

Chapter V

Conclusion :

The study in the preceding chapters reveals Faulkner's concern with the mythical kingdom. "Faulkner is not writing a historical account of Yoknapatawpha County, but a critique of its history." ¹ Faulkner makes use of history just in order to point out the moral flaws of the Yoknapatawpha County. He has not attempted economic, social and political standards. He is after almost always moral standards. As Miss Rosa Coldfield puts it : "But that our cause, our very life and future hopes and past pride, should have been thrown into the balance with men like that (Sutpen) to buttress it _____men with valour and strength but without pity or honour. Is it any wonder that Heaven saw fit to let us lose?"² The South lost the war because of its own moral weaknesses. If it had had a better code of morals, Faulkner---believes that it would have won. He explicitly says : "--- that day when the South would realize that it was now paying the price for having erected its economic edifice not on the rock of stern morality but on the shifting sands of opportunism and moral brigandage"³

Faulkner, in order to point out the moral standards of the mythical kingdom___ Yoknapatawpha County, employs various aspects of the Bible. He constantly uses names, phrases, and other bits from both the Old and New Testaments. The Biblical

imagery is most easily recognizable in The Sound and the Fury, and Absalom, Absalom! The symbolism is another technique that he largely made use of in his novels. He has used, as it is mentioned in chapter IV, different symbols to represent the morally destructive force of materialism. "Through understanding the meanings of the literary symbol, we can more easily understand the criticism he has of modern society."⁴

Faulkner is sensitively alive to the human suffering in the Yoknapatawpha County personae and suggests 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."⁵ Although every religion teaches human values of compassion, sacrifice, and endurance, Faulkner has imparted special significance to it. Dilsey, in The Sound and the Fury, represents the human values which Faulkner holds most dear. Although Faulkner does not want to limit himself as a regional writer, he acknowledges his debt to the authentic southern experience and sensibility. In fact he claims that the advent of Civil War and World War II made him sure that he had something to say as a writer. Faulkner, as a writer, "is a moralist lamenting the moral breakdown he finds, in much the same manner that Jeremiah laments the moral breakdown of Israel. It is for this reason that the moral analyses by Faulkner can be called

religious studies." ⁶ His work reveals a profound reverence for human dignity. He is not ready to believe the decline of man; instead he "prevails". There are a number of characters like Dilsey, who, at any rate, "prevail". Faulkner is at his best in The Sound and the Fury, and Absalom, Absalom! where the theme of the moral breakdown is evoked most effectively. These two novels are crucial to the understanding of Faulkner's philosophy of "compassion and sacrifice and endurance". ⁷ One of the early charges on Faulkner by most of the critics and readers of Faulkner is that he is morbid and pessimist. But an over-all study indicates that he has not lost faith in humanity. He explicitly refuses to accept the belief that man will merely "endure"; rather "he will prevail." Man prevails and attains peace of mind through suffering. And it is man who has this goal, not just the land. His assertion is, "I decline to accept the end of man."⁸

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Ward L. Miner, The World of William Faulkner (New York: Grove Press Inc, 1952), P. 131.
- 2 Willian Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! (New York : The Modern Library, 1936), P. 20.
- 3 Ibid ; p. 260.
- 4 Ward L. Miner. The world of William Faulkner (New York: Grove Press Inc.; 1952), P. 136.
- 5 Dr. Egbert S. Oliver (ed), American Literature : AN Anthology (New Delhi : Eurasia Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, 1967), p. 83.
- 6 Ward L. Miner. The World of William Faulkner (New York : Grove Press Inc, 1952), P. 143.
- 7 Dr. Egbert S. Oliver (ed), American Literature : AN Anthology (New Delhi : Eurasia Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, 1967), p. 84.
- 8 Ibid; P. 83.