FAULKNER AND THE MILITARY: A STUDY OF FOUR NOVELS

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FAULKNER AND THE MILITARY:
A STUDY OF FOUR NOVELS

An Abstract

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Cheryl Clapper Fardink

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ABSTRACT

Although the military hierarchy is frequently cited as the epitome of man's rapacity, it also reflects another side of his nature. Dedicated to self-preservation and the extension of its mundane power and glory, it also expresses the human capacity for sacrifice, honor, and fidelity.[1] Because of the paradoxical nature of the military Faulkner's own view of the military was ambivalent. Several of the author's works, namely The Unvanquished, Sartoris, Soldier's Pay, and A Fable reveal Faulkner's view of the military as exemplary of man's dual nature. The Stockholm Address further demonstrates his idea of man's inner conflicts which indicate the duality of man's nature.

The Unvanquished provides the chronological genesis of Faulkner's fascination with the military as indicative of man's dual nature. Faulkner's love for the Civil War is revealed through the pageantry, glory, and honor, while

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[1]Edmond L. Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner (New York: Noonday Press, 1964), p. 283.

his hatred for it is revealed through the rapacity, violence, and self-aggrandizement.

Sartoris and Soldier's Pay, both set after World War One, deal with Faulkner's ambivalence toward a military system which fosters repugnance in a society for its returning veterans. Alienation from society and the cruel treatment of the returning soldiers offer insight into the theme by providing human conflicts set against the martial background. The effects of war and the military structure on the characters illuminate harshly the contrast in man's nature. Faulkner depicts characters torn between the romance of honorable goals and the reality of social ostracism.

A Fable, apparently written to serve as a testimony to the ideas in the Stockholm Address, makes Faulkner's most vivid statement of man's dual nature in relation to the military theme.

A study of these novels reveals the extent to which Faulkner's ambivalent attitude toward the military shapes his concept of man's dual nature.

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Cheryl Clapper Fardink entitled "Faulkner and the Military: A Study of Four Novels." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

Charles C. Holt
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

Edward E. Irwin
Second Committee Member

Albert J. Bekus
Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Council:

Wayne E. Stamp
Dean of the Graduate School

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Jeffrey Reynolds, whose love and friendship inspired me to continue working and whose death made me realize what a gift it is to be able to work.

C. C. F.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Few critics note Faulkner's obsession with the military, an obsession which underscores and enforces his dualistic view of man. The depiction of this dualism is necessary for Faulkner to show the "human heart in conflict with itself," a subject he endorses in the Stockholm Address. He hoped that man could transcend his evil nature but never forget it, because the awareness of its possibility prevents man from becoming totally evil. Addressing a group of cadets at West Point, Faulkner clarified this point: "To never be afraid of dirt or filth, or baseness, or cowardice, but always try to be better than that, to be braver, to be compassionate, but not to be afraid of it, not to avoid it. I think the worst perversion of all is to retire to the ivory tower."[1] It is the purpose of this thesis to demonstrate how Faulkner's conception of man's conflicting nature extends to his use of the military motif in The Unvanquished, Sartoris, Soldier's Pay, and A Fable. The Stockholm Address

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[1]Robert Ashley and Joseph L. Fant, III, eds., Faulkner at West Point (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 55.

crystalizes Faulkner's insistence that man's goodness must be tempted by grief and inner conflict; Faulkner's man is not pre-lapsarian.

Because of Faulkner's Southern heritage, the military has always been an important part of his life. His grandfather, Colonel Faulkner, started the tradition of military service which William continued by enlisting in World War One as an aviator for the Royal Air Force. Faulkner could never escape the lure of the military, nor did he want to. He was both fascinated and appalled by it. It is this ambivalence which flows from him into his characters, shaping them into dualistic creatures serving good and bad, acting both valiantly and selfishly. Faulkner recognized the glory and the grandeur of military service while simultaneously acknowledging the violence of rapacity; his view of man complements his view of the military.

The military setting provides the background against which Faulkner creates the struggle of man at war with himself. The tenets in the Stockholm Address correlate with the military theme; man's universal grieving could find no more perfect climate than war. Through the war setting, Faulkner depicts man struggling to endure in a world which recognizes honor and in the same breath fosters dishonor. Faulkner creates these struggles hoping to

illuminate for the reader the conflicts in the world which require strength and action because, "It's his [the writer's] privilege, his dedication too, to uplift man's heart by showing man the record of the experiences of the human heart, the travail of man within his environment, with his fellows, with himself, in such moving terms that the lessons of honesty and courage are evident and obvious."[2] Discussion of the four novels will examine these beliefs in relation to Faulkner's views of man and the military.

The Unvanquished shows Faulkner's dualistic views of man and the military in a Civil War setting. The traditional code of the South which insists on glory, honor, courage, and chivalry balances the side of violence, greed, and evil. The intrinsic nature of the South's cause illuminates an irony which explains the dualism: professing to defend the glory and the honor of the South, the soldiers and statesmen were acting rapaciously to ensure the future enslavement of human beings to further their economic growth. Also, the defense of Southern agrarian interests against the powerful industrialization of the North caused the Southerner to act selfishly and violently.

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[2]Ashley and Fant, p. 48.

The characters in The Unvanquished are the embodiment of this view. Colonel John Sartoris is the champion of the Southern cause and the embodiment of its mystique. Gallant in uniform, chivalrous in manner, the Colonel leaves his home to defend the Southern way of life. At first only the glamorous and honor-bound side of the Colonel is portrayed; but when the reality of war vitiates the fantasy, the less favorable side of his nature materializes. Driven by ambition, the Colonel loses much of his honor and becomes a man who has killed too much. Violence is the new status quo.

The Colonel's son, Bayard, reveres his father in the beginning of the novel. Impressed by his father's stature and position, Bayard sees the war and the "Cause" as manifestations of the supreme good; but he soon realizes that honor and courage entail greed and violence. He repudiates the traditional code of the South so ingrained in his mind by not reacting with violence to defend the honor of the family.

Other characters react to the military with mixed emotions. Knowing it to represent the defense of the South's honor, they find it difficult to adjust to the destruction and total annihilation the military causes. Faulkner portrays the Yankees in the same manner, refusing

to allow stereotyped characters to detract from the novel. The Yankees have families with conflicts; duality is just as present in them.

Sartoris, Faulkner's third novel, traces the Sartoris family through the catastrophic First World War. Faulkner's genius crystalizes in this novel as he portrays the brutal effects of a man torn by war, ravaged by guilt engendered by failure to live up to traditional expectations. Bayard Sartoris, Colonel John Sartoris' great-grandson, returns from the war an emotional cripple, alienated from a society he cannot live in, nor understand. Glory and honor are the only realities this society can fathom.

Soldier's Pay explores this same theme with the return of another World War One veteran, Donald Mahon. Grossly scarred and deformed from the fighting, he, too, is alienated by a hypocritical society which simultaneously excoriates and apotheosizes him. Faulkner's motif of dualities depends on the discrepancy between society's conception of heroism and the physical appearance of the returning soldier. When the veteran is crippled, blind, and ugly, society flees, offering only gawking curiosity and forced amenities. Once symbols of the glorious cause, the soldiers are now only ubiquitous reminders of the brutal altercation and of the nation's insanity. Torn

and alienated, the people closely affected by the war are isolated, trying to struggle back into a society they can no longer understand because of man's dual nature enunciated by his ambivalent attitudes toward the military and what it represents.

The fourth novel, A Fable, makes Faulkner's most vivid statement about the condition of man and the military. Apparently written to illustrate the ideas presented in the Stockholm Address, A Fable clearly defines the dualities intrinsic in man and the military. War is the culmination of glory, honor, and sacrifice. But it is also the breeding ground on which rapacity, violence, and selfishness fester. Through the characters of the corporal and the supreme general, Faulkner can personify each side of the duality: the corporal represents the esoteric realm of philosophical good and selfless aims, while the general represents pragmatic man attempting to endure in the world. The conflict between these two men symbolizes the conflict within the hearts of individual men. Faulkner contends endurance is possible through acceptance of man's dual nature, coupled with sublimation of evil tendencies and propagation of the good.

CHAPTER II

THE UNVANQUISHED

Chronologically, The Unvanquished is Faulkner's first novel to display his dualistic view of man in relation to the military. Set in the Civil War, a grossly brutal war counter-pointed by chivalric tradition and pageantry, The Unvanquished exemplifies the theme on many levels. The Southern setting contributes prominently to the dualism through an apparently idyllic status quo which involves the enslavement of human beings. Furthermore, an analysis of the main characters, John Sartoris; his son, Bayard Sartoris; Rosa Millard; and Drusilla Sartoris, reveals Faulkner's dualistic view of man on many planes and in relation to different aspects of the military. The main tenets in the Stockholm Address, endurance and the human heart in conflict, weave a unifying pattern into the theme.

No study of the impact of the military on the characters in The Unvanquished can be attempted without a close examination of the Southern setting. The South is a land which fosters the endurance theme; its people were mostly of hard stock, and they were dedicated to their land.

These traditional Southern feelings are exemplified even further in the treatment of the South's lost cause, the War. The South was a land being vanquished from within and without. The Northern move for industrialization was crushing the agrarian South. Also, the moral failings of the planter aristocracy and slavery contributed to starting the war. But the planters never lost their sense of glory and grandeur throughout the novel.[1] Their lives exemplified the traditional moral code of the South: one must live and die courageously and keep the virtues of love, honor, duty and kindness to women in the chivalric manner foremost in one's thinking. Honor is maintained for its own sake.

However, these Southern patriarchs soon realize maintaining honor for its own sake is an ephemeral dream. The reality of losing homeland and family drives the men to violent and rapacious acts. Under Faulkner's guidance, their dual nature becomes manifest, replacing the monistic persuasion of the genteel country lord. Man's values are challenged, and he reacts either with honor or dishonor.

The intrinsic irony of the South's war, fighting for economic security based on human bondage, subverts honor,

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[1]Douglas T. Miller, "Faulkner and the Civil War: Myth and Reality," American Quarterly, 15 (Summer 1963), p. 201.

revealing greed and desperation. The land is everything to the Southerner; in danger of losing it, like an animal, he will kill, maim, destroy--anything to preserve the status quo.

Because of the Southerner's love for his land, the need to maintain this land becomes sacred; but the dream of honor is replaced with the need, the obsession, to survive. The Stockholm Address enunciates this feeling, stressing the passion for survival in the face of grievous human suffering and conflict. In a society which holds two things sacrosanct, land and honor, the loss of both causes devastating consequences. Man is divided by his animal need to survive and his human desire to maintain honor. Almost no other culture felt the blow of war as did the Southern culture. The War hit the South with the fierceness of a locomotive--violent, dirty, and unyielding to all forces. It continues when nothing else can, crushing in its path men, honor, tradition, and dreams. The once valiant war to save the just and courageous South becomes a proving ground of wits matched with wits, in the game of sheer survival. Young Bayard describes this metamorphosis:

> Then it was later still and Denny was shaking me and I remember how I thought then that he did not seem to need sleep either, that just by having been exposed to war for three or four

> seconds he had even at just ten acquired that quality which Father and the other men brought back from the front--the power to do without sleep and food both, needing only the opportunity to endure.[2]

All the characters in The Unvanquished undergo this metamorphosis; some transcend to the level of regaining honor, some do not. All experience the crippling effects of war and the military. Those who can transcend these effects after seeing the evil are Faulkner's endurers.

At the core of this conflict is the archetypical Southern colonel, John Sartoris. He is the embodiment of the Southern officer. His son, Bayard, describes him as

> . . . the man who to twelve years old looked bigger than most folks could hope. . .standing in the stirrups above the smoke-colored diminishing thunderbolt, beneath the arcy and myriad glitter (p. 14).

He is the man who transcends the common; the symbol of courage who will save the South, win the War, protect the women, and maintain the honor of the Confederacy. In the Civil War South a man like the Colonel embodies a "curious mixture of violence, commercial enterprise and Southern gentility."[3] For these men, the traditional

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[2]William Faulkner, The Unvanquished (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 113. All quotations are from this edition and will be referred to by page numbers within the text.

[3]Irving Malin, William Faulkner: An Interpretation (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 15.

Southern code is often an excuse for blustering gallantry and violence. He is a public figure who inspires simultaneously fear and respect. Uncle Buck McCaslin expresses this feeling.

> 'Hear of him!' Uncle Buck shouted, 'Who ain't heard of him in this county? Get the Yankees to tell you about him sometime. By Godfrey, he raised the first damn regiment in Mississippi out of his own pocket, and took'em to ferginny and whipped Yankees right and left with 'em before he found out that what he had bought and paid for wasn't a regiment of soldiers but a congress of politicians and fools (p. 58).
> . . . I won't say God to take care of you and your Grandma on the road, boy, because by Godfrey, you don't need God's help. All you got to say is, "I'm John Sartoris' boy, rabbits hunt the canebrake" and then watch the blue bellied sons of bitches fly' (p. 59).

Through the eyes of his relatives and cohorts, John Sartoris is the pinnacle of glory and thrilling excitement. The dashing uniforms, the authority, the horses, the weapons, the pageantry, all create the illusion of fantasy involving the war. The reality of war has not confronted them yet. In the beginning all that matters is saving the homeland; the honor of the South must be defended. Because of his Southern heritage and position, Colonel Sartoris must act like a gentleman. However, when the reality of the War surfaces, endurance takes precedence over gentility. No longer is the uniform clean and dashing, the guns idle and

shiny. The rapacity and violence so akin to war replaces the exhausted honor. Defending the South is not the glamorous adventure it appeared to be.

Just as the Colonel is kind and chivalrous to women and children, he is ruthless and cunning to the outlander and enemy. This dualism is based on the concept of Southern honor and the need for self-preservation. The necessary violence is justified, as the Southerner realizes that honor alone will not ward off the opposition. The Southerner and the Yankee are faced with a war that neither has seen before--nor expected. Andrew Lytle offers an explanation.

> The Civil War was the first unrestricted war in America. For the first time America gave way to total war and with that total war our civilization moved toward dissolution of all forms of order.[4]

With this total dissolution of order comes acrimony and killing. Honor for honor's sake is sublimated in favor of basic survival. The code of the South is supreme when life is not challenged. Ideally some men can change from honor to violence, and regain honor and decency when the killing is over; the Colonel cannot. Violence is his new status quo. As Bayard matures his view of his father changes. Once the greatest hero in the South, Bayard's father,

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[4]Andrew Lytle, "The Son of Man: He Will Prevail," Sewanee Review, 63 (1955), p. 116.

affected grossly by the war and by violence, becomes a demented man, tormented by killing too much.

> . . . with that spurious forensic air of lawyers and the intolerant eyes which in the last two years had acquired that transparent film which the eyes of carniverous animals have and from behind which they look at the world which no ruminant ever sees, perhaps dares to see, which I have seen before in the eyes of men who have killed too much, who have killed so much that never again as long as they live will they ever be alone (p. 265).

The Colonel cannot be one of Faulkner's prevailers. He has allowed the evil, violent side of his nature to obliterate the good, honor-bound side. The War and the military influence crush and eventually kill the Colonel.

However, the effect of the military and the war on the characters is not limited to military men. The children and the women feel its forces with similar impact. They, too, can be driven to reveal their inherent dual natures; they, too, must either conquer the evil or allow it to crush them.

Young Bayard, the Colonel's son, and the narrator of the story, matures through the War years. His enchantment with the military decreases as he matures. In the beginning, he sees only the glory and the grandeur of the War, the marvelous endeavor to save the South. Cleanth Brooks describes Bayard and his Negro friend, Ringo's, world.

> The world in which the boys grow up is the exciting world of war, a world in which the two boys can try to shoot a Yankee soldier, in which the boy's father can appear as if by magic out of the woods or in which the enemy troops can suddenly emerge from nowhere.[5]

Brooks captures the boys' feelings toward the War, an exciting and thrill-packed adventure--cowboys and Indians on an accelerated level. They can only think of joining the action and being a part of the glorious business called war.

> . . . the two of us needing first to join forces and spend ourselves against a common enemy, time, before we could engender between us and hold intact the pattern of recapitulant mimic furious victory like a cloth, a shield between ourselves and reality, between us and fact and doom (p. 4).

However, as the War progresses, the boys' matured view of this glorious game becomes focused on harsh reality. Truth replaces fantasy, and the vision becomes one of cruelty and incessant suffering. The boys see not only the honor and sacrifice, but defeat, humiliation, death, and annihilation. The Yankees' rapacity, as well as the Southerners', instills in the boys a view of war that shapes their future attitudes; a view which demands lack of violence, and requires thought and discretion before action; a view which the gallant, reckless heroism of the

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[5]Cleanth Brooks, William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 85.

fathers would not tolerate as manly and fitting of a Southerner--not to mention a Sartoris. In a moment of insight, Bayard expresses this view.

> . . . this was to be the last time we would see any uniforms at all except as the walking symbols of defeated men's pride and indomitable unregret, but we didn't know that now (p. 159).

Because of his changed view, Bayard will not only endure, he will prevail. He has discovered how to learn from this experience; Colonel John has not. His eyes, the eyes of a killer, reflect his soul. Rapacity and violence have conquered the "eternal verities." Bayard, young and sensitive, can learn from his inner conflicts and triumph over them. Later in the book, when he is called upon to use violence to defend the honor of the family, he recognizes the irony and declines this use of violence.

The women in the book, namely Miss Rosa Millard, "Granny," and Drusilla, view the War differently from the men, but the effect is similar. Faulkner depicts war as a devastating experience from which no one emerges unscathed. Miss Rosa, Bayard's grandmother, and the surrogate parent to Bayard and Ringo during the Colonel's absence, is called upon to defend the homestead. She tries to behave honorably at the outset but in the end is forced into dishonor when she steals mules and sells them to the Grumbys, the

scum of the Southern hierarchy. She feels her death is retribution for her lack of honor. The War has killed her, but it has not crushed her spirit at the time of her death. Faulkner's treatment of the elderly, especially women, is always sympathetic and usually kind. We love Granny and accept her indiscretions with understanding. It is the War we impugn.

However, the real testimony to the military and its effects on the women in the novel comes with the character of Drusilla, John's cousin and later his war-partner and wife. In one of the book's most glaring declarations of the debilitating nature of war, Drusilla relates her feelings about the effect of war on her and her associates.

> You lived in the same house your father was born in, and your father's sons and daughters had the sons and daughters of the same Negro slaves to nurse and coddle; and then you grew up and you fell in love with your acceptable young man, and in time you would marry him, in your mother's wedding gown, perhaps, and with the same silver for presents she had received; and then you settled down forevermore while you got children to feed and bathe and dress until they grew up, too; and then you and your husband died quietly and were buried together maybe on a summer afternoon just before suppertime. Stupid, you see. But now it's just fine; you don't have to worry about the Negroes, because they tramp the roads all night waiting for a chance to drown in homemade Jordan; and you don't have to worry about getting children to bathe and feed and change, because the young men ride

> away and get killed in the fine battles and you don't even have to sleep at all, and so on, all you have to do is show the stick to the dog now and say, 'Thank God for nothing' (p. 114-5).

Drusilla's ironic speech summarizes the effect of the War on the civilians. Nothing left to care for or about, the people left at home are reduced to apostasy. Gone are the lovely tales of horseback-riding, dashing men of grey; all that is left are husbandless women and fatherless children. Because of this, Drusilla decides the only way to change things is to join the fight. Cleanth Brooks comments:

> How Drusilla persuaded her cousin, Colonel John Sartoris, to accept her as a soldier, we are not told. One assumes that it was not an easy matter to get his consent; but she must have got it, for the next we hear is that she was with his cavalry troop in the last months of the War. Had Faulkner indeed been interested in mere romantic stereotypes this was an opportunity to show the brave maiden in battle or on a raid. But there were no such scenes in The Unvanquished; Faulkner was apparently uninterested in this kind of glamour. Drusilla was doubtless brave enough, yet it was not bravery that made her a combatant.[6]

After the War is over, Drusilla continues to fight for her goals. Unlike the other women, she rolls up her sleeves and works alongside her man to re-cultivate the soil and

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[6]Brooks, p. 82.

rebuild the home. But Drusilla's motivations are not entirely constructive. The violence taught her by the War years has not left her. Her behavior is influenced by the need to succeed; and if violence is indicated, it is welcomed. The War has affected her, impinged on her "Central I-Am" so severely that she cannot separate violence from deed. She impugns Bayard vehemently for his refusal to avenge his father's death. Drusilla cannot accept that the violent years of war are in the past, and she refuses to act with reason and harmony. Like John, she has seen too much killing, too much violence, to separate it from her life. Bayard summarizes her convincingly as "the Greek amphora priestess of a succinct and formal violence" (p. 139).

The Yankees and the outlanders figure prominently in Faulkner's view of man and the military structure. Never guilty of stereotyping the enemy, Faulkner depicts with honesty the emotions and actions of the Northern segment. He shows them as human beings with families, and faults. However, because of the narrator, at times the Yankees are presented as a mysterious demoniacal force.

> It went fast, like that, like it did every time anybody named Sartoris or Millard came within sight, hearing, or smelling of Yankees, as if Yankees were not a people nor a belief nor even a form of behavior, but instead were

> a kind of gully, a precipice into which Granny and Ringo and I were sucked pell-mell every time we got close to them (p. 118).

Bayard's narrative views the Yankees as a threat, not as a tangible people. To a fifteen-year-old boy, the waves of blue uniforms represent terror and lack of security. However, Faulkner's treatment of the Yankee is human and sensitive; he takes no artistic license in their portrayal, and no prejudice is detected. When the boys (Bayard and Ringo) take shots at the Yankees and are hiding behind Granny's skirts to avoid capture, the entrance and ensuing speech of the Yankee colonel, Dick, reveals Faulkner's sympathetic characterization of the Yankee:

> He thanked her for the milk . . . 'Perhaps it is just as well that you have no grandchildren,' he said. 'Since, doubtless, you wish to live in peace. I have three boys myself, you see. And I have not even had time to become a grandparent.' . . . Louvinia said he was standing there in the door with the brass bright on his dark blue and his hat in his hand and his bright beard and hair, looking at Granny without laughing now. 'I won't apologize; fools cry out at wind or fire. But permit me to say and hope that you will never have anything worse than this to remember us by' (p. 38).

Faulkner confirms that man's dual nature is defined by war. The Yankee Colonel, kind and chivalrous to Granny and the boys, will kill and maim the Confederate soldiers if given the chance.

Faulkner's real prejudice comes with his depiction of the segment of the population containing the Grumbys and the Snopeses. These vermin prey on the misfortunes of others and use the catastrophe of war to further their economic gain. Driven only by greed, they rob their own army and kill women and children if necessary. Faulkner has no sympathy for these characters. The violence manifested by the Confederates and the Yankees is justified when this violence is precipitated by the desire to protect and ensure stability. Rules and conventions are observed to keep violence at a minimum; the Grumbys and the Snopeses obviate these rules and kill for sheer personal gain and in some cases, pleasure. These men use the War as a parasite uses a dead tree, sucking life away to plump up their own bodies. For them, there is no honor, hope or endurance. They are the basest end of Faulkner's scale of duality.

Despite the Grumbys and the Snopeses, there is much hope and honor in The Unvanquished. Replete with marvelous tales of valour and intrigue, The Unvanquished promulgates a positive statement about the condition of man. His "little puny inexhaustible voice"[7] is not all that is heard at the

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[7]William Faulkner, "Stockholm Address."

end of the novel. Faulkner reasserts his position in the belief of man's indomitable spirit--man does prevail at the end. War is an intensifier. No other milieu can enunciate actions and emotions so vehemently. Faulkner's characters are forced by the War to reveal their dual natures. Those who can transcend their baser natures are the prevailers who constitute the positive message the novel offers about the condition of man.

CHAPTER III

SARTORIS AND SOLDIER'S PAY

Sartoris and Soldier's Pay abound with similarities: both deal with the military and its effect on the people it touches; both are set in the South immediately following World War One; both have as their protagonists two young men crippled by the War, Bayard Sartoris with his psychic wounds and Donald Mahon with his physical wounds. The intense treatment Faulkner gives their situations emphasizes and defines man's bi-partite nature: man wants to act kindly and sympathetically to the returning soldier; but his vitriolic nature intercedes, contributing significantly to the alienation and disillusionment suffered. However, owing to Faulkner's genius and sensitivity, these novels transcend the bulk of fiction of that era by containing more than mere lost-generation lugubriousness. Faulkner's characters cannot blame their demises or lack of personal fulfillment entirely on the war or the times--that would be too easy. Faulkner weaves a complexity into his novels which defies critical generalization. Even

though Soldier's Pay is artistically inferior to Sartoris (and most of his other works), it can be studied in conjunction with the latter to reveal further information concerning the prominence of Faulkner's ambivalent attitude toward the military and how it figures in his concept of man.

Faulkner's third, but first artistically great, novel, Sartoris, continues the theme and characterization of The Unvanquished by relating the effects of war (World War One) on the Sartoris family. Young Bayard from The Unvanquished is now Old Bayard, the honorary colonel who serves as patriarch of the family and of the town, Jefferson, Mississippi. The action again concerns a Young Bayard, this time grandson of Old Bayard. Just as in The Unvanquished, Faulkner's conception of man's dualism is interwoven with his feelings for the military and its extension--war. In Sartoris, however, two new elements create a more profound and psychologically complex novel. The disassociation of society from the war and the palpable presence of the past form a chasm between the society and the returning soldiers and render post-war adjustments and transitions Herculean undertakings as they intensify the extremes in man's character.

In The Unvanquished, the battles are fought on home ground where the civilians and non-combatants witness firsthand the brutality of war which reduced their men to violent maniacs or crippled unicorns. In Sartoris, however, only the soldiers and a few others ever see the actual fighting, creating a rift between experience and understanding which many of the characters cannot bridge. Out of lack of understanding grow intolerance of and contempt for the mental and physical aberrations many veterans suffer. Man's baser nature conquers his more sympathetic one through consistent refusals to commiserate with the soldier. Were the war fought on home soil, such a rift could not have developed.

The other element introduced in Sartoris which helps to delineate character extremes because of its intensity is the palpable presence of the past, Faulkner's interesting theorem that the South demands adherence to past values and traditions. The past looms grandiose over the modern protagonist, inflicting him with guilt when he cannot respond to situations as his predecessors did. The Southern legend of brave men dashing off to war, dying courageously for the cause, emasculates the modern men who are incapable of emulating those who preceded them. Because of their convictions that they are deficient in honor, many of

Faulkner's characters seek recognition not for their probity, but for their lack of it. Thus the war, combined with the spectres of past heroes haunting the modern protagonist, figures in extracting a facet of man's character which might otherwise have lain dormant. Few characters can achieve stability after they have gone to such extremes; but the ones who can, who accept defeat and disillusionment and strive and overcome grief, are Faulkner's endurers.

The characters in Sartoris suffer from the effects of war through a wide range of outward manifestations. Some become reckless and are characterized totally by Weltschmerz; others are emasculated; many retreat into a safe domain where life and pain cannot touch them. Young Bayard returns from the war an emotional infant who is incapable of positive, constructive action. The war begins the debilitating process, but Bayard's return to a hostile society which expects a gallant hero completes his denigration. Young Bayard cannot adjust to a society which demands that he react in the valiant, dashing manner of his great-grandfather, Colonel John. Bayard sees the death of his brother and the violence of war not as manifestations of the sacrosanct endeavor to save the free world, but as heinous actions he is to blame for. Incapable of assertive action, he continues the deleterious process

by ultimately annihilating both himself and his grandfather. While his great-grandfather was a man of deed, Bayard is reduced to the state of word man.

Bayard cannot reconcile his image to society nor to himself. He cannot accept the role of war hero, nor can he accept being a contented, placid man of the land. His dilemma is real and painful: he is lost and torn by war, but he clings to its memory as a crutch to prevent his living in the present. Like Laura in The Glass Menagerie, he holds tenaciously to what he knows, retreating further from reality, further from correcting the tortured state he is imprisoned in.

Bayard is the embodiment of Faulkner's concern for the human heart in conflict with itself. Because Bayard cannot reconcile his conflicts, he cannot endure. His self-destructive inclination does eventually destroy part of his family and himself. He constantly recalls the image of his twin brother, John, who jumped out of his burning plane, thumbing his nose at Bayard and at life. Bayard could have died and could have been the glorious hero like his brother, but Wanton Fate robs him of his glory and allows him to live long enough to kill himself with self-delusion and hatred. Society's insistence on glory and honor out of a war which yields only violence and despair tears Bayard and emasculates him. His "Central I-Am"

shattered, Bayard will not endure, or even survive. Even his marriage to Narcissa is a failure because of the war and its attendant attitudes. Narcissa, who was in love with John, marries Bayard to mother him. She evades a fulfilling relationship, which further disillusions and alienates Bayard.

But Bayard is not the only character of this milieu annihilated by the War and the expectations of a society whose hunger for heroes can only be satiated by legendary ones. Faulkner's most sensitive portrait in Sartoris comes with Horace Benbow. A gentle, kind, and aesthetic man, Horace cannot engage in the fighting and joins the Y. M. C. A. to fulfill his commitment as a non-combatant. Horace, unlike Bayard, reacts to the cessation of the War not with belligerence, but with passivity. No longer having to assert himself, he can continue his female-dominated life by slipping totally under the wings of his sister and later of Belle Mitchell. No deed man, Horace clings to esoteric images of beauty rather than the tangible application of action, striving only to imbue the ideas of Keats' Urn. Sensitive and illusory, Horace's image of war consists of recalling the beautiful and delicate glass blown objects he found in Europe. His domain lies "where

unicorns filled the neighing air with galloping, or grazed or lay supine in golden-hoofed repose."[1] An intelligent man, Horace wishes to recreate the beauty of Keats' Urn in glass. He is so far removed from the society's image of a war hero, that he either escapes or ignores the constant ridicule and censure Bayard faces.

Narcissa, Horace's sister and Bayard's wife, is affected by the attendant war attitudes and manifestations. Faulkner's pervasive image of war as a sexual crippler is prominent in Sartoris. All the men Narcissa loved have been ruined or tainted in some fashion by the War or its repercussions. Horace retreats to his illusory world of poetry and glass objets d'art; John, her first love, is killed in the plane episode; Bayard is unable to exhibit any genuine display of love for her because of War's devastating effects on him. Narcissa retreats behind a wall of indifferent coldness, blocking out love and the possibility of hurt. She is characterized as having a "dark shape of doom." According to Warren Beck:

> The most profound generalization of this war-born melancholy is the description in Sartoris of Narcissa Benbow contemplating the boyhood miniature of John Sartoris, her husband Bayard's

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[1]William Faulkner, Sartoris (New York: Signet Classics, 1957), p. 162.

> twin brother shot down over the western front in 1918 . . . 'she realized as she had never before the blind tragedy of human events . . . it was as though already she could discern the dark shape of that doom which had incurred, standing beside her chair, waiting and biding its time.'[2]

This "dark shape of doom" looms over Narcissa and the other characters as palpably as does the past. Narcissa will not allow herself to live freely and act willfully. She is determined to live in that shadow of doom, not becoming strong until Bayard dies and her child is born. Narcissa's acquired fortitude never attains for her the stature of an endurer because this strength is contrived, a defense mechanism to protect her from making a commitment to emotion. Narcissa lacks the determination and will most Faulknerian women display. She cannot accept tragedy and continue life undefeated. Narcissa confines herself behind the wall of her garden, ghosting her way through an unfulfilled life. She is afraid of her sexual impulses because they break the superficial tranquility she has established over her mundane life. Only the pornographic letters of the vulgar Byron Snopes can excite her with impunity because of his lower social standing. Since Narcissa feels at that time that Byron can never violate her body, the implication becomes a reality which is acceptable to her. She

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[2]Warren Beck, "Faulkner and the South," The Antioch Review, 1 (Spring 1941), p. 83.

is unattainable to Byron, just as he is unacceptable to her--therefore safe. Safety and stasis are all that matter to Narcissa. She starts the break in the stock and fibre of Faulkner's characterizations of Southern women continued with Temple Drake and Cecily Saunders.

The only character who transcends the crippling and magnifying effects of war and the military is Jenny, Bayard's Great aunt. Like Miss Rosa Millard in The Unvanquished, Jenny rises above the turmoil, not out of any immunity conferred on her by her age, but by the will to survive, to continue life. Jenny is an endurer. Living through the Civil War and World War One, she refuses to allow these moments of insanity to interfere prominently in her life. Early in the novel when Jenny speaks to Isom about Caspey, a Negro who has just returned from the War, her obstinate and enduring attitude surfaces.

> 'Well, let him sleep this morning. Give him one day to get over the war. But if it made a fool out of him like it did out of Bayard, he'd better put that [the uniform] thing on again and go back to it. I'll declare, men can't seem to stand anything.'[3]

Jenny's refusal to let anything as insipid as war daunt her spirits is due in part to her ability to combine word

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[3]William Faulkner, Sartoris, p. 58.

with deed in the positive assessment of life's difficulties. Jenny accepts man's dual nature, and in so doing, can transcend the malignant by reasserting the positive. She does not retreat to the ivory tower.

Although Faulkner considers several of the same themes in Soldier's Pay, his first novel, it lacks the psychologically devastating effects caused by the introduction of the palpable-presence-of-the-past-theme in Sartoris. However, in theme and characterizations the two novels are similar more often than not. Both protagonists are former fliers deformed by the war, physically for Donald Mahon, and mentally for Bayard Sartoris. The deformities serve to isolate and alienate both young men from their society and their friends and families. As Michael Millgate observes,

> There are other resemblances: the assumption on the part of the relations and friends that a settled relationship with a young woman may be the best treatment for the wounded hero: the action of particular women (Narcissa Benbow, Margaret Powers) in marrying a sick man who she believes can help as a kind of substitute for what might have been a fuller relationship (Dick Powers, John Sartoris); and the evocation of the settled domestic background of the man now so torn by war in terms of the dedicated cultivation of gardens.[4]

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[4]Michael Millgate, The Achievement of William Faulkner (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 76.

Although Soldier's Pay is inferior to Sartoris, it does foreshadow the author's narrative talent. Lacking in quality, it still presents a devastating portrayal of the effects of war on individuals and society. Faulkner clearly demonstrates his ambivalent attitude toward war; as a method of defense it brings out a man's instincts for honor and compassion; as a vehicle for greed it brings out man's instincts for violence and cruelty. Soldier's Pay traces the trip of Donald Mahon, a lieutenant-aviator brutally deformed and near death, to his home town.

The society to which Donald returns proffers all of the dualistic attitudes Faulkner expresses. The people love the idea of a war hero but are horrified by his appearance, just as the people of Jefferson loved the idea of Bayard's being a hero, but were horrified by his actions. In one of the more poignant passages of the book, Faulkner indicates society's view of war and the military.

> This, the spring of 1919 was the day of the Boy of him who had been too young for soldiering. For two years he had had a dry time of it. Of course, girls had used him during the scarcity of men, but always in such a detached manner. Like committing fornication with a beautiful woman who chewed gum steadily all the while. O Uniform O Vanity. They had used him but when a uniform showed up he got the air.
>
> Up to that time uniforms could all walk: they were not only fashionable and romantic, but they were also quite keen on

> spending what money they had and they were also going too far away and too immediately to tell on you. Of course it was silly that some uniforms had to salute others, but it was nice, too. Especially, if the uniform you had caught happened to be a salutee. And heaven only knows how much damage among feminine hearts a set of pilot's wings was capable of.[5]

The changing attitude toward the War and the superficiality of the society strike recurrent notes throughout the novel. Wishing only to see the brave, excited, young men the society has sent off to war, the people regard the returning soldier either with disgust or with a total lack of awareness for his deformities if they are not patently obvious. At a dance given by Mrs. Worthington, an unidentified young flapper exemplifies one side of this view.

> 'You must have had an awfully good time while we poor women were slaving here rolling bandages and knitting things. I hope women can fight in the next war: I had much rather march and shoot guns than knit. Do you think they will let women fight in the next war?' she asked, watching a young man dancing, limber as a worm.
>
> 'I expect they'll have to,' James Dough shifted his artificial leg, nursing his festering arm between the bones of which a tracer bullet had passed. 'If they want to have another one' (pp. 189-90).

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[5]William Faulkner, Soldier's Pay (New York: Horace Liveright, Inc., 1926), p. 188. All quotations are from this edition and will be referred to by page numbers within the text.

The soldiers' feelings are ignored--circumvented. Their presence brutally reminds the society of something it cannot understand, does not want to understand. "Once society drank war, brought them into manhood with a cultivated taste for war, but now society had something else for a beverage" (p. 179). War, once the opiate of society, has been abandoned for a new escape, liquor.

Through the characterization of Donald, Faulkner is able to weave a complex tale which involves many people and their diverse attitudes. Incapable of speech and memory, Donald serves as a symbol of the War itself. His return affects most of the characters in the novel. Cecily Saunders, Donald's fiancee and a typical flapper, is horrified at Donald's appearance and refuses to have anything to do with him. Margaret Powers is willing to throw her life away for Donald. Joe Gilligan is trapped because he wants Margaret and she insists on marrying Donald out of a misplaced sense of duty. Julian Lowe envies him his scar and heroic status. Donald is the rock thrown in still water, causing ripples which generate more ripples. Like the rock, Donald is not even aware of what he has caused. Unlike Bayard, he does not feel his torture, and know his disillusionment. However, he causes

others to reveal their dual natures by intensifying their situations. Because of the influence of war each character searches for something but never finds it, rarely even knowing what the search is for. Donald symbolizes the futility in them because he cannot even find death until it is months over-due.

The most venomous portrait in the novel, next to that of Januarius Jones, comes with Cecily Saunders, Donald's fiancee. Popular and pretty, Cecily becomes engaged to Donald for the thrill of the catch. Donald's being a soldier, not to mention an aviator, gives Cecily the superior air she loves. His going to war is not at all alarming to Cecily since her bond with Donald is not love; he is a trophy to her. She is not aware of the consequences of her engagement until Donald returns in his grotesque state. She cannot even allow herself to look at his hideous face. Cecily toys with life, never permitting herself to live it. Donald's return breaks her imaginary conception of life and love. He is real, and his deformity is ugly reality in its harshest form. Impinging reality causes Cecily's baser nature to surface. Wanting nothing to do with Donald, she makes love to George Farr, a civilian, who, until now, was not glorious or interesting enough to

warrant her attentions. The sexual encounter is distasteful to her because it, too, is reality. Driven by fear of exposure by the black-mailing Jones, Cecily runs to Donald and begs for permission to marry him. Her parents will not approve the union; and Cecily impulsively elopes with Farr, committing herself to a life of unhappiness.

The War claims another victim in Cecily. The glorious, intriguing side of war and the military entice Cecily into becoming engaged to Donald; the reality of war causes her to become completely selfish and irrational. Cecily's superficial nature might have developed into cruelty even without the war; but the war indirectly intensifies her traits, making the darker side of her personality emerge.

The riposte to Cecily's superficiality is Margaret Powers, widowed by the War, and thus robbed of her chance for personal fulfillment. Margaret is the archetypical victim of Wanton Fate. She tells Joe Gilligan how she allowed herself to marry a man she did not know just to live with him for three days before he went overseas.

> 'You know how it was: all the soldiers talking of dying gloriously in battle without really believing it or knowing very much about it, and how women kind of got the same idea,

> like the flu--that what you did to-day would not matter to-morrow, that there really wasn't a to-morrow at all' (pp. 162-3).

Ironically, Lieutenant Powers' death was not glorious at all--he was shot in the back by a nervous soldier. Because she did not have the chance to dissolve the union (Dick died before the letter announcing Margaret's plans to divorce him arrived), Margaret is psychologically crippled by her husband's death. Feeling she is still bound to Powers and therefore incapable of having a fulfilling relationship with a man, Margaret evades a possibly satisfying liaison with Joe Gilligan. Marrying Donald out of a sense of duty, not out of love, is the payment Margaret feels is necessary for not dissolving her marriage. Unlike Cecily and many other characters, Margaret accepts her fate and lives with it, therefore enduring. She has been wronged, but like Jenny, she will continue living. When Faulkner says he writes of universal griefs which show the human heart in conflict with itself, he has situations like this to draw from. Faulkner never intended for sheer endurance to entail personal fulfillment, and it rarely does.

Joe Gilligan's characterization brings to the novel a note of honor and decency. Assigned to escort Donald

home, Joe meets Margaret Powers on the train and she agrees to help. Joe falls deeply in love with Margaret but cannot know fulfillment because she is still morally bound to her husband. The war has robbed Joe of his happiness. Joe suffers the consequences of fate and "the hang-over of war-fare in a society now tired of war-fare" (p. 198). Cursing the conditions of existence, he tries in vain to get Margaret to marry him, only to learn she intends to marry Donald.

The one thing Joe wants is unattainable to him because of the war. Rather than allow his baser nature to emerge, Joe will continue to pursue Margaret. She is the Keats' Urn figure; the lure of the unattainable. Joe cannot endure unless he learns to accept his fate and continue his life undaunted.

The culmination of the deleterious effect war has on people comes with the young aviation cadet, Julian Lowe. Robbed of the chance to fly and be a hero by the Armistice, Julian bemoans the rotten trick fate plays on him. In his demented state he wishes for Donald's scar and his heroic status.

> 'I wanted to be,' he confessed more than he had ever believed, 'I would take his scar and all.'

> [Margaret] 'And be dead like he is going to be?' But what was death to Cadet Lowe, except something true and grand and sad? He saw a tomb, open, and himself in boots and belt, and pilot's wings on his breast, and wound stripe . . . What more could one ask of fate?
>
> 'Yes, yes,' he answered.
>
> 'Why, you have flown, too.' she told him, holding his face against her knee. 'You might have been him, but you were lucky. Perhaps you would have flown too well to have been shot down as he was. Had you thought of that?'
>
> 'I dont know, I guess I would let them catch me, if I could have been him' (pp. 52-3).

Julian is the prototype of Faulkner's idea of duality in man and the military. Because of his greedy and selfish nature, he wants all the glory and grandeur of military service. He sees war not as a vehicle for defense, but as a method of self-glorification. Although the war has not crushed him, it precludes his having a satisfying life. Obsessed with the notion of being a hero, Julian cannot be thankful that he is alive and well. His life will entail disillusionment and despair; he will not achieve the stature of an endurer.

Even the minor characters in the novel react to the war with incessant lack of insight. Robert Saunders, Cecily's younger brother, has one goal in mind--to see Donald's scar. The war makes even the young react with macabre excitement over the ghoulish results. However,

it is not only the young who react with gawking curiosity. Joe Gilligan points this out to Margaret.

> 'That damn Saunders hellion brought his whole gang around to see his scar. We got to stop this,' he stated with exasperation. 'Cant have these damn fools in and out of here all day long, staring at him.'
>
> 'Well, it is about over,' she told him, 'they have all called by now. Even their funny little paper has appeared, "War hero returns"' (p. 150).

Through Soldier's Pay, Faulkner is able to make a profound statement on the condition of man and the military. Disillusioned because of the war, those affected by it will either continue on their destructive paths or transcend the difficulty and continue life.

CHAPTER IV

A FABLE

In A Fable Faulkner makes his most pronounced statement of man's dual nature as it is shown through the military. Although it is his most obscure novel and least successful artistically, it does proffer a positive statement of Faulkner's ontological philosphy. He personifies the duality in man through the characters of two men: the general and his illegitimate son, the corporal. These two represent the conflicts within individual man. The general symbolizes pragmatic man, the champion of the mundane earth; the corporal symbolizes the esoteric man who bases his life on hopeless and idealistic dreams. The clash between father and son, precipitated by the military mutiny instigated by the corporal, constitutes the limited plot contained in the novel. However, the importance of A Fable comes not with the plot, but with philosophical content. Faulkner dramatizes the idea that the only way for man to endure is to accept his dual nature. Characterization, theme, and philosophical discourse reveal the

significance of man's dual nature in relation to the military setting and the Stockholm Address, which was presented during the writing of this book.

Faulkner chose World War One for his setting, even though he wrote the novel after the Second World War. This choice was not an arbitrary one. Because of its scope, the war caused unprecedented tragedy. Each man affected by this war felt it was a personal crisis aimed only at him. In the history of the world few other wars caused such mass slaughter and annihilation. Country was pitted against country in a universal brutality never witnessed before. Because of the advances in communication and technology, this war was fought and planned by technicians who rarely ever saw the actual fighting. These men did not mutiny, because they did not fight. The mutiny was left to the fighting men, the men in the trenches like the corporal and his followers.[1] This mutiny causes a break-down in the military hierarchy which furthers the malevolence so akin to the military and war.

Because of the tragedy and the conflicts, man's dual nature emerges. Only endurance is not contrasted with a counterpart.

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[1]V. S. Pritchett, "Time Frozen," Faulkner, ed. Robert Penn Warren (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966), p. 239.

> Endurance is precisely the one single highest cause that Faulkner does not question by a contrast to its own category. Endurance is terribly hard, but it is the solution of a sensitive man in the incessant strife between opposing forces.[2]

Straumann points out Faulkner's central idea in A Fable: man must accept his dual nature in order to endure. Negating either part of it, or refusing to accept its prominence, dooms man. Sutterfield, the Negro preacher in A Fable, acts as Faulkner's raisoneur in the following quotation:

> 'Evil is a part of man, evil and sin and cowardice, the same as repentance, and being brave. You got to believe in all of them or believe in none of them or he ain't capable of none.[3]

Faulkner is not enticing man to become evil; conversely, he insists that man's awareness of his evil side will preclude his becoming totally evil.

Through a fluke, the general learns the mutinous corporal is his illegitimate son conceived thirty-three years before in a remote land. The corporal convinces a

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[2]Heinrich Straumann, "An American Interpretation of Existence: Faulkner's A Fable," William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, trans., Grace A. Goodman and Olga W. Vickery (East Lansing: Michigan University Press, 1960), p. 371.

[3]William Faulkner, A Fable (New York: The Modern Library, 1966), p. 203. All quotations are from this edition and will be referred to by page numbers within the text.

group of French soldiers to lay down their weapons and refuse to fight, hoping that their not fighting will help end the war. The mutiny is not successful, but it does start a chain of events which multiplies the conflicts in the book. The general is faced with the dilemma of killing his mutinous son, or setting him free. Setting him free would undermine the general's authority and possibly figure in his losing the war and his life. The general, who represents the pragmatic, realistic man, offers his idealistic and esoteric son exile instead of death. The general's failure comes when he does not realize that what is meaningful to him--in life--is not meaningful to his son. His son would die willingly for his beliefs. The general states the difference in their values.

> 'I champion of this mundane earth . . . you champion of an esoteric realm of man's baseless hopes for his infinite capacity--no: passion--for unfact' (p. 348).

Faulkner's scale of duality makes the general the champion of the mundane and the real. He recognizes the dualism in man and therefore is superior to his son, since he will endure. The corporal's goals are admirable; but since he cannot endure, his goals are not achieved. His death accomplishes nothing.

When the general begs his son to reconsider, this pragmatic attitude is again witnessed.

> 'Oh yes, I can destroy you tomorrow morning and save us--for the time. For the length of my life, in fact. But only for the time. And if I must, I will. Because I believe in man with his capacities and limitations. I not only believe he is capable of enduring and will endure, but that he must endure at least until he himself invents evolves produces a better tool than he to substitute for himself. Take my car and freedom, and I will give you Polchek. Take the highest of all the ecstacies: compassion, pity; the orgasm of forgiving him who barely escapes doing you a mortal hurt--that glue, that catalyst which your philosophers have trained you to believe holds the earth together. Take the earth' (p. 347).

Since the corporal and the general are of the same flesh, and since they represent the inimical forces at war with each other, their conflicts symbolize the conflicts of man at war with himself. The conflict between the general and the corporal is the microcosm or the trouble in the world. It is the war of the flesh against the spirit. The general is practical, and because of his acceptance of man's dual nature he will endure. But Faulkner makes it clear that sheer endurance does not entail personal happiness or fulfillment.

The reason for the military and the war is another central point of the novel. Man's greed and selfish pursuits

produce the military institutions, yet man convinces himself the military is established for defense purposes, purposes of honor. Out of this paradox grows the military dualism: greed and violence on one side and honor, compassion and sacrifice on the other. The side of glory and honor usually is seen only at the outset of war.

> Glory and valor would still exist of course as long as men live to reap them. It would be even the same valor in fact, but the glory would be another glory. And that would be this: some second form of Elysium a cut above dead infantry perhaps, but little more: who was not the first to think What had I done for motherland and matched me with her need (p. 89).

Glory, valor, bravery, and honor are necessary to give men something to strive for. Without these qualities man is reduced to an un-masculine state. The general cannot understand his aide's insistence that it takes courage to pity, because of his sheerly pragmatic nature.

> 'About being brave. About glory, and how men got it, and how they bore it after they got it, and how other people managed to live with them after they got it; and honor and sacrifice and the courage it takes to pity, and the pride it takes to deserve the courage--'
>
> 'Courage to pity?' the general said.
>
> 'Yes, courage: When you stop to pity, the world runs over you. It takes pride to be that brave' (p. 45).

Faulkner contends that as long as there are men who have the courage to pity, there is the hope of salvation for man. The chance at salvation keeps man from becoming totally evil. However, the mundane in man too often obviates the compassionate side, so this salvation is minimal--but the hope for it is always present.

A man identified only as the "tall man" supports Faulkner's belief in the need for valor and honor, which balances the need for dishonor in the fight for endurance and hope.

> . . . then on that day twenty years ago, in his return for the right chance to wear on the battle-soiled breast of his coat the battlegrimed symbolical candy-stripes of valor and endurance and fidelity and physical anguish and sacrifice, he had sold his birthright in the race of man. But he did not show it. The candy-stripes themselves were the reason that he could not, and his wearing of them the proof that he would not (p. 10).

Even though Faulkner loves the side of man's nature which professes the eternal verities, Faulkner's insistence on writing of matters of the heart makes him write about the depraved side of man. The war setting facilitates the job of depicting virulence. Faulkner never says that rapacity is good: he says it exists and it must exist, for without it there would be no struggle and no merit in being an endurer.

> Not rapacity, which like poverty, takes care of its own. Because it endures, not even because it is rapacity but because man is man, enduring the immortal; enduring not because he is immortal but immortal because he endures; and so with rapacity, which immortal man never fails, since it is in and from rapacity, gets, holds, his immortality--the vast, the all-being, the compassionate, which says to him only, Believe in me; though ye doubt seventy times seven, ye need only believe again (pp. 260-1).

Evil is necessary to give importance to the good, to make the human struggles significant. However, just as man cannot be totally good, he cannot be totally evil; this denigrates him to animal status.

It is the animalistic tendencies coupled with the self-interest and egoism which produce war and the military. The military and the war are man's creations. If his heritage is love and sacrifice, it is also war and violence. The most devastating statement of this is displayed when General Bidet tells General Gragnon, the general in charge of the mutinous men, the origin of war.

> 'It wasn't we who invented war,' the group commander said, 'It was war which created us. From the loins of man's ineradicable greed sprang the captains and the colonels to his necessity. We are his responsibility; he shall not shirk it' (p. 54).

Faulkner ironically personifies greed as the creator of war and the military since man created the greed first. Man's selfish and vitriolic nature and need for self-aggrandizement produce the military and its extension, war. Later, the general suggests to Gragnon the theory that erasing one word from our language would obliterate war.

> 'A moment ago you said that we must enforce our rules or die. It's not abbrogation of a rule that will destroy us. It's less. The simple effacement from man's memory of a single word will be enough. But we are safe. Do you know what that word is?'
>
> The division commander looked at him for a moment and said, 'Yes.'
>
> 'Fatherland,' the group commander said (p. 54).

Because of man's dual nature he is at war with himself. However, it is because of this dual nature that man has the chance to endure. The endurance Faulkner speaks of seldom involves any personal pleasure and rarely even satisfaction, but the challenge is there. Faulkner's man must be stoic. The old general, when talking to his son, encapsulates this view, which contains much of the message of the Stockholm Address.

> 'Oh yes, he will survive it because he has that in him which will endure even beyond the ultimate worthless tideless rock freezing slowly in the last red and heatless sunset, because already the

> next star in the blue immensity of space will be already clamorous with the uproar of his debarkation, his puny and inexhaustible voice still talking, still planning; and there too after the last ding dong of doom has rung and died there will still be one sound more: his voice, planning still to build something higher and faster and louder; more efficient and louder and faster than ever before, yet it too inherent with the same old primordial fault since it too in the end will fail to eradicate him from the earth. I dont fear man. I do better: I respect and admire him. And pride: I am ten times prouder of that immortality which he does possess than ever he of that heavenly one of his delusion. Because man and his folly--'
>
> 'Will endure,' the corporal said.
>
> 'They will do more,' the old general said proudly. 'They will prevail' (p. 354).

The general summarizes what Faulkner advocates in A Fable and in his Stockholm Address. Because of the human heart in conflict with itself and the subsequent battling of man's dual nature, man will learn to endure--he must. Faulkner shows all these problems to depict man's grieving universal bones. He must and does penetrate into the intrinsic nature of man and the result is a work of profound philosophical quality. The tragedy of A Fable is that artistically it cannot support the weight of its philosophical content.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Faulkner's use of the military as a vehicle for his theme of man's conflicting nature leads the reader to several significant conclusions: man occupies the supreme position; he can evaluate his life and make his own choices. It is his decision to choose enduring, by accepting his dual nature and working to make his life meaningful. Contrary to much critical opinion, Faulkner's view of man is not pessimistic.

Faulkner's love of and obsession with the military consists of more than a mere fascination with an institution. He finds in the military the perfect setting to illustrate man at war with himself: his human heart in conflict with itself. Because of the intrinsic nature of the military and of war, quick and decisive action is mandatory. The essence of the military implies discipline, honor, glory, and sacrifice, but it can also embody rapacity, cowardice, and violence. For these reasons, the military is the acute enunciator of man's nature. Faulkner

shows men driven to maniacal states or exalted ones just by virtue of their contact with the military. When man's evil nature surfaces, Faulkner does not censure the military; it is merely the catalyst for man's behavior.

The military setting in The Unvanquished provides the rich background for Faulkner to show his characters in conflict and dilemma. The lure of the military with its glory, grandeur, and pageantry instills in man the desire to serve, the desire for honor. However, when the reality of war replaces the initial enticement, the rapacious and brutal side of man and the military emerges. Faulkner gives his characters the choice of accepting the evil and working to control it, or letting evil rule their lives. The Colonel allows the violent nature of war to overtake his life, and he dies violently with his "yellow killer's eyes." Bayard, on the other hand, sees both sides of the military and of man and decides to choose the course of honor without violence. In so doing he repudiates the code of violence and allows himself to endure. Miss Rosa Millard accepts the brutality of war and refuses to let it rule her life. Even her own violent death somehow manages to transcend the violence because of her strong will, giving her the enduring quality which transcends death.

Bayard Sartoris, of Sartoris, cannot do this. Living through the war, seeing death, and returning home to a society which does not understand his emotional problems cripples him and crushes his spirit. He cannot surmount the difficulties of readjustment, and he dies violently, negating anything meaningful in his life. Only Aunt Jenny sees the irony of war and works to transcend its effects. The war does not crush her spirits; she is an endurer. Horace Benbow, like Bayard, allows the adversity in life to demean him, making him the pawn of women and of society.

In Soldier's Pay, Donald Mahon is totally ruined by the War, physically and presumably emotionally. However, the true protagonist of the novel is the society which refuses to accept the reality of the war. Faulkner shows a society which will only accept a returning soldier if he is a hero and in perfect condition. When the soldier is deformed and demented, the society offers only forced amenities and gawking curiosity rather than compassion and understanding. Cecily Saunders represents this society whose superficiality precludes its awareness of anything real or significant. Joe Gilligan maintains his honor throughout the novel, but his quest for the unattainable prevents him from accepting reality, therefore obviating

his chance at endurance. Julian Lowe represents the basest effect of the war. He wishes for Donald's scar and mangled body just to fulfill the selfish dream of being a hero. Only Margaret Powers finds the key to life by acknowledging a Wanton Fate, and taking what it yields. Because of this she learns to accept the adversity in her life, and she comes closer to enduring than the other characters.

A Fable adds an interesting aspect to the study of man's dual nature as reflected by the military, by personifying each side of the duality present in man's nature. The corporal represents the esoteric realm of selfless goals and non-violence, while the general represents the animalistic, pragmatic man. Faulkner feels that neither man is perfect, since man must embody both qualities and extremes to be complete. The conflicts within these two men symbolize the conflicts within the hearts of individual men.

Through these books and characters, Faulkner reveals much of the intense message in his Stockholm Address. He does not write of the evil, cowardly, deprecating side of man because he enjoys this--it is his duty as a writer. He has to show the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself, and to do this he has to burrow into man's consciousness and extricate the good with the evil. Through

his choice of the military theme, Faulkner makes a profound statement about the condition of man. His assertion that man will prevail, is, in the end, man's choice:

> I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of the past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.
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> Stockholm Address
> December 10, 1950

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