Faulkner on Freedom

The Unvanquished. By William Faulkner. (New York: Random House, 1934).

In a journal devoted to discussions of important works in political science, an analysis of a novel by William Faulkner may seem strangely out of place. That Faulkner is not widely understood to be a political novelist is demonstrated by a look at the treatment he receives in works discussing the genre. Neither Irving Howe in his *Politics and the Novel* nor Gordon Milne in his *The American Political Novel* present a consideration of Faulkner. Joseph Blotner's much longer study, *The Modern American Political Novel,* discusses 138 American political novels published between 1900 and 1960, and Blotner claims that this number "includes all the political novels I could find" from the period.[1] None of the 138 novels were written by William Faulkner.[2] These observations become even more striking in the context of the realization that both Howe and Blotner are Faulkner scholars. My intent in this essay, nonetheless, is to make students of politics aware that William Faulkner is a valuable resource to those who seek to understand the relationship between political orders and human beings.

The neglect of Faulkner's political teaching may be traced largely to the fact that he investigates the characters produced and the problems caused by regimes rather than concentrating on politicians and obviously political institutions and events. Since fundamental political choices made at the founding of the United States have resulted in limited government and a separation between state and society, it is often not self-evident to Americans, including American literary critics, that their way of life is shaped by those political choices. The point is made by Martin Diamond:

1. Joseph Blotner, *The Modern American Political Novel* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 14.

2. Blotner does list one Faulkner novel, *Absalom, Absalom!,* as a "related novel," and gives it a brief mention in the text. *Ibid.,* 379, 204.

> But under the new liberal doctrine, with its substantive withdrawal of the character-forming function from the domain of the political, it became natural to think of state and society as separated, and of government as limited to the protection of individual life, liberty, property, and the private pursuit of happiness. It became both possible and reasonable to depoliticize political life as previously conceived, and that is precisely what happened wherever the new view came to prevail.'

But this apparently depoliticized life remains fundamentally political since it is created by the liberal doctrine of politics.

In his *Democracy in America,* Alexis de Tocqueville outlines the differing objectives of what he calls the old aristocratic politics and the "new science of politics" produced by the liberal doctrine. Aristocratic politics, with which human life is not depoliticized, aims at raising mankind "to an elevated and generous view of the things of this world"; at inspiring "a certain scorn of material goods"; at preparing the way for "acts of profound devotion"; at "elevating the manners, and causing the arts to blossom"; and at creating powerful nations which will attempt "great enterprises." Liberal democratic nations have a very different set of goals.

> But if you think it profitable to turn man's intellectual and moral activity toward the necessities of physical life and use them to produce well-being, if you think that reason is more use to men than genius, if your object is not to create heroic virtues but rather tranquil habits, if you would rather contemplate vices than crimes and prefer fewer transgressions at the cost of fewer splendid deeds, if in place of a brilliant society you are content to live in one that is prosperous, and finally, if in your view the main object of government is not to achieve the greatest strength or glory for the nation as a whole but to provide for every individual therein the utmost well-being, protecting him as far as possible from all affliction, then it is good to make conditions equal and to establish a democratic government.*

William Faulkner's novels, especially *The Hamlet, The Town,* and *The Mansion* (the Snopes trilogy), *Flags in the Dust* (the unabridged version of *Sartoris), Absalom, Absalom!,* and *Go Down, Moses,* explore the characteristics of, problems with, and justifications for, aristocratic and liberal democratic regimes. His portraits

3. Martin Diamond, "Ethics and Politics: The American Way," in Robert H. Horwitz, ed., *The Moral Foundations of the American Republic* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 48.

4. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* trans. by George Lawrence **(Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 245.**

of the pre-war South are of a community with the characteristics of aristocratic orders. They show the nobility and desire for greatness as well as the crimes, especially the crime of slavery, of which Tocqueville wrote. Faulkner's portraits of the twentieth century South are of a community characterized by the equality, the materialism, the tranquility, the vices, and the mediocrity which Tocqueville argued are created by liberal democratic orders.

There is one novel in which Faulkner presents the two regimes contending against one another and in which he clearly indicates the fundamental political responsibility for depoliticizing twentieth century American life. That novel is *The Unvanquished. The Unvanquished is* set in the South during and after the Civil War. Its principal characters are the members of a Southern aristocratic family, the Sartoris family. Colonel John Sartoris and Rosa Millard (Granny), the Colonel's mother-in-law, fight both during and after the war to maintain their aristocratic position in the face of a struggle with the more democratic spirit of the North. Sartoris and Granny have different understandings of the basis of aristocracy, however, and through Granny's failure and Sartoris's limited success Faulkner shows his reader which understanding is more defensible. That more defensible claim for aristocracy is based upon a teaching about human freedom. From the Northern point of view the Civil War was fought, at least in part, in the name of freedom-to free an enslaved race. Yet from the Southern point of view, as Faulkner portrays it, the South too was fighting for freedom. Such a statement may seem absurd on its face, but in attempting to understand it the reader is forced to ask just what freedom is and what kind of man can make a reasonable claim that he is free. In comparing this Southern understanding of freedom with the Northern understanding the reader gains insight into the differences between aristocratic and democratic regimes.

The Unvanquished is the most overtly political of Faulkner's novels. Indeed, so dominated is it by political events that it would seem to meet the narrow requirements for a political novel set by the authors of the works about that genre. Perhaps the novel failed to make Blotner's study because Blotner limits himself to works whose subject is twentieth century politics.[5] In Howe's case the decision not to include *The Unvanquished* may have been based upon an opinion that the work has nothing of value to offer. Writes Howe:

5. Blotner, 8.

> **Often mildly entertaining,** ***The Unvanquished*** *is* the least serious of the Yoknapatawpha novels. Most of it was written for the slick magazines, and not only does the book show this, it also shows how economically a gifted writer can parcel out his major themes for trivial occasions.°

Howe's opinion that the work is a trivial one, merely a selection of cute stories, seems to be shared by most critics. In addition, some find the work to be a simple history of Faulkner's family.' As a result, many Faulkner commentaries include no discussion of *The Unvanquished,* and most of the rest give it only minor treatment.

While it is true that six of the seven stories included in *The Unvanquished* were originally published as short stories in *Scribner's* and *The Saturday Evening Post,* those six were revised in critically important ways and added to a seventh to make the whole novel. That Faulkner himself saw it as a whole with a serious point seems clear. He once told a University of Virginia audience that he had originally viewed *The Unvanquished* as simply a series of three stories, "but by the time I finished the first one I saw it was going further than that, and then when I'd finished the fourth one, I had postulated too many questions that I had to answer for my own satisfaction. So the others. . . had to be written then."[8] As to the question of whether *The Unvanquished is* simply family history, Faulkner told audiences at the University of Virginia and West Point that he may have drawn some from his ancestors in writing the book, but that he was certain that he had not written wholly from historical fact because his purpose in writing was far greater than to report history.[9] Of course, it is only a study of Faulkner's words in the novel itself that can yield a decisive conclusion as to the worth of the work.

There are some commentators who take *The Unvanquished* seriously.[10] Since they do not approach the novel from the perspec-

6. Irving Howe, *William Faulkner: A Critical Study* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 42.

7. See, for example, William Van O'Connor, *The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner* (New York: Gordian Press, Inc., 1968), Ch. I; H. Edward Richardson, *William Faulkner, The Journey to Self-Discovery* (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1969); and Howe, 12.

8. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, eds., *Faulkner in the University* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1959), 8.

9. Gwynn and Blotner, 254; Joseph L. Fant III and Robert Ashley, eds., *Faulkner at West Point* (New **York** Random **House,** 1964), **57.**

10. See, for example, Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner, The Yoknapatawpha Country* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); Hyatt H. Waggoner, *William Faulkner, From Jefferson to the World* (The University of Kentucky Press, 1959); and

tive of political thought, however, they do not make Faulkner's political teaching clear. One commentator, M. E. Bradford, has written of the political content of the novel. Bradford suggests the following comparison:

> But we may look beyond the boundaries of [Southern] literature for a more elevated comparison. I refer to the history plays of Shakespeare as we have been led to interpret them by the late Sir Eustace Tillyard. In these majestic chronicles there is no single hero; rather, the protagonist is *res publica,* the Commonwealth, as sustained and undermined in varying degrees by the principal figures in a portion of British history. The hero is thus an idea, a notion of civilization acknowledged as at stake by the conduct of those who act within its ambit and under its measure.. . . And such is the case with *The Unvanquished,* where we are to understand the title as a plural and the hard-won survival of a civil order connected with the family name "Sartoris" as being the common enterprise of the sequence of protagonists who structure its unfolding."

While Bradford discusses a political theme, however, he does not make it manifest that the political theme is the struggle between contending regimes over how human beings shall live. In order to make that political teaching clear, and in order to provide an introduction to the political teaching of other Faulkner novels, I turn to a careful analysis of *The Unvanquished.*

II

The story in *The Unvanquished is* told by Bayard Sartoris. Bayard's father, John, is a colonel in the Confederate cavalry with a reputation for being a constant annoyance to the Yankees. As the book begins Bayard and Ringo, Bayard's Negro companion who, like Bayard, is twelve years old, are playing a game. They have constructed a battlefield consisting of a river dug with a hoe and a city, Vicksburg, made with wood chips. Bayard and Ringo take turns being Generals Pemberton and Grant (Bayard being the Confederate twice in succession and then Grant once, because Ringo wouldn't play unless he could be Pemberton). But suddenly the game is disturbed by one who understands himself to have a real stake in a

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Edmond L. Volpe, A ***Reader's Guide to William Faulkner*** (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1964).

11. M.E. Bradford, "Faulkner's *The Unvanquished:* The High Costs of Survival," *The Southern Review* Vol. 14, No. 3 (Summer, 1978), 429.

war which is therefore no game. Loosh, a Sartoris slave, comes to step over the scene and, wearing an expression of triumph, flattens Vicksburg.

Such is the thrust of the entire first chapter: the innocents aloof from and unable to understand the complex war are drawn into that war, and it is necessary for them to begin to understand. Twice Bayard pictures himself and Ringo as the uninvolved "two moths, two feathers, riding above a hurricane" (8, 20),[12] although the second time, in the context of overhearing John Sartoris speak of the real fall of the real Vicksburg and of the need to hide the family silver, Bayard suggests that the distance may have been caused by a lack of credulity-the beginning of understanding, but not wanting to believe. Indeed, the innocence is highlighted by Ringo's response to the news that Vicksburg has fallen: "Vicksburg *fell?* Do he mean it fell off in the River? With Ginrul Pemberton in hit too?"(20).

The innocence, the unknowing shows itself in Bayard and Ringo's reaction to the first Yankee they've seen: Bayard is surprised to find that "He looks just like a man" (28). When Bayard and Ringo have shot at a Yankee on his horse and are hiding under Granny's skirt lest they be found by an incensed sergeant, Granny asks whether "he-it-the one who-" is dead. The sergeant's reply is "Dead? Hell, yes! Broke his back and we had to shoot him!" (33). Granny and the boys have a much different reaction to this statement than does Faulkner's reader: they exhibit "horrified astonishment" at the thought of Yankees killing their own, when in fact the Yankees had shot the horse. The problem is that Granny and the boys simply don't know what Yankees are. They know Yankees are bad, but they do not know why. They know there is a war, but they do not know what the Yankees hope to gain by that war.

It is from Loosh that Bayard and Ringo learn of the Yankee war aims. They overhear Loosh, who has been gone for a day, telling his wife, Philadelphy, that General Sherman is going to free the Negro race. Loosh envisions Sherman "sweeping the earth," just as Loosh had swept the earth of the boys' Vicksburg (25). They run to Granny, and Bayard says "Loosh saw them! They're just down the road. It's General Sherman and he's going to make us all free" (26). Bayard's exclamation is not one of joy, for he does not know what it

12. William Faulkner, *The Unvanquished* (New York: Random House, 1938). Citations to *The Unvanquished* are indicated hereafter by page numbers appearing in the text.

means either to be set free or to free the slaves. That he does not know that the Yankees intend to free the slaves is shown when he tells Granny that General Sherman is coming to set "us" free. That he does not know what freedom is becomes clear when he and Ringo are heading out of the house with the musket to shoot the Yankee. Granny is shouting at them to stop, and Ringo is hesitant. Bayard makes Ringo continue by threatening him, shouting "Do you want to be free? . . . Do you want to be free?" (29).

In shooting at the Yankee Ringo and Bayard begin to lose their status of moths above a hurricane and enter the war. Having learned from Loosh that the Yankees are headed their way, Bayard and Ringo take it upon themselves to watch the road for approaching Yankees. After two days they finally see one and they run to the house, get the musket, and shoot at him. When they see that he is merely one of many Yankees they run furiously back to the house, and Bayard shouts to Granny that "We shot the bastud" (30). Granny hides the boys under her skirt while the Yankees come to find them. The sergeant, who is angry because the boys have killed "the best horse in the whole army" (33) on which he has placed a bet for the next Sunday, is told by Granny that "There are no children in this house nor on this place" (32). A Yankee colonel arrives, and he sees, and Granny knows he sees, where Bayard and Ringo are hidden. Yet the colonel calls off the search, instructing the sergeant to believe what the lady tells him. The colonel leaves only after he has bowed to Granny's insistence that he have some refreshment. The colonel laughs at Granny's "bravado," but Granny shows no gratitude because gratitude is not called for; the colonel has acted as a gentleman should. Granny is relieved, however, and she is relieved because the Yankee turned out to be a gentleman. She had not known what to expect from a Yankee, and the sergeant's inordinate concern for horses had not been encouraging.

When the colonel has left, Granny has the boys help her to her knees so that she can pray for forgiveness for having lied. Granny had never whipped Bayard and Ringo for anything except telling lies (32), but now she had lied. After the prayer she washes out the boys' mouth with soap for using the word "bastud." Nothing is said as to whether Bayard and Ringo should have tried to kill the Yankee.

When Granny discovered that the Yankee was not dead, she was greatly relieved. Still it is not the boys' attempt to shoot him, but their use of obscenity that she punishes. This almost comic situation seems to represent Granny's attempt to deal with the intrusion of the

war. She ignores it. The war does not fit into her pattern, her way of life, and she does not try to adjust her thinking to accommodate it. Thus she stresses what she would have stressed in less extraordinary days: A gentleman does not use obscenity. She makes no attempt to deal with the problem of killing Yankees. Her response to the crumbling of the order that she knows is to pretend that it isn't crumbling.

As noted earlier, the book begins with Bayard and Ringo playing a Civil War game on a battlefield they have built on the ground. Bayard observes that even on their living map the topography betrays a "ponderable though passive recalcitrance" which outweighs the artillery (3). Nature is passive, yet dominant over man. It is true that in this instance the topography is created by human beings, but that project only reinforces the fact of the stubbornness of nature in the face of human attempts to dominate it. To Bayard and Ringo the map lives. It lives because it resists their attempts to create a river for the map: "the sunimpacted ground drank water faster than we could fetch it from the well"(4). Thus the stage was set for a conflict, "a prolonged and wellnigh hopeless ordeal in which we ran, panting and interminable, with the leaking bucket between wellhouse and battlefield, the two of us needing first to join forces and spend ourselves against a common enemy, time ..."(4). It is not clear here whether there is any hope for man in this conflict. Bayard and Ringo are forced in the instant case to settle for a "damp colored" ravine to serve as the river. Yet is does not seem certain that the victory must always be nature's. Bayard characterized the ordeal as "wellnigh hopeless," not hopeless simply. Indeed, here nature has been particularly harsh, for there has been no dew for three weeks. And the tool is imperfect-the bucket leaks. In any case, it seems that the only hope for victory lies in a cooperative effort: men must strive together to create what they then fight over for possession.

In the face of this view of nature, an approach to the war such as Granny's simple refusal to recognize its power would be absurd. That if the war is somehow related to nature. The Yankee colonel does not apologize to Granny, for "fools cry out at wind and fire" (38). He himself, we are told, has been thwarted by a lack of time (38). The colonel can only "hope" that Granny will have nothing worse to remember the Yankees by. In the view of the Yankee colonel, then, the war is connected to the natural; it is something that men cannot be sure they can control. It is one set of human bodies

trying to exert its force against another set of human bodies, with no neutral force able to moderate the conflict. War is men acting without politics: the relationship between the combatants is as in a state of nature. In the immediate case, the cooperation of Granny and the colonel to shield the boys mirrors the cooperation of Bayard and Ringo to create a river. The sergeant becomes the leaky bucket: the imperfection hampering man becomes man himself, and in this case his desire for money.

Granny's refusal to retreat from what is important without the context of the war in the face of that war remains vehement. When John Sartoris tells Granny to take the boys to Memphis in order to avoid the invading army, they make the trip in their Sunday clothes. They never make it to Memphis, however, and the boys become separated from Granny. They arrive back at Sartoris at the same time, and when they do, Granny's first act is to bury the trunk containing the family silver. She then directs her concern to the boys, questioning whether they had cursed when separated from her and demanding that they get out of their Sunday clothes. As the trip to Memphis began, Granny wanted to stop in Jefferson so that she could pick up some rose cuttings and have someone look after her flowers while she was gone. When Granny arrived back at Sartoris, she still had the rose cuttings in her hand.

At one point Bayard compares his grandmother to a blooded mare (50). Such a horse may be characterized by great spirit, but not by intelligence. Granny's courage in the face of the war has been magnificent, but the question arises as to whether it is a courage informed by prudent calculation or one informed only by spirit, by Granny's love of her habitual way of life. Thus explained would be Granny's continual emphasis on the details of the family's behavior, the emphasis on silver, cursing, Sunday clothes, and flowers as opposed to killing and being killed. Her purpose is to maintain without interruption a way of life, and anything necessary to that end will be attempted. Accordingly she pursues John Sartoris's instructions to go to Memphis without question, even when reason suggests that the attempt is doomed to failure and that another plan might, therefore, be in order (64). During the trip a Confederate officer tells Granny that the road is too crowded with Yankee patrols for them to succeed, especially should they be discovered to be kin to John Sartoris. Granny refuses to consider not continuing, saying that her experience with Yankee officers is that they will not bother women and children. That opinion is drawn from the single instance in the

first chapter when Granny and the boys escaped quite narrowly from Yankee wrath. The Yankee colonel there had arrived just in time, and had certainly not been able to guarantee that worse things would not happen. From this one instance, however, Granny assumes that she and the boys will be accorded safe passage to Memphis. When the Yankees do attack and take the mules, there is no colonel stopping to call on Granny: the Yankees appear out of the dust and take the mules without saying a word (66). Granny is standing in the wagon beating the Yankees on their heads with an umbrella, and she succeeds only in bending the umbrella.

In fact Granny does depart from the pre-war routine: she locks her door; she takes the musket with her on the trip to Memphis, thereby affirming that it may be neccessary to kill Yankees; and she, like all the other Sartorises, "borrows" horses. What she does not do, however, is to make any attempt to reconcile these things with the life she is trying to maintain. As in the first chapter where the issue was not whether Bayard and Ringo should have tried to shoot the Yankee, but whether they had cursed, the issues here are not whether one can get to Memphis, or whether one should "borrow" horses, but whether the boys have cursed and whether they are wearing their Sunday clothes. It is a complete subordination of means to end that does not even ask if the means will reach the end. Her spirit lashes out at a threat without considering the magnitude of that threat or the probability of its realization being avoided.

At the end of the second chapter the Yankees have trodden down the flower beds; the silver is gone; Loosh and Philadelphy are leaving; and the house is burning. Louvinia, another Sartoris slave, and Bayard have to hold Granny to keep her from running to the burning house to stop the Yankees from taking her silver. Finally, Granny leads Bayard and Ringo in a cursing of the Yankees. It is not clear, then, that simply courage is sufficient to maintain Granny's way of life. Further, that courage, or more accurately rashness, would endanger Granny's life at an instant where there is no hope of success. Thus, excessive unreasoned courage may not only be not helpful, it may also be positively harmful.

In the first chapter the issue was raised as to whether man is capable of reconstructing nature to fit his desires. In this second chapter a hypothesis to the point is presented by the McCaslin brothers. Sartoris says that Buck and Buddy McCaslin have ideas about social relationships that wouldn't even be named until fifty years after their deaths (54). The novel form of social relationship

flows from their ideas about land. The people, they believe, belong to the earth, which will permit them to use it so long as they behave rightly. It is not clear exactly what "behaving rightly" means, but the results of this belief on the McCaslin plantation are as follows. The Negroes are allowed to earn their freedom by working the plantation. In addition the white men pool their small patches of land with the Negroes' and the McCaslin plantation. As a result the "white trash" are much better off: everyone has shoes and many go to school. The McCaslin brothers themselves live in a two room cabin (54,55).

If this view of nature is correct it calls into question not only the desirability, but also the possibility of Southern aristocracy. Granny's courage is absurd, for she is fighting a nature which simply does not lose. Granny's failure in the first two chapters may be supportive of the McCaslin view, although the alternative remains that Granny's failure is due to a lack of ability to fight nature, instead of to an inconquerable nature.

At any rate, Granny's spirit will not allow her to admit the possibility of defeat, and so the struggle continues. She takes the boys and journeys north in order to retrieve her mules, her silver, and her slaves from the Yankee army, After much travail they arrive at the Yankee camp and, with the help of the colonel who had pretended not to see Bayard and Ringo under her skirt, Granny receives a note from a general authorizing the return of her property. However, instead of authorizing Granny to be given one chest of silver, two mules and two Negroes, the note calls for Granny to be given ten chests of silver, one hundred and ten mules,. and one hundred and ten Negroes. Granny accepts the excess, saying "It's the hand of God" (128).

On the trip back to Sartoris Ringo discovers that the note from the Yankee general is quite useful. When they are stopped by a Yankee patrol Ringo uses the note to appropriate the Yankees' horses. Later, after they have returned to Sartoris, Ringo and Granny forge similar notes and steal a total of two hundred and forty-eight mules and horses. Most of the stolen stock is sold back to the Northern army, and the profits are distributed by Granny to the war-deprived people of the countryside.

Granny uses a man named Ab Snopes to sell the stock back to the Yankees. Snopes is a man who is neither Yankee nor Confederate. He is simply greedy. He sold the mules for Granny only because he was able to skim a profit for himself. When the Yankees began to

pull their soldiers out of the county Snopes realized that he would no longer have a ready market for Granny's mules. He responded to this problem by informing on Granny to the Yankees, and undoubtedly the Northerners paid for his information (168).

After the Yankees have left, Snopes sees one more'chance for profit. He tells Granny that a group called Grumby's Independents have four stolen horses, and persuades her to try to steal those same horses for herself. Grumby's Independents were a group of fifty or sixty men who appeared when the Yankees left, raiding smokehouses and stables "where they were sure there were no men," frightening women and torturing Negroes to find where money and silver were hidden (170). Such activity follows logically from the kind of thinking that forms Ab Snopes. If nothing, neither friendship nor country, is important except wealth, then all is permitted in the attempt to obtain wealth. All is permitted, that is, that one can get away with. Thus Grumby's Independents do not ransack the country when the Yankees are there, because the Yankees are strong enough to stop them. Further, they do not attack homes except where there are no men, because men might give them a fight. Thus there is one thing that merits consideration besides money, and that is being alive to have money. In the absence of a force sufficient to make these raiders fear for their lives, the way of life in the country is pulled down so that people live like animals. Women are afraid to stay in their homes at night, and Negroes live in caves like beasts (171, 177).

At one time Grumby's Independents were actually captured by some old men. Grumby, however, produced what he said was a raiding commission signed by the Confederate General Forrest. The paper actually was signed by the General, but it was so tattered that it was impossible to tell whether the original name on it was Grumby (171). The old men let him go, and in so doing they evidence an abiding respect for the law: Grumby is legitimate since he has the commission, and therefore may not be stopped from terrorizing the countryside. They also demonstrate a remarkable, even naive, respect for personal honor: the assumption, even with a man like Grumby, is that he is telling the truth when he says that the raiding commission is his. Both the respect for the law and the respect for personal honor are not shared by men like Snopes and Grumby, of course, and that decent men persist in their unquestioning respect for these things only encourages the triumph of those who reject them. It seems here that for the society to survive what is needed is

at least less trust, for without their trust in Grumby's word the old men would not have let him go. Bayard says that the bogus note was sufficient to get Grumby off "because it was just some old men that captured them" (171). The phrasing indicated that it was not a deficiency in strength that caused the old men to let them go, but an excess of trust that might not have been shared by younger men. The acting from the beliefs of the old order caused the escape of Grumby's Independents.

It is also interesting to notice that Grumby uses a false note to escape capture just as Granny had used bogus notes to steal horses. In Granny's case, however, the end is different. Granny believes that stealing is wrong, but that the injustice which deprived her of her mules and her silver was a more serious wrong, and that the condition in which the war had left the people to whom she gives the money was a more serious wrong still (167). She does what in circumstances other than wartime she would not consider doing, and she prays for forgiveness. If the wartime circumstances have any effect on Grumby's action it is to encourage the dominance of the desire for gain. Now there is no ruling authority to stop him, no force to threaten him-he does what he would do at any other time were he given the opportunity. Now, however, Granny enters Grumby's world of lawlessness for personal gain, putting her own gain on the same level as her more disinterested goals. In a world without law Grumby's rules control, and Granny is killed.

Snopes tells Granny about the horses that Grumby has and suggests that she requisition them as she had the Yankee stock. Snopes argues that they could sell Grumby's horses for two thousand dollars. He tells her that Grumby's men wouldn't harm her, for if the Yankee's didn't, and the Yankees are enemies, surely there would be no risk that Southern men would harm a woman (171). Snopes argues that the business with the Yankees had stopped without warning and that Granny had not had the opportunity to save any money for herself to rebuild the plantation. Granny is persuaded, and so she goes, despite Bayard and Ringo's pleas to the contrary. And Grumby shoots her.

The argument which persuades Granny appeals to the passion which made her want to run back to the burning house after her silver. The argument is successful, and now Granny is attempting to steal horses for her own benefit. Granny claims that it is safe because, as Snopes has said, a Southerner would not hurt a woman, and "she still believed that what side of a war a man fought on made

him what he is" (170). Granny is assuming, then, that Grumby and his men are like the old men who let Grumby go, rather than like Ab Snopes. Her intention is to deceive Grumby just as he had deceived the old men. She assumes that Snopes is not leading her astray because "even a rogue will be honest for enough pay" (169). True, Snopes has much to gain if the deception succeeds, but he has nothing to lose if it fails-Granny could do him no more good. Therefore, in terms of possible profit the only way Snopes might gain is for Granny to make the attempt. Even if that attempt is almost certain to fail, there is no reason for Snopes not to urge it (169). Granny's death is caused by her readiness to accept Snopes's argument. Her passionate love of her position is too blinding for her to see the absurdity of the attempt she makes.

Granny is defeated in her attempt to maintain the old order of Southern aristocracy. She is defeated because she believes that what are important about order are things like silver, flowers, majestic houses, and slaves. If these possessions are gone, then so is her world. She lies and steals to preserve them without seeming to question the propriety of her acts (except when her possessions are not directly at stake). She dies when she confronts others who are willing to do anything for material gain, the difference being that Grumby and Snopes have a more active concern for self-preservation. This is not to say that Granny is moved simply by a desire for comfortable self-preservation as are Snopes and Grumby. Instead she is moved by a desire to maintain what is hers, her way of life.

If Granny correctly understands her way of life then her defeat seems to confirm the McCaslins' contention that Southern aristocracy is impossible. Nature will not support or even allow a vast economic inequality. The attempt to maintain economic superiority leads to continual warfare-with the Yankees over slavery and with Grumby over horses-that ends in death.

Yet there remains the possibility that Granny does not understand what Southern aristocracy is based upon. Her spirited defense of the old order may be directed at maintaining things that are not necessary for the endurance of the aristocracy, for that aristocracy may be based on a superiority that is not fundamentally economic.

III

When Granny's funeral is over Buck McCaslin goes with Bayard and Ringo to find her killers. For three months they travel in circles

around Jefferson tracking Grumby. The pursuit of Grumby takes them to a realm of raw nature: no law, no comforts, nothing but survival and the stalking of other animals. Granny's attack on Grumby and Grumby's killing of Granny, an exchange in which both acted without the law, has led to the loss of whatever political order there was, and thus Bayard, Ringo, and Buck are placed on Grumby's level of animal nature. There is this important difference: Grumby and his men are moved primarily by fear or by its obverse, the desire for self-preservation, like other animals, while Buck, Bayard, and Ringo are not scared in the same way (189). Nor do Bayard and Ringo search for Grumby in order to get the horses that Granny had wanted-in fact they find the horses and pass them by (183). Thus the boys are moved neither by a desire for self-preservation nor by a desire for material gain. Instead they hunt and finally kill Grumby in order to re-establish human control over the bestial impulses of men like Grumby. In fighting Grumby, Bayard and Ringo are fighting the democratic notion that all desires are equal and that one may do whatever he can get away with. Their actions assert that there are things more important than mere preservation. By affirming the importance of things like honor and courage Bayard and Ringo point to a dignity of man as such in that unlike other beasts man can choose to act other than for mere preservation. They also point to the fact that men can be ranked since some men possess these qualities more than others.

It is interesting to note that Buck McCaslin accompanies the boys on their journey to find Grumby. Buck and his brother had argued against slavery and excessive wealth because they violate nature. Now, however, Buck seeks to avenge the death of a woman whom he understands to have courted death through such a violation of nature. Moreover, both McCaslins had tried to join John Sartoris's cavalry troop to fight for the South in the war despite the fact that they were letting their own slaves go and believed that others should as well. On the one hand, then, the McCaslins act against slavery and excessive wealth, while on the other they seem to fight for them.

The McCaslin position can make no sense if the war is fought over slavery. This is because for Buck and Buddy any attempt to acquire more material well-being than is necessary for preservation endangers preservation, and one cannot have a comfortable life without having life itself. However, if there is something more important than comfortable self-preservation then it might be more reasonable to risk one's life in order to obtain it. If the South is not

fighting the war simply to preserve slavery then it might be reasonable to join the fighting. If the aristocracy is not based simply upon inequalities in wealth then it might be reasonable to want to perpetuate it.

Bayard and Ringo learn the meaning of the war from Bayard's cousin Drusilla. On the trip to recover the silver, mules, and slaves Granny and the boys spend a night at the home of Granny's sister, Louisą. That night, when Granny and Louisa are asleep, Drusilla, Louisa s daughter, tells Bayard and Ringo the story of the destruction of the railroad that had passed by her family's home. The railroad, Drusilla explains, was destroyed by the Yankees because the Confederates had used it for some unspecified strategic purpose, and it had outrun the Yankee locomotive that was chasing it. The next day the Yankee soldiers came and tore up the track. Before the war Bayard had seen the railroad in operation, and with great excitement he describes the train's coming: "the river they had cut through the trees wasall full of smoke and noise and sparks and jumping brass" (100). We recall Bayard and Ringo's unsuccessful attempt to create a river, to conquer nature. Now man is described as having created a river. The railroad is as splendid as it is because it represents man's attempt to restructure nature for his own ends. The conquest of nature is not futile, for men have succeeded in the task that Bayard and Ringo were trying to accomplish as the book began: they have built a river. Yet as Drusilla tells the story the railroad is no longer in existence. The burned ties and the rails twisted around the trees are "becoming one and indistinguishable with the jungle growth which had now accepted it" (109). Soon the product of the victory over nature will have been lost, covered over by that resilient force of nature itself. Man's glory is fleeting. In the first chapter it was noted in the examples of Bayard and Ringo creating a river and Granny and the Yankee colonel saving the boys from the irate Yankee sergeant that cooperation between men is necessary for any hope of victory over nature. Here that point is recalled, for it is men who destroy the glorious railroad.

Bayard says that he and Ringo had known that a war existed because they had seen its product in terms of wounded men. Still, that did not tell them what the war was about: "men had lost arms and legs in sawmills" (107). So there was no real proof that this was *a war,* that is, something of special significance. When Sartoris would come home he would not betray any extraordinary manner; rather he worked and sweated with the others to maintain the plan-

tation. Bayard says that the need for this kind of activity was the fruit of the war, but in and of itself building stock pens or plowing land or killing meat for the smokehouse provided no proof of the nature of the war. Bayard says that as his father undertook to accomplish the ungloried necessities he would seem "to emanate a kind of humility and apology, as if he were saying `Believe me, boys: take my word for it: there's more to it than this, no matter what it looks like. I can't prove it, so you'll just have to believe me' " (108).

For Bayard and Ringo that missing proof is supplied by Drusilla's telling of what led to the destruction of the railroad. Here the entire war is encapsulated in a single instant by two locomotives. Drusilla imagines the grey generals having told the Southern people that "You have suffered for three years; now we will give to you and your children a glimpse of that for which you have suffered and been denied" (111). They imagine the roundhouse in Atlanta from which the Confederate locomotive would leave to travel the track that had not been used in over a year. They picture people sneaking into the roundhouse to caress and cajole the engine for one final magnificent effort, an effort for which it will receive annihilation, but an effort which is nevertheless clearly worthwhile (110). Once moving, the Confederate locomotive remained a hundred yards ahead of its Yankee pursuer. The contest, Bayard says, was like that of two knights, and the stakes and weapons were honor and courage-principle, and not material gain (111). It was the doing of the deed, not its end, which was important; if there was a strategic objective it has been forgotten (109).

The Yankee engine never caught the other, and the next day the Yankees came and tore up the track. Bayard says that what was ultimately proved was "the finality of death and the vanity of all endeavor" (111). But to say that such endeavor is vain is not necessarily to say that it is impossible. The locomotive did make the race, and it won; but the result was the destruction of the railroad. Knowing that would be the result, the Confederates still chose to make the race. Drusilla says, "They could tear the track up, but they couldn't take away the fact that we had done it. They couldn't take that from us" (112). In this case the magnificent deed, the glory of the doing, was sufficient return for the annihilation of the railroad. The free choice was to abandon mere preservation (the railroad had not been used in over a year) for a moment of glory.

There is a distinction made here between the having of things and the doing of things. It is upon the deed itself that Bayard, Ringo,

and Drusilla focus; the material end is relatively unimportant. One does glorious things simply for the sake of doing glorious things; for it is in the doing that the glory inheres. Drusilla tells the magnificent story of the railroad to men; the women are asleep. Drusilla herself looks and acts like a man, and wants to be a man. She rides like a man (101); her hair is cut like a man's (103); and she dresses like a man (113). Further, she repudiates the way of life that was expected of Southern women. "Living used to be dull, you see. Stupid" (114). One lived in the ancestral home, married an acceptable young man, received one's mother's silver for a wedding present, settled down and raised children, died quietly and was buried. "It's fine now; you don't have to worry about the house and the silver, because they get burned up and carried away." You don't worry about the slaves because they've left, and you don't worry about a husband and children because the young men are off getting killed in fine battles. "You don't even have to sleep at all; and so, all you have to do is show the stick to the dog now and then and say, `Thank God for nothing' " (115). The dog is the mere animal in man that requires comfort and sleep. But for Drusilla there are things so much more important going on that one must repudiate the dog in order to participate in the magnificent war. She asks Bayard to ask his father if she can ride with his troop (115).

The Southern men fight the war, then, because not to fight would be to allow oneself to be determined by the physical force of the North. Their fighting is an affirmation of honor and courage, of the human ability to make choices that jeopardize preservation. Thus the war is not to maintain slavery, but to stop the North from imposing its will upon the South. It is an effort to demonstrate human dignity: that man can control his physical needs and desires. This struggle for freedom on the part of the South continues after the war.

Towards the end of the war lawless men like Snopes and Grumby were allowed to surface because the Yankees had left and the Southern men were still away, leaving no one to restrain the bestial men from taking whatever measures they thought useful to satisfy their passions. Now Colonel Sartoris and the others are back, and there is sufficient force to restore peace and order, to make men obey the law. Sartoris is quiet about this project-it is not a task to be compared with fighting the war-and he refuses to allow the boys or Drusilla, who had joined his troop during the war and now has returned to Sartoris with him, to come into town to see what he is

doing. Nevertheless, there are indications that at least part of Sartoris s business in town is the restoration of some kind of rule over the passions of men. At one point Bayard overhears his father telling Drusilla that "We were promised Federal troops; Lincoln himself promised to send us troops. Then things will be all right." Bayard says that "we had joined forces with the men who had been our enemies against a new foe whose means we could not always fathom but whose aim we could always dread" (228). Sartoris wants the Federal troops to help re-establish order in the defeated South. He has defended his honor in a hopeless cause, thus affirming his freedom from being determined by men or by nature; now it remains to recreate a society moved by the principle of freedom rather than by the more base human passions. Thus the men are rebuilding Jefferson just as the boys and Drusilla are working to rebuild the aristocratic home.

But there is more involved. One day Ringo slips into town and comes back and announces " `I ain't a nigger anymore. I done been abolished' " (228). Again Ringo seems not to know what freedom is, so Ringo does not know what the abolition of slavery means, except that it means that he has been given a dollar (228). Ringo reports that a freed slave named Cassius Benbow is running for marshal of Jefferson and that his election is what Sartoris is so busy about in town. It seems that two people named Burden have come to Jefferson to organize the Negroes into Republicans and to get Cassius Benbow elected marshal.

Sartoris told the Burdens that there would be no election with -Cash Benbow or any other Negro in it, and the Burdens dared him to stop it. He stopped it. On the day of the election, while six or eight white strangers are "herding" (236) *a* group of Negroes to the polls, Sartoris goes to the hotel room of the two Burdens, lets them take the first shot, and kills them both. Drusilla comes out of the hotel carrying the ballot box, and the voting is finished at Sartoris. Cash Benbow is unanimously defeated.

When Sartoris comes out of the hotel his men begin to give the yell that they used to give when attacking Yankees, but Sartoris stops them. He then sends the men with Drusilla to his home while he goes to the sheriff to make bond. "Don't you see we are working for peace through law and order?" he says (239). On the face of it this statement seems simply absurd. John Sartoris has just finished killing two men because he disapproved of the candidate they were supporting. Of course the killings technically were *in* self-defense: the Burdens

seemed to fire first, at least the first shot did not come from Sartoris's derringer (there were no witnesses), but it is clear that Sartoris went up to the Burdens' room with the intention of stopping the election as he had promised he would do. How, then, is this act compatible with an intention to establish peace through law and order?

Recall that Sartoris is trying to rebuild Jefferson and to reaffirm the freedom of man to control his own destiny, the freedom of man to act against his physical passions. The possible election of Cash Benbow puts Sartoris's project in jeopardy. The problem is that while the "niggers have been abolished," in Ringo's words, they are not free, and they are not, therefore, qualified to govern free men. Earlier we were told that the former slaves had, by being relieved of their masters, been relegated to the status of animals. Now we are presented with the image of Negroes being "herded" (236,238) by white men who have virtually bought their votes. Further, Cash Benbow is himself no better: he is illiterate to the point of not being able to sign his own name (229). It should be noted that Sartoris does not kill Cash Benbow; he kills the white men, the carpetbaggers, who are responsible for Benbow's running for marshal. Not the slave, but the master, is responsible for what the slave does.

But the South lost the war. It would seem that the issue had been decided, that the South, by surrendering and "admitting that they belonged to the United States" (226), had submitted to the will of the North. Yet the case is not so simple, for to admit that there will be-,no slavery is not to admit that one is not free to control his destiny. The very act of fighting the war was an affirmation of honor and courage, and affirmation of human freedom to choose to act for reasons other than mere preservation. That they would lose the war was always known, but by fighting it the South affirmed the dignity of man in the face of necessity. The surrender, therefore, was not as complete because of the war as it would have been without the war. The surrender was a surrender to necessity only on the issue of slavery; so that while they had admitted to being part of the United States, they had not admitted to being ruled by the rest of the United States. The principle of self-rule, of freedom to control oneself, is again at issue in the Benbow election. Sartoris, who had earlier been unwilling to grant the right of the democracy of white men to deny his superiority (56), will certainly not yield to a democracy of brute numbers. If the "niggers are abolished," they are still not free; they are less human than he, and they will not rule him. To re-establish a human order in Jefferson in the wake of the

lack of authority caused by the war requires that John Sartoris stop the election, but also that he do it at least with the appearance of lawfulness. Thus the killings at least seem to be in self-defense, he will not let his men yell as if they were still at war, and he must report to the sheriff before going home. From Sartoris's perspective the killings themselves are no less necessary for the re-establishment of order than is the reporting to the sheriff. Yet this balance that Sartoris attempts to maintain between lawless violence and peace through law and order is finally untenable, and must result in one or the other winning out. John Sartoris decides which shall win, and dies in implementing his choice.

About seven years after the deaths of the Burdens, Sartoris is killed by a lawyer named Redmond with whom he had been a partner in building a railroad and whom he had just defeated in a race forthe state legislature. Bayard tells us that Sartoris took Redmond for a partner in the railroad because of the latter's quality of being able to bear Sartoris's "violent and ruthless dictatorialness and will to dominate" (258). Redmond was not a coward, but he had not fought in the war. Instead he had worked a desk job for the Confederacy, and had passed up the opportunity to enrich himself in the process. Sartoris would taunt Redmond with not having fought in the war, and relations between the two became so strained that it became necessary for one to buy the other out. Sartoris came up with the money and finished the railroad as sole owner.

Yet he continued to badger Redmond. When the first train came into Jefferson Sartoris blew blast after blast on the whistle as they passed Redmond's house. And in a speech on the platform after the train had arrived Sartoris again made a direct and "needless," Bayard tells us, allusion to his former partner (260). Immediately thereafter Sartoris decided to run for the legislature, apparently because he knew Redmond would have to oppose him. Of course the election was no contest, but Sartoris nevertheless used it as an occasion for continuing his badgering of Redmond. Finally Redmond shot Sartoris.

If there is no apparent excuse for Sartoris's action, the question arises as to why he did it. Redmond was a public-spirited man, a supporter of the Confederacy, a brave man, an honest man, and an important provider of capital for John Sartoris's railroad. Redmond was also a non-violent man and a lawyer. The focus of Sartoris's attacks on Redmond was the fact that the latter had not been a soldier during the war. This combined with the observation that Redmond

was a lawyer leads to the suggestion that the incompatibility of the two men may have stemmed from Redmond's being a man who sought to direct human affairs by non-violent orderly procedure. Sartoris, on the other hand, has been willing to act against lawful procedure (even if in the name of "peace through law and order") when he has decided that the results of such procedure are unacceptable. Both are public-spirited men, but Sartoris is more willing to claim an individual duty, based upon ability, to take whatever measures are necessary to secure his dream of the public good, and the consequence is that he disregards the rules made with the intention of securing that same good.

And Sartoris does have a dream, as is explained to Bayard by Drusilla: "He is thinking of this whole country which he is trying to raise by its bootstraps, so that all the people in it, black and white, the women and children back in the hills who don't even own shoes- Don't you see?" (256). The reference to shoes recalls the McCaslins and their communism wherein everybody has shoes. But that is not Sartoris's approach; he prefers acting for glory to acting from necessity. And so he rebuilds his plantation home bigger than it was before (253), and instead of buying shoes he builds a railroad. We know that the building of a railroad represents man's conquest of nature, something which the McCaslins seemed to deny to be possible. And indeed that conquest is not without price: there is the hostility between Sartoris and Redmond, and there is the fact that Sartoris has had to kill another man. This last was a man who might have been attempting to rob Sartoris-whether he actually was could not be determined because Sartoris shot too quickly (255). Further, Sartoris had killed the two Burdens and he had established the "night riders" (256).

For Drusilla these actions are inconsiderable: "There are worse things than killing men . . There are worse things than being killed" (261). Such was the assumption made by the Confederacy during the war, and indeed such an assumption lies behind all glorious action. Yet there are limits not recognized by Drusilla, for the Southern soldiers surrendered. The problem then becomes to learn where those limits lie. When does courageous action become unjustified violence?

Sartoris does seem to recognize the existence of the limits that Drusilla does not acknowledge. The war is over, the carpetbaggers have been kept from victory, the Sartoris home is rebuilt, the railroad is finished and Sartoris has won a seat in the legislature.

With the victory in the election Sartoris has changed his position. He has now submitted to the electoral procedure for a decision as to his worth; he has become part of the order that his actions had been above, although they had been for the sake of improving that order. Thus by defeating Redmond, who stood for the orderly procedure of law at all times, Sartoris repudiates the principle that the social order should dominate the superior man. Yet at the same time, Sartoris submits himself here and now to that order.

It was the day when the last election returns had come in. Bayard and Drusilla, who was now married to the Colonel, had that afternoon had a passionate physical encounter and Bayard felt it necessary to confess their transgression to his father. But Sartoris didn't care. The matters of simple physical passion, and even the possibility of incest, are below the level of Sartoris's concern, and he changes the subject. "I have now accomplished the active portion of my aims in which you could not have helped me; I acted as the land and time demanded and you were too young for that, I wished to shield you. But now the land and the time too are changing; what will follow will be a matter of consolidation" (266). Notice that Sartoris takes account of the land and the time. This is not to say that he is dominated by nature, as the McCaslins had argued men must be to survive, for Sartoris acts, and he acts to secure his own aims. The aims are created by man; they are not given by the land and the time. The effect of circumstances is to dictate what tactics a successful man uses to reach his aims. Now the tactics must change, not because the old means were inadequate, but because the land and the time are changing, partially at least because of the actions of Sartoris. Now is a time for consolidation; consolidation would not be called for if Sartoris had not been successful in accomplishing something.

Sartoris has sent his son to law school in anticipation of a need for a lawyer's skills. In order to consolidate his aims it is necessary that Sartoris stop acting outside the law. That is why he ran for the legislature. He tells Bayard that what will follow will be a period of "pettifogging and doubtless chicanery in which I would be a babe in arms but in which you, trained in the law, can hold your own-our own" (266). Sartoris has been the lion (260); now it is time for the fox. Peace through law and order ultimately must be maintained through peaceful and lawful means, and it is to these that Sartoris turns. Moreover, these means are not in conflict with the value of the preservation of human life. Sartoris has created the condition to

allow himelf to indulge that value: "And now I shall do a little moral housecleaning. I am tired of killing men no matter what the necessity nor the end" (266).

Yet while Sartoris could make an order worth consolidating, he himself could not consolidate it. Sartoris is a lion, and he could not be the fox. His world was one of danger and fighting (216), not one of peace and law. Sartoris is shot by Redmond, and Sartoris does not defend himself. He chose to stop killing, for the perpetuation of the aims he had reached by violence required an ending of the violence, and so he did not defend himself against Redmond. Sartoris told his son that he was going to meet Redmond unarmed (266), and Bayard learns that although his father had the derringer with which he had killed the Burdens up his sleeve, he made no attempt to use it when Redmond shot him (268). Sartoris had created a society which could no longer accommodate him, for his mode of action, his belief in the claim of superior men that they could do what was right irrespective of law, was incompatible with a society which demands that all obey the law. Given the circumstances in the post-war South, that is, that Sartoris neither is nor can be the Colonel any longer, Sartoris must be either broken or removed. Had he been broken, Cash Benbow would have been elected and the railroad would not have been built; the freedom of the human being which is his dignity would not have been affirmed. Sartoris made the alternative choice, thereby re-emphasizing the teaching that man can make choices, as well as the corollary teaching that there are things more important than mere preservation.

The issue does not end with the death of John Sarotoris, for now Bayard Sartoris must make a choice. Bayard is in his third year of law school at the University of Mississippi at Oxford when his father is killed. He is living in the home of Judge Wilkins, one of his law professors, and it is Judge Wilkins who tells Bayard of his father's death. Ringo has come with the news and to escort Bayard home. When they arrive at Sartoris they find the yard full of members of Sartoris's old regiment, and one of the members of that regiment offers to act in Bayard's place to kill Redmond, but Bayard allows that he will attend to the matter (268). Inside the house Drusilla is waiting and hands two dueling pistols to Bayard. But the next morning when Bayard goes to see Redmond he does not kill him, he doesn't even carry a gun, and Redmond intentionally misses with two shots and then leaves town.

It was clear that it was expected of Bayard that he duel with Red-

mond. Bayard knows what is expected of him, but refuses to perpetuate the killing. John Sartoris too had chosen to end the killing; the critical question that remains is whether he and his son refused to kill for the same reason. When Drusilla was telling Bayard of his father's dream, Bayard opposed her story with the story of another man. That man was Thomas Sutpen. Sutpen was "underbred, a cold ruthless man" (255) who had come to the county some thirty years before the war with an unknown, though it was presumed to be devious, past. He had gotten some land and money and a wife, and had become a gentleman. Sutpen was a Colonel during the war, and after the war he had lost everything and set about rebuilding singlehandedly. He claimed to be too busy to bother with politics, and he refused Sartoris's invitation to join the night riders to "keep the carpetbaggers from organizing the Negroes into an insurrection" (256).

For Sutpen it was not necessary to engage in politics or in Sartoris's project to shape the kind of social order that one wanted. Sutpen was neither a supporter nor a detractor of Sartoris's politics; he simply understood it to be unimportant. "I'm for my land. If every man of you would rehabilitate his own land, the country will take care of itself' (256). Thus Sutpen views politics as not being a cause of the well-being of men and as a waste of time for men to engage in. When Sartoris challenged Sutpen to a duel the latter simply refused, refusing at once the traditional opinion about personal worth, that it lies in honor.

"Nobody could have more of a dream than Colonel Sutpen" (255), Bayard asserts. Bayard applauds Sutpen's refusal to jeopardize his life in the name of honor, thereby assuring that his dream remains alive along with his body. Bayard approves of Sutpen's dream as opposed to his father's because Sutpen's does not require killing people. As to his father's dream, Bayard asks what good one can do a man by killing him (256) and exclaims of the Burdens that "They were men. Human beings" (257). Bayard's affirmation of the value of human life is made in the context of Drusilla's assertion that human lives are worth "nothing" in the face of a "good dream" (257).

Bayard's rejection of his father's dream of honor and freedom in the name of Sutpen's dream of comfortable preservation accounts for a change in the tone of the narrative in the final chapter. Heretofore there has been no serious criticism of Colonel Sartoris, but now there is much of it. Killing in general and Colonel Sartoris's killings in particular are painted as indefensible. Bayard describes his

father as being moved by a "violent and ruthless dictatorialness and will to dominate" (258). And he tells us that his father's criticisms of Redmond were needless and inexcusable (280, 261). Since Bayard is the narrator and Bayard has rejected his father, it is left to the reader to find if there is any justification for Sartoris's action. Faulkner does make Bayard present Drusilla's explanation of Sartoris's dream, and although Drusilla overstates the case by saying that human lives are worth nothing (257), she does present us with enough information to be able to justify the colonel's actions in terms of his view of human freedom and dignity. If Sartoris's actions are reasonable with reference to his end then the dispute that remains is between the end of mere preservation on the one hand, and freedom and dignity on the other. Bayard has chosen preservation, and thus neglects to present a thorough argument for the alternative.

And so Bayard goes unarmed to meet Redmond. Redmond misses Bayard with two shots and then leaves town. Redmond had to leave Jefferson in order to maintain his defense of non-violence and orderly procedure. The principle of the rule of law could not accommodate the man superior to the law, and so the defender of that principle had to dispose of John Sartoris. Yet in relieving the society of Sartoris, Redmond too had risen above the law, so that now both he and the man he had to kill had fought outside the law to secure the law. In the final analysis, then, Redmond agreed with Sartoris that the law could not rule in all cases. Yet because the choice was made to institute the rule of law, it was necessary first to remove Sartoris, and then to remove Redmond.

IV

In a story called *My Grandmother Millard and General Bedford Forrest and The Battle of Harrykin Creek* Colonel John Sartoris explains to his son Bayard what is at issue in the war. The Southerners, he says, are "a heterogeneous collection of people who [are] cohered simply by an uncomplex will for freedom engaged with a tyrannous machine." Such a people, he continues,

> could not be defeated; if they just willed that freedom strongly and completely enough to sacrifice all else for it-ease and comfort and fatness of spirit and all, until whatever it was they had left would be enough, no matter how little it was-that very freedom itself would finally conquer the machine as a negative

> force like drought or flood could strangle it. And later still after two more years and we knew we were going to lose the war, he was still saying that. He said `I won't see it but you will. You will see it in the next war and in all the wars Americans will have to fight from then on. There will be men from the South in the forefront of all the battles, even leading some of them, helping those who conquered us defend that same freedom which they believed they had taken from us.'"

The war is to retain freedom, and because that is its only end, because survival and comfort are unimportant relative to freedom, the war cannot be lost. Hence the title of *The Unvanquished.* Yet these, roles seem reversed; are not the Yankees the ones fighting for freedom, to free the slaves, while the Confederates are fighting for unfreedom, to perpetuate slavery? In fact, the teaching of *The Unvanquished* seems to be that the freedom of the slaves was not at issue, for they were no more free after the war than before. Instead it is their own freedom which the Southerners protect by fighting against the Yankees who try to take it away. Yet the Yankees do win the war; it remains to be shown how freedom can be affirmed despite that loss.

Freedom is not simply an absence of chains. Neither does it seem to be a simple liberty to do whatever one feels he would like to do. Freedom in *The Unvanquished* is self-determination; it is man making the choices that determine his life. Self-determination, in turn, means making choices based upon a rational decision as to what one truly wants; it does not mean that one's self is determined by his feelings or passions. Freedom, then, is freedom from the tyrannies of men, of nature, and of physical needs.

The problem of man and nature arises at the very beginning of *The Unvanquished* with Bayard and Ringo trying to create a river which the earth simply will not allow them to create. Later in the same chapter the Yankees are compared to *a* natural force, the suggestion being that to fight against such a powerful army is like fighting against the nature that Bayard and Ringo had found so recalcitrant. But the experience of Bayard and Ringo is not final, and it is found that man is capable of subduing nature. The man who is so capable is the superior man, Colonel Sartoris. When Sartoris builds a stock pen we are shown that to conquer nature requires hard work; Sartoris works even harder than his slaves to build the

13. William Faulkner, *Collected Stories* (New York: Random House, 1950), 672.

pen (14). And in the third chapter it becomes clear that man is capable of conquering nature on an even larger scale, for the railroad is a river through the trees. However, there is also in the third chapter a reminder that while man may win a battle, nature will keep the war alive, for as the chapter takes place the railroad has been destroyed and its parts are being incorporated into the jungle growth.

The railroad was destroyed by men. The Yankees destroyed it because the South had dared to use it, and the South had dared to *use* it because she refused to be determined by the power of the Yankees. She chose it to assert her honor and courage in the face of Northern physical force. The battle of the locomotives, which we are told is a miniature of the war as a whole, is fought on a high level: it is men using the products of their conquests of nature against each other, each to assert his own honor and courage and thereby to deny that he can be beaten finally by the other. It is the South saying that the North may take away lives and goods, but that it will not take away the honor and courage that is affirmed by fighting for lives and goods.

Freedom, then, implies that the passions for goods and for life do not dominate. The former passion seems to be what moves the women in *The Unvanquished,* with the exception of Drusilla. Such a passion moves Granny, and she is defeated and destroyed. In the second chapter the McCaslins raise the issue of the desire for survival. They argue that if one is to survive he must allow himself to be dominated by nature, and, at least in the case of the McCaslins, forswear the desire for luxury. Thus the desire for freedom seems to be subordinated to the desire for self-preservation. But nothing the McCaslins *say* leads to the conclusion that such a subordination is necessary simply, for it is necessary only if one refuses to endanger survival. Thus, to turn the formulation around, if one chooses freedom it may cost him his life *or* the lives of others. As stated, the McCaslin argument does not deny human freedom, but only says that the choice for freedom from nature requires that one be willing to take risks in terms of preservation. Freedom requires that the passion for self-preservation not be dominant. Thus both the freedom from dominance by men, in that it requires that one be willing to fight those who would tyrannize, jeopardizing life and comfort, and the freedom from nature require a freedom from the dominion of the desire for preservation.

All of the signs of human freedom are lost in the struggle for its affirmation. The house and the silver are important to John Sartoris as signs of what he has been able to win from nature, and they are lost in the war. The railroad is the symbol of man's conquest of nature, and it is lost in the war. Civil peace and order through law is a conquest of human nature, the physical passions, and it too is lost in the war. This last loss is shown by the activity of Grumby and Ab Snopes and by the kind of response that their lawlessness demands. Still, all of these things are lost in the affirming of human freedom, and after the war the ability remains to rebuild. Thus Sartoris rebuilds the house bigger than it was; he builds a railroad; and he establishes peace, order and the rule of law over men. There is a tension here between the assertion of human freedom and the submission to law which parallels the tension between courageous action and the worth of human life. That tension is finally resolved by man's choosing to submit to an order that he has built. Thus satisfied is the claim of freedom, for the order embodying the creations of humanity-and that order itself is such a creation-is perpetuated, as well as the claim of life itself. There comes a point, as with Drusilla; where the refusal to submit to law is no longer courage, no longer any subordination of passion to reason, but a passion itself whose satisfaction requires the relatively useless loss of life.

All of this is not to say that man will always be the victor over nature. It must not be forgotten that the South did lose the war and with it slavery. There are limits to what man can achieve, and he must work within those limits. Hence there came a time when the Confederacy had to surrender. Human freedom, then, requires effort to be maintained, but there ; is a point where it becomes unreasonable, which is to say indicative of a lack of freedom, not to change one's tactics.

The problem of slavery must be considered in the context of this discussion of freedom. The Negroes demonstrate a natural desire for, and an attempt to secure, human freedom, but the difficulty is that they do not know what it is. In the third chapter when Granny, Bayard, and Ringo are traveling north to recover Granny's goods they pass countless Negroes who have been "freed" by the Yankee army. The Negroes too were going north, moved by an impulse "darker than themselves, reasonless, following and seeking a delusion, a dream, a dark shape which they could not know since there was nothing in their heritage, nothing in the memory even of the old

men to tell the others . ."(92). The former slaves, then, desire freedom, but they cannot find it. Their movement is "dark" and especially "reasonless" for they do not know and cannot know where to go, and they fail to get there. The Negro drive to freedom is stopped when they come to a river that they cannot cross. They cannot be free because they cannot conquer the natural obstacle. The slaves' journey north becomes a journey to misery and starvation, and they are eager to return to Mississippi with Granny (130).

The Yankees, then, do not free the slaves. The only Negro we see approach freedom is Ringo, and Ringo never leaves his master and mistress. At the end of *The Unvanquished* Loosh has returned to Sartoris and Bayard compares him with Ringo. Ringo, he says, still takes matters into his own hands and is willing to do whatever he thinks is needed. Loosh, on the other hand, will always wait to be told by his master what to do (246). Loosh was the slave who most wanted to be freed by the Yankees, and he and his wife were the only slaves who left the Sartoris family during the war. Now Loosh has come back and he is not free at all, especially as compared with Ringo. As shown by the aimless migration of the Negroes and their being stopped by the river, more is required for freedom than to cease being owned. At the end of the book the liberated slaves are again doing what they were before the war, despite the fact that the Yankees have set them "free." It is true that the Negroes' relationship to the whites is unchanged largely because of the work of men like Sartoris in killing the Burdens and starting the night riders. Still, had Cash Benbow been elected it would not have made him or any of the other Negroes free. Indeed, that election presented a positive threat to freedom, for now the Northern carpetbaggers are trying to force the Southerners to be ruled by the slaves. Since the slaves are not free, the result of their rule and of the Southerner's allowing of it would have been not to raise the Negroes to the level of whites, but to pull the Southerners down to the level of slaves.

This is no attempt to justify the owning of blacks. It is clear in *The Unvanquished* that there is no natural justification for one race's owning of the other. The blacks are shown to possess both the desire and the capability for freedom. The best example is Ringo, who is shown to be both physically and mentally Bayard's superior. There are clear indications in the novel that some Southerners realize the injustice of slavery. The most striking example is the McCaslins, who were actually allowing their slaves to leave the plantation. And John Sartoris seemed to agree with their project; his only comment was

that they were fifty years ahead of the rest of the country. Yet John Sartoris fought against the Yankees in the war as well as against the Northerners during Reconstruction. The McCaslins as well showed a very strong desire to fight against the Yankees in the war. The point is that to the Southern men the war was not about slavery, but represented an attempt by Northerners to tyrannize over Southerners, and that they could not allow to go unchallenged. Added to this fact is the realization that the slaves could not be freed by simple proclamation, but that such a project would require a long effort at educating the Negroes to the meaning and responsibilities of human freedom. The freeing of the slaves, then, was not at issue in the war because nobody was trying to free the slaves. The Yankees were trying to abolish slavery, and the Confederates were trying to assert their freedom in the face of Yankee aggression. Because that was the Southerners' aim, they were not vanquished.

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