainly sober." These same men refer to the episode later as the time when Flem passed Jody, but

Ratliff amends it: "You mean, that was when Jody began to find it out."

The best adjective for Jody is ineffectual, in his loud and violent concern with his sister's sexual behavior and consequently the family name, in contrast with his father, and in his contest with Flem Snopes. He attempts to copy aristocratic mannerisms in his dress and in his insistence that his sister be a lady, school-tutored and chaste, but there is no evidence that he understands even what these things indicate. Will Varner advanced because he understood people; Jody, who concerns himself with superficialities, understands little of people and how to deal with them, and his failure is evident.

Eula Varner is a focal point for determining the character of members of her family and other people as well, and she, with Flem Snopes, is the character around whom much of the action revolves. The first impressions of Eula are achieved through the author's commentary and through comments and thoughts of other characters. Actions and speech provide less information in her early life principally because she does so little of either. Two problems confront the reader concerning Eula: she is depicted as a "Helen" and also as mammalian or bovine, which is difficult to reconcile; also, in early life she simply exists, before her suicide she becomes an acting, reasoning person.

Eula first appears as a "soft ample girl with definite breasts even at thirteen and eyes like cloudy hothouse grapes and a full damp mouth always slightly open," who has grown from infancy to the age of eight moving only from her bed to chairs and to the table in order to eat or to avoid being in the way when house work was being done. She

seems even in infancy to know that there is nowhere she wants to go, nothing new for her to do; instead, she exists as if waiting for one important event. When she reaches the age of eight Jody insists that she go to school, and she does not contest the decision but simply refuses to move until he transports her back and forth on horseback. After five years of this Jody envisions himself "transporting not only across the village's horizon but across the embracing proscenium of the entire inhabited world like the sun itself, a kaleidoscopic convolution of mammalian ellipses." Still later, she emanates "that outrageous quality of being, existing, actually on the outside of the garments she wears and not only being unable to help it but not even caring." The school teacher sees her sitting on the steps at recess eating a cold sweet potatoe like "one of the unchaste and perhaps even anonymously pregnant immortals eating bread of Paradise on a sunwise slope of Olympus." In her late teens, after having been sought after by all the young men in the county and some outside the county, she meets the swashbuckling Hoake McCarron, and soon she is pregnant. Hoake flees, and by her father's arrangement, Eula is married to Flem Snopes. After her marriage and a honeymoon in Texas, where the baby is born, Ratliff sees her not as tragic, but damned.

Eula moves to Jefferson with her husband and there meets Major de Spain, with whom she has an eighteen-year love affair. No moral judgment of her actions is voiced by Faulkner; instead, she seems to be pictured amorally. The people of the town sanction or overlook the affair because this is, in effect, Helen and her Paris. During these years Eula and DeSpain refrain from eloping in order that her daughter,

Linda, may have a home. Then when Flem threatens to expose the affair, Eula commits suicide.

In a flashback in the last book, The Mansion, Eula is praised first by Gavin Stevens, then by Ratliff as their "Helen." Ratliff feels that anyone who merely lived at the same time in Jefferson with her was lucky, because the world has only a few Helens. Also, Ratliff suggests, and Stevens quickly accepts, the idea that Eula committed suicide because she was "bored."

William Van O'Connor does not see Eula as a person but classifies her as "the ungirdled goddess of Frenchman's Bend. . . She is fertility, the pagan ripening of spring and summer."¹ Andrew Lytle, on the other hand, points out that reconciling Eula, the bovine, sitting on the school house steps eating cold sweet potatoes, and Helen, the sublime "Helen," eating bread of Paradise on a slope of Olympus is a difficult task.² Perhaps these critics have overlooked one fact; all author's commentary and her actions and speech convey the earthy, voluptuous, at first incorrigibly lazy Eula, whereas the male characters, e.g., Jody, Labove, Ratliff, and Stevens, are the ones who endow her with sublime qualities. Could not Faulkner be showing, comically, how legends grow, how the human imagination transforms the actual into the sublime? Undoubtedly, Eula possesses qualities which are more intensely feminine than those of any other woman these people know, if one uses their criteria for judging superiority. She radiates womanhood to them as very probably

¹William Van O'Connor, The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner (Minneapolis, 1954), p. 119.

²Andrew Lytle, "The Tom: Helen's Last Stand," Sewanee Review, XLV (1957), 475-84.

did the first "Helen" to her admirers. However, legend and actuality are not comparable in direct ratio; Jessie James was not a humanitarian in disguise, although he is often termed the "Robin Hood of the West." Eula Varner is not sublime, but she epitomizes sublimity to these people. That their concept of "Helen" or "an immortal" is incongruous with ours produces the comic effect, and I hardly think that Faulkner was unaware of this. This comic irony emphasizes the dissimilarity of fact and legend.

Eula's change in character from the foetal stage of simple existence to the maturer stage of partial sacrifice for her child is possible, but not entirely probable. Possibly, Eula, upon maturing, could have changed into a woman who threatens to take her daughter and leave both Flem and DeSpain or who is willing to ask Gavin Stevens to protect her daughter by marrying the girl; however, there is nothing in her early character which indicates that such a change might occur. Ratliff's and Stevens' explanation that she shoots herself because she is "bored" smacks too much of the mythical Eula. It seems more probable that, unwilling to have her daughter publically exposed to scandal or to relinquish her lover, she chooses to commit suicide and resolve both problems. Obviously, life with Flem and without DeSpain would be unbearable to her, but she feels just as strongly the urge to protect her child. By killing herself she need not be forced to decide between the two. This is Will Varner's characteristic "washing his hands" of a matter carried to a further extent by his daughter.

One incident in the second section of The Hamlet shows, comically but truly, the character of each member of the family. When Jody discovers that the unmarried Eula is pregnant, he storms into her room

to loudly and fiercely demand the name of her lover. Eula simply replies, "Stop shoving me, I don't feel good." Mrs. Varner wishes to "fix" both of them—with a stick of stove wood—for "turning up pregnant and yelling and cursing in the house" while she is trying to take a nap! Will quickly ends the turmoil by leaving Eula alone, locking the door on Mrs. Varner, and shouting down the frustrated Jody.

No one is concerned about Eula or about the morality of the act which she has committed. Jody, frustrated and ineffectual as usual, is superficially concerned with the family name. Mrs. Varner reacts heatedly because they have interrupted the daily routine of her nap. Will is disgusted with all of them and wishes to quiet the turmoil until he can arrive at a logical solution. Eula, concerned only with her physical health, wants to be left alone. The outward semblance of respectability must be preserved, even though everyone in the community knows that the child does not belong to Flem, and the burden of the preservation of that respectability falls on Will since Jody is unable to do anything, Mrs. Varner simply depends upon her husband, and Eula is unconcerned. When the problem is quietly and effectively solved, none of the people of the community are disturbed; they watch curiously to see what Will will do, and the Varners lose none of their prestige. Leadership based on money, power, and respectability, not leadership based on moral supremacy, proves to be the rule.

CHAPTER III

THE SNOPESES

The Snopeses are a seemingly innumerable tribe of the lowest class of whites whose relationship to each other is often difficult to determine. They appear first in minor roles in The Unvanquished and Sartoris. Later, they are major characters in several short stories, most of which Faulkner incorporated in the Snopes trilogy, The Hamlet, The Town, and The Mansion. In most analyses of Faulkner's work the Snopeses play an important, although often controversial, role. Flem is the most important Snopes; however, others must be considered if the picture is to be accurate. I shall divide the Snopeses into five categories determined by their relationship to Flem: first, Ab Snopes; second, Flem and his followers, Lancelot (Lump), I. O., Clarence, Byron, and Montgomery Ward; third, Mink; fourth, Colonel Sartoris, Eckrum and his two sons, Wall Street Panic and Admiral Dewey; fifth, Isaac. Most of the Snopeses are characterized through the author's commentary, their personal actions and speech, the comments and thoughts of other characters; two notable exceptions to this are Colonel Sartoris and Mink, whose thoughts are conveyed to the reader.

The word "Snopes" carries an unpleasant connotation; as Harry Campbell and Ruel Foster have pointed out, about fifty per cent of the words beginning with "sn" in the dictionary, such as snake, snob, sneer, sneak, produce unpleasant reactions. And the name Flem Snopes evokes

a doubly revolting connotation.¹ Faulkner undoubtedly was aware of the suggestiveness of this word which he chose as the name for this clan, most of the members of which are essentially ruthless and amoral or deviate in other ways from the established norm. Many of the Snopeses are oversimplified and overly caricatured; on this point Faulkner says:

They were simply an invention of mine to tell a story of man in his struggle. That I was not trying to say, this is the sort of folks we raise in my part of Mississippi at all. That they were simply over-emphasized, burlesqued if you like, which Mr. Dickens spent a lot of his time doing, for a valid to him and to me reason, which was to tell a story in an amusing, dramatic, tragic, or comical way.²

From the family name is derived the word "Snopesism," as used by other Faulkner characters, i.e., Gavin Stevens, Ratliff, and Chuck Mallison, and by critics. The word refers to the amoral, unscrupulous methods of advancement employed by Flen and his family followers and the resultant threat to other people which evolves from their advent.

The first Snopes to appear in the trilogy is Ab, a smaller than average man with "a pair of eyes of a cold opaque gray between shaggy graying irascible brows" and a voice "not deliberately harsh so much as rusty from infrequent use," who has a reputation for barn burning. Ratliff says that Ab "aint naturally mean. He's just soured." Then Ratliff recounts events which reveal Ab to be the same Snopes who had not fought in the Civil War but had been a booty hunter, had betrayed Rosa Millard, and as a consequence had been caught and beaten by Rosa's grandson and had been forced to hide from John Sartoris when he returned from the war. Ratliff glosses the story and also adds a tall tale of

¹Campbell and Foster, p. 104.

²Gwynn and Blotner, p. 282.

Ab as a horse trader in his younger days which shows him to be an extremely unlucky man. However, the Ab of The Unvanquished, if not "naturally mean," was at least naturally self-justifying, evasive, and none too honest. He sought to profit from the war rather than to fight with his neighbors for a common cause. In the later story, "Barn Burning," and in The Hamlet Ab still thinks of himself and his family as opposed to everyone else, but by this time he bitterly asserts himself in attempts to retain the only thing he has left, his pride. His arson is a protest against the socio-economic group who he feels look down upon him and continually persecute him. His and his family's lives are a progression of moves from one over-farmed rent place to another, where they work not for themselves but for someone who owns them "body and soul." Ab, extremely sensitive to personal slight and presumed injustice, reacts against either one in the only manner which he can command, arson, and is forced to "move on" regularly. He, even more than other tenant farmers, has no place in society, no hopes for success, no friends, and no happiness. He cannot make the best of what he has because "his ferocious conviction in the rightness of his own actions" causes him to have a perverse, antagonistic attitude. He cannot even accept a gift from Ratliff, who was once a friend, without asking, "You brought it to me? . . . What for?"

In The Town Ab is an old man, still head-strong and perverse, who grows watermelons so that he can shoot at the boys who come to steal them. While he had previously constituted a threat to men and their property, the people now regard him as a cross, eccentric old man. In Ab's life-long frustration one can see the basis for the determination of the later Snopeses to succeed.

The leading exponent of Snopesism is Flem. To the rest of the Snopeses he is: ". . . the one Snopes of them all who had risen, broken free, had either been born with or had learned, taught himself, the knack or the luck to cope with, hold his own, handle the They or Them. . . ." To other people he represents the personification of unscrupulous greed. His appearance, a "thick squat soft man of no establishable age. . . with a still broad face. . . and eyes the color of stagnant water. . . and a tiny predatory nose like the beak of a small hawk," is exceptional only in that his nose seems to serve as a warning of his character and that he sees everything without seeming to look at anything. Flem rises from the extreme poverty of share cropping to the position of bank president by sheer force of will and unscrupulousness, and his rise forms the basic framework for the Snopes trilogy. When Ab Snopes' family moves to Frenchman's Bend, Flem intimidates Jody with the silent threat of his father's arson and goes to work at Varner's store. Here he learns from both Varners, begins practicing usury, installs a swarm of relatives in Frenchman's Bend, and finally usurps Jody Varner's place as Will's aide. After out-maneuvering everyone in the community, including Will and Ratliff, and marrying Eula Varner, Flem moves into Jefferson. He begins as a restaurant owner, next is water power superintendent, moves into the bank vice-presidency, and finally becomes president of the bank. Several years after having attained this position, he is murdered by his cousin, Mink.

The outstanding quality of Flem's character is singleness of purpose; his purpose is to attain wealth and power, and nothing stops his rise. His impenetrable blandness, shrewdness, sense of good timing, and genius for manipulation added to the singleness of purpose

produce the perfect business man. All these qualities combined with his amorality and lack of any basic humanity produce an inhuman and dangerous monster. In Frenchman's Bend, Flem attaches himself to the wealthiest people and learns all they know about business; he even patterns his dress after them, Jody's white shirts and Will's black bow tie. But he lacks the human failings of the Varners. Jody obviously miscalculates in his own favor when figuring bills; Flem "never made mistakes." Will wishes to preserve his family's reputation, and Flem takes advantage of the fact by marrying the already pregnant Eula. He later uses Eula and the child as pawns in securing Will's support and money. He also utilizes his own relatives by putting them into businesses where he needs them and disposing of them when he no longer needs them. He is calloused enough to take the money of his idiot ward and to take the last five dollars from a poverty stricken family, the Armstids.

Recognizing none of the morals by which other people live and work, Flem does realize that other people do respect some principles, and he uses this fact in his dealings with them. He always operates within the limits of respectability, after he realizes that they are a necessary asset in achieving his goal. He tolerates Eula's adultery for years, using it to attain two of his stepping stones and his final goal. When the proper moment comes, he goes so far as to place Eula in a position of having to decide between her lover and her child, knowing that any decision which she makes will aid him.

Several critics have felt that Flem lost part of his demonic quality when he assumed the guise of respectability; however, I must agree with Olga Vickery that: ". . . Flem recognizes that society

itself is a source of power. Hence he redefines his goal to include respectability and achieves it by a scrupulous attention to propriety in all his observable actions."³ In Jefferson, Manfred De Spain symbolizes success to Flem, so he patterns himself after De Spain as he earlier had patterned himself after the Varners. Eventually he surpasses De Spain, as he also had the Varners. Faulkner seems to be pointing out that at least a part of the evil lies within a society which fosters a Flem Snopes and in which respectability, as apart from morality, can be assumed and then used as both power and protection by a person shrewd and unprincipled enough to take advantage of it.

Another point of contention concerning Flem is the manner of his death. His cousin, Mink, swore vengeance when Flem failed to save him from a prison sentence. After serving his time in the penitentiary, Mink returns to Jefferson and shoots Flem. Flem does nothing whatsoever to prevent his own death after Mink's release. When Gavin Stevens tells him that Mink has left the prison Flem merely says, "Much obliged," and suggests that it is improbable that Mink can even get back to Jefferson. When Mink does arrive, and the two are face to face alone, Flem:

. . . his feet now flat on the floor and the chair almost swiveled to face him (Mink), appeared to sit immobile and even detached too, watching too Mink's grined shaking childlike hands like the hands of a pet coon. . .

Mink shoots him. Concerning this question of why Flem does nothing, Granville Hicks says that Flem, "who in The Hamlet quite literally beat the devil, no longer had anything to live for."⁴ However, even though

³Olga M. Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1959), p. 181.

⁴Granville Hicks, "The Last of the Snopeses," Saturday Review, November 14, 1959, p. 20.

in an anecdote Ratliff pictures Flem in hell "beating the devil," the anecdote comes from Ratliff's imagination, not fact; in the author's commentary Flem is called a "discipline of the devil." As in Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, the devil has come to claim his payment, and Flem has no choice other than acceptance. The devil's tool in this instance is Mink. The people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson have been unable to stop Flem, and he is killed by a member of his own family—evil destroys itself.

Flem, then, is both a product of and a prey upon the society in which he lives. By observing the conventions of respectability and ignoring the morality upon which those conventions were based, he achieves his goal of wealth and power without society's being able to stop him. Inhuman yet possessing many of the qualities which appear in varying degrees in many human beings, he moves toward his goal without any thought of the effect that his actions might have upon others. Faulkner's criticism seems to be not of Flem Snopes as a person, but of Flem Snopes as the symbol of the materialism and greed of a society which functions on the word and not the practice of humanity, honor, and truth.

Following directly, but much less successfully, in Flem's wake are I. O. Snopes and Lump Snopes. I. O. is one of the first of Flem's relatives who comes to Frenchman's Bend to fill a position for Flem. He is thin, undersized man who "talks constantly in a steady stream of worn saws and proverbs usually having no connection with one another nor application to anything else." He first superintends Eck in his new role of blacksmith (he is unable to do the work himself); thereafter he is Mink's legal advisor (he loses the case), schoolteacher (he

leaves town when his first wife arrives), and mule trader (he is forced by Flem to quit the business). The fact that few things which he attempts turn out to be completely successful does not deter him from trying any work or scheme which might bring money. Lump succeeds Flem as clerk in Varner's store when Flem and Mula leave for Texas on their honeymoon and keeps the position after Flem returns. The villagers' first view of Lump comes when Flem enters the store "heeled as by a dog by a man a little smaller than himself but shaped exactly like him." Lump does anything for money and helps Flem by obviously perjuring himself at the trial of Armstid versus Snopes. Neither I. O. nor Lump is equal to Flem in business maneuvers. Their biggest fault is short sightedness; all they can attain is the easy money within short reach. Also, neither can remain completely detached from other people. I. O. is a bigamist and is caught; Lump succumbs to the temptation of bragging to the men about Flem's ability to trick them into buying the wild Texas ponies. However, both are like him in that they acknowledge kinship whenever it is advantageous but take advantage of relatives as quickly as of strangers whenever possible.

Montgomery Ward Snopes, Clarence Snopes, and Byron Snopes also have some of Flem's characteristics but lack others. Montgomery Ward capitalizes on the lewdness of other men by setting up a photography studio as a blind for selling pornographic pictures; however, he is indiscreet in carrying on his trade and is caught. After being caught he has visions of blackmail, but these do not materialize. Flem quickly dispenses with Montgomery Ward for two reasons; he threatens Flem's respectability, and Flem wants him sent to Parchman Penitentiary in order to trick Mink into having his sentence lengthened. Clarence

works for both money and power, but cannot maintain what he achieves. He, supported by Will Varner, advances from constable of Beat Two to candidate for Congress before he is eliminated by a "trained American ward-level" politician's trick played by Ratliff. Clarence, although "unprincipled and without morals," constitutes a danger only to "someone he would have moral and intellectual ascendancy of" because he lacks intelligence, foresight, and detachment. Byron successfully embezzles money from the bank where he works, but he must leave town in order to accomplish the feat. This action shows only two of Flem's qualities, desire for money and shrewdness. A human failing which also differentiates him from Flem is his practically uncontrollable lust for Narcissus Benbow, which dominates his thoughts incessantly. Montgomery Ward, Clarence, and Byron, further removed from Flem in perspective than I. O. and Lump, are correspondingly less materially successful.

Mink Snopes is perhaps more like Ab than any of the rest of the clan. Virile and proud, defeated in his one attempt to escape a life of drudgery on tenant farms, he follows Flem to Frenchman's Bend but resents any act which he considers unjust and will not be completely guided by Flem. Ratliff's observation about him, ". . . 'this here seems to be a different kind of Snopes like a cotton-mouth is a different kind of snake.' So that wasn't the last time this one is going to make his cousin trouble." proves to be only too true.

Mink, the second most important of the Snopes, appears as a central character in "The Hound," The Hamlet, and The Mansion. Mink murders a wealthy neighbor after what he considers to be just provocation but assures himself that Flem will intervene in the trial and help him. When Flem fails to help him, he decides that his remaining life's

purpose is to repay Flem. After spending thirty-eight years in Parchman State Penitentiary, Mink is paroled and manages, despite obstacles which seem almost insurmountable, to make his way back to Jefferson and to shoot Flem. After Mink decides that Flem has betrayed him, his pride causes him to decide that he must avenge that betrayal. This vengeance becomes an obsession which approaches monomania, monomania to which is added patience, endurance, and determination.

He learned the hard way. . . that a man can bear anything by simply and calmly refusing to accept it, he reconciled to it, give it up. . . Patience was his pride too. . . They might be stronger for a moment than he hurt nobody. . . could wait longer than he could wait when nothing else but waiting would do.

Never does Mink consider that he is responsible for his own actions before the trial, that according to the law he is liable to punishment; he recognizes only that Flem, "the only member of the clan with the power to and the reason to, or what could at least be expected to, extricate him" from the consequences of his act, failed him. Mink's determination and endurance approach the heroic in his achievement of an evil end. Mink, like Flem, combines singleness of purpose, determination, and amorality in his character, but he lacks detachment. Instead, he is proud, vengeful, and antagonistic.

Three Snopeses who do not exhibit the characteristics of Snopesism are Colonel Sartoris, Eckram, and Wall Street Panic. Colonel Sartoris, Flem's younger brother appears in the short story, "Barn Burning," but not in The Hamlet; Ratliff simply mentions that "there was another too, a little one." Colonel Sartoris, Sarty, is forced by his father to adhere to the code of kinship, which in this case includes arson and perjury. Ab senses that the boy did not want to lie at a trial and tells him, "You got to learn to stick to your own blood. . . Don't you

know all they wanted was a chance to get at me because I had them beat?" Later, Ab instructs his wife to hold Sarty while he goes to burn another barn, but the boy breaks loose and rushes to warn the owner. Unable to change his father's warped views concerning truth and justice, Sarty can only attempt to prevent further injustice and then leave his family for a life of his own.

While talking about the Snopes as a clan, Montgomery Ward says, "I dont count Wallstreet and Admiral Dewey and their father Eck, because they dont belong to us: they are only our shame." And to the Snopeses who practice Snopesism they definitely are both a "shame" and a threat. Eck Snopes arrives in Frenchman's Bend with I. O. to become the blacksmith. He is a "well-made, muscle-bound man. . . whose intentions were good and who was accomodating and unfailingly pleasant and even generous"; besides this, he is neither shrewd nor unscrupulous. When Ratliff forces I. O. to get rid of Ike's cow, Eck is tricked into paying for the cow and then buys Ike a wooden effigy of his cow to alleviate his pain. When he moves to Jefferson to cook in Flem's cafe, Eck says aloud and in front of customers, "Ain't we supposed to be selling beef in these here hamburgers? I don't know jest what this is yet but it aint no beef." Flem soon moves Eck to the post of night watchman at the depot where he cannot be an embarrassment and where he blows himself to pieces by striking a match to look into an oil tank for a lost child. The only way in which Ratliff can account for Eck's behavior is to suggest that Mrs. Snopes must have done some "extra night work."

Eck's son, Wallstreet Panic, appears first as a small boy tagging at his father's heels in Frenchman's Bend. When they move to Jefferson he immediately starts to school and is encouraged by his teacher. From

his father Wall inherited honesty, generosity, and pleasantness; his only Snopes' characteristic is industriousness. This industriousness, unlike that of other Snopeses, is used toward an admirable end. He proves to the people of Jefferson that he is not like other Snopeses and succeeds in his grocery business without, or despite, Flem's offer of help. He also keeps his younger brother in school. His young and equally ambitious wife believes in him fiercely and hates his relatives passionately. She does not want to change their name; she "jest wants to live it down." Through their integrity, they do "purify" their part of the family name, and after Flem's death, they, who are so completely removed from Snopesism, are the only Snopeses left in Jefferson.

Another type of Snopes is Ike, Flem's idiot ward. Unable to understand any implication of Snopesism, even he is slightly touched by it. Although he is not conscious of the explicit value of money, he does realize that it has some value. Ike too has singleness of purpose. One section of The Hamlet is devoted to his love affair with Houston's cow. Olga Vickery says: ". . . Ike is the perfect lover just as Flem is the perfect economic man. . . Ike as a lover is absurd, but there is no absurdity in his love."⁵ It is true that Ike loves completely and without demanding anything in return. His single purpose lies in his love, and the description of this love is idyllic and poetic. The contrast between his love affair and the love affairs of Flem, Mink, and Houston is obvious. Flem is impotent; Mink must always be tormented by the remembrance of his wife's past lovers, and Houston fights against his marriage. The comic contrast in the description of the cow and Eula

⁵Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 179.

is also clear. The cow is described as the "flowing immemorial female," "maidenly shy," and "graceful." Jody says of Lula, "She's just like a dog! Soon as she passes anything in long pants she begins to give off something. You can smell it." However, why Faulkner chose the common barnyard joke of sodomy as the vehicle for the comparisons is not immediately obvious. At times the humor is definitely crude, and even while reading the highly idyllic passages, one is occasionally jolted back to the realization that this selfless and beautiful love is, after all, for a cow. Perhaps the meaning lies in the fact that "absurd" as Ike is as a lover, he is more human than Flem, who is completely removed from any human feelings. Ike identifies himself with the most universal of human qualities, love, and nothing distracts him until the object of his love is forceably taken away from him. He actually harms no one in pursuit of his object, but he offends the people's sense of respectability and morality. Whereas Flem is amoral but capable of recognizing morals, Ike lacks the intelligence to recognize, let alone understand, moral law. He can only do what he feels, without reasoning whether it is right or wrong. The greatest irony is that, while Ike is an object of callous curiosity and has his cow taken from him, Flem is grudgingly admired by his society and continues his infamous career.

The Snopeses are a tribe of characters combining personal and symbolic significance whom Faulkner uses as the vehicle for bitter satire on Southern society in particular, modern society in general. Snopesism in its worst degree is exemplified by Flem, a monster created by and preying upon a society which operates on the word but not the principle of humanitarianism.

The first Snopes, Ab, has no actual place in the stratum of society, and embittered because he is unable to make a place for himself, he spends a life of constant rebellion against those who can claim a definite position. His son, Flem, who is completely dehumanized, possesses the qualities necessary for achieving what his father could only desire. Flem seizes upon material success as the quality most highly prized by society and makes that his goal; he is successful. The other Snopeses are not completely dehumanized, as is Flem; indeed, some of them are completely opposite from Snopesism, and they can only prey upon other people or attempt to exist within the family without following the general rules. Snopesism is the product of a society in which wealth and station had once been the outward manifestations of the inward qualities of truth, honor, and integrity. When those inward qualities crumbled, only the external signs, wealth and power, remained, and a Flem Snopes emerged to exemplify that deterioration.

Faulkner's final word concerning Snopesism is not dark and damning. After Flem himself disperses his family followers, in the name of respectability, he is killed by a member of that family, and the only Snopes left in Jefferson is Wall, who has inverted the Snopes code. He, who is the product of Snopes ambition and bourgeois virtues, believes in honesty, honor, and industry because of their intrinsic values, not because they are the best policies to follow. The evil of Snopesism is, in this instance, halted; however, the evil must destroy itself. Society, because of the corresponding evil within itself, had been unable to eliminate Snopesism.

CHAPTER IV

THE BUNDRENS

Differing from the Varners in socio-economic scaling and from the Snopeses are the Bundrens: Anse and Addie, their children, Cash, Darl, Jewel, Dewey Dell, and Vardaman. Cash, Darl, and Jewel are young adults; Dewey Dell is approximately fifteen years old, and Vardaman is under ten years old. The framework of the novelette, As I Lay Dying, is built around Addie's thoughts as she lies dying, her death, and the family's funeral journey to Jefferson to bury Addie. All the other family members are characterized primarily by their involvement with Addie and by their reactions to the obligation which she places upon them. Anse and Addie have diametrically opposed personalities, and their children exhibit these conflicting traits in varying degrees. The outstanding medium of characterization is the stream-of-consciousness technique which allows the reader to follow the thoughts of each character and to contrast these thoughts with the actions.

Addie Bundren's thoughts as she lies dying convey her character, her interpretation of life, and reasons for her complex relationship with her children. Hers is a passionate, unfulfilled nature, and she has sought concrete relationships with other people and with life. She sees the students at the country school where she teaches as "each with his and her secret and selfish thought, and blood strange to each other blood and strange" to hers. She looks forward to whipping them so that

they will be aware of her. She marries Anse in an attempt to escape a life of nothingness, but he knows only words, which Addie separates completely from actions. Not until Cash, her first child, is born does Addie realize that living is "terrible" and that violation of aloneness is the answer to being completely alive; Cash, therefore, makes her whole, or alive, by violating her aloneness as Anse had never done. With the birth of Cash she achieves the fullest extent of doing, and words are completely unnecessary. However, when Darl is born, Addie feels betrayed, because she had not expected this further violation. Whereas the first child had made her whole, the second one is unexpected and brings her back to Anse's world; she dismisses both Anse and Darl from her consciousness, refusing to acknowledge their existence. Still seeking release for her passion and a further concrete involvement with life, Addie commits adultery with Preacher Whitfield. She imagines Whitfield as in the world of "doing" rather than in the world of "words" because he must repudiate his words in order to sin with her. Jewel is the child born of her passion, and after his birth Addie sits with him, and ". . . the wild wind boiled away and the sound of it ceased." After this she gives Anse Dewey Dell to "negative" Jewel and Vardaman to replace him; thus these two children are Anse's and not hers. Addie is now ready to die, for as her father had told her, "the reason for living was to get ready to stay dead a long time."

Addie forces Anse to promise that he will bury her in Jefferson with her own people, but true to her statement regarding him, Anse complies with the letter of the promise but depends on others to furnish the necessary action. The long funeral journey, during which the Bundrens are beset by flood and fire, which result in halting

progress and the putrefaction of the corpse, is accomplished by the combined family effort. Not one family member fully understands the reason for fulfilling the obligation, and only Darl attempts to stop the journey. Contrary to the Compsons of The Sound and the Fury, who are unable to unite for any single purpose, these poor whites are able to unite and fulfill an obligation. The irony of the situation is that Addie's motive for being buried in Jefferson is that she desires solidarity with her people, and in forcing her will upon the Bundrens she violates the aloneness of Anse Bundren and the children and makes them further aware of her. However, the degree of involvement of each person has been predetermined by his earlier relationship to Addie; the journey simply brings about the final fulfillment of this relationship. Addie's children respond to her, to the obligation she has placed on them, to life itself as she had borne them.¹ Cash, whom she loves and at whose birth she achieved understanding, fulfills his obligation to Addie and learns to understand others. Darl, whom she repudiated in her heart, is tormented by insecurity, repudiates Addie, and goes insane. Jewel, whom she bore of passion and whom she loves covertly, violently and harshly fulfills his obligation. Dewey Dell, in whom Addie has no interest, involves herself only to the extent which aids her own selfish ends. Vardaman, in whom Addie also has no interest, cannot even comprehend the meaning of the obligation.

Anse Bundren is one of the most "put upon" men in the world, but troubles slide off his shoulders onto the shoulders of others. He

¹Olga W. Vickery, "As I Lay Dying," (reprinted from Perspective, Autumn, 1950, pp. 179-191), eds., Hoffman and Vickery, p. 194.

He reminds one of the shiftless, self-justifying transient farmers in the stories by Erskine Caldwell. Despite frequent protests that he "wouldn't be beholden to no man," Anse permits his neighbors and children to do his work whenever possible. Addie has said that Anse lives by words, and this is shown to be true; he talks of work while other work. So completely is he separated from "doing" and from Addie's passionate nature that he does not recognize their existence. Even grief is only a word to him; when Addie dies he says, "God's will be done. Now I can get them teeth." He justifies his acts of selling Jewel's horse, taking Cash's and Dewey Dell's money, and borrowing a spade to dig Addie's grave. To Jewel he protests.

For fifteen years I ain't had a tooth in my head. God knows it. He knows in fifteen years I ain't et the victuals He aimed for man to eat to keep his strength up, and no saving a nickle here and a nickle there so my family wouldn't suffer it, to buy them teeth so I could eat God's appointed food. I give that money. I thought that if I could do without eating, my sons could do without riding. God knows I did.

Anse is not detestable, he is grotesquely comic. People have helped him for so long that they feel as though it is too late to stop now. His appearance at the end of the story with "store bought teeth" and a new wife is in keeping with his character. Having fulfilled the letter of his promise, he continues as he had previously.

Cash alone grows as a consequence of the experience. Early in the story he appears to be so literal minded that he is comic. When asked how far he fell when he broke his leg he replies, "Twenty eight foot, four and a half inches, about." When Anse solicitously worries what he will do working in the rain without a raincoat, Cash answers simply, "Get wet." He and Addie understand and love one another with words as well as deeds and he fulfills his obligation to her although enduring

agony to do so. While Addie lies dying, Cash builds her coffin. During the funeral journey, Cash's leg is broken again when he attempts to save Addie's coffin from overturning in a stream. Anse has the other children set the leg in cement in order to save money, and Cash does not complain. During the rest of the trip he does not complain about the pain from his leg, and not until after Addie is buried will he consent to being left at a doctor's to have the leg properly set. The impression is given that not until the funeral journey has Cash taken time to view the members of the family and the tensions among them. When he does recognize these stresses, he can speculate in an intelligent and detached manner about them because he is not directly involved. Only he, unless Vardaman can be counted, sympathizes with Darl. It is to him that Darl appeals when the others attack him, "Do you want me to go?" Cash tries to explain but can only tell him, "It will be better for you." Later he ponders,

. . . 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.

This is particularly fitting in application to Darl's attempt to burn the barn and the coffin with Addie's putrefied body. Cash achieves mature sympathy and understanding and a reasonable balance between words and actions.²

Darl, the child whom Addie actually rejects but to whom she gives outward signs of affection, moves from psychic perception to insanity. Tull expresses what other feel about Darl's ability to fathom their

²O'Connor, p. 48.

thoughts with, "It's like he had got into the inside of you somehow. . ."

Darl senses that Dewey Dell is pregnant; he realizes that Addie favors Jewel and that Jewel is not Anse's son. Also, he recognizes the violence inside Jewel and the reason for his working to buy the wild horse. This awareness draws Darl into conflict with Dewey Dell and Jewel although he refuses to act openly on his knowledge. Both of them turn on Darl in physical violence when he is to be sent to the asylum. Darl searches himself continually in an attempt to determine his place in the family. He says, "I cannot love my mother because I have no mother." When he makes observations on or speaks to other people, his words are rational and clear; when he turns to introspection, both his thoughts and utterances become muddled, poignant, and yet poetic. Although at times difficult to accept as coming from him, Darl's language at the times when he contemplates his life heighten the emotional intensity and draw the reader into sympathy with him.

Darl's progress toward insanity is marked by less concise comment on the other Bundrens, physical rebellion against Addie, open taunting of Jewel, intimations of Dewey Dell's condition, and a closer relationship between his and Vardaman's thought processes. His introspection becomes more detached, and when the others attack him he appeals to Cash, "I thought you'd 'a' told me. It's not that I. . .," as if he were two separate people. (In his final state of insanity Darl watches himself as if completely apart from himself.)

Darl is our brother, our brother Darl. . . in a cage in Jackson where, his grimed hands lying light in the quiet interstices, looking out he foams.

'Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.'

He attempts to ascertain his own identity as "our brother." A reader

may agree with Cash that there is difficulty in deciding between sanity and insanity when Darl and the other members of the family are considered together.

Jewel identifies himself with no one except Addie. Dewey Dell observes that he is not "care kin" to the rest of the family, and if Darl had his way, "It would just be me and her on a high hill and me rolling the rocks down the hill at their faces. . . ." Addie says that when Jewel was born her wild blood "boiled away," and Jewel's nature indicates that it was transferred into him. He is all action, no contemplation, and his actions are abrupt, harsh, and violent. His speech is interspliced with cursing, and he hates Darl passionately for correctly interpreting his actions. These two characteristics can be seen when Darl taunts him with, "Your mother was a horse, but who was your father, Jewel?" Jewel can only reply in a stream of violent curses. Also, his last act of violence is against Darl.

Jewel works beyond the limits of endurance to buy a wild horse and transfixes his physical expression of love on the horse; however, he sacrifices the horse to fulfill his obligation to Addie. Addie had said of Jewel, "He is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save me from the water and from the fire." This is true in both the concrete and the abstract sense. He risks his life to save her body from being washed away in the stream and from being burned in the fire. Only after Addie is buried and Darl is sent to Jackson, does Jewel act and speak without the explosive, smouldering fire quality which has previously characterized him. It is as though when these things are accomplished he is free of his mother's bequest to him.

Dewey Dell, like Eula Varner and Lena Grove, conveys a sense of

placidity and closeness to birth and life; however, unlike them, she attempts to stop her pregnancy. At one point Darl watches her as she "sets the basket into the wagon and climbs in, her legs coming long from beneath her tightening dress: that lever which moves the world. . . ." She combines characteristics of both Addie and Anse. Like Addie, she experiences passion and bitterness, to a certain degree, and feels "like a wet seed wild in the hot blind earth." Like Anse, she accepts obligation on the "word" level only. She wishes that Addie would die quickly so that they may start on the journey, and she goes on the journey in order to buy pills to stop her pregnancy. Neither does she accept responsibility for her own act; when Lefe promises to seduce her at the end of a cotton row if her cotton sack is full, she does not stop him from picking into her sack. She later justifies herself with, "And so it was full when we came to the end of the row and I could not help it."

Dewey Dell's one act of violence is against Darl, whom she hates because he knows and could reveal her secret. She thinks, "I can talk to him with knowing and hating because he knows." When the attendants from Jackson come after Darl she jumps "scratching and clawing at him like a wild cat" before even Jewel can reach him. Irving Howe states that Dewey Dell is the only Bundren who fails to emerge clearly.³ However, I feel that her character is simply less complex; hence there is less to emerge. She refuses to become committed to Addie except as it concerns her main interest, her pregnancy.

³Irving Howe, William Faulkner: A Critical Study (New York, 1952), p. 137.

Vardaman, the youngest son, is a pathetic, weak-minded child whom his mother's death affects greatly. None of his thoughts and speeches are completely coherent, and his actions are often prompted by incorrect association of events. Dr. Peabody attends Addie at her death, so Vardaman decides that Peabody has killed her and takes vengeance on his horses. He catches a fish on the day that Addie dies and cannot disassociate his dead mother and the dead fish. He remembers that he could not breathe in the corn crib and thinks that Addie cannot breathe in the closed coffin, therefore he bores holes in the coffin, and unintentionally into Addie's face. Throughout the story he reiterates, "My mother is a fish."

At times Vardaman's thoughts seem close to those of Benjy Compson in that he sees and relates action without its passing through assimilation. When Benjy burns himself he thinks, "I put my hand out to where the fire had been. . . My hand jerked back and I put it in my mouth." When the barn burns Vardaman thinks, "The barn was still red, but it wasn't a barn now. It was sunk down and the red went swirling up." Also, the closeness between his thoughts and Darl's thoughts grows more pronounced as Darl approaches insanity. Just before they reach Jefferson they are able to communicate on equal terms. He sympathizes with Darl in his incoherent fashion, "My brother he went crazy and he went to Jackson too. Jackson is further away than crazy. . . Darl. Darl is my brother. Darl. Darl." Ironically, it was he who had given Dewey Dell the information which decided Darl's fate. Vardaman is a combination of Addie's passionate nature and Anse's ineffectuality. He can express himself only in ineffectual, violent actions which result from equally violent but, more often than not, misguided emotions.

Each of the Bundrens is a distinct personality, yet their kinship is evident. The most admirable person is Cash, who accepts life as it is, a combination of "words" and "doing." Addie and Jewel dismiss words and rush to meet life with violent acts; Darl and Vardaman, unable to achieve a balance between word and deed, are pathetic; Anse and Dewey Dell live principally by "words" and prefer to have others carry out the action whenever possible. Despite, or perhaps partially because of, their variant interests and conflicting traits, they unite in a family action. Grotesquely humorous as the funeral journey is, it shows that even the poorest, most ignorant of people respond to a common interest and obligation and are capable of fulfilling an obligation which is placed upon them.

CHAPTER V

COMPOSITE OF CHARACTERS

Besides the three clans already discussed, there are many others in the Yoknapatawpha series. Some of them play minor roles in several novels, others perform major roles in only one story. Also, there are individual characters who are important in one or the other of these two functions. It would be impossible to consider all these people, but I shall attempt to make a representative selection.

Henry Armstid and his wife, Martha, appear first in Light in August, later in The Hamlet. Although the names are the same, the people are not the same. In Light in August Henry is a "humped, bleached" man who helps the pregnant, unmarried Lena Grove and worries about what Martha will think, but he decides, "I reckon I do know what Martha's going to say. I reckon womenfolks are likely to be good without being very kind." This is exactly what Martha does. She, "a gray woman with a cold, harsh, irascible face. . . not plump not thin, manhard, workhard," helps Lena without any trace of kindness. She shatters her china rooster bank and gives Henry her own money, which she has saved from selling eggs, to give to Lena. She also rises early the next morning to fix breakfast for the girl, but she refuses to see or be thanked by her. Both Henry and Martha attempt to convince Lena that she will not find the man for whom she is looking, but they do not try to stop her or offer to help her any more.

The Armstids of The Hamlet convey a different impression. Henry's eyes are still faded, but other elements have been added; he is now "a thin man, not large, with something about his eyes, something strained and washed-out, at once vague and intense." He no longer worries about what his wife thinks but turns furiously upon her the first time she opposes his wishes and strikes her the second time. When he buys and attempts to catch a wild Texas pony, the pony runs over him and breaks his leg. After this he is completely embittered. Later, he is one of Flem's victims in the Old Frenchman's Place ruse.

Bookwright observes:

Between having to remember them five dollars every time he looks at his wife maybe, and that broke leg, and that horse he bought from Flem Snopes with it he ain't even seen again, he's plumb crazy. Not that he had far to go.

The last picture of Henry shows him still digging for gold, which Ratliff and Bookwright are unable to convince him is not there, with a "gaunt unshaven face which was now completely mad." Bitterness at his lot and lust for quick riches which he cannot attain have completely disintegrated his character.

Mrs. Armstid could no longer give her egg money to Lena Grove; there is only five dollars in the family's possession, and Henry spends that for a horse. She is a "gray" woman in "gray garments" who is completely submissive to her husband and resigned to their poverty. She will not even raise her arm to fend off an undeserved blow from him.

The description of Mrs. Armstid's face, one "like those of generals who have been defeated in battle," in Light in August, prepares us in some degree for her resigned attitude in The Hamlet, and the comments of the men reveal that she still works hard. Henry, however, changes

radically, and the extreme poverty which they face in the second book is not evident in the first. In his treatment of Ab Snopes, Faulkner shows a man who "sours" and gives some reason for the change. Economic despair could be one reason for the change in Henry Armstid from the kind of man who helps another without thought of compensation to the madman who has no compassion and seeks only material gain. Unless we know the event, or events, which have caused the Armstid's decline into poverty, however, accepting the change in Henry is difficult.

Vernon Tull and his wife, Cora, appear as minor characters in both As I Lay Dying and The Hamlet. They, like the Bundrens, are presented through the stream of consciousness technique which reveals thoughts and emotions as well as actions and speech. In As I Lay Dying they emerge as actual people; in The Hamlet, although physical descriptions are stated in author's commentary, they represent types.

Cora Tull is a comically presented self-righteous Christian who sees everything differently from other people, and she usually sees them incorrectly. In her own mind, she tries:

. . . to live right in the sight of God and man, for the honour and comfort of my Christian husband and the love and respect of my Christian children. So that when they lay me down in the consciousness of my duty and reward I will be surrounded by loving faces, carrying the farewell kiss of each of my loved ones to my reward.

Cora assumes that Addie watches Cash building her coffin so that he will not skimp on it, but this is completely against his nature; she sees that Addie pretends to love Jewel and truly loves Darl, but Addie actually loves Jewel; she tells Addie to honor her husband, and she henpecks her own. When she rushes to the Bundrens after Addie dies, Vernon thinks she acts as if she is trying to crowd others away and get in closer, but "reckons" she knows best about matters such as this. He

also "reckons that if God could turn the world over to someone and have His mind at rest, that person would be Cora." She would make a few changes, but they would be for man's good, and man might just as well like them.

This comic presentation of Mrs. Tull is continued in The Hamlet. When one of the runaway spotted horses ruins their wagon and injures Vernon, the Tulls sue Eck Snopes, the owner. At the trial she violently presents their case, although Tull repeatedly tries to calm her. When they lose the case because of legal technicalities, she is completely outraged and turns bitterly on her husband as if it were his fault.

(Mrs. Tull represents Everyman outraged at the inadequacy of law which admits injustice on the basis of a technicality.)

Vernon Tull is a "neighborly" man who is dominated by his wife. He occasionally feels that she is inconsistent, however. He realizes that Anse Bundren imposes on him, but continues to help him because, as Will Varner says about God and all the neighbors helping Anse, "I reckon He's like everybody else around here. . . He's done it so long now He can't quit." When the Bundrens try to ford a flooded stream with Addie's coffin, Tull refuses to allow them to use his mule in the crossing, but he crosses himself and is there to help when the coffin and Cash's tools must be recovered from the rushing water.

In The Hamlet Vernon is pictured in "His faded but absolutely clean shirt and the overalls which. . . resembled the short pants of a small boy." His complete innocence and his lack of self-assertion are evident from both his looks and his attitude toward his wife. The only words he utters during the trial are, "Now, mamma," in an unsuccessful attempt to calm Mrs. Tull. He practices "neighborliness" to the degree of

withdrawing from any conflict which would involve assertion of his own rights.

Three short stories, "Shingles for the Lord," "Two Soldiers," and "Shall Not Perish," portray the Grier family, Res and his wife, their two sons, Pete and the younger boy, who remains unnamed. All three stories are related by the younger boy, and the other three persons emerge through their own actions and speech and by his observations. No physical description is given for any of the family, but the omission provides no difficulty.

Res Grier terms himself as "jest a average hard-working farmer," but he actually works none too hard. He is stubborn, proud, and sensitive to ridicule or supposed injustice; all of these qualities appear in his contest of wits with Solon Quick. When his older son decides to join the army during World War II, Res objects. He says that the country is not being invaded, that Pete has not been drafted, that he and an uncle have already served, and "Besides, what'll I do for help on the farm with you gone? It seems to me I'll get mighty far behind." Both Pete and the younger boy reflect that he has always been behind anyway. When Pete actually leaves, however, he reacts in a different manner, a manner which surprises and pleases the boys. Res continually whines that he deserves more than he has, but his pride saves him from falling into complete self pity in an instance of stress.

Mrs. Grier is a proud, hard working, sympathetic woman. The greatest part of her characterization comes from her relationship with her elder son. When Pete tells her he must join the service, she cries at first but later tells him, "You got to go, and so I want you to go. But I don't understand it, and I won't never, and so don't expect me to."

As he leaves, she tells him that he must never forget who he is, that his blood is as good as that of anyone else even though he is neither rich nor famous. When the telegram arrives announcing Pete's death, she knows the contents without opening it, and she and the rest of the family can allow themselves the luxury of only one day in which to grieve. When another boy from Yoknapatawpha county dies in the war, she immediately goes to comfort his father, who is the banker in Jefferson. Here, the strength of character which enables her to accept her son's death as a time for grief, but not for hate or self-debasement contrasts with DeSpain's wild grief and uncontrolled despair. Without understanding why there must be a war and why her son must die, she places her faith in the wisdom of her son and in his pride which will not allow injustice to those whom he honors.

Pete, the older son, combines industry, gentleness and patriotism in his nature. He, unlike his father, always works his land carefully, while helping his father as well. The younger brother says, "Pete never got behind like pap, let alone stayed behind." After listening to the newscasts following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he decides that he must enlist because he "jest ain't going to put up with no folks treating the Unity States that way." His devotion to his mother is evident in his attempts to comfort her before he leaves. When the younger boy follows him to Memphis, still unconvinced that he cannot go along, Pete is at first hard and quick with him in an attempt to hide his emotion. Soon, however, his voice gentles as he tells the boy, "No. You must go home. You must look after maw, and I am depending on you to look after my ten acres. I want you to go back home." Then, for the first time, he kisses the boy. Pete may not be able to completely

understand why there is a war, and his expression of why he must enlist is not eloquent, but his ideals are high, and he does not betray them.

The younger Grier boy, as the narrator of the stories, states ideas, attitudes, and concepts which are valid, but of which he has no existential awareness. Many of these, such as Pete's idealism or the democratic heritage, would be truisms in the mouth of an adult, but their value and the impact of the stories lie in the fact that he does not realize their banality because of his youth and inexperience. Faulkner manipulates the evolution of the final statement of "Shall Not Perish" in such a manner that it seems natural rather than startling. Other than this, the younger Grier is one little boy who typifies all little boys in his naturalness. He is loving and yet not tender, capable at one time and unreasoning at another, surprised but not overwhelmed by what he discovers outside Frenchman's Bend.

He idolizes his elder brother and wants to please and imitate him in every way. He classifies other men in accordance with Pete, and none of them are equal. When Pete says Pearl Harbor is across the Pacific Ocean and he does not know where that is, Pete accuses him of having learned nothing in school. He replies, "I reckon we ain't got as fer as the Pacific Ocean yet." When Pete decides he must go to the war, the boy assumes that he will go too:

Pete said, "I got to go."
 "Go where?" I said.
 "To that war," Pete said.
 "Before we even finish gettin' in the firewood?"
 "Firewood, hell," Pete said.
 "All right," I said. "When we going to start?"
 But he wasn't even listening. . . "I got to go," he said.
 "Yes," I said. "Firewood or no firewood, I reckon we got to go."
 This time he heard me. . . "You?" he said. "To a war?"
 "You'll whup the big uns and I'll shup the little uns," I said.
 Then he told me I couldn't go.

After Pete leaves for Memphis, the boy follows him. He walks twenty-two miles to Jefferson and offers to trade the depot clerk a shikepoke egg "worth a dollar" for a ticket to Memphis. When the welfare women who help him ask if he is sure he can find his brother he replies, "I reckon I can. I ain't got but one and I have knowed him all my life. I reckon I will know him again when I see him." Despite never having been away from home before, despite the long trip and the large town, he manages to find Pete and tell him, "I got to go too. I got to. It hurts my heart, Pete." He rides home in an army car and his thoughts are: "I thought about me riding up to Frenchman's Bend in this big car with a soldier running it, and all of a sudden I begun to cry. I never knowed I was fixing to, and I couldn't stop it."

In spite of his ability to carry out such an ambitious and illogical plan as following his brother to Memphis, his father must remind him that "You shine all shoes like you aimed yourself to wear them: just the part that you can see yourself by looking down." The boy is ingenious when determined, humorous because of his lack of knowledge, and haphazard in things of no interest to him.

The McCallums, proud and independent hill farmers, appear first in Sartoris; later they are central figures in "The Tall Men." and act briefly in The Town. Several discrepancies in detail separate their first and later appearances: in Sartoris the father's name is Virginius, in "The Tall Men" it is Anse; in Sartoris he has had two wives, in "The Tall Men" only one; in Sartoris the name is MacCallum, in "The Tall Men" it is McCallum; one son, Henry, appears in Sartoris and The Town but is not mentioned in "The Tall Men." However, the overall description of the family and the impressions they produce are the same. Their

faces bear "an almost identical stamp of kinship," and all the boys are friendly but quiet; "Rafe was the only one of them that, by any stretch of the imagination, could have been called loquacious." Two examples of their self-sufficiency and independence are outstanding. They refuse government aid for crop raising, but send the younger boys, Buddy's sons, to school to learn cattle raising; they do not understand that they must register for the draft during peace time, but Buddy sends the boys to enlist immediately when an official arrives to arrest them for draft dodging. Within the family there is no pretense or degradation as there is in the aristocratic families such as the Compsons or De Spains; instead there is solidarity and acceptance of a person as he is.

Pappy McCallum rules the family even though the sons are all grown; after his death they still live by what he "would have done." Although his sons do not share his illusions concerning the Confederacy, they do respect his personal strength and integrity. He is silver-haired, "straight as an Indian," and taller than any son except Buddy. He fought in the Civil War, and as Rafe says, he thinks the country has never gotten over Lee's surrender. His reply to Rafe's teasing is:

I be damned ef I ain't raised the dammedest, smartest set of boys in the world. Can't tell 'em nothin,' can't learn 'em nothin'; can't even set in front of my own fire for the whole passel of 'em tellin' me how to run the whole damn country. Hyer, you boys, git on to bed.'

That he too enjoys his jokes can be seen in his persistent needling of Jackson about the half fox-half dog pups he is raising. He says that even the hound, General, can tell they are worthless and proves it by bringing General in to see them. General leaves the room with a reproachful look at his master and the pups, and McCallum rumbles

happily. McCallum exhibits personal strength, independence, humor, and endurance.

Jackson, the eldest son, has a "faded, vaguely ineffectual lankness. . . a broad, high forehead and thick brows and an expression at once dreamy and intense---a sort of shy and impractical Cincinnatiatur." His impracticality and gentleness reveal themselves in the raising of the puppies, which all the others realize to be worthless.

Henry, the second, who is not mentioned in the second story, has taken the place of the dead mother. He has a "squat, slightly tubby figure. . . mild brown eyes and. . . capable, unhurried hands." He superintends the kitchen, visits town and hunts infrequently; his "sole relaxation" is making the best whiskey in the county for the consumption of the family and a few friends.

Stuart and Rafe are twins but are not alike in temperament. Rafe has an "easy manner," goes to town more than the others, and does most of the talking for the brothers. He is "A broad, squat man with a keen weathered face and gray temples. . ." with the supple body of a horseman and kind hands. It is he who invites Bayard Sartoris to visit them and who comments on Bayard's haggard appearance. When Bayard arises after spending the night with them, Rafe comments drily, "You look all wore out. Buddy must 'a' kept you awake talkin'." Stuart, of "poised and stocky muscularity," resembles Rafe in build but has none of his easy manner. He has much of "Henry's placidity" and is a "good farmer and a canny trader." When a question arises concerning Buddy's mutilated leg, it is he rather than the ineffectual Jackson who makes the decision to amputate the leg.

Lee, the next son, has a "thin and fiery restlessness" and a

"bitter and passionate voice." There is "something delicate in his face and something tragic and dark and wild" in his eyes. As a child he had been weak, and he now spends much of his time "tramping moodily and alone about the countryside." He speaks only once in the two stories, and this one time betrays some animosity for Buddy, the favorite son, who is well liked, strong, and the father of two boys.

The youngest son is Buddy, who at seventeen ran away to join the army and received a medal for combat duty; no one knows what he had done to receive the medal. His father still feels that the United States army was the Yankee army, and the medal only provokes him more, so the incident is never mentioned. When Bayard asks Buddy how he liked the army he answers, "Not much. . . Ain't enough to do. Good life for a lazy man." He muses a moment. "They gimme a charm," he adds, in a manner which indicates shy pleasure. He is the hunter of the family, going out at any time and in any weather to follow the hounds after 'possum or coon.

Buddy's mother was McCallum's second wife," and his hazel eyes. . . reddish thatch. . . and round face" contrast with his brothers' dark hair and eyes. Yet his face has the same stamp of the father that theirs have. He is the one who all the family believe will "marry and perpetuate the name," which he does. His twin sons, Anse and Lucius, are the "livin', spittin', image" of their grandfather.

When the federal agent comes to arrest the twins for not registering for the draft, Buddy has had an accident and is waiting for the doctor to amputate his leg. At this time he is able to observe that the "gentleman yonder is beginning to look impatient. . ." and sends the boys to Memphis to enlist. When the agent protests that this is not

correct procedure, neither father nor boys pay any attention to him. In a statement much like Mrs. Grier's, he tells the boys to do as they are told until they learn what is right, but to "remember your name and don't take nothing from no man." After the boys leave, he forces the doctor to amputate his leg with only liquor from the "johnny jug" for anesthetic. The similarity of Buddy and Pete Grier is easily seen. Each is independent yet loyal to his family, and each feels that his family name is equal to any man's. Each enlists in the army to defend his country, which, in his mind, is the family unit on a larger scale. As no one can be allowed to attack or debase the family, no other nation can be allowed to attack the United States. The major difference between the two is that Buddy, who is older, has the more mature understanding of both his family and his country.

One critic observes that "the two good" preachers in Faulkner's fiction belong to the poor white class. They are men who live in close contact with their congregations and realize the everyday, difficult task of living.¹ However, to complete this picture, one more character must be added, Brother Whitfield. Whitfield, of As I Lay Dying, The Hamlet, and "Shingles for the Lord," receives his characterization by all methods. He commits no overt acts of violence, and all his parishioners look upon him as the true spokesman of God, but a more hypocritical person would be difficult to find. Addie Bundren first describes him, her lover, in this manner:

While I waited for him in the woods. . . I would think of him as dressed in sin. I would think of him as thinking of me as dressed also in sin, he the more beautiful since the garment which he had exchanged for sin was sanctified.

¹Lytle, p. 476.

When Whitfield learns that Addie lies dying, he "wrestles with Satan and emerges victorious" in his recognition of his sin and his decision to admit his guilt to her husband. His fording of a flooded creek he sees as God's test of his penance, but when he learns that Addie has died without confessing their sin, he immediately decides that a "merciful" God has accepted his remorse:

. . . He is merciful; he will accept the will for the deed, who knew that when I framed the words of my confession it was to Anse I spoke them, even though he was not there. It was He in His infinite wisdom that restrained the tale from her dying lips. . .

He administers the final services without divulging his secret.

In The Hamlet Whitfield is described as a "harsh, stupid, honest, superstitious, upright man"; and the part he plays here particularly emphasizes his superstition and stupidity. He advocates killing Ike Snopes' cow and feeding her to the boy in order that he may be cured of his sodomy. He says that the boy must eat the flesh so that not only his mind, "but his insides too, the seat of passion and sin, can have the proof that the partner of his sin is dead." He also says that he knows of a case in which this cure worked. For him to prescribe a cure directed at "the seat of passion and sin" after he has been the lover of a married woman exhibits his basic hypocrisy.

In the short story, "Wash," which is now included in Absalom, Absalom!, Wash Jones, "a gaunt, malaria-ridden man with pale, questioning eyes, who looked about thirty-five" but was known to be older, appears. Wash and his granddaughter live in a dilapidated shack in a corner of Sutpen's Hundred, and Wash idolizes Colonel Sutpen as "a fine proud man. If God Himself was to come down and ride the natural earth, that's what He would aim to look like." Wash, shiftless and lazy, lives by

hunting, fishing, and working for Sutpen, but does all of these as little as possible. He is looked down upon by whites and Negroes alike as a harmless squatter not worthy of notice.

When Sutpen goes to fight in the Civil War, Wash stays behind and says, "I'm looking after the Kernel's place and niggers," but even the Negroes recognize this as a lie, and Wash is never permitted to enter the house of the "Kernel" until Sutpen returns and begins rebuilding his plantation with only Wash to help him.

Wash believes that the Southern gentlemen are "the gallant, the proud, the brave," and that Sutpen sits at the pinnacle of this greatness. However, when Sutpen repudiates Wash's granddaughter, who has born him a daughter rather than the son he desires, Wash's whole life is "shredded from him and shrivels away like a dried shuck thrown into the fire." He attacks and kills Sutpen with a scythe, ironically, one which Sutpen had loaned to him. This murder is an assertion of Wash's pride. He had been content with his position before, but he now realizes that had he gone to the war with Sutpen he would have recognized sooner that his idol and others like him were "bragging and evil shadows," not persons to be idolized. He also knows that had he discovered this truth sooner he would have had nothing to live for during these years since the war. With the murder he asserts his pride, but the realization that his idol was false leaves him with nothing for which to live. Rather than be lynched by other men like Sutpen, he kills his granddaughter and the baby and forces the men who come after him to kill him in self defense.

Oden Bookwright, who appears in The Hamlet and one or two short stories, is characterized through speech, actions, and one comment

which Ratliff makes about him. Most of this delineation stems from his conflicts with Snopeses.

Bookwright believes that other men are basically honest and moral, as he himself is. His moral character reveals itself when he refuses to witness the sodomy of Ike M. Snopes and his cow although all the other men do go to see it. He recognizes the fact that Flem Snopes seizes any opportunity for monetary gain; this is evident when he attempts to quiet Ratliff, who purposely talks about a proposed business deal to ensnare Flem. Ratliff later says, "He done all he could to warn me. He went as far and even further than a man can let him self go in another man's trade." But he feels that there are definite limits to what even a Snopes will do; when Mink Snopes is jailed for murder he says, "Even Flem Snopes aint going to let his own blood cousin be hung just to save money." This is his mistake, and he continually allows himself to be duped. When Flem brings the wild Texas ponies to Frenchman's Bend, he buys one; when Flem plants gold coins on the Old Frenchman's Place, he, with Ratliff and Arnstid, buys the place to search for buried treasure. However, he accepts these defeats and does not allow them to embitter him as they do Arnstid.

Stonewall Jackson Fentry appears in only one short story, "Tomorrow," yet he is clearly characterized and difficult to forget. His characterization evolves through his association with Buck Thorpe, who was first named "Jackson and Longstreet Fentry." Fentry is a farmer, "a thin man, small, with thin gray hair and that appearance of hill farmers---at once frait and worn out, yet curously imperishable," who lives on land so poor that it "had already killed his ma and his grandma both before they were forty years old."

Earlier in his life Fentry had gone to work at Quick's saw mill, and Isham realized that he was hard working and honest simply because he was a hill farmer, but for the same reason he underestimated Fentry's capacity for love. This capacity for love caused him to take in and tend a pregnant and sick woman, marry her, and carry the child home with him when she died. Although neighbors continually offered to help him raise the boy, Fentry refused their offers. They are never apart; even when Fentry worked in the field, the boy toddled along behind him as soon as he could walk.

When the boy's uncles trace him and arrive to claim him, Fentry "come straight at the oldest brother with the ax already raised and the down-stroke already started," and the boy tries to help by beating another brother on the legs with a stick of firewood. After he is stopped and the boy is carried to the wagon, Fentry sinks to the ground and whispers. "I been expecting it. I reckon that's why it taken me so by surprise." He throws away the money the men had given him and never mentions the boy again.

The boy grows up to be a "no-good, dangerous. . . swaggering bravo calling himself Buck Thorpe." Fentry appears in town once to observe the obnoxious drunkard, presumably to satisfy himself that the little boy he had known and Buck Thorpe are the same person. After watching Buck for a while, Fentry rides away without making himself known. Later, Buck is shot by Odum Bookwright, and Fentry serves on the jury. He absolutely refuses to vote with the other men to set the father free because:

It wasn't Buck Thorpe the man. He would have shot that man as quick as Bookwright did, if he had been in Bookwright's place. It was because somewhere in that debased and brutalized flesh. . . there still remained,

not the spirit maybe, but at least the memory, of that little boy, that Jackson and Longstreet Fentry, even though the man the boy had become didn't know it, and only Fentry did.

Fentry, whose Spartan existence afforded him only one opportunity for love, seized that opportunity and clung to it tenaciously. Even after the child whom he loved changes into a despicable person, he is unable to renounce him. Love, then, emerges as the determining factor of his character.

X V. K. Ratliff, or Suratt as he is named in Sartoris, weaves in and out of Sartoris, the Snopes trilogy, and several short stories. He is a combination of shrewd horse trader and homespun philosopher who acts as living newspaper and postal service for the people on his sewing machine sales route. The occupation, which causes him to travel all over the county and enables him to know all the people, achieves a dual purpose. He serves as a registering consciousness of the action of the stories; at the same time he is a peripheral participant in much of that action. He travels around the country first in a wagon with a strong mismatched team, later in a Ford pickup. Warren Beck considers him to be one of Faulkner's "best talkers. . . both in extended anecdote in monologue and in dramatic conversations."² Three examples of this ability are his vision of Flem Snopes descending to Hell and unseating the devil, the tall tale about Pat Stampler's horse trade, and his conversation with Mrs. Littlejohn concerning Ike Snopes and the cow. His character development is consistent in its presentation by all methods available to the author.

²Warren Beck, "William Faulkner's Style," (reprinted from American Prefaces, Spring, 1941, pp. 195-211), eds., Hoffman and Vickery, p. 155.

Ratliff has a "bland affable ready face," always wears a neat tieless blue shirt, "and speaks in a pleasant, lazy voice which you did not discern at once to be even more shrewd than humorous," and he sees and hears more than anyone realizes. He is shrewd, humorous, humane, and skeptical. His running commentary on the villagers and their actions characterizes both them and himself, and a large part of this characterization is drawn from actions and reactions in connection with Snopeses.

One of the humorous situations concerning Ratliff occurs in connection with the spotted horses. He flatly refuses to attend the auction of the wild ponies and goes to Mrs. Littlejohn's boarding house to go to bed. When the ponies break away, one crashes into the house and through a door.

It was a bedroom; Ratliff, in his underclothes and one sock and with the other sock in his hand and his back to the door, was leaning out the open window facing the lane, the lot. He looked back over his shoulder. For an instant he and the horse glared at one another. Then he sprang through the window as the horse backed out of the room. When he comes around the house, sock still in hand, and starts up the front steps, the horse whirls past him again. The next day someone wonders what that horse thought Ratliff was, and Ratliff replies, "I don't know. . . but if he saw just half as many of me as I saw of him, he was sholy surrounded."

His humane qualities are evident in his treatment of Ike Snopes and also in his treatment of Buron Snopes' half-breed children. To Mrs. Littlejohn he gives the money he makes from out-maneuvering Flem in a business deal to be used for Ike, but when the men of the village watch the unnatural relations of the boy and cow, Ratliff conceives of a way to have the Snopeses themselves eliminate the cow. He realizes

that Ike has nothing else except the cow, but he can stop the sodomy because, as he puts it, "he is stronger than Ike. Not righter. Not any better, maybe. But just stronger." His disgust is not for Ike, who knows no right or wrong, but for the Snopeses who exploit the boy's idiocy and the men who watch it. When Byron's savage, unmanageable children are sent home, only Ratliff thinks of going to the railroad station to take them food, food that children like, for the trip. Also, it is he who is able to console and fortify Gavin Stevens at the times when he loses faith in humanity.

That he is shrewd is evident. He makes his living by selling and trading among people who have little money to spend and who take pride in their ability to trade for profit. He manages to outwit Snopeses several times, which no one else in Frenchman's Bend does. Also, his ability to understand people enables him to observe and synthesize. Examples of this are his recognition of the similarity between Will Varner and Flem Snopes, his realization of what Flem's final goal is long before anyone else. However, with all these excellent traits, Ratliff is not immune to human failings. After the Snopes-Houston trial he lapses into ironic mockery of I. O. Snopes' continual misquoting of adages. After the Snopes-Armstid trial he explodes into almost savage blustering when Bookwright asks if he gave Mrs. Armstid her five dollars back. Finally, he is duped by Flem in the gold salting of the Old Frenchman's place, and at times the reader must be careful to distinguish between his relation of facts and his imaginative stories. Yet in the later two books there are no instances of his being so emotionally involved in the actions of other people that he himself acts irrationally. He continues to "watch Snopeses" and to foil them

whenever possible, and his sane and reflective comments continue to aid the reader in evaluation of other characters and events.

Some of the characters discussed in this chapter remain constant in their various appearances, while others change. Seemingly, when the situation of the story requires different qualities of the character, he is changed. Examples of this are the changes in the McCallum family and in Henry Armstid. At times these changes appear to be credible; however, at other times they are contradictory. The changes in the McCallum family are credible, but Henry Armstid's change is contradictory. Quite often, after the contradictory changes, the character may be more easily recognized as a part of Faulkner's philosophy which he stated in the Nobel Prize Award speech, but at the same time, the character may lose part of his individuality. This may also be seen in the changes in Flem Snopes and Eula Varner Snopes.

In the following chapter I shall discuss these characters, with the Varners, the Snopeses, and the Bundrens, in a final evaluation.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

An immediately recognizable feature of Faulkner's handling of the poor white characters is his versatility in narrative form, in characterization, in variety of characters, and in comedy. Poor white characters appear in short stories, novelettes, and novels, the handling of which ranges from the stream of consciousness technique in As I Lay Dying to the episodic plot form of The Hamlet.

Faulkner utilizes all available methods of characterization. Direct author's comment, comments by other characters, and actions (habitual, deliberate, and impulsive), speech, and thoughts of the character himself are all employed. All these methods are at times used for a single character, as with Cash Bundren; another character may be presented through fewer methods, as with Odum Bookwright. Many of these characters emerge as fully rounded, complex creations; i.e., Ratliff, Darl Bundren, Mink Snopes, Jody Varner; however, a few remain flat or somewhat distorted; i.e., Eula Varner, Henry Armstid, Lee McCallum.

The wide range of characters is an amazing achievement. In one story, As I Lay Dying, there appears a variety of individuals: Anse is comic; Addie is serious, and each child is a different combination of the parents. Other characters, such as most of the Snopeses, are primarily caricatures rather than life-like creations. Cora Tull is

the self-righteous Christian, while Whitfield is the hypocritical Christian, and Mrs. Grier is the practicing Christian. Will Varner is a self-made monarch, and Ab Snopes is a struggling, bitter tenant. Flen Snopes is both comic and frightening; Mrs. Armstid is pitiful. The younger Grier boy suggests all little boys and still has distinguishing personal characteristics. Almost every type of person can be found in the complete character listing.

One feature which deserves particular attention is the freer play of comedy. Although some comedy appears in almost all of Faulkner's work, nowhere is it so profuse and unlimited. Quite often this comedy aids in characterization, and examples are numerous. Pappy McCallum's foibles are viewed sympathetically by his family and by the author. The scene in the Varner's house when Eula's pregnancy is discovered is farcical and provides good insight into each person's character. The absurdity of Res Grier's reaction to being outwitted by a neighbor provides comedy and also gives indications of his personality. Ratliff furnishes insight into the characters of Will Varner, Flen Snopes, and himself with his pun, "Will Varner looks like he is fixing to snopes forever. Or Varner will Snopes forever." Satire is the vehicle for a large part of the depiction of the Snopeses and the people who follow their code of business ethics. The comedy almost always is congruous with the character, as in the use of wit only for those who would be more likely to use it, such as Rafe McCallum and Ratliff.

Frontier humor is the one type of comedy peculiar to this group. Tales reminiscent of A. E. Longstreet, George Washington Harris, and Mark Twain appear as Faulkner employs the tall tale, dialect, understatement, hyperbole, trick situations, Aesopian animal humor, and

obscenity in this native American idiom. Chief exponent of the tall tale is Ratliff, who, with an absolutely bland and impenetrable face, can spin yarns about horse traders, goat farmers, and barn burners, and the entire novelette, Spotted Horses, could be viewed as an extended tall tale. An extensive study of the dialect of Faulkner's characters has not been made; however, Mary Cooper Robb says that it is faithful to the vicinity.¹ The Snopeses' names are an example of Aesopian animal humor: Flem, frog and snake; I. O., weasle; Lump, dog; Saint Elmo, goat; and so forth. Ratliff's relation of the situation involving Clarence Snopes and the dog thicket employs dialect, understatement, and obscenity. The story of Ike and his cow is supposedly based on an old politician's joke but acquires greater significance in the novel as a contrast with the inhumane Flem.² Hyperbole is evident in Jody Varner's statement that the Snopeses will eat everything in sight. Perhaps the best example of all these is Ratliff's tall tale about the horse trade between Ab Snopes and Pat Stamper. All these things reflect the ideas, ambitions, faults, and interests of the people.

One type of comedy which Faulkner uses, the grotesque, disturbs many critics. The best examples of it are As I Lay Dying, Spotted Horses, and the Snopeses. This type quite often is coupled with or is an extension of frontier humor in which humor and psychological horror are combined to produce a symbol. In As I Lay Dying, the actions of the Bundren family are quite serious to the family members themselves; to other people they are funny or repugnant. Spotted Horses is based

¹Robb, p. 41.

²Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 179.

on a tall tale, and the action, although humorous on the surface, has deeper significance. It symbolizes Flem Snopes' complete ascendancy over the majority of the people of Frenchman's Bend and the inadequacy of the law. The descent of the Snopeses on Frenchman's Bend may be compared with the swarming of bees or the attack of a hungry wolf pack; they are referred to as a "tribe" rather than a clan. Although their actions are often humorous, the implications are horrible.

This combination of humor and horror is at times grotesque, at times macabre, and one might protest that the horror negates the humor. However, the technique seems justifiable on several main points. First, the situations in which people are involved and which they themselves regard with utmost seriousness quite often do contain humorous implications for those who can view the scenes with detachment. Second, there are instances in which a humorous method is the best for presentation of truth. Many readers can accept truth more readily if it is presented with an element of humor. Also, most people remember humorous statements better than bare facts. However, this combination of humor and horror demands intelligent reading; if one or the other of the two elements is missed, the deeper significance will be lost.

Faulkner's poor white characters must be divided into two socio-economic groups, the independent farmers and the tenant farmers. Within these two groups, as within most such groups, there are further divisions; in this case they are based on the clans. The Varners are the wealthiest and, as chief family of the county, dictate to the others in matters of economics, church, school, and politics. Pappy McCallum and his boys are completely independent and remain aloof from contact with outsiders. A significant point is that only these two families

have Negro servants; however, while the Negroes actually serve the McCallums, Mrs. Varner prefers to do her own work, and the servants are in the way. The Tulls and Beckwrights fall into the middle group; the Griens are lower on the scale, and the Bundrens and Fentrys form a part of the lowest independent group. These people settled the hill land or took over the plantations of ruined dynasts such as the Frenchman, Compson, and Sutpen, who had himself come from their ranks. Only among the richest of them is there any pretense of copying the fading aristocracy--the Negro servants of the Varners and the McCallums, Jody Varner's insistence that Eula be "a lady." Most of them are honest, hard working, and self-sufficient.

The Snopeses, the Armstids, and Wash Jones constitute a part of the lowest class, the tenant farmers. Day-to-day existence is their major concern, but their reactions to this struggle vary. Wash Jones, content to live on a rich man's generosity, rebels fiercely after discovering that his views of the aristocracy are all false. Henry Armstid, driven by extreme poverty, values ownership so highly that he willingly spends his family's last five dollars to buy a wild horse. Ab Snopes spends the whole of his mature life harshly denouncing the society which he feels to be responsible for his poverty. Most of these people are poor, ignorant, and resentful toward those who are "more fortunate" than they. They hate the Negroes for obvious reasons. Before the Civil War many slaves were better cared for than these people could care for themselves, and the Negroes looked down upon them as "white trash." Then, after the war, the freed Negroes provided direct competition in the way of cheap labor and more poor farmers. An example of this attitude is Mink Snopes' comment after he has been jailed for murder, "Are they

going to feed them niggers before they do a white man?" Some of them adopt subservient attitudes when dealing with richer people because it is often more profitable, but others cling tenaciously to some form of pride; examples of this are the murders committed by Wash and Mink and the numerous barns burned by Ab. The worst result of this poverty is the dehumanized Flem Snopes, who devotes himself completely to the attainment of wealth and power, letting nothing stand in his way.

The tenants and the independents have many common characteristics. The Civil War plays a smaller part in their memories than in those of either of the two other major groups. They did not receive their freedom, as did the Negroes; nor did they create glorious legends or lose an established way of life, as did the aristocrats. However, they did gain through the war. As the old dynasties crumbled, these people rose in wealth and station. Although they still respected the old social order to a certain extent, they adopted their own code of ethics, and each man rose according to his ability. This is not to say that they did not own land or farm before the war, but that they had far better chances for advancement. As for religion, politics, and families, they are "Protestants and Democrats and prolific." They live primarily by farming, trading, and the resultant occupations, and they respect the man who works hard and the man who can outsmart others. This can best be seen in Ratliff's tall tale about the horse trade. They help their neighbors but are suspicious of outsiders. The first bond which they recognize is that of blood kinship, and each clan defends its own interests first. The reasons for this strong bond, however, seem to differ between the two. Mrs. Grier best states the independents' view, "You ain't rich and the rest of the world outside of Frenchman's Bend

never heard of you. But your blood is good as any blood anywhere, and don't you never forget it." Tenant Ab Snopes says, "You got to learn to stick to your own blood or you ain't going to have any blood to stick to you." The first denotes pride; the second shows the desire for self-preservation.

The clan perpetuates the order of society. Based on it are the morals and the social institutions--economy, religion, and law. This closeness of the clans is shown repeatedly: Pappy McCallum stamps his children with physical likeness; Addie Bundren imposes co-operation on her family after her death; Ab Snopes tolerates no change from family policy. The only clan to openly violate this code is the later Snopes tribe. Faulkner does not question the fact that order is a necessary outcome of community living, but he points out the evils which can result from blind acceptance of that order. If the clan forces a member to accept its philosophy, rules, and situation without question or deviation, that person will suffer. Two who openly rebel are Darl Bundren and Colonel Sartoris Snopes; feelings of rebellion are suggested in the manner of Lee McCallum. In the same way, if society forces unquestioning allegiance, first the person who rebels, but eventually all society, suffers. People must constantly watch, evaluate, and improve themselves and their society in order to insure perpetuation. However, if that society is based on false ideals, it will either be destroyed or destroy itself. The Southern aristocracy was destroyed because of the rigid class system based on slavery which was a necessary part of its existence. Snopesism destroyed itself because it was based on the false principles of wealth and power. In a further sense, this vigilance toward society and its institutions must be

practiced today. One of Faulkner's main criticisms of modern society is best stated by Marshal Combault,

. . . we done got into the habit of confusing the situations with the folks. . . We done invented ourselves so many alphabets and rules and recipes that we can't see anything else; if what we see can't be fitted to an alphabet or a rule, we are lost.

In other words, we are too involved in the letter of our laws and social institutions to see what they originally meant or why they were set up. As new situations arise, we can only depend on past experience as a guide, but as past experience indicates, flexibility must be allowed. All people and experiences cannot be neatly catalogued and disposed of. Another point is that people concern themselves too much with money and forget the essential truths--"love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice." Also, they sometimes ignore nature, which can teach these truths. Some of Faulkner's most beautiful and moving passages depict nature or man in relationship to nature.

In his Nobel Prize Award Speech, Faulkner says that man is "immortal" and "will prevail. . . because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance." What part do the poor white characters play in this picture? The past aristocracy doomed itself, and the remaining descendants possess few of the qualities necessary for prevailing. The Negroes possess many good qualities, particularly endurance, but they have been subjugated and discriminated against for too long to be a positive power soon. The Indians have practically disappeared from the Yoknapatawpha scene. This leaves the townspeople, about whom there is too little critical material on which to base judgment, and the poor whites. Most of the tenant farmers are too fully engaged in the struggle for existence to be a positive power,

but many of the independent farmers do possess spirits "capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance." It would seem that Faulkner places the greatest measure of his faith in these people.

Faulkner's philosophy reminds one of Jefferson's theory of democracy. Faulkner believes in a counter-balance of power in which the person scrutinizes himself and the whole society and in which absolute power is not placed in the hands of one person or group. He does not deny that a society will be stratified, but he suggests that a natural stratification in which the foremost or controlling group ascends by merit is best. He says that rules and regulations should be for the benefit of the people, not for restricting them, and that the fewest set rules are best. He cites instances in which majority, or mob, rule is unjust, but he also gives examples of just group decisions. Violence, destruction, and injustice result largely from ignorance and prejudice, which can be modified by enlightened, humanitarian thinking. Both the title and the conclusion of the short story, "Shall Not Perish," reveal a positive faith in man and in America, as do many other works. Those critics who label Faulkner as a member of the cult of cruelty, a pessimist, or a sensationalist surely cannot have read much more than Sanctuary. There are evil, violence, and greed in Faulkner's world, but in his later work he has greatly tempered these conditions with comedy and outweighed them with the qualities of "compassion and sacrifice and endurance." Man "will prevail."

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Campbell, Harry M. and Ruel E. Foster. William Faulkner: A Critical Appraisal. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951.
- Couglan, Robert. The Private World of William Faulkner. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953.
- Cowley, Malcolm. "Flem Snopes Gets His Come-Uppance." The New York Times Book Review, LXIV (November 15, 1959), 1-18.
- Faulkner, William. The Portable Faulkner. Ed., Malcolm Cowley. New York: The Viking Press, 1946.
- Frohock, William M. The Novel of Violence in America. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1959, pp. 144-165.
- Geismar, Maxwell. Writers in Crisis. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942, pp. 141-84.
- Gordon, Caroline. "Notes on Faulkner and Flaubert." Hudson Review, I (Summer, 1948), 222-31.
- Greet, T. Y. "The Theme and Structure of Faulkner's The Hamlet." LXX (September, 1957), 775-90.
- Gwynn, Fredrick L. and Joseph L. Blotner, ed. Faulkner in the University. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959.
- Hicks, Granville. "The Last of the Snopeses." Saturday Review, XLIII (November 14, 1959), 20-21.
- Hoffman, Fredrick J. and Olga W. Vickery, ed. William Faulkner, Two Decades of Criticism. East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1954.
- Hopkins, Viola. "William Faulkner's The Hamlet: A Study in Meaning and Form." Accent, XV (Spring, 1955), 125-44.
- Howe, Irving. "Faulkner: End of a Road." The New Republic, CIVI (December 7, 1959), 17-21.
- _____. William Faulkner: A Critical Study. New York: Random House, 1952.
- Kazin, Alfred. On Native Grounds. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942.

- Kohler, Dayton. "William Faulkner and the Social Conscience." The English Journal, XXXVIII (December, 1949), 545-53.
- Lytle, Andrew. "The Town: Helen's Last Stand." Sewanee Review, LXV (July-September, 1957), 475-84.
- Malin, Irving. William Faulkner, an Interpretation. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957.
- McCole, Camille J. "The Nightmarish Literature of William Faulkner." The Catholic World, CXLII (August, 1935), 576-83.
- Meriwether, James B. "The Snopes Revisited." Saturday Review, XL (April 27, 1957), pp. 12-13.
- Miner, Ward L. The World of William Faulkner. Durham: Duke University Press, 1952.
- O'Connor, William Van. The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954.
- Robb, Mary Cooper. William Faulkner: An Estimation of his Contribution to the American Novel. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1957.
- Thompson, Alan R. "The Cult of Cruelty." The Bookman, LXXIV (April, 1932), 477-487.
- Vickery, Olga W. The Novels of William Faulkner. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1959.
- Warren, Robert Penn. "William Faulkner." Forms of Modern Fiction. ed., William Van O'Connor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FAULKNER'S WORKS

- Faulkner, William. Absalom, Absalom! Modern Library ed. New York: Random House, 1951.
- . Collected Stories. 2nd ed. New York: Random House, 1950.
- . Doctor Martino and Other Stories. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Hass, Inc., 1934.
- . The Faulkner Reader. New York: Random House, 1946.
- . The Hamlet. 3rd ed. Modern Library. New York: Random House, 1940.
- . Intruder in the Dust. 7th ed. Signet. New York: Random House, 1958.
- . Knight's Gambit. 3rd ed. Signet. New York: Random House, 1956.
- . Light in August. Rahway, New Jersey: Quinn and Boden, 1932.
- . The Mansion. New York: Random House, 1959.
- . Sanctuary. Modern Library ed. New York: Random House, 1932.
- . Sartoris. 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951.
- . The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying. Modern Library ed. New York: Random House, 1946.
- . Spotted Horses, Old Man, The Bear. 2nd ed. Modern Library, New York: Random House, 1939.
- . These Thirteen. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1931.
- . The Town. New York: Random House, 1957.
- . The Unvanquished. Signet ed. New York: Random House, 1952.

VITA

Nancy Duke Knox

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Thesis: A STUDY OF WILLIAM FAULKNER'S POOR WHITE CHARACTERS

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, October 11, 1935,
the daughter of Frank W. and Helen Duke.

Education: Attended grade school and high school in
Preston; graduated from Preston High School in May,
1954; graduated from William Woods College in May,
1956; received the Bachelor of Arts degree from
Northeastern State College, with a major in English,
in January, 1957; completed requirements for the
Master of Arts degree in August, 1960.

Professional Experience: Taught seventh grade English and
speech in Hobbs, New Mexico, in 1957; taught seventh
grade English and ninth grade speech in Midland, Texas,
in 1957-1958; taught Freshman Composition, as a graduate
assistant, at Oklahoma State University, in 1958-1959,
1959-1960.