

AN EMERGING MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOUTHERN LITERATURE
IN TWAIN, FAULKNER, WARREN, AND MCCULLERS

286A

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TO
MY MOTHER AND FATHER

PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to present an emerging moral consciousness in the white Southerner by examining selected books of Mark Twain, William Faulkner, Robert P. Warren, and Carson McCullers--four Southern authors who follow the dictates of the heart; these authors illustrate that their instrument for self-awareness in each novel is a Negro. This study shows a progression of moral knowledge and brotherhood between the races by revealing different types of Southerners in conflict with their environment. The selected works--The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Pudd'nhead Wilson, Go Down, Moses, Band of Angels, and Clock Without Hands--depict a South that shows some hope of casting off the tyranny of its heritage and a South that is dying and can never be again.

I undertook this study in an attempt to find some meaning in the struggles between whites and Negroes in Southern America. I have tried to present with compassion and understanding the traditional reasons that cause many conflicts and to show the emergence of a new moral feeling in Southern white society. Because of this study, I have higher hopes for the South, since these authors in my study reflect a feeling of brotherhood and humanity.

I would very much like to express my appreciation to Miss Gertrude Haury, Professor Jeanette Bigge, Professor J. T. Sandefur and Professor June Morgan for their encouraging remarks on my work, to Professor Charles E. Walton, the second reader of my thesis, for his kind advice and his extremely helpful and constructive criticism, and to Professor Green D. Wyrick, director of my study, for his most helpful suggestions, faith, and genuine interest in the preparation of my thesis.

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CHAPTER I

TWAIN'S STATEMENT OF THE THEME OF MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS:

HUCK FINN AND PUDDIN' HEAD WILSON

Concerning her book, The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, Carson McCullers, a Southern author, advances a theme of "the emerging conscience" in Southern Literature:

There was something of the conscience of the South in the theme and characters of the book. All of us seek a time and a way to communicate something of the sense of loneliness and solitude that is in us--the human heart is a lonely hunter--but the search of us Southerners is more anguished. There is a special guilt in us, a seeking for something had--and lost. It is a consciousness of guilt not fully knowable, or communicable. Southerners are the more lonely and spiritually estranged, I think, because we have lived so long in an artificial social system that we insisted was natural and right and just when all along we knew it wasn't.

The fact that we bolstered it with laws and developed a secular liturgy and sacraments for it is evidence of how little we believe our own deceptions.¹

The heart has its reasons, as Pascal says, but many times the heart is unaware of its reasons.² The purpose of this study is to look at the "truth" that comes from the heart in conflict with itself in four Southern authors. The paper presents a progressive examination of the

¹Quoted in Ralph McGill's, The South and the Southerner, p. 218.

²Quoted in John Bartlett, Familiar Quotations, p. 272.

Southern way of life by Mark Twain, William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, and Carson McCullers. All are "traditional" writers in the sense as defined by T. S. Eliot. The "traditional" sense they use

. . . is what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity. It involves . . . the timeless as well as of the temporal together. It cannot be interited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. Tradition is more than following the ways of the preceding generation.³

These selected authors encompass the time span which extends from the Civil War to the present day, providing one with a representative picture of the South since the Civil War in the reflection of a certain "consciousness" about the land and the people, especially about the Negro. Geographically, although these four authors are from the South, they write in general terms of the American way of life. Nevertheless, a study of Twain, Faulkner, Warren, and McCullers reveals an emerging consciousness in Southern literature, since all have been influenced by their heritage, by the complex setting of universal humanity, and by cultural struggle.

Rubin thinks that it is the Southerner's destiny to be involved in his region and to be held by its deceit.⁴

³T. S. Eliot, The Sacred Wood, pp. 48-49.

⁴Louis Rubin, Southern Renaissance, p. 99.

Perhaps, the Southerner does not believe in its myths. Perhaps, the pain and the strict formula based on race has offended him. Perhaps, he has worried about the Negro and the spiritual and material welfare of his own people, but the white Southerner is a part of the Civil War, Negro-dominated past. Like most people, he has been influenced by his past and his cultural environment. Some sensitive Southerners are embarrassed when they suddenly realize that they have accepted a form of community life which is, in truth, repulsive to them. By this same means, the Southern author is also made conscious of his society and often comes in conflict with it. He is as an author, concerned with the meaning of events, legends, undying superstitions, and prejudices of his people. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that each Southern author has something to say about the Negro and the various white social classes in his region.

To speak of the South today is to speak of the Negro. It seems that the role of the Negro in Southern life will become a symbol of the change that is taking place in the South. Since the Civil War, there has been a change--a slow change at first--but, nevertheless, a change in the attitudes of the people in the South. Many Southerners have tried to maintain a pre-Civil War

status. These individuals seeking to hold onto a past social structure are destined to fail. Some Southerners are fighting a losing battle, because their present campaign for segregation must also pass with those features of life which include the close knit rural community and small town society. The Southern system has as its focus the Negro, who is, supposedly, a member of an inferior race. It holds that he is to cut wood, carry water, and wait on tables. At the present time, however, this "inferior race" has decided that there should be some new arrangements. Wherever the Southern society has been dependent upon the services of this race, there will now have to be established a new order of society, because today the Negro race demands full rights and privileges of belonging to the American society, with a status, not of fixed inferiority, but of equal participation and reward to the degree that its individual members have the ability to achieve.⁵ Consequently, it is clear that segregation is a form of estrangement; the white Southerner has withdrawn from the Negroes, who are very close to him, and these Negroes want the Southern institutions to conform to those of open society. Life in

⁵Louis Rubin (ed.), Modern Southern Literature in Its Cultural Setting, p. 16.

separate compartments has demonstrated itself to be an explosive and tragic situation. Guilt and self-accusation about the Negro comprise the Southern conscience. This present study, therefore, proposes to show the emergence of a new consciousness.

The first author to accept this moral challenge is Mark Twain. He is the first in this investigation to observe the Negro and become morally aware of the Negro as a person, as an analysis of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Puddin'head Wilson will demonstrate. After writing about a minor Negro character in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Twain changes his attitude toward the Negro in his investigation of a slave society. For example, in "The Facts Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut," he decided to destroy his conscience. To him, this conscience ". . . was something moral, a thing of training or whatever one's mother, Bible, comrades, laws, or heredity had made it."⁶ Twain's "Carnival" is a dream story that has a conflict between basic internal goodness of will and conscience. He destroys his conscience in this battle; thus, he considers himself freed from the conventions of society and begins life anew. He shows that one's moral consciousness is achieved

⁶Kenneth Lynn, Mark Twain, p. 203.

by defeating one's environmentally trained conscience. In The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Twain reveals his evolving pattern of moral consciousness and provides one with a picture of the South in the 1840's. He succinctly reveals the changing attitude in his society, for he is an idealist of the most uncompromising sort who stands out as a lover of justice, mercy, tolerance, kindness, honesty, and democratic living. The least violation of these qualities provokes his contempt.⁷

Twain reveals in his works the regional conditions and circumstances that make possible lynchings, feuds, and slavery. He is, at all times, conscious of the Negro. In one of his unpublished papers, Twain says, "We used to own our brother human beings, and we used to buy them and sell them, lash them, thrash them, break their piteous hearts--and we ought to be ashamed of ourselves."⁸ His The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn dramatizes the truth of moral passion; the book deals pointedly with the depravity in man and his society. Twain makes the book true to ". . . his own unusually sensitive, deeply according,

⁷John Macy, American Writers on American Literature, p. 276.

⁸Louis J. Budd, Mark Twain, p. 94.

and highly intelligent memory."⁹ Twain's drama of moral consciousness is found within the characters of the novel. Huck Finn, a realist, is the main character. From his honest revelations along the river, Huck finds a moral consciousness. Twain shows a range of society from "poor white" Pap Finn to the cultured and aristocratic Grangerfords in the passage of Huck from youth to complete moral maturity or moral consciousness. Huck Finn, a young adolescent, tells his tale of being caught between his environmentally trained conscience and his heart which intuitively convinces him that what he knows is the right action. Here, Twain thinks that man is nothing but a creature of his own environment. Huck's struggle is between internal goodness and the law of his environment, and what motivates Huck Finn as a person is Twain's own sense of decency and his hatred of hypocrisy, slavery, and petty tyranny.¹⁰

Twain tells the story of Huck Finn on three levels. On one level, it is the story of Huck Finn and Jim and how they run away to freedom. On the second level, it is a record of the society along the river. And on the

⁹Henry S. Canby, Turn West, Turn East, p. 133.

¹⁰Willard Throp, The American Writer and the European Tradition. eds. Margaret Denny and William Gilman. (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1950), p. 103.

third level, it shows the emerging consciousness of Huck Finn.¹¹

On the first level, then, in which Twain relates the story of Huck and Jim, one is made aware of this problem in two distinct ways: first, in his development and presentation of the relationship which exists between Huck and Jim; and secondly, in his delineation of Huck's concept of society which eventually causes Huck to decide in favor of following the dictates of his heart.

In presenting the story of Huck and Jim, Twain begins by introducing the adopted rebel, Huck Finn, the poor, ignorant, unfed, unwashed boy with a heart of intense richness. "His liberties were totally unrestricted. He was the only really independent person--boy or man--in the community."¹² Similarly, Jim is also outside of society, since he is a slave and an escaped one at that. Both Huck and Jim are runaways; both are seeking freedom. Freedom to Huck and Jim means being free or, apart from society; they are not seeking a type of salvation to ease the pains of guilt and sin. Their salvation is a freedom from all social restrictions. Huck is running

¹¹Henry Smith, Mark Twain, p. 84.

¹²Charles Neider (ed.), The Autobiography of Mark Twain, p. 68.

away from his evil father and the "civilizing" of Miss Watson, or the respectability of the general routine. Jim is running away from actual slavery. Twain, next, creates a scene in which he presents this relationship in a more profound way. After faking his death, Huck runs away to Jackson's Island, and Jim. Huck is reluctant to return to Miss Watson's place and be "civilized," and he does not want to be the social outcast with Pap. To the symbolical as well as the dramatic action of the novel, Huck has literally and figuratively cut himself off from parental and social restrictions. Now, Huck has no father or society, but by joining him with Jim, Twain shows that Huck acquires a father and a society. For a while, Huck and Jim are very happy on the island. They eat and sleep together; in Twain's symbolism, they compose a human society. Then, Huck and Jim face their first crisis when Huck disguises himself, leaves the island to obtain the news, and finds that some men are coming to the island to apprehend Jim. Huck, then, hastens to the island, and Twain has him show the first signs of moral consciousness as he says, "Git up and hump yourself, Jim. There ain't a moment to lose. They're after us!"¹³ To a small extent, as Twain delineates it in

¹³Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, p. 95.

this passage, the society which has fostered Huck is beginning to lose its influence upon him. When Huck returns to the island, he refers to "us," including himself in Jim's predicament. Twain has made it clear that the men are not after Huck, for everyone now thinks that he is dead. Consequently, Huck's identification with Jim's flight to freedom comes from the goodness within Huck's heart. Twain establishes, here, a firm bond between Huck and Jim, and Huck is not able to turn Jim in to the slave hunters. He is beginning to identify himself with basic qualities of goodness when he says, "People would call me a low down abolitionist and despise me for keeping mum--but that don't make no difference. I ain't agoing to tell."¹⁴

It is interesting for one to learn that Twain allows Huck to find his identity, in what would have been Chapter XVI in the novel, in a story that is discovered in the private collection of the unprinted papers of Mark Twain.¹⁵ This chapter emphasizes the bond between Huck and Jim. It, also, illustrates the development of consciousness in Huck which is emphasized again later in the novel. Twain says that he had "thrown" the episode into Life on the Mississippi, as he did not know when

¹⁴Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁵Lynn, op. cit., p. 212.

he would finish The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.¹⁶ He starts the episode immediately after Huck and Jim's terrible experience of getting lost in the fog. They decide to find where they are by having Huck swim to a raft. He climbs aboard without being heard. He listens to their boasting, their roaring songs, and the fantastic tale of Dick Allbright and the mysterious barrel that follows him everywhere he goes. In the story, a captain opens the barrel that has been following Dick Allbright; in the barrel, he finds a dead, naked baby. The baby is Charles William Allbright, the son of Dick Allbright. The captain explains the situation as follows:

Yes, Dick said he used to live up at the head of this bend, and one night he choked his child, which was crying, not intending to kill it--which was probably a lie--and then he was scared and buried it in a bar'l before his wife got home, and off he went, and struck the northern trail and went to rafting; and this was the third year that the bar'l has chased him.¹⁷

Twain shows that Huck is very frightened by this tale, and reveals his involvement in it when the men eventually find him. He lies and tells the men that his name is "Charles William Allbright." (Huck is exactly like Charles; both of them are dead as far as society is concerned. Having died, both boys come alive in the turbulent

¹⁶Loc. cit.

¹⁷Loc. cit.

Mississippi.) Twain's rebirth, so to speak, of Huck upon the river reminds one of the story of Moses, who was also placed upon a raft in a river. The analogy to the tale of Moses is interesting, for it is the drama of a people in bondage who are striving to be free. At the bottom of Twain's parable, however, one finds a brighter outlook. One is informed that Charles William Allbright, having lost his father, has taken to the river in search of him. In transferring the name of Charles Allbright to Huck Finn, Twain gives to Huck the role of looking for a father. Huck's quest for a father is also his own quest to find himself, for once he finds his father, he discovers his own true identity within his heart. In Huck's search for identity, then, rests Twain's resolution of the struggle between Huck's conscience and the impulses from his kind heart which tells him what should be done with Jim.¹⁸ The theme of Twain's novel, then, that of the moral consciousness of Huck and the liberation of Jim, depends finally on Huck's search for a father.¹⁹

Twain's next step in reaching a moral consciousness through Huck and Jim is shown in Chapter XV. Here, one discovers Huck and Jim when they have been separated by the fog. When Huck, finally, gets back to the raft,

¹⁸Lynn, op. cit., p. 213.

¹⁹Loc. cit.

he finds that Jim is asleep. He decides to play a joke on Jim and wakes him. Jim is very happy to see that he has returned, but Huck tells Jim that he has not been any place and that Jim has been dreaming. Jim goes along with Huck's explanation and tries to interpret the dream for Huck. When he reaches the account of the leaves and trash that the raft has picked up in the fog, he says:

What do dey stan' for? I's gwyne to tell you. When I got all wore out wid work, end wid de callin' for you, en went to sleep, my heart waz mos' broke bekase you wuz los; en I didn't k'yer no' mo' what became er me en de raf. En when I wake up and find you back ag'in all safe en soun', de tears come, en I could of got down on my knees en kiss yo' foot, I'se so thankful. All you wuz thinkin' bout was how you make a fool of old Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is trash; en trash is what people is that puts dirt on de head er der fren's en makes 'em ashamed.²⁰

Then, Jim gets up and walks away, leaving Huck feeling guilty. He says, ". . . I could almost kiss his foot to get him to take it back. It was almost fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger; but I done it, and I warn't ever sorry either."²¹

Twain's depiction of this scene enables Huck to put the conventions of his old society farther behind him with this last statement. Jim, now, has become like a parent to Huck. Twain had introduced this theme of the search for a father as early in the novel as Chapter V, when

²⁰Twain, op. cit., p. 126.

²¹Loc. cit.

he has Judge Thatcher and the Widow Douglas go to court to obtain legal authority to remove Huck from Pap. Twain must have pondered the question, who should have Huck? Should it be these "respectable" aristocrats or Huck's violent, drunken father? Twain knew that a human soul was at stake, and that the decision would call for the wisdom of Solomon. Of course, as one recalls, in the Chapter about Solomon, a true parent is picked because of his love for his child. One sees instantly that the Widow Douglas and Pap would not qualify in Twain's concept of the situation. Furthermore, Twain has Jim pretend to be Solomon as he goes through the story. Huck finds that Jim is very logical, as was Solomon in the Biblical tale, and cannot be persuaded that his logic is wrong. However, Jim's decision is based on the principles of love; he cannot see the logic in Solomon's story. Twain is showing that Huck is seeking truth and the voice of parental love, and for Huck, Jim's voice is the voice of parental love. Twain, also, reveals that Jim's relationship to Huck is fatherly in the sense that Jim is constantly correcting and warning the boy, but he qualifies even more as Huck's father by the kind of love he gives to him. Huck has said earlier that it is awful being so "dreadful lonsome;" he admits that he wants to be loved. At first, Huck is amused and exasperated by Jim's

stupidity, but he gradually becomes aware of the fact that Jim is "most always right" about things which really make a difference, about the things of natural importance in their simple life together.

Twain brings complexity and depth to Huck and Jim's relationship as they travel down the river in one of the noblest and humblest of all odysseys. When they are almost to Cairo, Illinois, the place which means freedom for Jim, Twain shows that Huck is still bothered by his conscience about Jim, and, as they come closer and closer to Cairo, Huck speaks:

Jim said it made him all over trembly and feverish to be so close to freedom. Well, I can tell you, it made me all over trembly and feverish, too, to hear him, because I begun to get it through my head that he was most free--and who was to blame for it? Why, me? I couldn't get that out of my conscience, no how nor no way. It got to troubling me so I couldn't rest; I couldn't stay still in one place. It hadn't ever come home to me before, what this thing was that I was doing. I tried to make out to myself that I warn't to blame, because I didn't run Jim off from his rightful owner; what did Miss Watson do to you that you could treat her so mean? Why, she tried to be good to you every way she knowed how. That's what she done.²²

Clearly, Twain shows that Huck does not know what to do in this moral dilemma confronting him. Huck's conflict arises over whether he should be true to himself or to the attitudes bred within him by social conformity. But

²²Ibid., p. 129.

Huck does at last comprehend his dilemma. Remembering Miss Watson, he outlines his argument in behalf of turning Jim in. The memory and influence of Miss Watson are strong, and Huck decides to report Jim. In an attempt to distract Jim, he says that he is going to see if the town, close by, is Cairo. As he paddles off, Jim says:

Poty soon I'll be a-shout'n for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts o' Huck; I's a free man, en I couldn't ever ben free ef it hadn't ben for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck; You's de bes' fren' ole Jim's got now.²³

Enroute, Huck meets two men who are hunting runaway slaves and learns that they are going to board the raft to look for escaped slaves. Here, Huck discovers that he is unable to turn Jim in to the authorities. He infers that his family on the raft has smallpox and thereby keeps the slave hunters from searching the raft and finding Jim. Perhaps, shallow people are the target of Twain's satire in this scene with the slave hunters, for the men immediately give Huck some money to help him with his "sick" family, putting it on a board and leaving it for him. After they hear about the smallpox, they do not want to pull the raft ashore or even to come near it. Instead, they even tell Huck how to dupe the next people who come along into helping him. Huck returns

²³Ibid., p. 130.

to Jim, and as they proceed down the river, the bond between them grows stronger. Huck says, "Jim, this is nice. I would not want to be nowhere else but here. Pass me along another hunk of fish and some hot corn-bread."²⁴ Clearly, the friendship between these two characters is developing into an excellent relationship.

Twain shows that the longer that Jim and Huck are together, the more that they learn about each other. For example, Huck tells the reader about the kindness that is in Jim. He illustrates this kindness by telling that once when it was his turn to stand watch, he went to sleep, ". . . and Jim didn't call him when it was his turn."²⁵ As Huck points out the goodness in Jim, Twain shows that Huck has not completely outgrown his conscience nor has he found himself. While Twain continues this revelation of Huck's and Jim's social consciousness elsewhere in the relationship in the novel, these examples herein cited are perhaps sufficient enough to establish Twain's concept of this theme. Huck reveals a compassionate picture of Jim and his social conscience when he says with feeling, "He was a mighty good nigger, Jim was."²⁶

²⁴Ibid., p. 79.

²⁵Ibid., p. 207.

²⁶Loc. cit.

In delineating Huck's concept of society, Twain clearly shows the developing pattern which becomes Huck's philosophy as it evolves from his observation of certain critical events in the novel itself. Huck runs the gamut of the social structure from his father, Pap Finn, to the social aristocrats, the Grangerfords. Twain presents Pap Finn as the lowest strata of society. In Huck's words, Twain describes him as follows:

He was most fifty, and he looked it. . . . His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his whiskers. There warn't no color in his face where his face showed; it was white; not like another man's white but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl--a tree toad white, a fish-belly white. As for his clothes just rags, that was all. He had one ankle resting on t'other knee; the boot on that foot was busted, and two of his toes stuck through, and he worked them now and then.²⁷

Through Huck's eyes, Twain has described one of the most despicable characters in American literature. Pap has returned in order to take Huck away from Widow Douglas, because he wants the money that Huck has been awarded. Twain illustrates Pap Finn as a greedy social vulture who is perfectly willing to prey on anyone, even his own flesh and blood. When Pap sees Huck, he criticizes his son for going to school, for having a bed, for being

²⁷Ibid., p. 41.

clean, and for knowing how to read and to write, and he takes all of the money that Huck has and proceeds to become roaring drunk. By means of this episode, Twain has shown that blood ties do not always place a limit on moral blindness.

Furthermore, Twain attacks sham do-gooders and white supremists in Chapter V in which he presents Pap Finn at his worst. Here, Pap is taken in by the new judge who wants him to reform his drunken and slovenly ways. Twain then, shows Pap in the process of "reforming." For example, Pap now extends his hand and says, "Look at it gentlemen and ladies all; shake it. There's a hand that was the hand of a hog; but it ain't no more; that's the hand of a man that's started in on a new life."²⁸ After the episode of the Bible reading and the interlude of false conversation, Pap departs. Twain, then, pauses to show that the judge and his friends are as morally blind as Pap Finn, in pointing out that the only difference between the Judge and Pap is that they are living in different, illusionary worlds. The characterization of Pap becomes Twain's vicious satire on the subject of the poor whites in the South. He shows that what really stirs Pap up is the system of government. Twain's satire,

²⁸Ibid., p. 45.

perhaps, reaches its highest and most effective level of expression in the following wonderfully grotesque speech by Pap Finn on the subject of white supremacy:

Call this govment! Why just look at it and see what it's like. Here's the law a-standing ready to take a man's son away from him--a man's own son, which he has had all the trouble and all the anxiety and all the expense of raising. Yes, just as that man has got that son raised at last, and ready to go to work and begin to do somethin' for him and give him a rest the law up and goes for him. And they call that govment.

Oh, yes, this wonderful govment, wonderful. Why looky here. There was a free nigger there from Ohio-- a mulater, most as white as a white man. They said he was a p'fessor in a college, and could talk all kinds of languages, and knowed everything. They said he could vote when he was at home. Thinks I, what is the country a'coming to? It was 'lection day and I just about to go and vote myself if I warn't too drunk to get there.²⁹

Pap goes on depicting "the terrible Negro" and "the government." It is Twain's vivid picture of a part of society in his time. Through the eloquence of Pap, Twain illustrates how much the poor whites served the white supremists by opposing education and by standing against the government. Finally, Pap Finn loses consciousness from having consumed so much liquor. Twain presents to Huck (and the reader) a full measure of Pap's depravity in the graphically dramatized scene which follows. Huck describes the incident:

²⁹Ibid., pp. 49-50.

All of a sudden there was an awful scream and I was up. There was Pap looking wild, and skipping around every which way yelling about snakes. Then, he went down on all fours and crawled off. By and by he rolled out. . . looking wild, and he sees me and went for me. He chased me round and round the place with a clasp-knife calling me the angel of death, and saying he would kill me, and then I couldn't come for him no more.³⁰

Twain convinces one that Pap Finn is at his lowest level of behavior; in fact, Pap does not even recognize his son and actually tries to kill him. Huck realizes that he, himself, is a victim of society and concludes that unless he runs away, he may not survive. To keep Pap from pursuing him, Huck simulates his own death by killing a pig and spreading its blood around the cabin. In this act, Twain has a double meaning when one recalls that Pap Finn's notorious habit was that of lying drunk among the hogs and of identifying of himself with his sleeping companions. Twain's symbols indicate that Huck's slaughtering the pig was in reality a reflection of his desire to end his miserable life and also to slay his father and to destroy his father's pronounced bestiality.

One sees that Huck, therefore, has no choice but to run away. He reasons that he could stay at Miss Watson's, but he knows that she has been shown to be just as corrupt as Pap Finn. Twain reveals that her

³⁰Ibid., p. 52.

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³⁰Ibid., p. 52.

main interest is money even though she pretends to be a devout Christian. Miss Watson was, at one time, offered a good sum for her slave, Jim; previous to receiving this offer, she had not believed in the practice of selling slaves, but eventually her mercenary qualities overcome her best intentions, and she had decided to sell him.

Twain depicts the Grangerfords in another revealing picture of the society of his time. The Grangerfords are aristocrats, but Twain shows that their form of life is just as corrupt as that of Pap Finn, Huck becomes a part of the Grangerford family upon his separation from Jim. While living with the Grangerfords, Huck comments upon his new environment. Huck describes the Grangerford family and calls them aristocrats, but he believes that underneath their outward display of honor is a corrupt system. At the bottom of the Grangerford system of honor is a feud, the cause of which has long since been forgotten; now, it is only being carried on for the sake of "honor." Twain depicts the battles and the families involved in them as being anything but honorable as he shows how they go through the motions of pretended chivalry. Love, for these people, is not even a strong enough force to unite the families when Sophia Grangerford falls in love with a Shepherdson.

After permitting Huck to observe these families, as they go to church carrying guns, listening to sermons on brotherly love, and then, fighting like animals, he permits Huck, again, to show his emerging sense of moral consciousness as Huck says, "The feud made me so sick . . . I ain't going to tell all that happened . . . I wished I hadn't ever come ashore to see such things."³¹ Twain, in giving this telling statement to Huck, reveals the most important criterion for moral consciousness: that is, the way in which one reacts to certain experiences. Twain, in these Grangerford-Shepherdson chapters is showing a cultural breakdown in families; the chapters are Twain's grotesque examples of man's inhumanity to man. In so depicting the Grangerfords, Twain is revealing the other facet of Pap Finn's society, in order to emphasize that this society is corrupt from the lowest level to the highest.

Next, Twain's target for satire is conventional or emotional religion and the artificial values of "royal" birth. For example, in the river episode, the peace of the raft is marred by the entrance of the Duke and the King, the two most celebrated con-men in all of American literature. The Duke and the King promptly

³¹Ibid., p. 154.

take control of the raft and, indeed, of the novel for the next chapter and one-half. However, they drive Huck and Jim closer together, for now Huck, as well as Jim, becomes a slave to the Duke and the King. Twain uses the Duke and the King, then, as a part of society with which he may comment upon the quirks of humanity. For example, the Duke and the King claim a nobility in order to exploit Huck and Jim. Two instances of their exploitation of Huck and Jim occur rapidly at this point in the novel. The two members of "royalty" decide that they are entitled to have the beds and to be catered to by Huck and Jim. The King and Duke are Twain's symbols of the pretended piety that is to be found in the South, an example of which may be seen in the description of King at a revival camp meeting:

He told them he was a pirate--had been a pirate for thirty years out in the Indian Ocean--and his crew was thinned out considerable last spring in a fight, and he was home now to take out some fresh men, and thanks to goodness he's been robbed last night, it was the blessedest thing that ever happened to him, he was going to start right off and work his way back to the Indian Ocean, and put in the rest of his life trying to turn the pirates into the true path; and though it would take him a long time to get there without money, he would get there anyway, and every time he convinced a pirate he would say to him, "Don't thank me, it all belongs to them dear people in Pokesville camp-meeting, and that dear preacher there!"³²

³²Ibid., p. 181.

Then, there were cries of "Take up the hat!" After the King collected \$87.75, he returned to the raft and had "a good bout with his jug." Twain, here, is showing the hypocrisy inherent in the culture of the South; it is a system based on false art and false religious values. Another example of pretended piety is the crowning swindle perpetrated upon the Wilks girls by the King and the Duke. Huck, in watching this action, experiences pangs of moral consciousness and he concludes that these two men were enough " . . . to make a body ashamed of the human race."

Perhaps ante-bellum social values are most thoroughly explored in Twain's famed Bricksville episode. Here, Twain describes the village scene; the streets were filled with mud, and the hogs were running loose in the street; the sows flopped down in any puddle and let the pigs milk them. Then, some loafer would put a dog on the pigs. Huck tells about Boggs, the town drunk, who was killed by Colonel Sherburn in a brutal scene. A mob had decided to lynch Colonel Sherburn, but he had made them withdraw. Here, Twain makes his comments about lynchings, in having Sherburn say, " . . . if any real lynching is going to be done, it will be done in the dark, Southern fashion; and when they come they will

bring their masks."³³ Twain, through Sherburn, brands all of them cowards. Sherburn, though, is a despicable character who has committed a murder and has escaped punishment. Here, again, Huck gains experience in human behavior. Twain has Huck reach a sense of moral consciousness because of his pure heart and his courage to stand up for his beliefs. In Chapter XXXI, Huck has to face the responsibility of deciding an important moral issue. This chapter reveals the conflicting forces that cause Huck's plight; his position is one of desperation. The King has reported Jim as a runaway slave. Huck does not know what to do. In the next two pages, Twain develops the emotional climax of the novel. First, Huck writes Miss Watson the following letter:

Miss Watson, your runaway Nigger Jim is down here two miles below Pikesville, and Mr. Phelps has got him and he will give him up for the reward if you send.

Huck Finn³⁴

Huck is alone; his decision cannot be affected by any influence outside of himself. At first, Twain shows that Huck's previous environment is talking to him, as he says:

³³Ibid., p. 197.

³⁴Ibid., p. 279.

And then think of me! It would get all around, that Huck Finn helped a nigger get his freedom; and if I was ever to see anybody from that town again, I'd be ready to get down and lick his boots for shame.³⁵

One recognizes that this is the language of the tribe and an expression of hypocrisy. However, as Huck really begins to rationalize, he reveals the following thoughts:

I see Jim before me all the time: in the day and in the nighttime, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we afloat along, talking and singing and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind. At last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had smallpox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the only one he's got now; and then I happened to look around and see that paper.

It was a close place. I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself:

"All right, then I'll go to hell and tore it up."³⁶

Huck's decision of "going to hell" means that he cannot go home again. His last statements are the expressions of his true feelings; he decides to help Jim to escape from captivity. It is Huck's memory of Jim's kindness on the raft and the evils of society that make Huck go against the teachings of his early environment. Twain

³⁵Ibid., p. 278.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 279-280.

shows that Huck has outgrown childish racial prejudices. The raft relationship between Huck and Jim is more civilized than any other on shore. On the raft, the two have a relationship that demands sacrifices from them. Their relationship demands mutual responsibility, self-abnegation, and moral choice. Huck and Jim's motto is "for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind towards the others."³⁷ Twain illustrates that the tragedy of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn lies in the fact that the relationship between Huck and Jim cannot be sustained on shore or on the raft. On the shores of the river, Twain shows how humanity lives; on the raft with Huck and Jim, he shows how men should live. Twain is presenting the individual in conflict with his social conventions. Twain has Huck go to the Phelps farm to help Jim escape. At the beginning of Chapter XXXII, Huck arrives at the farm and makes the following statement:

When I got there it was still and Sunday-like, and hot and sunshiny; the hands was gone to the fields; and there was them kind of faint dronings of bugs and flies in the air that makes it seem so lonesome and like everybody's dead and gone; and if a breeze fans along and quivers the leaves it makes you feel mournful because you feel like it's spirits whispering--spirits that's been dead ever so many years--and you always think they're talking about you. As a general thing it makes a body wish he was dead, too, and done with it all.³⁸

³⁷Ibid., p. 173.

³⁸Ibid., p. 285.

This speech is very important since it shows the death of something; that is, it shows that the quest for freedom while on the raft is now ended. It is foreboding because it is a precursor of Twain's solution to the novel.

After this moving hymn to death, Huck is reborn as Tom Sawyer. The novel does not end in a decisive manner. Perhaps, time prevented Twain from having taken a more definite moral stand, or perhaps, Twain was not capable of making the complete moral choice between society and self. Twain does show some hope, though, in an emerging consciousness, for Huck, out in the territory, can be completely born again as a moral agent to fight another time against hypocrisy.

Twain has a romantic-realistic plot in motion at the end of the novel. He castigates the conscious life of Tom Sawyer. Tom, basically a romanticist, thinks that Jim's escape must be very involved. Tom and Huck could simply steal the key and open the door to Jim's cell, but stealing the key would be too simple for Tom. Tom knows that Jim is free; thus, the treatment that he subjects Jim to is most cruel and inhuman. Tom has Jim writing notes (which Jim is not capable of writing) and making a rope ladder (even though he is on the ground floor). Huck has to argue with Tom to keep him from having Jim saw off his own leg to remove the chain.

Twain and Huck, here, seem to have a lapse of moral consciousness as Jim is subjected to grossly inhuman punishment. Huck swears to help Jim even if it means going to hell, but he cannot see that it is his duty to tell Tom to "go to hell." In Twain's account of Jim's imprisonment at the end of the book, one realizes that the chains are not able to reduce Jim to the level of a superstitious silly "nigger." He has experienced true freedom on the raft with Huck. His endurance during his imprisonment has shown his great moral stature. But Jim's continued stature is shown as he finally escapes after suffering many discomforts in the hands of Tom. Tom is with him and injured, and Jim gives himself up so that he may nurse Tom back to health. After being brought back to the farm and after facing the danger of a lynching, Jim refuses to show that he knows Huck. In fact, Jim is so true to his belief in his friends that he would give his life for them. Twain has shown that Jim is very noble and without selfish motives. As such, his is the main source of energy for Huck's moral consciousness. Clearly, Tom Sawyer's world is one of illusion because all of the pain for Jim is unnecessary since Jim is already free. Tom has known that Miss Watson has freed Jim, but this is Tom's opportunity for "great adventure." Obviously, the world of Tom

Sawyer is ridiculed by Twain. Tom's romantic vision of life shows man's inhumanity to man and Huck's faith in Jim's humanity.

By the time one reaches the middle of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, he is able to accept Jim as a brother human being and share his heartbreak. One is able to understand the anguish that occurs when families are separated. One is, also, able to see how hardened the whites have become after owning Negroes. This hardness is epitomized as Huck (as Tom Sawyer) says to Aunt Sally Phelps that no one was hurt, since "only a nigger was killed" in the explosion in the steamboat. At the same time, Huck, by getting into the Shepherdson Grangerford feud, by serving the Duke and King, by watching Colonel Sherburn kill a man, has developed a sobering insight into the problem of man's inhumanity to man. He now sees life as it is and not as a romantic illusion, as Tom does. In the last chapter, he is the educated moral person. Huck is upset when he learns that Jim was free all the time. Jim's misfortune is not a game to him, but a contest against the foe; i.e., civilization. Huck has had too much civilization. He hates what it is. His only future is to "light out for the territory."

In the 1880's and the 1890's the hero who emerges in Twain's world is a lonesome stranger wandering in

the search for Paradise. Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson is innocent in the ways of the world since the ways of society are not his. He is set apart from society by his extraordinary knowledge. Generosity and compassion are in his spirit, as well as a new harshness. To liberate, he is ready to destroy, to tell the facts that may ruin a man's life, or to kill. Pudd'nhead Wilson, Twain's next fictional hero, was to replace the lonely boy that had gone off to the territory. The new hero, like his creator, is a volcano on fire with the surging possibilities of life. Twain, writing in the Southwestern tradition, as Lynn points out, shows a volcano, the terrible image of the rebellious Negro and the broken Union. To Twain, the volcano was a symbol of chaos and the possibility of a better world.³⁹ Twain gives a characterization of the rebellious Negro in Pudd'nhead Wilson.

The current interest in Pudd'nhead Wilson should not be a surprise since the United States is still involved in a racial struggle. Pudd'nhead Wilson is Twain's last look at America through the novel form. In Pudd'nhead Wilson, Twain ridicules the respectable society of Dawson's Landing, for as Henry Smith proves, a warped and deformed conscience is found in the town. The book is a character

³⁹Lynn, op. cit., p. 249.

study of the town. Morally, it is an honest book.⁴⁰ The subject matter is that of slavery and miscegenation. The tragedy opens with two babies sitting in a wagon. One is white and the other is one/thirty-second Negro. They are symbolic of the "twin monster," in that, if someone hurts one, he is also hurting the other. Wilson's joke is lost on the townspeople; Wilson wants to own half of a dog that has been barking. He says, ". . . I would kill my half."⁴¹ Wilson's joke about the dog brings out the question, which is, can one man own another without being hurt? Twain is saying, through Wilson, that a person cannot kill part of an animal or part of a man without killing the other part.⁴²

Twain felt that slavery was corrupt. His treatment of Tom and Roxy is simple and to the point. He does not gloss over the faults of the Negro, but he puts the blame for these faults where it belongs--on the system of slavery. The system of slavery within itself contains punishment worse than the punishment received for murder. Tom is sold down the river instead of receiving punishment for killing Judge Driscoll.

⁴⁰Henry Nash Smith, Mark Twain, p. 134.

⁴¹Mark Twain, Pudd'nhead Wilson, p. 6.

⁴²Smith, op. cit., p. 263.

Twain's plot revolves around a race that has a stigma in it; the book shows this "inferior race" forever present and dependent upon in a community that denies they are human. This theme, a social concept about an inferior race, which was important in 1894, is still an issue. Twain analyzes the past training of Dawson's citizens and shows that slavery or imprisonment of the Negro is a corrupting influence on society.⁴² Roxy puts her son, Chambers, in the Driscoll cradle. Chambers grows up as Tom and is evil. The cause of Tom's baseness is slavery. Twain's purpose in the book is to awake the moral consciousness of the people. The subject of the book concerns an ironic examination of slavery. What appears to be true is really false. The story is unfolded on an ironic plane. The law makes Roxy a slave even though she is only one-sixteenth Negro. Tom and Chambers are both white in skin, but Chambers is one thirty-second Negro. After Roxy substitutes Chambers for the master's boy, Chambers is thereafter reared as Tom Driscoll, and the real Tom becomes a slave.⁴³ Twain

⁴²John Wain, "Pudd'nhead Wilson," Spectator, CLXXXIV (May 20, 1955), p. 652.

⁴³Mark Twain, Pudd'nhead Wilson, p. 21.

shows that it is the kind of training which makes one a free man or a slave.

In *Tom Driscoll*, Twain shows a corrupt society with its secret history of "night crawling." Though the society around Dawson Landing is built upon the aristocracy of F. F. V. gentlemen who treasure honor, one sees that this society has a stain upon it. The main families are so conditioned to the stain, they cannot see it; but one sees it in Thomas a Becket Driscoll who is supposed to be a Negro. The inability of the people in Dawson's Landing to recognize Thomas shows the moral blindness of the people. Thomas is the result of a white man's lust with a Negro slave. The master's taking on the expense of this extra-marital activity is his way of soothing his own conscience. He accepts no moral responsibility in the matter. The miscegenation that the Southerner condones under the bonds of slavery or the system of servitude is a way of showing the existing bond between the two races. For example, Thomas a Becket Driscoll is carrying white blood, but he is suppressed as a slave. His suppression as a Negro allows the false Tom Driscoll to become white.

In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Twain is trying to show a world in which those who have served have also become the master. With Roxy's shifting of the two babies,

there is a subsequent shift in the power structure. Roxy's act is not for revenge, but a sacrifice to save her son from being sold "down the river." When Tom Driscoll is finally revealed as her son, she is the only person who accepts the blame. Her plea is "De Lord have mercy upon me, po' misable sinner dat I is!" Her cry is that of self-awareness in a world of moral blindness, and it affirms the nobility that she has maintained throughout the novel. The tragic irony, here, is the fact that Roxy accepts the values of the white society.

Twain makes it clear that the aristocrats of Dawson's Landing have cut themselves off from the cruel burdens of their past so that their denial of their "night crawling history" becomes, in reality, a denial of themselves. Their blood flowing in the veins of Tom Driscoll is their self-appointed nemesis.

Thomas a Becket Driscoll is the agent, who, across the color line, transports the guilt that has gathered at the heart of slavery. Tom Driscoll's murdering of Judge Driscoll, the symbol of authority, shows the anarchy which the whites of Dawson's Landing have precipitated themselves. When Tom kills the Judge, he is disguised as a Negro, and one sees that there is irony in this scene, because Tom becomes at this time what his father

has made him. By showing Tom Driscoll's flaw, Twain actually exposes the entire community of Dawson's Landing. It is a corrupt community. The dark spot in Tom Driscoll is the repressed guilt in the South. Paradoxically, Twain sees this dark reality concealed in the dreams of innocence. Tom is a symbol of the avenging destiny that has taken over Dawson's Landing. He is the opposite of Jim. Tom is white on the outside and black on the inside. Jim causes Huck to find moral consciousness. Tom, as an instrument of moral consciousness, looms over Dawson's Landing. He is one thirty-second Negro. He stands in the foreground of the long history of miscegenation in Dawson's Landing.

The ending of the book shows that for Twain there is no solution. Pudd'nhead Wilson's testimony at the trial sends the false Tom to jail and then to slavery. One sees the triumph of justice and the defeat of the criminal, but there is still a larger crime. Wilson's revelations do not exempt the true Tom from slavery. Twain stresses, here, that no man is able to be free if he has never learned the meaning of the word. Wilson's acts cause ruin for everyone. Chambers is made the rightful heir to Judge Driscoll's fortune, and Tom is sold down the river. Social reality is asserted in

Wilson as he puts ". . . an end to the vernacular values of Roxy."⁴⁴ At the end of the book she is, in effect, dead. Her church is her only form of solace. Roxy, the only threat to Dawson's Landing, is defeated as she accepts the false pride of the whites, the contempt for Negroes, and the white's code of honor.

⁴⁴Henry Smith, Mark Twain, p. 182.

CHAPTER II

MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN FAULKNER'S "THE BEARS"

Traditionally, as defined by T. S. Eliot, William Faulkner, like Twain, is another Southerner who writes and extends his thoughts beyond the usual limits of provinciality and becomes an American without losing devotion to a locale. Faulkner writes of immortality. He says in his Nobel Prize address that the writer should know the following:

The problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because that alone is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.

He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and teaching himself that forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths--love, and honor and pity and compassion and sacrifice.⁴⁵

Faulkner, in addition, believes that man will not merely endure, he will prevail, for he has a soul and a spirit that comprehends compassion, sacrifice, and endurance. A writer, to be of any merit, must be concerned with these things. Faulkner says that it is the writer's privilege ". . . to help man to endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and

⁴⁵William Faulkner, The Faulkner Reader, pp. 3-4.

hope and pride and compassion and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past."⁴⁶ Faulkner tries to show the worth of man and his immortality by examining man in his social context. Faulkner's description of "immortality," or immortal man, implies that his values can only be created by isolation from society or by a negative response to society, the way for the character to become morally conscious as a person. It was Huck Finn's duty; and in Faulkner, it is Ike McCaslin's duty to rebel against society and isolate himself from its evil. Both Huck and Ike stand in opposition to archetypal Southern puritans; they represent the antithesis of the Southern ego.

In "The Bear," from Go Down, Moses, Faulkner is concerned with man's enduring moral problems. Faulkner reveals his sense of moral consciousness (the archetype of transformation) in the character of Ike McCaslin. Faulkner's Ike must undergo a transformation or a detachment from the world of reality as the center of existence. By undergoing this kind of a transformation, he is able to transcend reality and project the truth of the collected unconscious (all that is past) into moral consciousness. The symbols or archetypes from the collected unconscious appear in man's deepest inner conflicts; Faulkner writes

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 4.

about these conflicts. These symbols and archetypes result in many of the myths about race. Man can understand myths only by means of an acute self-realization which makes him seriously consider what he is experiencing instead of allowing him to cling to the myths in the past, or the "uncollected consciousness."⁴⁷ The "traditional" past, as has Eliot stated, is useless if it merely has contacts with preceding generations. Ike McCaslin uses the past, but his world, as well as being part of the past, goes beyond the past and creates a system of consciousness. In Faulkner's "The Bear," there is need for communal security. The South has, for a long time, used false myths about race to achieve false security. "The Bear" is Faulkner's story of Ike's repudiation of these Southern myths.

By writing of the South and its tragic fable of human beings, Faulkner shows an emerging consciousness that is highly moral. He depicts truth by examining man in "The Bear." He knows the human condition in the South; thus, he can write with understanding about the Negroes and whites. Since the races have so much in common that they cannot be isolated, Faulkner, in "The Bear" presents the people, the land, the race problems,

⁴⁷Elizabeth Drew, T. S. Eliot, p. 9.

and the meaning of the land. Faulkner analyzes man and looks at his folly, his tragedy, his heroism, his comedy, and his heart which creates conflicts within itself.

As "The Bear" opens, Ike McCaslin is about sixteen years old; he reveals the facts about his family and his land. The central setting of the story is the capital of Yoknapatawpha County in the 1880's. Through Ike, Faulkner shows the three geneological branches of the Carothers McCaslin tree. The story is almost in the form of a ritual as Faulkner shows Ike maturing; the county in which Ike lives is a miniature portrait of the South's history.

Important to Southern history is the hunt, which is almost a ritual with the McCaslins, inasmuch as they go bear hunting each year. Faulkner's account of the bear hunt reveals Ike's growth to maturity, especially when he permits Ike to say, ". . . cousin McCaslin brought him to earn for himself from the wilderness the name and state of hunter, provided he in turn were humble and enduring enough."⁴⁸ The wilderness is pure, "almost Eden or virgin like," and teaches him about life, for Ike believes that he has to serve an apprenticeship in the woods which would prove him capable of participating

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 254.

in the "pagent-rite" for the bear, Old Ben, ". . . indomitable and invincible out of an old dead time a phantom epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life."⁴⁹ Engaging in the hunt is for Ike, tantamount to being reborn, and with Sam Fathers beside him, Ike enters the wilderness. The wilderness closes behind him as it has opened to accept him.⁵⁰ Here, Faulkner is describing the wilderness as if it were some type of a mystic god. Now, after Ike has received a sort of rebirth from the wilderness, he must, next, become a part of the wilderness; i.e., he must achieve worthiness. The first indication of virtuous qualities in Ike occurs in his wish to become a part of the wilderness. Ike's apprenticeship in the woods is directed by Sam Fathers, who is the best possible teacher, because Ike learns from Sam a type of morality that comes with private awareness and belonging. For Ike to make use of the lore of the wilderness, he, first, has to find out what the wilderness has been before he entered it. From Sam, the son of a Negro slave and a Chickasaw chief, he learns how to hold his gun and draw the hammer, but what is most important, he is told by Sam: ". . . Be scared. You can't help that. But don't

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 255.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 256.

be afraid."⁵¹ Ike's humility is derived from his awe for the vastness and majesty of the wilderness. Gradually, he realizes that Sam is preparing him for a pursuit other than hunting, and teaches him the heritage of the wilderness. That Ike is yet a novice is shown when he thinks that the wilderness will not change. Old Ben, the bear, sees Ike before Ike sees him because, to see Old Ben, Ike must become pure. Ike is alone in the wilderness, but this act is not enough. He must leave the emblems of civilization behind, as he does when he leaves his compass, gun, and watch. At once, he sees Old Ben:

It did not emerge, appear; it was just there . . . not as big as he had dreamed it but big as he had expected, bigger, dimensionless against the dapple obscurity, looking at him. Then it moved . . . it crossed the glade without haste . . . and stopped again and looked back at him across one shoulder. Then it was gone.⁵²

Old Ben, then, is the wilderness, a primeval force in Faulkner's handling of his theme. Old Ben and the wilderness had existed before the time of civilization. As civilization makes inroads into the wilderness, they will become a lesson for Ike; that is, man's moral consciousness cannot go against nature. Ike wishes to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and

⁵¹Ibid., p. 264.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 265-266.

worthy in the woods. He finds himself, becoming so skillful so rapidly that he fears he is never to become worthy because he has not learned all about the woods. It is Sam, who leads Ike to the old bear. With the little fyce, Ike learns that the quality that he needs is courage. Ike learns that he has the courage necessary when the little fyce charges Old Ben:

Then he realized that the fyce was actually not going to stop. He flung the gun down and ran. When he overtook and grasped the shrill, frantically pinwheeling little dog, it seemed to him that he was directly under the bear. He could smell it, strong and hot and rank. Sprawling, he looked up where it loomed and towered over him like a thunder-clap.

Then it was gone.⁵³

In part II of "The Bear," Ike has now become an experienced huntsman; he has killed his first buck and has had his face marked with the hot blood. With this baptismal in blood, he becomes truly responsible. He is much like Santiago of the Old Man and the Sea; he only kills what he needs and loves. He tells Sam: "It must be one of us. So it wont be until the last day. When even he dont want it to last any longer."⁵⁴ With the coming of Lion, the dog, Ike realizes that Old Ben will not last much longer. Old Ben is not able to

⁵³Ibid., p. 267.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 268.

compromise with civilization. Ike realizes this fact, and with this knowledge he achieves a sense of moral responsibility. He says that there is a finality to all events. He is not certain that he knows what it is, but he knows that he will not grieve when it occurs. He feels that he would be ". . . humble and proud that he had been found worthy to be a part of it too or even just to see it too."⁵⁵ Sam realizes that Old Ben and he are about to die: "He was old. He had no children, no people, none of his blood anywhere above earth that he would ever meet again. And even if he were to, he could not have touched it, spoken to it, because for seventy years now he had had to be a Negro. It was almost over now and he was glad."⁵⁶ Sam and Ike have had an opportunity before to kill Old Ben, but have not shot him because he was a symbol of their beloved wilderness.

In part III, Faulkner has the death of Old Ben take place. It occurs at the climatic point in the hunt episode, which climax marks the turning point in Ike's life, as well. Ben's death is the end of something for everyone, except Ike. Before Old Ben's death occurs, Ike and Boon Hogganback leave the group to go for some

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 278.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 269. (The Italics is Faulkner's).

liquor for the men on the hunt, a trip which enables Faulkner to show the contrast between the busy city and the idyllic wilderness. He also shows that Boon is a misfit outside of the wilderness. Boon and Lion are successful in killing Old Ben. They have to pry Lion's jaws away from Old Ben's throat. Boon says, "Easy, goddamn it. Can't you see his guts are all out of him?"⁵⁷ Both Lion and Boon are badly hurt. Sam has collapsed; Ike knows that Sam is going to die. After everyone returns to camp, the doctor examines Sam and thinks that he is just suffering from exhaustion and shock. Ike is told that he has to go back to school, but Ike wants to stay until it is all over. Cass, a relative to Ike, tells Ike to leave; but General Compson intervenes:

All right, you can stay. If missing an extra week of school is going to throw you so far behind you'll have to sweat to find out what some hired pedagogue put between the covers of a book, you better quit altogether. You shut up Cass. . . . You've got one foot straddled into a farm and the other foot straddled into a bank; you aint ever got a good hand-hold where this boy was already an old man long before you damned Sartorises and Edmondses invented farms and banks to keep yourselves from having to find out what this boy was born knowing and fearing too maybe but without being afraid.⁵⁸

General Compson, by referring obliquely to enslavement and freedom, prevails. Faulkner makes sure that Ike

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 288.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 295.

stays and he sees Sam die, for Ike learns as he watches death. Old Ben has wanted to die; he knows that the wilderness is over. Sam dies for the same reason. Old Ben and Sam are so close in life that the death of one kills the other. On the level of realism, perhaps, Sam's death is the result of a stroke, which results from swimming in an icy river in December; but the consciousness of Ike makes him realize that Sam's death is something more. It is also a sign of the end of the wilderness and another step in moral consciousness for Ike; Ike achieves new insights. It is not definitely stated, but Faulkner makes it seem that Boon has carried out Sam's orders and has killed Sam. McCaslin is questioning Boon about Sam's death and tells him he would have done it. The discussion is ended when the boy, feeling as if water had burst from his eyes, rushes between them and says, "Leave him alone! Goddamn it! Leave him alone!"⁵⁹ Ike knows that Boon has killed Sam; Faulkner gives this example to show the maturity that Ike is obtaining. Boon has shown himself to be used as an instrument in the death of Old Ben. Throughout the selection, Boon is shown to be less than human; throughout, Faulkner contrasts him with Ike to show Ike's progress. Boon

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 297.

is unable to function outside the wilderness, but Ike is. Boon is not able to operate a gun, which is a tool of civilization; Ike, though, is an expert shot. Boon sleeps with Lion, and he is willing to risk his life for the dog against Old Ben; Ike, in contrast to Boon is not able to kill Old Ben. Ike is a part of the wilderness, a part of purity; he is becoming morally conscious as an individual. Boon, though, is not even close to being morally conscious. Faulkner describes Boon as follows:

Boon already sat at the table at breakfast, hunched over his plate . . . his working jaws blue with stubble and his face innocent of water and his horse-mane hair innocent of comb. . . . He was four inches over six feet; he had the mind of a child, the heart of a horse, and little hard shoe-button eyes without depth or meanness or viciousness or gentleness or anything else.⁶⁰

In part V, the tale of the hunt is ended; Sam Fathers is dead, and Ike has learned his lessons from the wilderness and Sam. Major de Spain has sold the timber to a Memphis lumber camp, but Ike, who has grown up, returns to visit Sam's grave. Ike has to see the wilderness once more; the trains and mills have corrupted his old world. It is becoming a wasteland. After the train is out of sight, ". . . The wilderness soared,

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 287.

musings, inattentive, myriad, eternal green; older than any mill-shed, longer than any spur-line."⁶¹ Faulkner shows that with the signs of civilization gone, Ike is able to see beauty in nature again. He praises the wilderness and says that the wilderness:

. . . had shaped him if any had toward the man he almost was, mother and father both to the old man born of a Negro slave and a Chickasaw chief who had been his spirit's father if any had, whom he had revered and harkened to and loved and lost and grieved: and he would marry someday and they too would be his mistress and his wife.⁶²

Faulkner has jumped ahead in chronology to show Ike's final position in his awareness of and moral responsibility for his heritage. He pledges himself to the rapidly vanishing wilderness and goes on to the graves of Sam and Lion. As he is leaving the graves, he says that the knoll where they are buried is no abode of the dead:

. . . because there was no death, not death, not Lion and not Sam: not held fast in earth but free in earth and not in earth but of earth, myriad yet undiffused of every myriad part, leaf and twig and particle, air and sun and rain and dew and night . . . and, being myriad one.⁶³

They have become a part of the earth and have found life in death. Sam, Lion and Old Ben know the time to die. Lion, who is directed by Sam in the killing of Old Ben,

⁶¹Ibid., p. 345.

⁶²Ibid., p. 349.

⁶³Ibid., p. 350.

does not die as he has become a part of that which does not die. Here, Ike's thoughts are interrupted as beneath his foot he sees a big rattlesnake:

It had not coiled yet. . . . the old one, the ancient and accursed about the earth, fatal and solitary and he could smell it now; the thin sick smell of rotting cucumbers and something else which had no name evocation of all knowledge and an old weariness and of pariah-hood and of death. . . going and then gone; he put the other foot down at last and didn't know it, standing with one hand raised as Sam had stood that afternoon six years ago when Sam led him into the wilderness he ceased to be a child, speaking the old tongue which Sam had spoken that day without premeditation either; Chief . . . Grandfather.⁶⁴

This is the high point of Faulkner's illustration of Ike and his mystical experience. All that has happened, previously, in the story is keyed to this moment. Ike moves from the incident with the snake to the episode of Boon under the tree. The juxtaposed tableau of the snake and Boon contains intimations of mortality.⁶⁵ Speaking for Faulkner, Ike's vision of a life beyond death for Sam, Lion, and Old Ben is similar to that of the mythology of the American Indian in which the hunter and the hunted live together in peace in the land beyond the sunset. This type of purity is what Ike wants from the wilderness. Obviously, the serpent must appear in the wilderness to

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 351.

⁶⁵John Longlely, The Tragic Mask, p. 94.

show that evil has invaded the garden. The snake is, in many ways, like Old Ben: each is a totemic animal entitled to his place. After the snake is gone, Ike realizes that he has raised his hand and has said the words he had learned from Sam, "Chief. . . Grandfather." His cry, as Longely points out, signifies his recognition of the wilderness; also, he is symbolized as one of the initial wilderness creatures.⁶⁶ In the snake, therefore, Ike sees a symbol of the evil that has invaded the wilderness. Boon, at the end of the story, is an impure or evil element. He is sitting at the base of a tree and breaking his gun into very small pieces. He is committing the sin of assertion of ownership as he shouts to Ike, "Get out of here! Dont touch them! Dont touch a one of them! They're mine."⁶⁷ The squirrels (they) are God's creatures and cannot be owned by man. Boon's relationship with nature is out of character for man, for Faulkner shows that Boon is resisting a change that is necessary. While Boon does not have Ike's acute sensibilities, he realizes that something has been lost; and he wants to hold on to something that shows the liberty of the old wilderness.

⁶⁶Loc. cit.

⁶⁷Faulkner, op. cit., p. 352.

Since Ike possesses the right relationship with nature, he has found humility, courage, pity and love of justice within himself; in Ike there is no self-assertion over the wilderness. He has found pride and humility with Sam, who is a Negro. Faulkner shows that incorruptibility of the human being depends more upon outlook than upon blood as Sam is more a "person" than a slave; i.e., nigger. The little mongrel fyce teaches Ike about courage, and Lion shows charity as he charges Old Ben. In the wilderness, therefore, Ike learns of the qualities which lie close to the heart. The wilderness is the dominant influence which forms Ike's heart in maturity. Step by step, as though in a ritual, Ike learns about the same moral verities that Faulkner mentioned in his acceptance speech when he was awarded the Nobel Prize. For example, Ike realizes that he must have a code suitable to life outside the wilderness. His attitude toward nature makes him a man and governs him in his relationship with other men. His conflicts with nature provide the means for him to gain courage and humility. Faulkner's Ike knows that the wilderness will end with advancing civilization. Sam Fathers and Old Ben must die because they are the pure parts of the wilderness. Boon lives on to show what man is. Ike, because he is a man as well as a holy figure, continues to live outside the wilderness and

tries to use its code in a stupid world. He knows that man has broken his code with nature by using the land for mercenary reasons; consequently, he knows that man runs the risk of destroying himself. The wilderness is not suited to the bestiality of man's ways.

In part IV of "The Bear," Ike reveals man's bestial ways. In parts I, II, III, and V, Faulkner tells the story of a boy's maturation through Ike, who learns the lessons that he must know to be a conscious and responsible man. In part IV, Ike is given a chance to put his qualities to work upon the enduring problems of manhood and citizenship. In part IV, Faulkner stresses the injustice done to the Negro. He shows the denials to the Negro and the wilderness, here, more than he has done in any other part. Ike McCaslin is twenty-one years old. He is having an argument with McCaslin Edmonds about the land, which takes them through the details of family history, the start of America, the South and its part in the Civil War, and the relationships of the whites and Negroes in regard to nature. Two past experiences help Ike now, in his decision to give up the plantation way of life. One is his former participation in the hunt for Old Ben, and the other, he suffered at the age of sixteen, when he had read about the depravity of his grandfather. Ike, with this new sense of consciousness

received from the wilderness, is seeking truth and justice in his discussion with McCaslin about the land:

I can't repudiate it. It was never Father's and Uncle Buddy's to bequeath me to repudiate because it was never Grandfather's to bequeath them to bequeath me to repudiate because it was never old Ikkemotubbe's to sell to Grandfather for bequeathment and repudiation. . . . When Ikkemotubbe discovered, realized, that he could sell it for money, on that instant it ceased to have been his forever.⁶⁸

Ike is saying that the first taint is the selling of the land by Ikkemotubbe. The Indian loses the land since it cannot be sold, because as Ike says, it is God's land:

Because he told in the Book how He created the earth, made it and looked at it and said it was all right, and then He made man. He made the earth first and peopled it with dumb creatures, and then He created man to be His overseer on the earth and to hold suzerainty over the earth and the animals on it in His name, not to hold for himself and his descendants inviolable title forever, but to hold the earth mutual and intact in the communal anonymity of brotherhood, and all the fee He asked was pity and humility and sufferance and endurance and the sweat of his face for bread.⁶⁹

Here, Faulkner through Ike is stressing the brotherhood of man. The system of slavery uses a person as property; the system of owning property is in contrast to the principles of the brotherhood of man; man is not to own or be owned--he is just to hold the land in a trust of "communal anonymity of brotherhood." Ike continues to speculate about why his grandfather obtained the land:

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 299.

⁶⁹Loc. cit.

God used the blood which had brought in the evil to destroy the evils as doctors use fever to burn up fever. . . . Maybe He knew that Grandfather himself would not serve His purpose because Grandfather was born too soon . . . He saw already in Grandfather the seed progenitive .⁷⁰ . to set at least some of His lowly people free.

Ike's uncle and father also helped in setting the Negro free, when they had moved out of the big house and tried to make life on the plantation a community enterprise. Ike thinks that God sent the Civil War and Reconstruction since there are not enough "uncles and fathers." He says the following about the South: Apparently they can learn nothing save through suffering, remember nothing save when underlined in blood.⁷¹

There is the other experience which helps Ike to forsake plantation way of life. In the ledgers of the commissary, Ike discovers the following shocking entry: "Turl Son of Thucydus @ Eunice Tomey born Jun 1833 yr stars fell Fathers will."⁷² This entry is very revealing. Piecing it together, Ike finds that Lucius Carothers McCaslin had purchased Eunice in 1807. In 1809, he married her to Thucydus. Tomey was born a short time later. In 1833, Eunice, the mother of Tomey, drowned

⁷⁰Loc. cit.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 301. (The italics is Faulkner's).

⁷²Ibid., p. 320.

herself; Tomey had a child shortly afterwards. Since Carothers left a legacy to the child, Ike knows what has happened and says, "His own daughter His own daughter. No No Not even him!"⁷³ The daughter of Eunice and Carothers, had been made pregnant by Carothers, an act, which reveals Carothers' inhumanity and also his regard for Negroes. They are nothing but animals to be bought, sold, and bred and, perhaps sold again, if he wishes.

Faulkner examines the center of the dilemma and lets Ike continue to think and talk about his heritage. He realizes that one has to suffer to learn, because it is the only way. The way to salvation is to remove the evil system of impressing the Negro and keeping the earth mutual and intact. The ruined land shows the broken moral order. With the Negroes, comes some hope, and Ike says the following about them:

They are better than we are. Stronger than we are. Their vices are vices aped from white men or that white men and bondage have taught them; they have pity and tolerance . . . and forbearance and fidelity and love of children . . . whether their own or not or black or not.⁷⁴

He clearly recognizes that the Negro is a part of humanity. Ike is able to return his patrimony, as he is no longer a part of the system. The pride and humility, endurance,

⁷³Ibid., p. 308.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 326.

and courage that he has learned in the wilderness enable Ike to rise above civilization and repudiate the system of slavery and the impressment of the Negro. Sam, a Negro, has set him free. As Faulkner remarked in his Nobel Prize speech, Ike has exorcised his conscience by ridding himself of the guilt from his land and his people.

Ike continues in life to become a carpenter. He says that he has become a carpenter " . . . because if the Nazarene had found carpentering good for the life and ends He had assumed and elected to serve, it would be all right too for Issac McCaslin."⁷⁵ Unlike a Christ figure, though, Ike is living in a modern world. He gets married, but it does not work. His wife is a greedy whore. Her main objective is to get Ike to return to the land and its system. She tries to "sell" her body to Ike to get her objective. An example of her method is given, in which she tells Ike to stand up, turn his back, and lock the door. She removes her clothes and lies down on the bed. Ike is shocked by this act since he has never seen his wife without clothing. She tells him that he should take off his clothes:

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 337.

Her head still turned away, looking at nothing, thinking of nothing, waiting for nothing, not even him . . . her hand moving as though with volition and vision of its own . . . downward now, the hand drawing him and she moved at last, shifted, a movement one single complete inherent not practiced and time older than man . . . palm flat against his chest now and holding him away with the same apparent lack of any effort or any need for strength . . . somewhere, without any movement of lips even, the dying and invincible whisper . . . "Promise" . . . ! The farm!"⁷⁶

Ike, as all men, has a moral choice about his fate.

Ike's answer shows his consciousness of life and his uncompromising standards. He says, "No, I tell you I won't. I can't. Never."⁷⁷ Perhaps, a good wife could have helped Ike in his battle against slavery and miscegenation. He gives up his marriage; he becomes "the uncle to the county and a father to none." He listens to the truths of the heart.

Although Ike suffers for his moral vision, he knows that great things only happen through sacrifices. Thus, one sees that Faulkner's Ike and Twain's Huck are outside society and continue to seek the common, humble way of life. Both try to set the whites, blacks, and the shades between, free. Ike emerges as a man able to make the important decision between his social environment and his true moral consciousness. A sensitive individual can find the right way on earth, but needs good teachers

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 339-340.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 340.

and a sense of humility. Faulkner shows hope for man, inasmuch as Ike remains an individual leader outside the domain of the regimented Old South. Faulkner appears to think that, if enough people become conscious of humanity and practice their beliefs and teach others, society can finally accept a moral consciousness that reflects "the communal anonymity of brotherhood."

"The Bear," the section from Go Down Moses, illustrates the theme of freedom and moral consciousness throughout; Faulkner uses the title, Go Down Moses, as a part of the Negro spiritual, which places emphasis on the following beautiful words: "Let my people go." Ike tries to let the people in bondage go free; not only the Negroes but the whites who are in bondage. In "The Bear," Faulkner is referring to all humanity (mankind) as being enslaved by evil tradition. Since all of humanity are Faulkner's people, the term, "my people" involves all of mankind; thus, the ultimate freedom is derived from personal and social acceptance of the moral bondage, within the family of man.⁷⁸ Faulkner is saying that all of mankind should live under the permanent awareness of his moral obligation to take up and honor the blood-bondage that links all races.

⁷⁸Lawrence Thompson, William Faulkner, p. 98.

CHAPTER III

MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN WARREN'S BAND OF ANGELS; A QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Ike McCaslin is a direct forerunner of Robert Penn Warren's Amantha Starr, who is depicted in Band of Angels. Ike has a quest for identity, and he finally finds himself in becoming isolated from the rest of the world. After recognizing the tragedy of life, he can return to communion with other people and nature; Amantha must also accept her environment and rise above it and find herself. She must find herself so that she may have fulfillment and become morally conscious. The instrument for the growth of Amantha's consciousness, as with Ike and Huck, is a Negro. Amantha is also Warren's instrument for examination of the guilt consciousness of the South.

Some of the forms of guilt to be found in the South, as has been shown by Twain, Faulkner, and now Warren are discovered in ancestral pride, which makes the whites assert a superiority over the Negro; but no superiority of virtue or talent can be detected. There is also guilt in a social code that refuses to recognize the dignity of the Negro as an individual, since he has to act like a "nigger" to maintain the evil myth of the

past which boasts the white man's superiority. Another source of guilt that is found in the South is that involved in miscegenation.

Miscegenation, along with other forms of Southern guilt, plays an important part in Band of Angels. Warren dramatizes the search to achieve wholeness or full identity in a world of halves. In the novel, the question, "Who am I?" arises from the problem of miscegenation. Before the book is over, Warren, in Amantha Starr, shows how self-identity and moral awareness are reached. He tells her story through an analysis of her mind, a troubled mind, one searching for full identity. Her problem arises from the evil standards of society. Warren depicts her as a person with uncertain status and allegiance; he shows that she has no identity. She achieves her wisdom only by resolving the opposition imposed upon her by environment.

The action takes place, between the 1840's and the early 1900's, and begins on a plantation in Kentucky, called Starrwood. The novel starts with a question, "O, Who Am I?" (the italics is Warren's).⁷⁹ This is the cry of Amantha Starr, who says, "If I could only

⁷⁹Robert P. Warren, The Band of Angels, p. 1.

be free."⁸⁰ In these two lines, Warren shows that his themes are those of self-identity and freedom.

Amantha Starr is the daughter of Aaron Pendleton Starr, a Kentucky land and slave owner; also, Amantha is one of Starr's slaves. Her mother is dead, and Amantha does not know that her mother was a Negro. Amantha does not miss her mother too much, for she is spoiled by her Negro Mammy, whom she will eventually withdraw from to become indifferent toward or even to be contemptuous of. Warren endows her with the racial prejudice of her times. Aunt Sukie is the adored Negro Mammy in Amantha's youth, but only a "slave," when Amantha becomes a woman. The relationship between the races is not fraught with hatred when Amantha is a nine year old child. Warren depicts her childhood as being unstable at times and prepares his reader to receive Amantha's shock of revealed identity when he has her overhear the household slave say, ". . . what she?--ain't nuthin, no better'n nuthin--yeah, what she?"⁸¹

Warren takes his heroine North at the age of nine. She is removed from her Southern environment and sent to a Bible school in Oberlin, Ohio. In the North, she meets Miss Idell and is influenced by her glittering

⁸⁰Loc. cit.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 16.

infection and the promises of beauty that she predicts for Amantha. Amantha tries to decide whether or not to be attracted by the glitter of Miss Idell or by the "severe approbation" of Mrs. Turpin at the Oberlin School. After a few years at Oberlin, at the age of thirteen, her quest for identity (or moral self-awareness) is even more apparent when she realizes that her status as a person is a form of ambiguity. The point that Warren is making, here, is that Amantha is a listless creature suspended between worlds. Amantha says:

I was in ambiguous position, somewhat like the reformed cannibal who may be suspected to retire to his chamber, divest himself of Christian pants and shirt, paint his hide, squat on the floor and indulge in a few last, secret tidbits.⁸²

Another problem which faces Amantha, now, in identifying herself with the Oberlin world concerns the fact that her father is a slaveholder. In the world at Oberlin, which is rapidly becoming hers, slavery is forbidden. To identify herself with the world at Oberlin, Amantha approaches her father about getting rid of his slaves. Warren has her explain her problem:

With the brutality of awkwardness, I plunged into the topic like a surgeon doing an operation with a meatax. I told my father that he was damned. I told him that he jeopardized my soul by making me live on black sweat.⁸³ I told him he ought to get rid of his slaves.

⁸²Ibid., p. 29.

⁸³Ibid., p. 30.

In this passage, Warren seems to be showing that Amantha has been converted to the Oberlin ways, but, in reality, one sees that her identity with Oberlin is still undergoing change. In the next chapter, she recalls some of the good times experienced on the plantation. After thinking about these days at Starrwood, she says:

I had lost the picture of myself as the young girl clothed in white robes, with face shining in meekness and mission, and I did not have any other picture to take its place. I felt forlorn, and listless, and even as I repudiated Ellie, and the old image of myself, I felt a sneaking sense of loss and alienation. The future, suddenly, seemed nothing but a vista of grayness.⁸⁴

By revealing her thoughts about the old days at Starrwood, Warren is showing that Amantha is no longer a part of the Oberlin world. Her future does seem gray; Amantha is no longer able to use Oberlin as a means of finding her identity. Later, Amantha finds that things are not as gray as she thinks. Seth Parton, the most virtuous young man in the community, comes to see her. Seth is so zealous about religion that he is almost a fanatic. He is a member of the abolitionists, and he criticizes Amantha's father severely for owning slaves. Amantha is not able to pray for her father nor save him from the sins of slavery, but this realization does not stop her

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 38.

from taking an interest in Seth. In the meantime, she is also seeing that there is an intimate relationship between her father and Miss Idell, and thinks that they are going to be married. She fears they will not tell her about their approaching marriage, and says:

If this revelation had come to me not many months earlier, I should have felt the whole matter as a desertion by my father, as a betrayal, and by Miss Idell, too, I suppose. But now in my new certainty⁸⁵ of self, and of life, I felt indulgent, and kindly.

Amantha is able to think kindly about her father, for she believes that she has found herself with Seth with whom she has developed an assuredness.

In the passing scene at Oberlin with Seth, Warren, through Amantha, shows man's inhumanity to man. Inhuman treatment is found in the North as well as in the South, as Amantha recalls the case of poor Horace, who is tricked into meeting a group of theologians in what is supposed to be a lover's tryst. The theologians lecture Horace on the cupidity of flesh. Then, after telling him what is right, they show him how righteous they are by stretching him on a log and beating him. Warren also shows the hypocrisy of Mr. Taylor, the instigator of this "righteous" punishment and a strict crusader for laws preventing libidinousness who, ". . . lured into concubinage a

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 44.

young female, had got her with a child, and had an abortion performed upon her."⁸⁶ Amantha is not able to discover her identity at Oberlin, because she sees that much of this society is based upon falsely pious values.

Amantha finds that her father's life has been a series of lies. (Aaron Starr has been having an adulterous affair with Miss Idell, who is really Mrs. Mueller.) Amantha's life at Oberlin comes to an end when her father dies at Miss Idell's place, and Amantha goes home to Kentucky for the burial. Warren, then, introduces the most shocking scene of the entire book in Amantha's revelation at the funeral. She sees the funeral procession and thinks, "No-no--that's the wrong place--come over here--over here to the cedars!"⁸⁷ They are not burying her father close to her mother but in another part of the graveyard. Unknown to Amantha until after the funeral is the fact that her mother was a Negro slave, the reason that her father is not buried next to Amantha's mother. Warren has deliberately concealed this unknown information from Amantha so that now, she has a chance to find herself since she is alone. Amantha is seized at the funeral to be sold in payment of her father's debts. Her hope at the graveside is Miss Idell,

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 46.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 55.

but the woman deserts Amantha. Amantha says, "All had fled away from me, into the deserts of distance, and I was, therefore, nothing, I had been nothing I do not know who I was."⁸⁸ Warren illustrates the loss that Amantha has suffered. She wants to cry out that she is not a slave--that she is Amantha--Little Manty--Aaron Starr's Little Miss Sugar-and-Spice. From the examples given, Warren shows that Amantha is lost in self-pity. She is paralyzed with self-pity; she chooses to be nothing and is nothing until she is able to admit her identity. Indulging in self-pity, Amantha even tries to commit suicide.

Destitute she is sold at the slave auction to Hamish Bond, the next "angel." (Her father, Miss Idell, Seth, and Oberlin are all fallen "angels" in the beginning of Amantha's life; this band of angels is not able to lead Amantha, as the song says, to Jordan, i.e., identity.) She hopes that, perhaps, Bond is her chance for freedom. Coming to Bond's home as a slave, she finds that the Negroes there treat her as a Negro. Jimmy, a Negro servant, speaks of her being ". . . high-juiced and sweet smelling,"⁸⁹ a comment which irritates her since she does not want to be thought of as a "hot" Negro woman.

⁸⁸Loc. cit.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 102.

She will have nothing to do with the Negroes nor the whites; Warren shows with this speech that she cannot identify herself with Negroes. Amantha, then, becomes puzzled by Bond's actions. She wonders why Bond has purchased her. Michelle, another slave, tries to explain by saying that Bond is a kind man: "you might say that his kindness is like a disease. He has it as a man might have a long disease."⁹⁰ Warren is illustrating that Bond's kindness is a means of leading Amantha into another false identity. Amantha says that she has almost found her identity at Bond's place, because Bond treats her well and buys her many fine clothes, but as Warren depicts her, Amantha is still full of self-pity.

Amantha tries to escape, but she is not successful; she is taken back to Bond's place, where he tells her that she does not have to sneak off, because he will let her go. She falls in love with Bond, and he seduces her. She enjoys her first act of love and wants to stay with Bond. Bond tells her, "We are just what we are, little Manty. That's all we are."⁹¹ Warren, here, shows what Amantha is, a selfish individual who is willing to make use of her body to get the best bargain. Amantha, now, assumes a new role as Bond's mistress. Amantha surrenders

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 110.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 202.

her virtue to Bond in gratitude for his kindness; it is corrupt as it enslaves. Amantha hopes that the act of love with Bond will help her to know what love is; and from love, she is hoping to gain freedom. Warren shows that her idea is not valid since she finds that her new identity does not protect her from the wiles of other men. Charles Denis, Bond's good friend, tries to rape her, but Rau-Ru, (Bond's symbol of appeasement, the adopted slave-son), prevents the act. Warren uses Rau-Ru as a sounding board to show the viciousness in Amantha. Amantha could help Rau-Ru gain his freedom, but she has not learned that freedom relies on self-definition and an ability to love. The point is that Amantha is not able to love or care for anyone; she is concerned too much with herself really to care about another's welfare. The Civil War brings about other problems for Amantha, because her world is destroyed when Bond reveals the reason for his kindness to his slaves. His real name is Alex Hanks, and he had become a slave trader merely to spite his mother. He tells Amantha about going to Africa and raiding villages and about acquiring Rau-Ru, who is only a small boy when Bond obtains him. Amantha is repulsed by the tale that Bond tells; she realizes that she does not really know Bond: Warren, in Bond's story, pictures his weaknesses and shows his corruption.

Everything that Bond does is for the sole purpose of appeasing his guilt. He does not care about anyone or anything but self. Amantha realizes this; she leaves him in search of a new identity. Even though she cannot find self or conscious identity in others, she discovers in their common illusions why she cannot find herself.

In New Orleans, she meets Tobias Sears, the next "delivering angel." Tobias has a great desire to help all people. Amantha tells him, "I can live without help. Somehow--I don't really know, how, Captain Sears--you did that for me."⁹² Again, Amantha is putting her faith in someone; she does not know that she must set herself free. Warren is being ironic since each time she says someone has set her free, she is enslaving herself. A problem arises when she must decide whether to tell Tobias about her being a Negro. She does not want to tell him as she says:

I saw myself for what I was, the half-caste, the child of the nameless woman, the slave child, the nigger gal Old Bond had cut down, ignorant, rejected, stuck in this dingy room. And I saw the face of Tobias Sears smiling in pity, but withdrawing, withdrawing into distance. Oh, lost!⁹³

This speech shows Amantha's self-pity. Again, Warren is being ironic. She is not rating herself as a person;

⁹²Ibid., p. 224.

⁹³Ibid., p. 228.

she is ashamed of her race, and she is lost until she accepts herself as a Negro. She is a Negro; she thinks she would lose him. Warren shows Amantha in a reversal of roles; she becomes the victimizer as she cannot admit the truth to Tobias. In an angry moment, she tells Seth Parton, who is Sear's roommate, to inform Sears that she is a Negro; but Seth thinks she is asking him to reveal to Sears that her father had died while having illicit relations with Miss Idell. She also asks Seth to tell Sears to come to see her if he does not mind the information about her father, and she asks that Sears not mention what has happened. Amantha and Sears are married, and noble Tobias Sears does not know that she is a Negro. In 1866, just before her marriage to Sears, Bond returns and asks her to marry him. She says that Bond has "set me free, for I was not now the lost, lonely child flung into the world, dependent on his appetite or kindness. No, I was, at last, Amantha Starr."⁹⁴ Then, she goes on to say, "It was Tobias who had set me free. His own clarity and freedom had made me free. Free from everything in the world, all the past, all my old self, free to create my new self."⁹⁵ The point is that Amantha wants others to do what she alone can do.

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 234-235.

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 234.

She is not free yet; she still does not realize when she has freedom or identity.

Again, Amantha casts her fate with a fallen "angel."

It is impossible for Tobias to set her free, as he is not free himself. Tobias Sears is an idealist; he marries Amantha. Sears is the closest portrayal to the man of understanding in the South. His bondage is to his sense of nobility and magnanimity. He is a moral cripple. He has done some good things but they have only inflated his ego. Sears has some soul searching about the ideas of General Butler and decides to set out on his own. He takes a command of his own. His command is composed entirely of Negroes. He is proud of his troops and does not mind being ostracized by the other white officers for commanding Negroes. In one case, Sears says:

And you know who was the bravest man I ever saw? He was the blackest. His name was Oliver Cromwell Jones And suppose you were just waked up and no gun in your hand yet, and you a black man, with all your memory of being black, and those devils are riding you down

Well, Oliver Cromwell Jones stood up in the middle of it, clubbing a musket--clubbed two of those devils out of the saddle by George--and rallied our boys.⁹⁶

Sears shows signs of moral consciousness; he is able to attest to the bravery of a Negro. Warren shows through

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 260.

Sears that he wants the butchery of the Civil War to mean something. Speaking for Warren, Sears says that the black question and the white question are not inseparable. He advocates having the whites and blacks live together with justice for all. Sears says, "One does not work for gratitude. One works in order to be able to live with oneself."⁹⁷ Sears also advocates that if one is to live with himself and know truth, it is not enough for one to be true to self; one has to speak that truth and act upon it to make it a living truth. Sears is Warren's picture of the well-meaning idealist. Sears does not really understand people. He is trying to follow the principles of his heart, but he is still using people to advance himself. He is merely giving lip service to some good ideas. Now, Warren proves that Amantha must be truthful in order to live with herself, but she is still having a problem of identity. Amantha says, the words, "To live with oneself, seemed, in a strange, bright way, to be healing a wound, a wound in me."⁹⁸

She decides to tell Sears that she is a Negro. In Amantha's estimation, Tobias does not like to hear

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 272.

⁹⁸Loc. cit.

her news. She says, "I felt a sense of betrayal."⁹⁹ Finally, she tells Sears that she hates him as she thinks that his sexual responses toward her are a form of alienation. Warren shows Amantha in the bitch's role; she wants to go to bed. She uses sex as a weapon. Since Sears rejects her, she loses her faith in him.

Next, Warren depicts Sears and Amantha as they are leaving New Orleans for the West. The time is 1888; they are living in Halesburg, Kansas. Everyone has changed. Amantha has not yet found peace or identity. Looking at the grave of an old Negro, she comments upon her plight and says, "I did know that nobody had ever set me free. Nobody, not even my own father, leaving me to be snatched from his graveside. Not Seth in the snowy woods. . . . Not Hamish Bond . . . Not Tobias."¹⁰⁰ Amantha goes through her "band of angels" and Warren makes her realize, "Nobody can set you free. . . . except yourself."¹⁰¹

With these words come self-knowledge. The old Negro who lies buried at her feet is not Rau-Ru, a former symbol of her bondage. The old man makes her realize that no one can hold her in bondage if she wants to be

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 295.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 362-363.

¹⁰¹Ibid., pp. 363-364.

free. She realizes when she achieves her identity that she is free. She is able to face the fact that she is a Negro. Sears, her husband, also receives moral consciousness because of a Negro. Here, Warren, again, uses the Negro as the implement of self-knowledge. Sears, once the proud champion of Negroes and the rights of all, has diminished in stature, but in the last few pages he shows signs of success as a person again. Sears, during the war has been the liberator, and the bearer of freedom. "but he had not been involved in that commanality of weakness and rejection, he had merely leaned down from his height, had inclined his white hieratic head that glimmered like a statue."¹⁰² Warren depicts Sears as a moral, conscious being. He is no longer an idealist along the fringe of life. Amantha says the case of Sears helping Josh find Old Slop, the garbage collector, is different from his actions in the Civil War. She says that Sears' act made him a brother to the Negroes and thinks that it does not matter "how it came about just so it came, just so Tobias, himself somehow suddenly gay and free and young again, had ridden off in triumph through the town."¹⁰³

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 372.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 373.

Amantha, also, through understanding Josh Lounsberry, learns her lesson and is able to reconcile the dualistic aspects of the past. She accepts her father's deed as the only possibility. With this acceptance comes a selflessness. She has not been able to bring her whiteness and blackness together. Her father's rejection and betrayal still bothers her. She, finally, realizes why her father was not able to make out papers on her. It dawns upon her that it was his love. She says:

. . . in a funny, sad, confused way, his very love for me which made my father leave me to be seized at his graveside. He had not been able to make the papers out, or the will, that would declare me less than what he had led me to believe I was, his true and beloved child.¹⁰⁴

Warren shows that Amantha's blackness is not the "taint" of Negro blood, but it is the moral hatred that causes her to use sex as a means of betraying the men who love her. Understanding at last that her father has not betrayed her, she is able to give her love and accept herself. Now, she knows that loving a man does not set one free. After one is able to love without guilt, love becomes meaningful, but one is not able to free himself until he has no sense of guilt.

¹⁰⁴Loc. cit.

With this realization about her own life, Warren ends The Band of Angels. Amantha no longer sidesteps responsibility. She now accepts her father and is able to accept herself. She enters the "community of communal brotherhood" after she has come to know herself. Miscegenation causes her self-division, and none of the reformers and self-righteous individuals can set her free. Warren is saying that the righteous individuals can help a person find consciousness but that they cannot give consciousness.

CHAPTER IV

MCCULLERS' ANALYSIS OF THE SOUTHERN CONSCIENCE

Carson McCullers' Clock Without Hands shows this author's moral consciousness better than any of her other works. Like Warren, Faulkner, and Twain, she is concerned with defining self in a society that is disjointed and disorganized. She depicts the racial situation through the views of four Southern figures, J. T. Malone, Judge Fox Clane, Sherman Pew and Jester Clane. J. T. Malone has the same problem as Amantha Starr, Ike McCaslin, and Huck Finn, because he has to find his identity, or moral consciousness, or self-awareness in a world that is unaware of its inhumanity to man. Dejected, J. T. Malone is living in a lonely world. Morally and spiritually, he is as isolated as have been the other protagonists.

J. T. is the central protagonist in Clock Without Hands, a pharmacist in Milan, Georgia. McCullers is very much concerned with the meaning of life and death in this novel and illustrates that the most important thing in life is one's finding a moral awareness through self-knowledge. By finding identity, by knowing himself, J. T. Malone, like Amantha Starr, Ike McCaslin, and Huck Finn, finds life. J. T. is a dying man in a world he never understood. The opening lines in the book are

brilliant: "Death is always the same, but each man dies in his own way. For J. T. Malone, it began in such a simple ordinary way that for a time he confused the end of life with the beginning of a new season."¹⁰⁵ McCullers defines death, in an ironic manner, as the beginning of a new season after there has been an identity of self. McCullers illustrates that Malone has been dead for some time as a spiritual being; without awareness, she reveals, there is only death. Malone is only existing in a very humdrum life. The time is 1953 and the beginning of spring. Malone believes that he has spring fever, but one day, when he faints, he decides to see a doctor, and he learns that he has leukemia. The presence of death makes Malone aware that he has done nothing in life but lose himself; and he reasons that in death, he will be lost forever. He concludes that his only choice is to find himself, so that death will have some meaning. With the doctor's news, the knell for Malone is rung, and with this news, ironically, he begins to grow as a person.

Even with the realization that he has leukemia, Malone asks, "Am I going to die with this--leukemia?"¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵Carson McCullers, Clock Without Hands, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 4.

He knows, however, before he asks. McCullers presents a pathetic and provocative scene at the beginning that does not let up until the end. McCullers concerns herself with the theme of blood, not just with the blood cancer that Malone has, but rather with the threat of miscegenation. The tension about J. T. Malone's impending death and the racial situation build up to a shattering climax in the novel. Malone's story is a tragic one; he is forty years old, and to him, death has always been something that happens to someone else. McCullers joins this problem, the knowledge of his own coming death, with that of a changing South and of men all over the world who are not aware of life or death.

With the warning of death, Malone isolates himself from his society, and is able to find a moral consciousness and an answer to his responsibilities as a moral person. He learns that he must interpret what his life is so that he may find out who he is. The truth about impending death is what the doctor gives to Malone, and truth about life is what McCullers gives to her readers.

The road to moral consciousness is for Malone a long and lonely road. For a long time, he lives in a world of illusion and goes to different doctors and only receives the same information. He rationalizes

his situation as a pharmacist. The realization that Doctor Hayden is Jewish shows one part of Malone's illusion, because he remembers a time in his past when he attended medical school and flunked out and blamed the Jewish students because they had made such high grades that he could not compete. He thinks that he is not prejudiced against Jews, but he criticizes Doctor Hayden for having changed his name: "When Jews used the good old Anglo-Saxon Southern names like that, it was somehow wrong."¹⁰⁷ He regards Doctor Hayden with dread everytime he thinks that Doctor Hayden, a Jew, will continue to live. Here, McCullers shows Malone's dislike for all who are not of his race. Malone says, "It was not so much that Kenneth Hale Hayden was a Jew as the fact that he was living and would live on--he and his like--while J. T. Malone had an incurable disease."¹⁰⁸ Not only is McCullers showing Malone's prejudiced feelings, but also she is showing how much he pities himself. Also, in the beginning, Malone hates Sherman, the blue-eyed Negro, but with death ahead, it is hard for Malone to decide what he loves and what he hates. He is a man watching the time on "a clock without hands." He does not know when he is going to die; time

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 8.

founders of Coca-Cola, who leaves the church \$500,000, and Judge Fox Clane, who is a former Congressman and a glory to the state and the South. It becomes obvious, then, that Malone is attending church because he knows that the "influential" men of the community are there. He is not going to church for any right reason. He is not going to church because of any true sense of duty; his reasons are false, much like Roxy's. He also professes to be lenient in matters of race; however, his views on Hastings and Sherman Pew illustrate that he is anything but lenient. Again, McCullers depicts Malone's prejudices in a passage which follows a meeting with Sherman Pew: "The impression on Malone was such that he did not think of him in harmless terms as a colored boy--his mind automatically supplied the harsh term, bad nigger, although the boy was a stranger to him."¹¹⁰

J. T. Malone, therefore, illustrates the first of four views of McCullers' South. Malone is depicted as being half of a man. He, like Amantha, is following a fallen angel. He sits in rapt attention, drinks liquor in the back of the drug store, and believes everything that the Judge says is right. Malone thinks that all the important decisions about the world should be decided

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 11.

upon Judge Clane's opinion. Malone is not capable of making a morally conscious decision, yet. He simply goes along with the crowd and, especially, with the Judge.

Malone discloses in his soliloquies that the Judge is one of the most influential men in the town, state, and South, but that the Judge's world is one illusion. McCullers depicts the Judge as a symbol for the Old South and is her second portrait of Southern life. The Judge is regarded by Malone as one of the wisest men in the city, but, later, Malone will change this opinion. On the other hand, the Judge reveals himself as a standard bearer for the Old South in this speech:

The wind of revolution is rising to destroy the very foundations on which the South was built. The poll tax will soon be abolished and every ignorant Nigra can vote. Equal rights in education will be the next thing. Imagine a future where delicate little white girls must share their desks with coal-black niggers in order to learn to read and write.¹¹¹

Judge Fox Clane knows that Malone is going to die with an incurable blood disease, but he does not wish to make out Malone's will. He believes that Malone has the best blood in the state; after all, Malone is one of the leading white men in the community. His argument

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 13.

is that all white men have "good" blood and the "bad" blood is found in the lower elements of society. Finally, he agrees to make out the will, and even gives Malone a remedy for his blood: "Liver is excellent for the blood. You ought to eat crisp fried calf liver and beef liver smothered in onion sauce."¹¹² McCullers is showing the Judge as a pompous windbag. He is still living with old standards; the Judge does not even know what a leucocyte is! However, his lack of knowledge, here, does not stop him from giving advice; the Judge tries to keep Malone in a world of illusion. The Judge also tries to keep his grandson in a world of illusion. After his first sexual experience, Jester asks his grandfather, "Have you ever read the Kinsey Report?"¹¹³ The Judge answers, "Its just tomfoolery and filth."¹¹⁴ Outwardly, the Judge considers the Kinsey Report to be the work of an impotent, dirty old man. Here, McCullers has the Judge reveal his hypocrisy; the Judge has read the book in his office behind the covers of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Actually, he has had the book banned at the public library.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 16.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 92.

¹¹⁴Loc. cit.

McCullers continues to show the world of illusion the Judge lives in; the Judge illustrates the Old South's view as he says, "When States' rights are trampled on by the Federal Government, then the Southern patriot is duty-bound to react. . . . or the noble standards will be betrayed."¹¹⁵ Jester wants to know what he means by noble standards. The Judge answers:

Why, boy, use your head. The noble standards of our way of life, the traditional institutions of the South. . . . The Federal Government is trying to question the legality of the Democratic Primary so that the whole balance of Southern civilization will be jeopardized. . . . The time may come in your generation--I hope I won't be here--when the educational system itself is mixed--with no color line.¹¹⁶

McCullers illustrates some of Twain's Pap Finn in this depiction of Judge Clane. McCullers has Jester show the emerging moral consciousness of the South when he answers, ". . . I can't see why colored people and white people shouldn't mix as citizens."¹¹⁷ Judge Clane is distressed, to say the least. Jester's questions and convictions are just too much for his grandfather. Jester even questions white supremacy. McCullers has Jester say:

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹⁶Loc. cit.

¹¹⁷Loc. cit.

That time I heard about when that Negro from Cuba was making a talk in the House I was so proud of you. When the other Congressmen stood up you sat back farther in your chair, propped your feet up and lighted a cigar. I thought it was wonderful. I was so proud of you. But now I see it differently. It was rude and bad manners. I am ashamed for you when I remember it.¹¹⁸

Jester tells the Judge that he suspects the policies of the Old South have caused his father to commit suicide. One sees, therefore, that the Judge is a pathetic figure, left with nothing but an old life of illusions. Young Jester is doing much to shatter this world. The Judge is very pitiful as he reveals his crowning dream of dreams. As much Confederate money as he can find is hidden away by the Judge. He dreams of being re-elected to Congress and says:

I am going to have a bill introduced in the House of Representatives if I win the next election that will redeem all Confederate monies with the proper adjustment for the increase of cost-of-living nowadays. It will be for the South what F. D. R. intended to do in his New Deal. . . . It's the vision of a great statesman.¹¹⁹

Jester is shocked by this dream. His heart balances between pity for the Judge and his natural repulsion for madness. The Judge looks at him and thinks of the two times in his life that he has been rejected. He says, "I never thought I'd hear a grandson of mine speak

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 32.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 38.

as you have done. You said you didn't see why the races shouldn't mix. . . . Would you let your sister marry a Nigra buck if you had a sister?"¹²⁰ Thus, the old Judge makes the traditional circuit and asks the traditional question about marrying a Negro. But the answer that McCullers has Jester give is new and shows an emerging consciousness in the South, for it shows that racial justice is the important quest.

Being a judge, Fox Clane, thinks that he knows all there is to know about justice, and he believes justice to be a delusion, a chimera. Passion is more important to him. He thinks that the young white Southerners do not have the passion any more; the young people have cut themselves off from the ideals of their ancestors and are denying the heritage of their blood.¹²¹ McCullers illustrates that disregarding the past is a means for achieving moral consciousness. The Judge is such an old piteous dote that one is moved to sympathy for him. The Judge relates an incident in New York where he has seen a Negro man sitting and eating and laughing with a white girl. This is just too much for Judge Fox Clane. He leaves New York and swears never to go there again,

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 39-40.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 41.

and to make matters worse, Jester says that he would not have minded something like this innocent meeting. The Judge says:

That's what I meant. You have no passion . . . Your half-baked notions of so-called justice will be forgotten . . . then you will be my grandson with whom I am well pleased.¹²²

Clearly, Jester does not want to accept the passion that comes with a cursed tradition. As Ike McCaslin does, Jester repudiates the tradition.

Another side of the Judge is given by McCullers in his search for a wife. McCullers shows that he is still living in the past like many white Southerners. His wife has sung in the choir; thus, his choice for his next wife would have to sing in a church choir. His excuse for going to different churches is, "I like to be informed about what goes on in various religions and creeds."¹²³ He is a false individual; everyone in town knows that the Judge is looking for a wife, but consciously, the Judge, himself, will not admit that he wants to get married, even as he compares the qualities of the available women with the qualities of his late wife. By showing the Judge's quirks, McCullers continues to expose his values and his desire for a past that

¹²²Loc. cit.

¹²³Ibid., pp. 52-53.

can never be again. Many of the Judge's hopes are to be broken because he decides to remain alone in the present, live in the past, and give all of his love to his grandson, Jester.

The clock is running out for the Judge. He is called a reactionary by the Atlanta Constitution, and his grandson Jester, a perceptive and sympathetic individual, tells him that he is sorry. He realizes that his grandfather is living in the past. However, Jester's views show that he agrees with the Atlanta Constitution. The Judge is lost, but he does not even realize that he is lost. He thinks that his idea for restoring the South by the redemption of Confederate money can be implemented. His courage has increased with the passage of time just as his illusions have grown. The Judge hires Sherman to become his amanuensis. Sherman does not mind this job until the Judge, although, unthinking, as usual, about others, treats him like a servant. The Judge asks Sherman about his own thoughts for redeeming the South. McCullers has Sherman say, "All I would say is that your plan would turn back the clock for a hundred years."¹²⁴ The Judge wants to turn back the clock because he is living in the past and tells Sherman that he believes

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 161.

in slavery. Sherman thinks that the theories about the happy enslaved Negro are false. The Judge is oblivious to anyone's feelings except his own. He does not realize that Sherman is beginning to hate him.

The Judge is in a state of rejection. He has called Sherman "son" four times, but Sherman is not able to take up the burdens of the Old South. The Judge should know that he is asking too much, because he remembers a time in the past when he had wanted his son, Johnny, to accept the old traditions, but Johnny was not able to do so. Johnny had fought for the Negro's life with the truth of the law. The Judge said, then, that Johnny's truth could not sway "twelve good men and true." The "twelve good men and true" cannot be wrong, but the Judge remembers a time when "twelve good men and true" sentenced another Negro to death; only to have a different man confess to the rape for which he has condemned the Negro to death. McCullers illustrates that the "twelve good men and true" are warped in their concept of justice when it comes to judging the Negro.

McCullers uses the Judge and Malone to introduce Sherman Pew, who provides a third view of the South. Malone says, "Have you ever seen a blue-eyed nigma?"¹²⁵

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 20.

The Judge answers: "Sherman Pew, that's the nigger's name, is of no interest to me. However, I am thinking of taking him on as a houseboy because of the shortage of help."¹²⁶ The Judge further states that Sherman is a "woods' colt," but mentions nothing more about his parentage. McCullers reveals that Sherman is a foundling who is left in the Holy Ascension Church. Sherman, the blue-eyed Negro proves to be one of the most important characters in the novel; he is the instrument of moral consciousness. McCullers gives another look at life and death in the South in her portrait of Sherman, symbolically the new, young, and bitter Negro in the South. Sherman is living in a world of illusion as Malone and the Judge are. A seventeen year old, Sherman drinks Lord Calvert since the whiskey is advertised for "The Man of Distinction." Sherman does not know who he is. All he wants is to be "somebody." Sherman is a man of action, and would like to be a Golden Nigerian. McCullers identifies the Golden Nigerians as a kind of protest group against racial discrimination. Sherman tells of belonging to the Nigerians and stands up for his rights as a person. He cites an example of trying to register for voting; he tells of receiving a cardboard coffin

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 21.

with his name on it. He wants to identify himself with a cause, for he has no roots; he is unstable emotionally and tries to build up himself with affectations, fantasies, and delusions of grandeur. He lies about playing with the legendary jazz musician, Bix Beiderbecke, and Jester knows that he is lying, since Sherman is not old enough to have voted or to have played in the band with Bix! Jester, the Judge's grandson, hits Sherman beneath his hard shell: "It must give you a funny feeling, not to know who your mother was."¹²⁷ Sherman says that it is no bother to him, but McCullers shows that Sherman has done nothing but search for his mother for the last seventeen years. Sherman is much like the Judge; both of them are pathetic. Sherman represents symbolically the loss of identity for the Negro in the New South. McCullers illustrates that his problems have come about because of a corrupt tradition in the South. Sherman has a difficult life; he reflects: "I register every single vibration that happens to those of my race. I call it my black book."¹²⁸ Since he is without any ties, poor Sherman identifies himself with all of the tragedies of his race. Jester is not able to cope with the anger in Sherman; and in fact, his influence on

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 78.

¹²⁸Ibid., p.

Sherman is weakened by his helpless homosexual attraction for Sherman. Again, it seems that love on the physical level is impossible for the characters in this book. For example, Malone is not able to have sexual relations or ideal love with his wife. Furthermore, the Judge is not successful. Sherman worships Zippo, but is rejected by him. Jester seems to love Sherman, but Sherman repulses him. McCullers implies that the moral cripple is also a sexual cripple. She shows the bitterness in the South's new Negro as Sherman, in angry greeting, says, ". . . I hate, I hate, I hate."¹²⁹ Sherman feels that too many people are dead from the neck up and that life is hell if one is a Negro.

While Sherman is living with the Judge, Jester grows to understand him and sympathizes even more with Sherman when Sherman says, "A lot of my life I've had to make up stories because the real was . . . too hard to take."¹³⁰ McCullers depicts Jester, the fourth view of the South, as a sensitive, compassionate, and moral person. Jester is beginning to find himself. Now, he is not as lonely as he has been; but the Judge and Sherman and J. T. Malone are still searching in a world of illusion. Their illusions compensate for what they cannot face in life.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 167.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 141.

McCullers presents the South in all of its cursed traditional aspects in Judge Fox Clane. In Jester Clane, McCullers shows a New South that is becoming consciously aware of the Negro as a person. Jester is an isolated character from the rest in the story. Through his isolation from society, Jester is able to let his heart guide him; he is also able to make perfunctory statements on J. T. Malone, Judge Clane, and Sherman Pew.

After McCullers introduces J. T. Malone, Judge Fox Clane, Sherman Pew, and Jester Clane, she takes a final glance at each in a grand denouement. She brings everyone together in the trial and the death of Sherman Pew. Here the Judge is still so twisted in his visions of the glorious South that he cannot see the evil in it; he is too much a part of the system. He can remember the time when his son rejected him, but he still is not completely sure why there was such a rejection, if there was one. Johnny, his son, had said: "I have wondered how responsible you are . . . I never wanted to be your son."¹³¹ Even these words cannot pierce the Judge's shell. He remembers the trial. Johnny had said:

The fact is that the case involves a white man and a Negro man and the inequality that lies between the handling of such a situation. . . . The

¹³¹Ibid., p. 187.

Constitution itself is on trial. . . . These words are the law of our country. I, as a citizen and lawyer, can neither add to nor subtract from them. Four score and seven years ago. . . .¹³²

The Judge remembers striking the Gettysburg Address from the record. Johnny asked:

For more than a century these words of the Constitution have been the law, but words are powerless unless they are enforced by law, and after this long century our courts are stately halls of prejudice and legalized persecution as far as the Negro is concerned. The words have been spoken. The ideas have been shaped. And how long will be the lag between the words and the idea and justice?¹³³

Johnny revealed that he was the emerging consciousness of the South. McCullers, through Johnny, tells the world about the South. She reflects moral consciousness as she shows her characters struggling for something that is good and moral.

The Judge knows that the verdict is going to be guilty, for in the South's old tradition, if there is so much as a hint of rape, the Negro is always guilty. The "twelve good men and true" find Sherman Jones, the Negro, guilty of murder because they feel that he is "too friendly with the deceased's wife." Johnny falls in love with Mrs. Little, but he is denied for she loves the Negro Sherman Jones. The Judge does not understand this situation because Jones is black and Mrs. Little

¹³²Ibid., p. 196.

¹³³Ibid., p. 197.

is white. Sherman Pew is the bastard son of the relationship between Sherman Jones and Mrs. Little. It is a week later that Johnny commits suicide, after Mrs. Little tells him that she loves Sherman Jones and shows him the dark-skinned Sherman Pew. McCullers shows one that the Judge and the Old South have ruined Johnny. The Judge's mind is still closed to the fact of his son's suicide. The Judge has not learned anything from the tragedy in the past; since he is living in the past, he, therefore, cannot learn from the present.

McCullers shows that Sherman is still a lost soul. He is working for the Judge, but their relationship is not good. Sherman still will not write the Judge's letters about raising the Confederacy. One day, while he is in the Judge's office, Sherman discovers who his parents are. He is then, highly insulted; his mother is not a famous Negro, but a white woman. He does not know what to do. He has hated white people for so long, but the blue eyes link him to the truth of his birth. He wants "to do something, do something, do something."¹³⁴ His hate is so strong that he wants to do something for revenge. First, he drinks water from a fountain that is for whites; next, he goes to a men's room for whites.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 213.

He even cuts down on the Judge's insulin shots. But this action is not drastic enough. He hangs Jester's dog. His excuse is as follows: "Why don't nobody care about me. I do things, don't nobody notice. . . . People pet that goddamned dog more than they notice me."¹³⁵ His final plan earns for him the attention which he craves. He moves into an all white neighborhood. Everyone in town notices Sherman.

McCullers shows that J. T. Malone is still looking for a way to cure cancer. He goes to Johns Hopkins to have a final check-up. All the doctors confirm Dr. Hayden's diagnosis of leukemia. Malone picks up Kierkegaard's Sickness Unto Death. In it he reads, "The greatest danger, that of losing one's own self, may pass off quietly as if it were nothing; every other loss, that of an arm, a leg, five dollars, a wife, etc., is sure to be noticed."¹³⁶ Unable to think of the reality of his own death, he realizes that he has lost himself. With this understanding, Malone then sets out to find his identity. McCullers gives him the chance after Sherman has moved into an all white neighborhood. The men of the town have a meeting at Malone's drug store to decide "who is going to do it." Malone expects the

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 216.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 147.

meeting to be anything but what it turns out to be. He expects the leading citizens of the town, not the overalled, raggedy, drunken group. The place takes on the atmosphere of a carnival. Malone recalls something unpleasant about each man who is there. Malone sees the ugliness in each individual who is present. The Judge opens the meeting with the speech. He says: "Little by little we white citizens are being inconvenienced, even gravely put upon. Servants are scarce as hen's teeth, and you have to pay. . . ."137 Then, he realizes that these people do not have servants. This is the wrong approach; the group at the meeting do not have enough money to hire servants. He starts again, with the following: "Do you want coal-black niggers moving in next door. . . . Do you want your wife carrying on behind the back fence with nigger bucks . . . This is the hour of decision. Who is running this town, us or the niggers?"138 Malone wants to talk with Sherman, not "bomb him out." Malone is out-voted. He draws, and pulls out the slip with the "X." Moral consciousness comes to J. T. Malone because of Sherman Pew. J. T. rises above the group and says that he will not kill Sherman. J. T. does not have long to live, but he is not to be intimidated. He is concerned

137 Ibid., p. 222.

138 Ibid., p. 223.

about his soul. The Judge comes to his rescue and says that all of them should do it together; it would not be an individual problem then. J. T. says, "But it is the same thing. Whether one person does it or a dozen, it's the same thing if it's murder."¹³⁹ Sam Lank decides to do it to save argument.

Jester, who has sneaked in to hear everything, runs away to warn Sherman. Jester, who is sympathetic and understanding about the plight of the Negro has said, "I have thought often that if Christ was born now, he would be colored."¹⁴⁰ Jester tries to tell Sherman that he is not like his grandfather and that he is a Southerner of good will. McCullers has Jester saying:

I respect colored people every whit as much as I do white people. . . . Respect colored people even more than I do white people on account of what they have gone through. . . . I am trying to level with you about how I feel on the racial question.¹⁴¹

Even though Sherman realizes that Jester is a morally conscious person, Sherman will not leave, for at last, Sherman's heart is telling him: "I have done something, done something, done something."¹⁴² Sherman asks, "Why

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 228.

the . . . do you care?"¹⁴³ Jester explains that he cares because of his heart. Sherman says, "I sorry about your dog."¹⁴⁴ Jester cannot convince Sherman to leave. Jester runs from the house. Later, in the evening, Sam kills Sherman with the bomb.

Jester, then, decides to kill Sam Lanks, but Sam is such a pathetic example of "poor white ignorant trash" that the morally conscious Jester is not able to kill him. Instead, he feels compassion for Sam, who has fourteen kids. Sam is a grotesque character, but pitiful. All of their married life, he and his wife have tried to have quints, because, then, he reasons, they would not have to work any more. They are successful at getting twins and triplets, but they cannot beget the quints. Jester laughs in despair, and his compassionate heart will not let him kill. Jester, the compassionate, moral, young, white southerner evolves from the chaos. For Jester, the story of the trial and Sherman's death answers, "Who am I? What am I? Where am I going?"¹⁴⁵ This is enough to bring maturity. He is no longer dreaming of saving Marilyn Monroe in Switzerland and riding through New York during a ticket parade; he has

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 229.

¹⁴⁴Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 204.

put away childish things. He decides to enter law and be like his father not his grandfather. J. T. Malone, with his momentous decision, becomes a man; not a man watching a clock without hands. Time means nothing to him. He realizes that with life comes death, but if one has moral consciousness, there is no death. J. T. is dying, but he rallies long enough to listen to the Judge, who is giving a speech on the Supreme Court decision to integrate all public schools. The Judge stands with the microphone in his hand, but all he can say is the following:

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. . . . Why are you poking me. . . Quit poking me.¹⁴⁶

Too late, the Judge realizes what he is saying. He is so driven by guilt that he has said the wrong thing. He wants to say something else, but the speech which he had earlier squelched in his son, now comes out. J. T. dies, remarking that the old Judge has not been responsible to his "livingness." J. T. Malone had become a responsible person; he had made his moral choice.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 240.

McCullers discussed the problems of miscegenation, homosexuality, racial violence, suicide, and murder, but her book contains much more. It shows a revolution in Southern customs. By looking at two men and two boys, McCullers examines an evil system that can ruin an innocent young man. Everyone goes toward his destiny through Pew, the blue-eyed Negro. McCullers explores the minds, the desires, and the dreams of man.

These four Southerners, J. T. Malone, Judge Fox Clane, Jester Clane, and Sherman Pew, interact and come alive in McCullers' examination of moral consciousness. J. T. Malone, for a long while does not do anything but exist. The tragedy of human waste is depicted in his character. Sherman does not ever have the chance to live. All he can do is to die for what he believes. Jester, however, finds his identity, and he is able to live. The Judge does not find happiness; he is left in loneliness. He knows who he is; he realizes himself too late for a change. J. T. Malone is the unwilling hero; paralleling his death is the internal struggle for self. Through intense moral suffering, he sees the loss of self is far worse than death. Malone lives as Jester does. Malone and Jester identify themselves with something beyond themselves. Their instrument of moral consciousness is Sherman Pew; and through him Malone

CHAPTER V

REQUIEM FOR "THE GREAT ALIBI"

Twain, Faulkner, Warren, and McCullers show in their respective works, the subtle and open customs that make their protagonists assume some type of social facade that obliterates and depersonalizes their true selves. The burden of a cursed tradition is placed on Huck, Roxy, Ike, Amantha, Malone, and Jester. Roxy is the only major protagonist who is not able to rise above the cursed tradition of impressing the Negro; Roxy puts her faith in the values of the society of Dawson's Landing. But these values are corrupt as Huck, Ike, Amantha, Malone, and Jester show by rejecting them.

Each author reflects the pure heart, the permanent and unchanging aspect of human nature. Each author illustrates that the particular nor the universal cannot be slighted without a resultant dislocation of moral vision. All of these authors transfer their private awareness into universal truths. The mind of each author relates itself to the temporal items; and they conclude that it is the duty of the heart to seize the meaning behind the trivial items. The area of the mind produces knowledge; the area of the heart, as Twain, Faulkner, Warren, and McCullers state with their characters, reveals

truth. This truth is simple and universal; it is the fountainhead of all truly humane ethical conduct. The truth of the heart, as each author shows, carries its own rational and immediate conviction.¹⁴⁷ Huck, Amantha, Ike, J. T. Malone, and Jester Clane attempt to live by the truth of the heart. The price that each morally conscious character in the novels must pay is that of loneliness: They are all alienated in their disjointed world.

Robert Penn Warren is the only author in this study who has depicted, in a non-fiction work, the morally conscious Southerner. Warren's book, The Legacy of the Civil War, shows the heritage left to all Americans. In his work, he clearly states a need for an understanding of the Civil War: "The Civil War is, for the American imagination, the great single event of our history."¹⁴⁸ The Civil War is important, because it continues to live. Its problems are not solved. Many of the problems today grow out of what Warren calls the Great Alibi in the South and the Treasury of Virtue in the North. "By the Great Alibi the South explains, condones, and transmutes

¹⁴⁷Olga Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner, p. 212.

¹⁴⁸Robert P. Warren, The Legacy of the Civil War, p. 1.

everything."¹⁴⁹ Warren uses Hookworm, and illiteracy as two examples that are explained away by the Great Alibi. By using the mythic Great Alibi, the Southerner turns defeat into victory and defects into virtues. "The costly consequences of the Great Alibi are found, of course, in connection with race."¹⁵⁰ The Southerner feels that he is guiltless when it comes to race. Some Southerners are changing, but too many are frozen in their attitude. The white Southerner is trapped in a sad history, and, as one says, "I pray to feel different, but so far I can't help it."¹⁵¹ Warren wonders if the Southerner ever feels as if he is caught on some treadmill and is being doomed to eternal effort without progress. Warren wants the white South to consider the possibility ". . . that whatever degree of dignity and success a Negro achieves actually enriches, in the end, the life of the white man and enlarges his own worth as a human being."¹⁵² The Great Alibi rusts away the will for far too many white Southerners to face problems. All is explained--and transmuted. Too many are not able to face reality and see the dignity of the individual:

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 58.

"We all seem to be doomed to reenact, in painful automatism, the errors of our common past."¹⁵³

The Treasury of Virtue is the psychological truth that the North uses in visualizing the Civil War. Because of this myth, the Northerner, many times, does not become a morally conscious individual. He feels redeemed for having been human. Warren points out: "It is forgotten that only the failure of Northern volunteering overcame the powerful prejudice against accepting Negro troops, and allowed 'Sambo's Right to be Kilt.'"¹⁵⁴ Warren advocates getting rid of the myths from the Civil War days. If one is able to form self knowledge without using the old myths, he is becoming morally conscious. Warren wants to form a community of men outside the old myths, because as yet there is doubt and many forms of self-deception in the United States. Warren shows moral consciousness or self identity as he says that an ideal emerges out of history. The ideal is a form of humility of selfness that ". . . draws us to the glory of the human effort to win meaning from the complex and confused motives of men."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 108.

When there are enough people in the South, like the four authors in this study, who follow their hearts and make the Civil War mean something, the entire Southern society will become capable of taking up its moral commitments, stamping out the cursed "traditions," and showing itself to be a society of worth with people who create in Faulkner's words, ". . . the communal anonymity of brotherhood." In the South, a communal and anonymous brotherhood of man can be formed if each individual will value his social identity less and accept responsibility for the actions in the past as well as for the actions in his time. The expiation of the Old South's traditions can be traced from Huck Finn through J. T. Malone. The guilt of the impressment of the Negro can be traced from Twain through McCullers. The guilt (of the impressment of the Negro) is in the annals of time and can never be completely erased. The decision to repudiate the old customs must occur if a true moral consciousness about the Negro is to emerge in the South. There is great difficulty in such an effort, for the opposing forces to moral consciousness exercise a harsh pressure over any individual who wishes to follow the conventions of his heart; but, an emerging consciousness in literature is the first step toward changing a traditional society.

The Southern authors discussed in this paper have a high moral sense. Moral judgment, they find, is a facet of their identity. Seeing their identity as members of the white South, Twain, Faulkner, Warren, and McCullers rise above a traditional South, follow their hearts and find themselves in a world that is dislocated by using the Negro as an instrument to evoke a sense of moral consciousness. Each author records a moral consciousness that reflects "the communal anonymity of brotherhood."

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