FAULKNER'S TRILOGY:
TECHNIQUE AS APPROACH TO THEME

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to show the relationship of technique to theme in Faulkner's Snopes Trilogy. The central theme, the continuous conflict in man between the world of nature and that of money, is revealed most clearly through certain structural and symbolic techniques. The conflict between the two ways of life is expressed structurally by a series of encounters in the three novels, and symbolically by the tension between opposing symbols. The encounters usually take the form of a struggle between a man and a woman, the man representing the world of money, the woman, the world of nature. The most powerful symbols of nature, earth and season, are opposed by the most powerful symbols of the world of ownership, money, automobiles and monuments. The continuity of life is dramatized in the circular structure, which is seen in the apparently endless repetition of both the central conflict and the major symbols.

In spite of certain limitations of the Trilogy, such as the fact that it must rely upon other books in the Yoknapatawpha cycle, and an unevenness which results from the great length of time in which it was written, it merits a more detailed study than has been accorded it by the majority of the critics in the past. A survey of the existing criticism indicates that it is inadequate largely because it fails to probe the novels deeply enough. Instead it often relies heavily on the
traditional approach to Faulkner first suggested by George Marion O'Donnell, which says that all Faulkner's work is a variation of the theme of the struggle between Sartoris, the moral aristocrat, and Snopes, the amoral poor white.

As a result of the influence of the traditional view, relatively few attempts have been made to approach the Trilogy in any other manner. The best approach to the meaning of the Trilogy is not through fixed interpretations, but through technique. A detailed analysis of symbolic and structural technique in The Hamlet, The Town and The Mansion reveals the conflict and the continuity of life, and also the central focus of the novel.

The focus in the Trilogy is not upon Flem Snopes but upon man. Man's struggle to reconcile the world of nature with that of money and ownership leads him to an understanding of the nature of evil within himself. The Trilogy stresses the fact that not only must man become morally aware of the evil within himself, but he must also struggle constantly to overcome it. Because he is a part of both worlds he must reconcile them as Ratliff does, not reject them as Stevens does. The reality of Faulkner's presentation of the conflict and continuity of man's life, as revealed by technique, makes the Trilogy a significant part of his work, worthy of a detailed study.
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I

PROLOGUE

William Faulkner's Snopes Trilogy, The Hamlet,1 The Town,2 and The Mansion,3 was originally conceived not as a trilogy, nor even as a group of novels, but as a number of short stories which first began to appear in the 1930's. The genesis of The Hamlet was a short story, "Spotted Horses,"4 which appeared almost ten years before the publication of the novel. In it Faulkner created and fell in love with an itinerant sewing-machine agent named Suratt, later renamed Ratliff, and as a result created further material for his character, all of which became part of The Hamlet. "Spotted Horses," considerably modified,5 became one of the major scenes in the novel, the sale of the Texas ponies to the people of Frenchman's Bend.

"The Hound"6 was the next story to appear, a story that would later add new characters to the world of Frenchman's Bend which Faulkner was creating. In the original form the story involved an Ernest Cotton, who in The Hamlet became Mink Snopes. In The Hamlet this short story becomes the account of Mink's killing of Houston and his frantic attempts to get rid of the body and to defend himself against Houston's dog.

The next short story, "Centaur in Brass,"7 was the first to involve Flem Snopes. In the Trilogy it became the account of Flem's unsuccessful attempt to defraud the power
plant by playing on the human weaknesses of Tom Tom and Tomey's Turl. At the same time "Lizards in Jamshyd's Courtyard" appeared, a story which became the final incident of The Hamlet. "Mule in the Yard," the battle between I.O. Snopes and Mrs. Hait over the compensation money given Mrs. Hait by the railroad, was later incorporated into The Town. The horse trade between Ab and Vynie Snopes and Pat Stamper, "Fool About a Horse," appeared in the opening section of The Hamlet, foreshadowing the "Spotted Horses" episode at the end.

The Hamlet, published in 1930, incorporated "Spotted Horses," "The Hound," "Lizards in Jamshyd's Courtyard," and "Fool About a Horse." It was, however, also indebted to two other short stories which were closely related to it. "Barn Burning," the story of Sarty Snopes, is not used because of its point of view. The early history of the Snopeses was given by the detached observer Ratliff, so that a moving event of the story became a frankly humorous anecdote in the novel. "Afternoon of a Cow" influenced the description of Ike and the cow.

A long gap then occurred before the appearance of other short stories later used in the Snopes novels. Since the publication of The Hamlet only two such stories have appeared, and those only recently. "By the People," describing Ratliff's defeat of Clarence Snopes and his political career, was subsequently incorporated into The Mansion, the only part of that novel to appear separately. Finally, "The Waifs," the story of the four Apache-Snopes children, formed the closing incident of The Town.
This brief history reveals some interesting and significant facts about the Trilogy and Faulkner's method of creation. Unlike other trilogies, *Snopes* was composed over a long period of time - almost thirty years. Although Faulkner apparently had the over-all design in mind for many years, he did not publish the short stories in the order in which they appear in the novels. The first short story to be published, "Spotted Horses," appears in the final section of *The Hamlet*; a later story, "Fool About a Horse," appears at the beginning. "The Hound" and "Centaur in Brass," published within a few months of each other, appear in novels almost twenty years apart. This of course helps to link *The Town* to *The Hamlet* and suggests that in composition the two novels are more closely related than their publication dates would imply. The short stories form generally the finest episodes of the novels. The majority of the short stories become part of *The Hamlet*; considerably fewer become part of *The Town* or *The Mansion*. Although *The Town* and *The Mansion* were apparently written over a much shorter time span than was *The Hamlet*, the short stories are so interrelated and integrated in *The Hamlet* that it shows a greater synthesis than either of the other two.

The brief history of the Trilogy also suggests the major reasons for its weaknesses and limitations. The length of time over which it was written, although somewhat modified by the method of creation from the short stories as indicated earlier, is primarily the cause of its lack of continuity from time to time. Too much variation in structure from novel to novel also tends to destroy the unity. *The Town* and *The Mansion*
suffer from recapitulation of events narrated earlier, recapitulation which, although undoubtedly designed to show the importance of point of view and changing opinion, becomes at times undeniably repetitive and dull.

The time span in the writing of the Trilogy probably accounts also for the range in quality of the three novels. The Hamlet is so much the superior novel that The Town and The Mansion cannot help but suffer by comparison. The time span also accounts for Faulkner's change in attitude from The Hamlet to The Mansion. This is particularly noticeable in the change in the character of Flem, and to a lesser extent, in that of Eula. Faulkner himself was aware of the change; his remarks in the Foreword to The Mansion show his understanding both of Flem, and of the effects of time and experience:

The author has already found more discrepancies and contradictions than he hopes the reader will - contradictions and discrepancies due to the fact that the author has learned, he believes, more about the human heart and its dilemma than he knew thirty-four years ago; and is sure that, having lived with them that long time, he knows the characters in this chronicle better than he did then.

Finally the Trilogy is limited because it does not stand completely on its own; it belongs to and relies on the other novels of the Yoknapatawpha cycle. It does not give a complete history of the Snopes family, but is dependent on other novels for further references to the Snopeses. Another view of Byron Snopes is given in Sartoris; the younger Clarence Snopes is seen in Sanctuary; Ab Snopes's role in the Civil War appears in The Unvanquished. The Trilogy exists always within the framework of the Yoknapatawpha cycle.
In spite of these limitations, however, the Trilogy is a worthwhile study of the nature of evil. Both as part of the Yoknapatawpha cycle and in itself it explores deeply and realistically the continuous and unending struggle between good and evil, between the world of nature and of economic exploitation.
II

INTRODUCTION

The Hamlet is popularly considered a novel about Flem Snopes, his arrival in Frenchman's Bend and his steady and ruthless acquisition of power. Flem supposedly brings to the little hamlet evil and corruption which spread rapidly to the inhabitants. This view of the novel has its roots in a famous critical essay published in 1939 (one of the most influential articles written on Faulkner) by George Marion O'Donnell. According to O'Donnell, Faulkner is a "traditional moralist,"

whose novels dramatize "the conflict between traditionalism and the antitradiational modern world in which it is immersed."

In Mr. Faulkner's mythology there are two kinds of characters; they are Sartorises or Snopeses, whatever the family names may be. And in the spiritual geography of Mr. Faulkner's work there are two worlds: the Sartoris world and the Snopes world. In all of his successful books, he is exploring the two worlds in detail, dramatizing the inevitable conflict between them.

It is a universal conflict. The Sartorises act traditionally; that is to say, they act always with an ethically responsible will. They represent vital morality, humanism. Being antitraditional, the Snopeses are immoral from the Sartoris point of view. But the Snopeses do not recognize this point of view; acting only for self-interest, they acknowledge no ethical duty. Really, then, they are amoral; they represent naturalism or animalism. And the Sartoris-Snopes conflict is fundamentally a struggle between humanism and naturalism.

O'Donnell's article with its pigeon-holing of Faulkner characters into good and evil, Sartoris and Snopes, has had a pronounced and detrimental effect on much subsequent Faulkner...
criticism including that of the Trilogy. The fault of most of the criticism of the three novels, as the following survey will show, is usually due, directly or indirectly, to a reliance on O'Donnell's rigid and unsatisfactory interpretation.

The Hamlet poses problems for this narrow interpretation, as the more perceptive critics immediately noticed. When the facts of The Hamlet failed to coincide with the precepts of the interpretation, however, the critics tried to alter the novel to fit the interpretation. Robert Penn Warren, for example, in an early article noted the failure of the Sartoris world to appear and was forced to elevate the society of the hamlet to replace it:

The contrast here, then, is between the non-aristocratic Frenchman's Bend world, unconscious of its past, and the Snopes world, which Ratliff, the characteristic Faulkner commentator, recognizes as the enemy.4

His indebtedness to O'Donnell is revealed by his choice of Flem as the centre of the novel:

The main subject of The Hamlet is the rise of Flem Snopes, the son of Ab, the barn burner, one of the aimless, vicious, degenerate, bushwhacking tribe of Snopes,...5

He seems to accept O'Donnell's interpretation, although he qualifies it somewhat:

In Faulkner's mythology, however, Flem, as pure Snopes, may represent modernism, as Mr. O'Donnell suggests;....6

Continuing in this vein, The Town is then supposed to record Flem's corruption of Jefferson, a city trusting and unspoiled. Alfred Kazin, for example, takes the traditional view, but finds that in The Town the Snopes symbol has become too stereotyped. "In Faulkner's eyes, they [the Snopeses]
are the great symbol of what has happened to the old order in the South." A variation of the traditional view is one which sees Gavin Stevens as a Sartoris character created by Faulkner to oppose Flem Snopes. John L. Longley describes Stevens as a Don Quixote "defeated because he is human, committed to fighting humanely against inhumanity." Louis D. Rubin Jr. feels that The Town records Stevens' apprenticeship for the final battle against Flem Snopes to be told in The Mansion. He says of The Town: "Yet if the novel is the saga of his [Flem's] rise to power and respectability, it is also the story of Gavin Steven's [sic] bitter education in the ways of Snopesism, and how to combat it." Such a view automatically poses Gavin Stevens as Flem's only possible or formidable opponent. Nathan A. Scott Jr. is almost entirely indebted to O'Donnell; his summary of the novel shows the continuing influence of the traditional interpretation:

This...is what has happened to that vanished world of the Sartorises and the Compsons and the McCaslins in which men, however imperfect, yet acknowledged their accountability to codes of honor and virtue: the old order has been beset by the Snopeses, and the outcome of this engagement has been the triumph of the great modern religion of positivism, with its single imperative of success.

The Mansion is an optimistic book, in the traditional view. Following the triumph of Flem over the Sartoris values in The Town, The Mansion restores the balance by showing the defeat of Flem by his cousin Mink and the triumph of the original goodness and humanity seen at the beginning of The Hamlet. Peter Swiggart, for example, finds the book pervaded
by Faulkner's "new social optimism." The end of *The Mansion* the Snopes menace has completely evaporated, and society is again controlled by men of good will." The finality of *The Mansion* is also implied by the titles of contemporary reviews such as those of Granville Hicks and Irving Howe.

Traditional criticism of the Trilogy as a whole follows the lines suggested by that of the individual novels. The three novels show the triumph and eventual defeat of Snopesism, finishing on a note of optimism. Robert Thonon finds a shift in emphasis in the progress of Snopesism from the first book to the second. Although he feels that *The Hamlet* "seemed to imply that society has to accept Snopesism," in contrast *The Town* has a more hopeful outlook. In *Frenchman's Bend* he finds no "solid moral values capable of stopping it [Snopesism]," but in *Jefferson* he sees "the emergence of a definite and efficient opposition to Snopesism." The sources of resistance which he finds in *The Town* are women, the self-devouring character of Snopesism, Flem's own feeling of failure, and the strength of such townspeople as Gavin Stevens. The last is probably an attempt to see Stevens as a Sartoris character.

The danger of attempting to judge a trilogy before it is completed is seen in Hyatt H. Waggoner's book, *William Faulkner: from Jefferson to the World*. The first two novels offer "a treatment of the nature and effects of Snopesism."
In *The Hamlet* Snopes took over Frenchman's Bend, in *The Town* he took over Jefferson, in the forthcoming *The Mansion* we are promised the spectacle of Snopesism triumphant in the state.20

The few articles which have appeared on the Trilogy as a whole are also largely indebted to O'Donnell. Gordon E. Bigelow follows the traditional approach, regarding Snopesism as "part of the expiation for slavery."21 He sees a change in Faulkner's point of view in the change in Flem's character. Flem, seen most directly in *The Hamlet*, becomes symbolic and pitiable in *The Town* and *The Mansion*, because by the time of *The Mansion* Faulkner is "more willing to separate agent from principle, so that without hating the sin of Snopesism less he can feel pity for Flem the sinner."22 Elizabeth M. Kerr, too, regards *The Mansion* as a rounding off of the trilogy. At the end of *The Mansion* the circle is complete; the Clarence episode indicates the triumph of the humanistic values: "The conflict in the Yoknapatawpha saga between Snopesism and Jefferson, between gain and love, seems to be ended."23

Closely linked to the followers of O'Donnell are those critics who see Faulkner primarily as a social historian, a novelist interesting only because of the picture he presents of the South, past and present. Edwin Berry Burgum in *The Novel and the World's Dilemma* says of *The Hamlet*: "The competitive demands of capitalistic culture have corrupted the easygoing feudal ways of the South...."24 This is merely a variation of O'Donnell's traditional Sartorises and machine-like Snopeses. Richard J. Stonesifer takes much the same position. Eula represents "the vast American earth awaiting
occupation" and her exploitation by the chief character, Flem, reflects America's concern with business, so that Faulkner is really "saying profound things about America's turning away from sound ideals." Anthony West finds The Mansion mild propaganda; he says the novel is a warning of "what must happen to an America which fails to keep the ideas that created it alive and which becomes a mere cover for a mercenary conspiracy." He is indebted to O'Donnell in that he regards the people of Jefferson as humanitarians attempting to overcome Flem, again a variation of the Sartoris-Snopes dichotomy.

Other lines of criticism have been equally misleading. Early reviews of the novels, often hasty and generalized, express many of the existing clichés about Faulkner, for example, his Gothicism, his interest in the perverted side of life, and his lack of unity. At first no attempt is made to differentiate among the Snopeses; Stephen Vincent Benét lumps them all together, having as characteristics "the acquisitiveness of the gypsy-moth and the morality of the swamp moccasin,..." Eula he finds unsatisfactory as a character because she is "so mammalian that she is practically a gland." Louis Kronenberger finds The Hamlet unconvincing because Faulkner's world is "too artificially lighted and too demoniacally propelled" for his taste; there is nothing normal in the book against which to measure the demons the author has created. In contrast Malcolm Cowley finds The Hamlet easier reading than some of the earlier books:
"Faulkner has suddenly emerged from his Gothic midnight into the light of day."\textsuperscript{31} Desmond Hawkins criticizes Faulkner's body of work for being "a stupendous deathbed scene\textsuperscript{32} in which The Hamlet appears as a series of portraits of doomed and dying characters. He also criticizes the structure of the novel: The Hamlet is "not so much a novel as a series of stories grouped around a common theme; ...and this trick of partitioning a novel suggests a weakness of construction which seems to be inherent in Faulkner's method."\textsuperscript{33}

The first influential comment upon the structure of the novel was that of Malcolm Cowley in The Portable Faulkner, that the structure of The Hamlet is "a series of episodes resembling beads on a string."\textsuperscript{34} Another was an early but significant comment by Robert Penn Warren:

The structure of the book depends on the intricate patterning of contrasts, for instance, the contrast of the Flem-Eula story with the Houston-wife story, the Eula-seducer story, and the idiot-cow story.\textsuperscript{35}

Sparked by the remarks of Malcolm Cowley and Robert Penn Warren, recent Faulkner critics of The Hamlet have been concerned with proving the structural unity of the novel, and with relating structure to theme. An article by Peter Lisca\textsuperscript{36} attempts to show the way in which the episodes in the book are selected and arranged to form a rising pattern of action culminating in the conquest of the community in the spotted horses episode. He examines the way in which the short stories, which provide the "genesis," have been altered to fit the pattern of The Hamlet, and concludes that the pattern of contrasts and rising action has welded the series of
episodes into a novel.

Viola Hopkins continues the probing of the structure of the novel. Her insistence that Flem is the centre of the novel causes her to criticize its diffused focus:

Flem is the central figure of the novel; but, paradoxically, not only are most of the other characters more fully comprehended or sharply etched, but the book seems to be centered on what happens to them. He is inevitably in the background, scarcely appearing to be taking part in the action....

She shows greater perception in her analysis of the basic pattern of the novel: "The association of the female with the land as the procreative force which condemns man to servitude is a pattern which recurs throughout the novel."

Such a pattern as this, repeated in the sections involving Labove, Houston and Mink, gives the novel unity. Unity is also achieved by the use of parallels and contrasts, for example, the fact that the novel begins and ends at the Old Frenchman's place.

The structure is further examined by Florence Leaver, who sees the novel as a series of encounters between the forces of humanism and modernism, an interpretation obviously drawn from O'Donnell. As a result she maintains that the novel shows the corruption of the hamlet by the Snopeses; the narrative structure is a war of minds coming to a climax in the spotted horses episode. The hierarchy of minds which she sets up has Mrs. Littlejohn at the apex, superior even to Ratliff, since she is the only one who does not succumb to Flem Snopes.
The most perceptive article in this line of criticism is that of T.Y. Greet. *The Hamlet*, according to Greet, relates the theme of man's relation with himself to man's relation to the land. The novel is developed by contrast "between rationally and emotionally motivated actions." Structurally the linear rise of Flem is crossed by a number of bars representing clashes with Ratliff. Both the action and Ratliff's involvement are intensified as the book progresses. Greet's comments upon the change in Ratliff emphasize the fact that *The Hamlet* is part of a trilogy:

Ratliff is a transitional figure; his faith in man shaken, he begins to abjure responsibility, foreshadowing, perhaps, Issac [sic] McCaslin's withdrawal. Ratliff's pride, however, proves of a sort which precedes a fall. Himself ensnared, his sympathies will be renewed and deepened.41

There is hope in the novel in spite of Flem's triumph and the resulting chaos. The imperturbability of the natural world in which the panicky horses flee indicates that "the blight will somehow pass. The earth endures and in man's acknowledgement of this lies his hope for restoration."42 The final scene unites the two themes of man and the land:

This juxtaposition of Henry, the earth, and Flem objectifies the central irony toward which the novel has been directed: All men are thralls to the earth, but in his respect for his servitude lies man's chief hope of endurance through human sympathy and mutual respect.43

Although the recent trend in criticism has been toward a more detailed analysis of structure, there have been some interesting remarks made in more general studies. Henry Modean Campbell and Ruel E. Foster, in their book *William*
Faulkner: a Critical Appraisal, draw attention to Faulkner's use of nature imagery to clarify character and event, and for ironic contrasts, for example, in the Ike Snopes episode, "between the flowery language and pathetic condition of the idiot."\(^4\) Structurally, they point out that the first section of the novel foreshadows events which are to occur later. Richard Stonesifer picks this up; he points out that the first book balances the fourth, the horse incident being repeated in the fourth book with more serious overtones. In contrast he says the second and third books are "a counterbalanced treatment of love demonstrating the hollowness and barrenness of Snopesism."\(^5\)

The critics have said comparatively little about the structure of The Town and The Mansion. Andrew Lytle examines the images in The Town and finds the essential conflict occurring between respectability on one side and love and order on the other.\(^6\) Irving Howe criticizes the Trilogy for the "conflict between the design of the trilogy and what Faulkner can bring off at the moment of composition."\(^7\) The structure thus shows a lack of overall planning. He says, for example, that the Ratliff-Clarence episode in The Mansion is false to the overall plan because it makes the reader think that Snopesism is easily defeated. Anthony West feels that the structure of The Mansion has been stretched to fit the facts of Knight's Gambit, in particular the marriage of Gavin Stevens to Melisandre Backus. This problem, he feels, is typical of Faulkner's lack of forethought: "While Faulkner
is carpentering his way out of this difficulty, the book escapes him and disintegrates."\textsuperscript{48} Hyatt H. Waggoner finds it difficult to consider \textit{The Hamlet} and \textit{The Town} part of a trilogy because of "the old Faulknerian change of perspective, from judgment of the deed to compassion for the doer."\textsuperscript{49} This change has in his view removed the conflict and purpose from \textit{The Town}.

Elizabeth Kerr, in her article on the Trilogy, examines the relationship of the novels to one another.

In time and place... \textit{The Mansion} serves two purposes: it more fully integrates \textit{The Hamlet} with the rest of the trilogy and it extends the range of the trilogy beyond Yoknapatawpha County without shifting the center of interest.\textsuperscript{50}

The society of the Trilogy is static; Flem and Clarence are the only successful economic climbers and even they fall at the end. \textit{The Hamlet} is polarized by love and gain; at the end of \textit{The Town}: "Love has been defeated by gain."\textsuperscript{51}

As Mink succeeds Flem as the creative agent \textsuperscript{[in \textit{The Mansion}]}, despite the short duration of his freedom to act, the themes of fatalism and of defense of integrity and dignity replace the themes of greed and exploitation.\textsuperscript{52}

Structure not only contributes to theme but also serves to give the Trilogy unity. Flem comes full circle from the flour-barrel throne in \textit{The Hamlet} to the swivel chair in \textit{The Mansion}; the conflict in the Trilogy is finished.

The simplified and narrow view taken by the majority of the critics, that Flem, representing the evil of modernism, is the focus of the Trilogy and that with his death comes the
triumph of the good of traditionalism, ignores the real issues and conflicts of the Trilogy. William Van O'Connor, in *The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner*, is the first to move away from the established traditionalism versus modernism formula. He says:

> It is a serious distortion of the fictional world of Faulkner to set up the Past, identifying it with the planter aristocracy, and oppose this to the Present, identified with a modernism of self-interest and the pursuit of sensation.53

It is he who first directs attention toward the hamlet itself, saying that the novel participates in the ancient tradition of man satirizing his own weaknesses. Flem is personal aggrandizement incarnate, and Ratliff is his shrewd, witty, but fallible opponent. All of Frenchman's Bend are involved in the conflict between the two, for it is also their conflict.54

The *Hamlet*, as the title suggests, is a novel with the focus not upon Flem Snopes, but upon the world of Frenchman's Bend. Joseph Gold makes the first sustained attack on the Frenchman's Bend world:

> Although there has been ample criticism of Flem and his vices, there has been little said of Flem's compeers. To see Flem as a villainous exploiter of innocent country bumpkins is to misunderstand the novel. The people of Frenchman's Bend are basically self-interested. Although they are apparently strong in a sense of community, they are actually not prepared to involve themselves in the problems of others.55

Tull, for example, when challenged by Ratliff to stop the progress of Flem, says: "It aint right. But it aint none of our business." (72) The world of Frenchman's Bend is not one of innocence and purity; the people are eager to trade and make
a sharp deal long before Flem Snopes makes his appearance in their midst. Gold points out: "The evils revealed in the activities of the Snopeses are learned from the society out of which they grow." Ratliff's comments on Ab the horse trader, Ab before he became soured, make this clear:

It was the fact that Pat Stamper, a stranger, had come in and got actual Yoknapatawpha County cash dollars to rattling around loose that way. When a man swaps horse for horse, that's one thing and let the devil protect him if the devil can. But when cash money starts changing hands, that's something else. And for a stranger to come in and start that cash money to changing and jumping from one fellow to another,... It makes you twice as mad. (34-35)

...Ab was coming to town with twenty-four dollars and sixty-eight cents in his pocket and the entire honor and pride of the science and pastime of horse-trading in Yoknapatawpha County depending on him to vindicate it. (35)

The people of Frenchman's Bend, like Ratliff and Ab, delight in bartering and shrewd dealing, and are not averse to cheating now and then. What the villagers cannot comprehend is not Flem's desire to make money, but his complete lack of humanity. They understand and accept the code of Will and Jody Varner but they cannot fathom Flem, who never made mistakes in any matter pertaining to money. Jody Varner had made them constantly. They were usually in his own favor to be sure,... They had come to expect mistakes of him, just as they knew he would correct them when caught with a bluff, hearty amiability, making a joke of it, which sometimes left the customer wondering just a little about the rest of the bill. But they expected this too, because he would give them credit for food and plow-gear when they needed it, long credit, though they knew they would pay interest for that which on its face looked like generosity and openhandedness, whether that interest showed in the final
discharge or not. But the clerk never made mistakes. (57)

This is the way of business of Frenchman's Bend. The people of Frenchman's Bend want credit, even though they pay for it, but Flem "did not want to credit anyone with anything." (57)

The villagers prefer the errors of Jody, because they recognize the human bond between him and themselves. In Flem they are dealing with an uncontrollable and incomprehensible force.57

Flem introduces a new kind of business deal denying trust, even with interest, but he is not responsible for the instinct for profit which the men of Frenchman's Bend already possess.

Frenchman's Bend was "tainted" before Flem's arrival; it does not appear to have changed much by the time Flem leaves. His passage through Frenchman's Bend is catalytic. The inhabitants of the village have been confronted by their weaknesses, made active in Flem. Snopesism is a mirror that truthfully reflects the evils that permeate society.58

In the same way, Flem cannot be blamed for introducing evil into Jefferson in The Town. The desire for respectability which Flem manifests mirrors the desire for respectability of the townspeople as a whole. When Flem masks his real reason for wanting Montgomery Ward in Parchman (to coax Mink into an escape attempt and so add twenty years to his prison term) behind his desire to spare Jefferson, Gavin Stevens and Hub Hampton fall in with his plan. The French postcards give way to the moonshine whiskey, because as Hub Hampton says: "We live here. Jefferson's got to come first, even before the pleasure of crucifying that damned..." (174)

Flem Snopes is by no means the first to discover what Ratliff
calls "civic virtue." (175) The people of Jefferson refuse to acknowledge the presence of evil or moral wrong in their midst; if they do not look at it, it does not exist. Mr. Garraway transfers his money from De Spain's bank upon learning of De Spain's adultery "to escape the moral contamination and express [his] opinion of that liaison" (312) but transfers it back because he could stay in his small dingy store out at Seminary Hill and not have to come to town, have to see with his own eyes and so be reminded of his county's shame and disgrace and sin if he didn't want to be. (312)

It is not the townspeople who have learned from Flem, but Flem who has learned from the townspeople the art of hypocrisy.

Only two critics point out the weakness and complicity of the world of Jefferson. James B. Meriwether suggests that the guilt is not all Flem's:

Flem Snopes achieves his greatest successes at the expense of people who usually act in accordance with ethical code, but who yield to the temptation to adopt Snopes's morality at some moment that allows Flem to get the best of them. Flem Snopes got his start in both Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson when someone tried to cheat him and was himself taken in.59

Meriehether is too kind to Flem's opponents, however; a harsher and more acute attack is that made by Steven Marcus. For him the subject of the novel is "the impact of Flem and his family on Jefferson, and the reciprocal impact of Jefferson upon them."60 The novel is a criticism of the town rather than of Flem:
Faulkner's sense of the social immorality that allows Flem's schemes to succeed is particularly acute, and out of it emerges the extremely critical judgment on Jefferson life which the novel pronounces.61

The battle between good and evil is fought in Ratliff, who represents the novelist's conviction that if civilization and sanity are to be preserved they must be fought for constantly, even if one has to fight with one hand tied behind his back, since to beat the Snopeses by their own methods would be to forfeit the values one wishes to defend.62

His remarks on Flem show his awareness of the evil in the town:

[Flem's] desire for respectability is simply another form of his desire for power ...his success is a result of having beaten the Jeffersonians at their own game, a game few of them admit they play.63

Charlie Mallison's judgment of the narrow morality of the town is entirely correct; Flem Snopes is as much a part of Jefferson as he was of Frenchman's Bend.

It is utterly appropriate that a Snopes should come to power in this culture; he is no harbinger of something new and alien, something out of the North, or part of the "coastal spew of Europe;" but the fulfillment of a tradition its native, purified, stripped-down product.64

In The Mansion the focus turns inward to Flem's mansion, the symbol of his power and resulting apathy. Flem's mansion, like himself, remains the still centre, the stasis, within the moving framework of the town. As a result of his success Flem appears even more passive than he was in The Hamlet and in most of The Town. He has achieved everything he set out to do and more, and now has nothing to do but sit in his swivel
chair in his columned monstrosity and wait for death. The death of Flem does not eradicate all the evil of the town, as The Mansion explicitly shows. At Flem's funeral, Gavin Stevens sees Snopeses; he had never seen them before but they were incontrovertible: not alien at all: simply identical, not so much in expression as in position, attitude; ... like wolves come to look at the trap where another bigger wolf, the boss wolf, the head wolf ... the bull wolf, died; if maybe there was not a shred or scrap of hide still snared in it. (421)

Flem's death has no more destroyed all the evil than it has destroyed all the Snopeses, for evil is equal neither to all Snopeses in general nor to Flem Snopes in particular. It is extremely doubtful if the world of Jefferson has learned anything from its encounter with Flem. Certainly it is not this world that has destroyed Flem; Mink, who in The Mansion becomes an entirely natural agent, kills Flem for personal reasons. The society of Jefferson allows Flem to be killed, as in The Town it allowed him to prosper and Eula to be killed. Like the world of Frenchman's Bend, the world of Jefferson remains unaffected by the presence of the catalyst Flem.

Olga W. Vickery's book, The Novels of William Faulkner, also points out the fact that Flem is a part of the world in which he exists. The Hamlet and The Town revolve around two poles, sex and economics, the natural and the social ways of life, personified in Eula Varner and Flem Snopes. The economic world is not only Flem's, but also that of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson:
Flem Snopes, the master trader, does nothing to change the essential pattern of Frenchman's Bend; he merely redistributes its wealth and power. Accordingly, even as he disrupts the established order of the village, he acts in terms of one of its oldest traditions and accepts some of its oldest values. But by isolating these values, refusing to temper reason with emotion or self-interest with sympathy, he becomes an economic monster repudiated by that society whose creation he is.65

This economic world is opposed by Eula's natural world of love. The moral responsibility lies not with Flem, but with the creators of the economic world, the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson.

The only full-length significant study of the Trilogy is the recent book by Warren Beck, *Man in Motion: Faulkner's Trilogy*. Beck emphasizes the fact that the Trilogy is in a sense unfinished:

> Once more a Faulknerian theme has been evolved, in an opulently detailed yet scrupulous fable of the human condition, with recurrent conflict between ruthless aggression and a principled resistance which is only partially successful, barely forestalling despair.66

In contrast to the easy optimism of other critics who see *The Mansion* as the conclusion to the strife of the Trilogy, Beck says "campaigns may be concluded but not the war, it being the old endless one between light and darkness."67 The novels show a continuous conflict between

> two elements envisaged as universals— the ubiquity and persistence of evil, and the innate tendency in many men to resist it, often themselves skeptically and even grotesquely, but with a slight edge, so far, and no disposition yet to give over, though a complete congruity remains out of reach,...68
Since the subject of the novel is the response to Snopesism, the focus, therefore, is on the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson rather than on Flem. Beck's major error in the book lies in his choice of Flem's opponent; he feels that the Trilogy is a study of the conflict between Flem Snopes and Gavin Stevens. His choice of Gavin Stevens is a credit to Stevens' good intentions, but intention alone is not enough to combat evil.

The Trilogy is a study of evil and man's response to it, evil not of Flem Snopes, but of mankind. The desire for material wealth and power which Flem represents is already present in the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson; they lack only his complete inhumanity. Both in the hamlet and in the town, Flem's task is made easier for him by the unasked cooperation of his victims with him instead of with one another. Ratliff, before he has discovered the nature of the evil, denies his responsibility to man in The Hamlet:

I never made them Snopeses and I never made the folks that can't wait to bare their backsides to them. I could do more, but I wont. I wont, I tell you! (326)

But as Ratliff learns at the end of The Hamlet, it is not merely enough to recognize the presence of evil; man must struggle against it in order to overcome it. Against the evil of inhumanity and desire for material gain, man has the weapons of humanity, understanding and love, and these he must use constantly to defeat the evil. Ratliff, at the end of The Hamlet, has seen the evil within himself; in The Town and
The Mansion he goes on to become an active combatant against greed and exploitation. While Gavin Stevens observes the Snopes' infiltration of Jefferson, Ratliff acts, when he can, quickly and quietly to block it. He loans Wall the money to save his business from Flem, and eliminates Clarence from political life by a device which, although it amazes Stevens by its simplicity, was apparently beyond him to conceive or perform. The contrast between the two men is the contrast between the two responses to evil: active struggle or passive acquiescence. Stevens, like Jefferson, is for the most part content to watch and talk; it is Ratliff who knows what the circular pattern of the Trilogy emphasizes: the struggle against evil is real, and it is unending.
III

FROM TECHNIQUE TO THEME

Much of the criticism of the Trilogy, as the summary in the preceding chapter indicates, fails to reveal the central theme - the continual struggle between good and evil in man. The criticism is inadequate largely because it does not examine the novels in sufficient detail. The key to the theme of the Trilogy is technique; an analysis of Faulkner's method reveals his purpose. I shall therefore examine certain techniques which Faulkner uses in the Trilogy, both in the individual novels and in the Trilogy as a whole, in order to show how these techniques dramatize and reveal the theme. The particular techniques which most consistently and effectively express the struggle between the two ways of life or between the good and the evil elements in the Trilogy are structure, image and symbol, and these I shall look at in detail. I shall not attempt to keep these terms entirely separate, since Faulkner has fused the elements together to increase the sense of tension and contrast in the novels. For example, at Flem's death, Flem and Mink, as representations of conflicting forces, serve both symbolic and structural purposes. The conflict between the world of Mink and that of Flem is raised above the level of plot and character to that of symbol and theme, without losing the former elements. In terms of symbol and
theme the conflict lies between the two ways of life; in terms of plot and character Flem's death is the result of Mink's long-standing grudge.

Technique and theme are united in the conflict between the two ways of life throughout the Trilogy. Both structure and symbol display the tension between the two forces, and both are polarized to show the conflict between the extremes. Structurally each of the novels is composed of a series of encounters or conflicts representing varying degrees of the two opposing worlds. These conflicts vary in intensity depending upon the degree to which the one way of life momentarily triumphs over the other. Each incident forms part of the central and continuous conflict between the natural and the mechanical in the Trilogy; each incident is a variation upon the main theme.

The two worlds Faulkner presents in the novels are polar opposites. The first of these worlds is the world of nature. The primary symbol of the natural world is the land and the natural rhythms and cycles associated with it, such as the change from season to season or from day to night. It is personified in those figures who are close to, or a part of, nature, who share in it and understand it. They are intuitive rather than logical and act by instinct, as do animals, rather than by intellect. They have the richness and fertility of the earth, and are often described by earth imagery. The most natural figures are Eula Varner of The Hamlet and Mink Snopes of The Mansion, and both are consistently associated
with and likened to the earth. Associated with the natural world are the human qualities or emotions - love, honour, understanding, fidelity, generosity, forgiveness - and it is the natural characters who exhibit these qualities.

The opposing world is dominated by man-made things rather than by nature. The primary symbol of this world is money and the things money can buy. Secondary symbols are machines, particularly the automobile, and monuments, including mansions. This world is personified in those figures whose goal in life is to acquire wealth and whose energies are entirely directed toward that purpose. They rely on knowledge rather than intuition, reason rather than emotion. Their qualities are often a mockery of the natural ones; either they lack human emotions, or they feel them only for money. Flem, for example, loves and respects only money; Lump commits perjury so that Flem may win his court case. They exploit the natural world wherever possible to become rich. In contrast to the fertility of nature, either they are sterile or they exploit natural fertility for their own purposes. The most representative figures of this world are Flem Snopes and his cousin Lump, both eager to exploit and destroy nature to achieve their own ends. In their exploitation they reveal the negative character of their world. The qualities of this world are a negation or denial of the natural world rather than an assertion of positive values in their own right, so that the world of money is in a sense dependent on the world of nature.
The two worlds may be described by several pairs of opposing terms, terms which I shall vary throughout the thesis according to the context. There is some difficulty in finding satisfactory terms, since although the term "natural" well describes the positive world, no adequate corresponding term exists for the negative one. A few opposing phrases, however, will help to define and distinguish the two worlds. The one is the world of nature, the other the world of money, business and economics. The world of money upholds the principle of ownership; the world of nature, the principle of non-ownership. The world of money is the "civilized" world, the world of society, preserving the amenities without the meaning of life. The world of nature is the primitive world, the world outside society, preserving the emotions of love and humanity which make life meaningful. These two worlds find expression in a natural as opposed to a mechanical or prescribed way of doing things, between Eula who acts according to her own standard of love, and Flem who acts according to the standards of the society in which he exists.

These are the two extremes. The majority of the characters fall somewhere between Eula and Flem, and the focus of the novels lies in them. These characters respond both to money and to nature. They are human beings rather than personifications, and show a blend of both worlds. Their position is often relative; their response is natural at one time, mechanical at another. Mink Snopes's response to
Houston in *The Hamlet* is mechanical and destructive; in *The Mansion* it appears more natural. Faulkner uses the extreme figures of Flem and Eula in *The Hamlet* and *The Town*, and Flem and Mink in *The Mansion* to personify the conflict in its simplest and starkest terms. Flem and Eula are the extremes not only of the conflict between the two worlds but also of that between the man and the woman, the way in which the former conflict is most often dramatized. Flem, the man of business, and Eula, the woman who is a part of nature, are the distilled essences of the conflict of the Trilogy. Variation is introduced in *The Mansion* by the substitution of Mink for the dead Eula, but the pattern is basically unchanged. The reader's interest lies not with these stereotyped and fixed extremes, however, but with the characters in the middle who become morally involved in the conflict represented by Flem and Eula. The focus is on the moral attitude of the world of the hamlet and the town, an attitude revealed by the response of the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson to the test case of Flem and Eula. Since they are the extremes, the conflict between them is outward and somewhat superficial. It is an inner struggle only for those who are a mixture of both elements, those for whom the struggle is not a matter of instinct but of moral choice.

Structure is so interlocked and interrelated with imagery and symbol that there can be no definitive dividing line between them. The tension between the opposing forces shown structurally as a series of conflicts is also expressed
by the imagery and symbols, which occur in opposing pairs, one counterbalancing another. Imagery of earth and season is set off by that of money and ownership; the major natural symbol, the land, is juxtaposed with the major economic symbol, money. Flem, for example, in the powerful conclusion to The Hamlet, actually puts money into the earth to increase his own wealth, symbolically seeking to destroy nature.

In the same way, the imagery of natural fertility and human love is offset by that of sterility and exploitation. The land is again the symbol; in The Hamlet, Eula is described as a fertile field, Flem as owner in name only.

The circular structure of the Trilogy is reinforced by the major symbols; the cyclic pattern formed by the recurring symbols gives the Trilogy its circular structure. The pattern formed by the interplay between the major natural symbol, the land, and a major economic symbol, the mansion, indicates not only the circular structure but also something of the relation of the novels within the Trilogy. The Hamlet begins with a decayed mansion, the Old Frenchman's place; the land is parcelled out and controlled by Will Varner. In this section, the mechanical symbols are dominant; appropriately, this section showing Flem's rise to power is entitled "Flem." The second section, "Eula," and the third, "The Long Summer," are dominated by the land and season. In the final section, "The Peasants," the mansion, the Old Frenchman's place, again appears, and Flem symbolically tries to destroy the land by putting money into it. The mechanical symbols are dominant at the end of the novel. The triumph of the economic and
social world is most evident in *The Town* - the novel begins and ends with a monument - though that world is never seriously challenged by the natural world. Continuing from *The Hamlet*, *The Town* begins with the watertower and ends with Eula's monument and Flem's mansion, symbols of the strength of the economic and social world at this point. This triumph is carried over into *The Mansion* which begins with Mink's imprisonment. As Mink becomes more natural, the land re-appears and becomes the most powerful symbol in the novel. At the end of the novel, although Flem's mansion is already beginning to decay, the land remains so powerful a force that Mink is afraid to lie down on it lest it assimilate him.

Flem's decaying mansion at the end of *The Mansion* returns the Trilogy to the decayed Old Frenchman's place at the beginning of *The Hamlet*, thus indicating the circular structure. The mansion and land symbols have also expressed the conflict between the two worlds. When one rises, the other falls; when one is completely dominant, the other disappears. More important, the patterns of structure, imagery and symbol are an approach to the theme of the novels. Flem's linear rise and fall is a very minor pattern in the structure, further proof of the fact that he is not the focus of the Trilogy. The major pattern is circular, an endless succession of crests and troughs representing individual victories and defeats. The pattern formed by the seemingly endless variations upon the central theme suggests the necessity of the day-to-day struggle; the overall circular pattern suggests
the continuity of life, of good as well as evil. All things -
good and evil, natural and mechanical, Bula and Flem - follow
the cycle of life and death. The circular structure
renders the vision of life as motion, the con-
tinuum of being in transcendent human conscious-
ness, immediately responsive, reverberant of past
experience and projective of attitude and action,
and thereby evocative of values, postulated rela-
tively but with ethical relevance.1

In broader outline, symbol and structure serve as an
approach to theme not only in the Trilogy, but in the body of
Faulkner's works. The conflict between the world of nature and
of business symbolized by the land and money is basic not
only to the Snopes Trilogy but to other of Faulkner's works
as well, finding perhaps its clearest expression in the
thoughts of Ike McCaslin in the short story "Delta Autumn":"it was his land, although he had never owned
a foot of it. He had never wanted to, not even
after he saw plain its ultimate doom, watching
it retreat year by year before the onslaught
of axe and saw and log-lines and then dynamite
and tractor plows, because it belonged to no man.
It belonged to all; they had only to use
it well, humbly and with pride.2

No man can own the land. Nature has a power of endurance
beyond that of money and civilization and will continue to
exist after man has burned himself out. Ike McCaslin con-
cludes:

No wonder the ruined woods I used to know dont
cry for retribution! he thought: The people
who have destroyed it will accomplish its revenge.3

The Snopes Trilogy traces Flem's attempt to own the land,
his partial and temporary success and his ultimate failure.
He succeeded neither with Bula, who is likened to a field,
nor with the land itself. After Flem has brought about his
own death by his inhumanity to Mink in *The Mansion*, there is still the land, "the old patient ground," (402) which will continue to endure.

Technique reveals the relation of the novels to one another, to the Trilogy itself, to Faulkner's work as a whole, and most important, it reveals the theme and purpose of the Trilogy. In this section I have indicated briefly the techniques which Faulkner uses to express the theme, but a complete understanding of the relation of theme and technique is only possible after a detailed analysis of each novel. Since space permits an examination of only a few particular aspects of structure, imagery and symbol, I shall trace through the Trilogy the series of encounters usually personified as a conflict between a man and a woman, the circular structure of the three novels, and the most important symbols – the land, the seasons, money and monuments – as these techniques most conclusively illustrate the struggle and the continuity of life which is the focus of the Trilogy.
THE HAMLET

Faulkner's use of polar and circular techniques in the Trilogy can readily be seen upon a closer examination of the three novels. In both structure and symbols Faulkner uses pairs of echoing and contrasting incidents and events to emphasize single incidents and to suggest the continuity of existence. More specifically this is seen in the juxtaposition and interrelation of structure and symbol by means of the imagery to indicate the conflict between the world of nature and that of business in the Trilogy, a conflict that cannot be resolved.

The most important figures suggesting this conflict between the natural and the mechanical, the land and money, are Bula and Flem. Although psychologically Flem may be termed a psychopath, symbolically he is so one-dimensional that he scarcely appears as a human being. The men of Frenchman's Bend take a shrewd interest in business, but they lack the impersonal calculation of Flem. Flem's tool is money, the symbol of his power and achievement. As soon as he acquires a little capital he loans it out at interest; his one goal in life is the acquisition of money. He begins in The Hamlet loaning small sums to the people of Frenchman's Bend, so that the negro at Quick's sawmill is able to tell the fireman who wants to borrow money:
Go to Mr. Snopes at the store.... He will lend it to you. He lent me five dollars over two years ago and all I does, every Saturday night I goes to the store and pays him a dime. (71)

From such minor exploitation he moves inexorably forward until he is at last president of the Jefferson bank. He is a complete representation of the aquisitive and amoral qualities of man.

The first section of the novel is dominated by the world of business. Entitled simply "Flem" it records Flem's rise in the Varner-dominated world of Frenchman's Bend. The first conflict in The Hamlet occurs between Jody Varner and Ab Snopes. Ab's reputation as a barn burner enables Flem to insert the thin entering wedge into Frenchman's Bend. He blackmails Jody into taking him on as clerk in the Varner store in order to protect his hay, thereby becoming a living "fire insurance policy." (25) Flem, knowing there is no profit in farming, has seized his first opportunity to enter the world of business.

Flem, never making mistakes in money matters, runs the store disinterestedly and efficiently. He becomes more and more a copy of Will Varner as he learns his trade from him; it is from Will's example that he begins wearing a tie. Although he is apprenticed to Will, his allegiance is to money itself, an allegiance Will understands and tacitly approves. When Flem challenges Will for payment for his plug of tobacco, Will pays without comment. At the yearly settlement with the farmers they resemble "the white trader and his native parrot-taught headman in an African outpost." (61)
The Varners are the first of many to succumb to Flem without realizing a challenge was ever issued. He is so like them that they perceive only too late that he is working for his own interests; he has absorbed the hamlet's way of life better than the Varners were able to do.

Ratliff, who acts as choric commentator throughout most of the novel, warns the villagers that they are seeing the prologue of a drama in which they will inevitably become involved. His observation to Bookwright and Tull that Flem is "working the top and the bottom both at the same time" (71-72) and will soon move in on "you ordinary white folks in the middle" (72) goes unheeded by them. To Ratliff's suggestion that they do something about it, Tull replies: "It aint right. But it aint none of our business." (72) Tull is typical of the hamlet as a whole; he is aware of Flem's progress, but is too lazy and indifferent to do anything to stop it. Ratliff, who does not live in Frenchman's Bend, is irked by the hamlet's passivity and decides himself to challenge Flem. In this preliminary skirmish, the result is a draw, a fact which tends to cause Ratliff to underestimate Flem from then on, and paves the way for his downfall at the end of the novel.

Flem continues his rise in the Varner business at cotton ginning; he presides at the cotton weighing, leaving Jody to mind the store. At the reckoning

It was Snopes who did what Varner had never even permitted his son to do - sat alone at the desk with the cash from the sold crops and the accountbooks before him and cast up the accounts
and charged them off and apportioned to each tenant his share of the remaining money .... (90)

At the end of the first section of the novel one of the men of Frenchman's Bend reports the final stage of Flem's triumph over the Varner business; it is not Will Varner but Flem Snopes who is now sitting on the flour barrel throne on the porch of the Old Frenchman's place. He is ready to take over the dilapidated mansion, symbol of Varner's power.

The second section of the novel, "Eula," introduces the natural world in opposition to Flem's economic one. In contrast to the niggardly Flem, Eula Varner exists as a sort of earth-goddess and symbol of fertility. Eula in The Hamlet is not a credible character but "some symbology out of the old Dionysic times - honey in sunlight and bursting grapes, the writhe bleeding of the crushed fecundated vine" (95) or "too much of mammalian female meat." (100) Images of the earth and of sex blend to describe her richness and fertility. She possesses the intuition of the natural animal, for in contrast to the scholarly Labove "there was nothing in books here or anywhere else that she would ever need to know." (114)

As a natural woman, Eula seeks a natural man for a mate. The most satisfactory man she can find is Hoake McCarron, who is more suitable than Labove or the Frenchman's Bend boys hovering about her. Labove, the schoolteacher, is the monk, the ascetic, whose way of life is a complete denial of Eula's pagan fertility. The Frenchman's Bend boys are too timid; only McCarron has the force to possess her.
Flem's marriage to Eula is a further triumph for him and for his way of life. Earlier Ratliff had warned the village:

Flem has grazed up the store and he has grazed up the blacksmith shop and now he is starting in on the school. That just leaves Will's house. (71)

The insatiable Flem has now successfully "grazed up" the house also. Eula, her face a "calm beautiful mask," (146) is no longer the absolute representation of nature she was before her marriage. To a certain degree Flem has succeeded in dragging her down to his level. The marriage itself is a purely mechanical arrangement, a matter of money and legal entanglements, Flem's marriage rather than Eula's. If this victory lacks the finality of the one in The Town it is because in The Hamlet Eula is a completely passive and unconscious representation of nature. She does nothing to oppose Flem or anyone else; she simply sits. Flem sits too in The Hamlet, feigning passivity while he plans his next move, but compared to her he is intensely active.

The description of the land at the end of the summer of Eula's marriage reflects the loss and waste of Eula upon Flem:

the old, now glandless earth-creeping, the very buds and blossoms, the garlands of whose yellowed triumphs had long ago fallen into the profitless dust, embalmed now and no more dead to the living world if they were sealed in buried vaults (149)

Eula has left behind the summer of childhood and has entered the autumn of maturity with her marriage. Her face is a "calm beautiful mask" hiding her thoughts and feelings for her
husband; for the first time she is more than unthinking "galmeat." (150) The change in season from the furious heat of summer to the calmness and maturity of autumn symbolizes the change within Eula herself; she retains her link with nature while changing from a representation of nature to a human being. This change, begun in *The Hamlet*, is most clearly shown in *The Town*. Here, in deliberate opposition to Flem, she unhesitatingly gives her life to save Linda.

The importance of Flem's marriage to Eula is indicated by the vision of Hell which follows immediately. His triumph over the Prince foreshadows his triumphs over the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson. This scene, closely paralleling the one at the end of the first section in which Flem sat on the throne of the Old Frenchman's place, indicates how much greater is his triumph now. His success with Will has enabled him to marry Eula. His victory is incomplete, however. He may be Eula's husband in name, but he is unable to turn her from a natural to a mechanical figure. The power of nature to resist the forces of ownership which attempt to destroy it, personified in Flem and Eula, was forecast by the schoolteacher Labove. The relation of Eula and her husband is that of the fertile land to its sterile owner, who would be the crippled Vulcan to that Venus, who would not possess her but merely own her by the single strength which power gave, the dead power of money, wealth, gewgaws, baubles, as he might own, not a picture, statue: a field, say. He saw it: the fine land rich and fecund and foul and eternal and impervious to him who claimed title to it, oblivious, drawing to itself tenfold the quantity of living seed
its owner's whole life could have secreted and compounded, producing a thousandfold the harvest he could ever hope to gather and save. (119)

Labove's prophecy is fulfilled; Eula, although titularly owned by Flem, changes as a result of her marriage and her child from an unconscious symbol of nature, not to an automaton but to a human being. Flem's scheme has backfired on him. Even dead, she exerts a powerful enough force on her daughter in *The Mansion* to help bring about the death of Flem, although at the close of this section it would appear that Flem has triumphed.

The third section of the novel, "The Long Summer," provides an interlude from the theme of Flem's rise by focusing completely upon the people of Frenchman's Bend; this change of focus is a structural device used throughout the Trilogy. The series of conflicts which occur in this section offer variations upon the introductory theme of Flem and Eula both by parallel and by contrast. The continuation of the symbolic as well as the structural patterns serves to link this section to the novel as a whole. The variations are carefully selected and worked out so that the reader is not only interested in the individual incidents, but is also prepared for the reappearance of Flem in the final section of the novel.

The structural pattern of the section takes the established form of the conflict between man and woman, the mechanical and the natural way of doing things, the continuation of the pattern suggesting the identity of motive and purpose of Flem and the people of the hamlet. The first relationship is
completely meaningless and degraded, a continuation of the triumph of the world of business which dominated the end of the previous section. Lump Snopes's exploitation of the field negress makes a mockery of Eula's natural fertility. Lump is, after Flem, the figure in the novel most obsessed by money, degrading the sexual act into payment for a bucket of lard. To him, sex, like any other commodity, is to be bought and sold. The whole sordid petty incident is in complete contrast to the rich prodigality of nature earlier personified in Eula.

From this nadir the book rises to the main portion of the third section describing the love affair of the idiot Ike Snopes and Jack Houston's cow. Although on a realistic level the episode appears ludicrous and pathetic, symbolically the scene serves an important purpose. The dominance of the nature imagery suggests that this relationship is more natural than that of either Flem and Eula or Lump and the field negress. Ike, like the early Eula, is a part of nature: "He would lie amid the waking instant of the earth's teeming minute life," (167) where he feels at home. The barking of a dog is to his ears a shout, a language he can understand. It is only when he is inside a house that he feels like "a moth or a trapped bird." (171) As with Eula, the nature description suggests his moods and character; his life is bound by the cycle of nature. He is instinctively afraid of the fire which destroys the world of nature, yet risks his life unhesitatingly to save the cow. Nature in this section is
dominant and enduring; the land which has been ravaged by the sawmill is able to repair the damages in time:

it was a region of scrubby second-growth pine and oak among which dogwood bloomed until it too was cut to make cotton spindles, and old fields where not even a trace of furrow showed any more, gutted and gullied by forty years of rain and frost and heat into plateaus choked with rank sedge and briers loved of rabbits and quail coveys, and crumbling ravines striated red and white with alternate sand and clay. (174)

The partially obliterated scars suggest the power of the destructive forces, here symbolized by the sawmill and the fire.

Ike's world, however distorted, is one of human values, of love and fidelity that cannot be evaluated in terms of money. In contrast to Flem and Lump, Ike puts his beloved before himself, risking his life to save her. He and the cow live according to the cycle of nature, sleeping and waking to the rhythms of sun and moon:

There was a moon at that time. It waned nightly westward; juxtaposed to it, each dawn the morning star burned in fierce white period to the night, and he would smell the waking's instant as she would rise.... (182)

He looks after the cow carefully, clumsily but eagerly learning how to milk her, and remaining with her when she is captured. The human values denied by Flem and Lump find expression only in Ike. His devotion to the cow is so powerful that Jack Houston, unable to destroy it, is forced to sell
the cow to Mrs. Littlejohn for Ike. Within the framework of Lump's greed, however, the idyllic relationship degenerates into a sordid case of "stock-diddling" (204) which all the men of Frenchman's Bend may watch. When Ratliff forces Lump to put an end to the sideshow to keep the Snopes name as "pure as a marble monument," (204) Ike's natural world is destroyed. In place of the cow he has only a wooden effigy, a man-made monument to the past.

The love of Ike for his cow reveals the lack of love between Flem and Eula. Since Eula is on a level with the cow as a creature of natural fertility, the contrast in the two incidents lies in the men. Although Ike is unable to express himself, his fumbling actions nevertheless show an innate allegiance to the human values. In contrast to Flem who sits, Ike acts, however instinctively, revealing in his acts a feeling of love and an understanding utterly beyond Flem, a feeling that persists in spite of the ridiculousness of the scene when viewed realistically.

In contrast to the black and white of the Lump and Ike episodes, those involving Jack Houston and Mink Snopes are grey-toned. Compared to the materialistic Lump and the natural Ike, Houston and Mink are a mixture of both elements, relative rather than absolute characters. Their allegiance to the natural or the business world depends upon their relationship to, and the character of, the other person involved in the conflict. The somewhat rigid categorization of characters into those who are natural and those who are materialistic does not hold for the episodes involving Jack Houston, because
Houston is so near the centre of the scale, so much a mixture of both elements. The edges of the opposing forces become blurred when the characters are more fully rounded; the two sides remain sharp and distinct only when the characters are, like Flem and Eula, flat and allegorical. The man-woman relationship reveals that Houston's real allegiance is to his masculinity, not to nature as represented by Lucy, his wife. He is "unbitted... possessed of that strong lust... for that fetterless immobility called freedom." (209) His negro mistress, the woman from the Galveston brothel, and his years of wandering are an attempt to escape Lucy Pate, an attempt doomed to failure. His male instinct for freedom is curbed by the woman Lucy, the representation of nature. Like Labove and Mink, Houston feels trapped by nature. Earlier, marriage was a mechanical trap for Eula; now it is a natural trap for Houston. The natural elements gradually disappear in this section as Lucy is destroyed by the stallion, the symbol of Houston's urge toward freedom. But his new-found freedom becomes itself a trap for him, as he frantically attempts to avoid the moon which, as a symbol of fertility and the female, haunts Houston after the death of Lucy: "so he moved the cot into another room and then against a north wall where the moon could not possibly reach him...." (219)

The man-woman relationships in this section help to link Houston and Mink. The fact that the Galveston woman remains barren appears a token of sin to Houston and keeps her past alive in their present:
here again was the old mystical fanatic Protestant; the hand of God lying upon the sinner even after the regeneration; the Babylonian interdict by heaven forever against reproduction. He did not know just how much time, just what span of chastity, would constitute purgatorium and absolution, but he would imagine it—some instant, mystical still, when the blight of those nameless and faceless men, the scorched scars of merchandised lust, would be effaced and healed from the organs which she had prostituted. (216)

Mink, too, feels the presence of the ghosts of his wife's former lovers:

when he did approach her at last he would have to tear aside not garments alone but the ghostly embraces of thirty or forty men; and this not only once but each time and hence (he foresaw even then his fate) forever: no room, no darkness, no desert even ever large enough to contain the two of them and the constant stallion-ramp of those inexpugnable shades. (242)

Houston and Lucy Pate invite comparison with Mink and his wife. In spite of her past, Mink's wife has retained a natural quality; Mink "entered not the hot and quenchless bed of a barren and lecherous woman, but the fierce simple cave of a lioness...." (242) The present is stronger than the past, however, and can cast out the ghosts; Mink and his wife have two girls and Lucy was expecting a child when she was killed. In contrast Flem is impotent. Like Houston, Mink finds marriage a trap, both for himself and for his wife; his children "served to shackle her too, more irrevocably than he himself was shackled...." (242) Mink feels caught by his family, but Houston, who has lost his wife and the child she was to bear, knows there is no escape. The trap in which the men find themselves and which indicates the mechanical quality
of their lives, cannot be blamed upon Flem. He is not responsible for the circumstances which destroy their freedom.

The fact that Mink is at least partly natural is indicated by his identification with the earth in this section. His anger and desire for revenge culminating in the murder of Houston occur during the height of summer:

The summer's rainless heat - the blazing days beneath which even the oak leaves turned brown and died, the nights during which the ordered stars seemed to glare down in cold and lidless amazement at an earth being drowned in dust - (263)

Although he is poverty-stricken, he is not obsessed with money as are Flem and Lump. In this he has his own code of behaviour; he has murdered not for profit, but for revenge, and so he will not rob the body, as Lump would do. After the murder he becomes associated with the darkness, reversing the normal order of human life, sleeping by day and becoming active at night. The cold and ordered stars suggest the beginning of his alienation from nature. The alienation is further emphasized by his trips into the bottom; it is only after the murder that he becomes lost in the world of nature. The description of the winter Mink spends in the jail waiting for Flem to free him reflects his state of mind. He is trapped and worn out by the murder and the waiting, as nature is trapped by the cold:

an iron cold which locked the earth in a frozen rigidity,... all day long the sun stood pale as an uncooked biscuit and as heatless.... the windless iron cold came down... without even a heatless wafer of sun to preside above a dead earth caséd in ice;... the white and rigid solitude. (266-267)
Mink's season is now the winter; he has no part in the rejuvenation of the land in spring:

loud fierce gusts of warm water washing out of the earth the iron enduring frost, the belated spring hard on its bright heels and all coming at once, pell-mell and disordered, fruit and bloom and leaf, pied meadow and blossoming wood and the long fields shearing dark out of winter's slumber, to the shearing plow. (268-269)

The land, following its season of confinement and dormancy, is again alive and life-producing. Mink, however, remains in the state of winter, his grimed face anxiously peering through the bars of his cell, waiting for Flem.

The coming of spring at the end of the third section, dominated as the title suggests by images of season, is overshadowed by the imminent return of Flem. The natural world of Ike has slowly but inexorably yielded to the business world of the village, paving the way for Flem's triumph in the final section. As the curtain rings down in preparation for the final act, the last figure significantly is Ike, not the Ike of the beginning of the section, but a subdued figure with "devastated eyes," (271) with a wooden effigy in place of the cow. Ike's love and trust have been completely destroyed not by Flem, but by the people of Frenchman's Bend.

In the final section of the novel, "The Peasants;" the conflict between the worlds of nature and of money comes to a climax, and symbol and structure become more concentrated and complex. The primary incident in this section is the sale of the spotted horses to the people of Frenchman's Bend. Flem has indeed moved in on the white folks in the middle as Ratliff
had predicted, but with their implied consent. Throughout the sale Ratliff acts as chorus, warning the men and confirming their suspicions, but they pay him no more heed now than they did earlier. Even Ratliff realizes that his remarks are in vain: "I reckon there aint nothing under the sun or in Frenchman's Bend neither that can keep you folks from giving Flem Snopes and that Texas man your money." (282) The villagers' greed makes them unable to resist the bait Flem offers them, and they give their hard-earned cash for the privilege of owning one of the horses. Flem, as always, remains in the background, letting the Texan conduct the actual sale; he is so sure of himself and his victims that although he knows—his presence increases the doubts of the villagers, he remains on the scene during the auction.

Structurally, the conflict is again expressed as a struggle between a man and a woman, who represent the worlds of business, particularly ownership, and of nature. The most pathetic example is that of Henry Armstid and his wife. Armstid's fanatic determination to own one of the horses turns him into a madman. He takes his wife's five dollars, although he knows it is to buy shoes for their children, in order to buy one of the horses. In his determination, he is as one-dimensional as Flem. His wife, who represents the more natural elements, is unable to oppose him. The economic world he represents is completely dominant; he has become so determined to own a horse that even the pity and momentary concern of the Texan cannot change him. He is the extreme
example of what the hamlet's love of barter and gain can do to a man.

Even the symbols are polarized in this final section. The primary male symbol, the horse, becomes associated with mechanical images - the ponies, probably owned by Flem, are like "tatters... from large billboards - circus posters," (275) their heads are shaped like "ironingboard[s]." (277) they "explode" like "dynamite." (292-293). The symbols of nature - the moon, the pear tree, the mocking bird - are primarily female:

The pear tree across the road opposite was now in full and frosty bloom, the twigs and branches springing not outward from the limbs but standing motionless and perpendicular above the horizontal boughs like the separate and upstreaming hair of a drowned woman sleeping upon the uttermost floor of the windless and tideless sea. (281)

When the horses break free, they create havoc in the world of nature; their furious and undirected energy is contrasted to the rhythm and endurance of nature:

the tremulous April night murmurous with the moving of sap and the wet bursting of burgeoning leaf and bud and constant with the thin and urgent cries and the brief and fading bursts of galloping hooves. (310)

The horses are part of the economic world because they must be judged in the novel not as horses, but according to what they represent to the men of Frenchman's Bend. Although they are animals and hence part of nature, they are primarily a destructive force, as was Jack Houston's stallion. More important, however, the horses represent money and prestige to the
villagers. The ponies are a potentially valuable commodity. A man such as Anse McCallum who can tame and make use of a Texas pony gains considerable status in the social and economic world of Frenchman's Bend; he owns something which gives him both service and satisfaction.

The basic pattern of the opposition of the woman and nature to the man and ownership is further emphasized by the juxtaposition of the two major symbolic figures, Flem and Eula. Through Eula the woman becomes the symbol of nature. Will Varner recounts the folk tale associating the moon with fertility and the birth of girls which he and Mrs. Varner observed at the time of Eula's birth: "I could lay my ear to her [Mrs. Varner's] belly, and hear Eula kicking and scrouging like all get-out, feeling the moon." (312) This echoes the Houstons' earlier association of the moon with fertility, and indicates the presence of the destructive element in Houston in his frantic attempt to avoid the moon after his wife's death. When the men come to get Will Varner to set Armstid's broken leg, they see Eula standing "full in the moon...." (311) In contrast, the men, as part of a narrowly defined society, stand in a dark clump in the yard. During the sale of the ponies Flem remained in the background, "standing in his little island of isolation," (300) as cut off from the earth as Eula is a part of it.

Another significant man-woman relationship in this section is that of Ratliff and Mrs. Littlejohn. The pair are symbolically contrasted in their response to Eck's runaway
Mrs. Littlejohn, the natural woman, acts quickly and decisively; she hits the horse with her washboard and the horse turns and flees. Ratliff, unsure of himself, is momentarily frozen in surprise, then himself turns and escapes through the window. With this act he changes from observer to participant in the world of Frenchman's Bend. His inability to defend himself against the horse paves the way for his downfall at the end of the novel.

The conflict is continued in the trials that bring the incident of the Texas ponies to a close. The dark tones of the major trial, that of Armstid vs. Snopes, are offset by the comic tones of the minor one, Tull vs. Eck Snopes. Flem is so contemptuous of the law and his opponent that he does not even appear in court. He uses the law for his own purposes in allowing it to protect him. As no one can prove he was the legal owner of the horses, he cannot be held responsible for the damage they have done. Lump too uses the law for his own purposes, the reader suspects, by committing perjury so that Flem may win his suit. Flem's triumph is so complete that he can even afford the appearance of magnanimity. Having robbed Mrs. Armstid of her five dollars, he offers her instead a nickel's worth of candy. The defeated Mrs. Armstid accepts the substitute of candy for shoes for her children.

The trial of the Tulls and Eck Snopes offers comic relief. As in the Houston episodes, the sharp distinction between the worlds of nature and of business, good and evil,
are blurred in the presence of rounded characters. Compared to the passive Mrs. Armstid, Cora Tull has an undeniable vitality. Eck Snopes, well-meaning if slow, is a more rounded character than his cousin Flem. Both Cora Tull and Eck are a mixture of elements; Cora is harsh and aggressive in expressing her grievances, whereas Eck is willing to make reparation for the damage his runaway horse has caused. The same law that protected Flem protects Eck, with the result that Cora Tull becomes in turn the owner of the horse which has been the cause of all her trouble and vituperation.

The sale of the Old Frenchman's place brings the series of conflicts in the novel to a close by showing the self-defeat of Ratliff and the triumph of the world of business in Frenchman's Bend. Beginning and ending at the Old Frenchman's place, the novel has come full circle. For Flem, the mansion, like everything else, is something to be bought and sold for a profit, something to bait the trap for the credulous men of Frenchman's Bend. Ratliff, who has resisted all else, succumbs to this lure, believing that Will Varner must have felt the mansion valuable to have kept it for so many years. It is Ratliff's blind faith in Will Varner and Frenchman's Bend that betrays him, not Flem. The return to the mansion at the end of the novel not only gives unity, but serves as a connecting link to *The Town* and *The Mansion*, in which mansions achieve an even greater significance.

The sale of the Old Frenchman's place is the final incident because it shows even Ratliff greedily succumbing to Flem. Like the whole hamlet, he has brought about his own
destruction, playing right into Flem's hands. The three men, Armstid, Bookwright, and Ratliff (Flem's most formidable opponent in Frenchman's Bend), are defeated not by Flem, but by themselves. As "the peasants" they are firm believers in the shrewd deal and the hard bargain, "the science and pastime of skullduggery." (83) They observe the ethics of business as they are understood by the people of Frenchman's Bend, concerning the sacredness of a man's trade. Bookwright, because he is Ratliff's friend, did all he could to warn him against Flem in his goat deal, but even a friend may go only so far. All three men are aware that the mansion is a white elephant, for Will Varner has said so. However Ratliff's faith in Will Varner's business acumen is stronger than his distrust of Flem. Armstid, embittered by his recent defeat, has not learned his lesson, but can think only of the money. Flem needs to do no persuading; the men persuade themselves.

In the final incident, the conflict between nature and money has all but disappeared. The only female natural symbol to appear is the earth itself. The men are completely mechanical. Armstid's arm is "like a taut steel cable vibrating" (346) his body "the dead torso, not even knowing it was dead, laboring on in measured stoop and recover like a metronome...." (366) The earth has been ravaged by greed; even the road to the plantation is a "scar." (343) The men wield their shovels, glinting like pickaxes, murderously, seemingly trying to destroy the earth itself in their search for wealth. Old Uncle Dick, the only one who sees the
significance of their actions, warns them:

There air anger in the yearth. Ye must make that ere un [Armstid] quit a-bruisin hit.

Ye kin dig and ye kin dig, young man.... For what's rendered to the yearth, the yearth will keep until hit's ready to reveal hit. (350)

Not only the three treasure-hunters, but all the people of Frenchman's Bend take part in this destruction of the earth, in coming to watch Armstid dig. The road to the mansion, "no longer a fading and almost healed scar" (370) is now rutted and marked by the tracks of wheels "like shouts in a deserted church." (371)

Flem himself offers the ultimate desecration to the land. His only interest in the land is in buying and selling it at a profit. When he first meets Jody he tells him tersely: "Aint no benefit in farming." (23) He is seen in the store, on the flour-barrel throne, on the buckboard, not in the fields, on the land itself. He puts money into the earth, ostensibly to sell the mansion, symbolically to make the earth mechanical. Looking down contemptuously from the buckboard at the automaton Armstid ravaging the earth, he spits on it. His wheels, rolling toward Jefferson, have scarred not only Frenchman's Bend but even the land itself.
The Town is the weakest and the most awkward of the three novels in the Snopes Trilogy. The structural patterns often appear rigidly contrived in comparison to The Hamlet, and the parallels strained out of proportion. The obvious similarities of Gavin Stevens' encounters with Manfred de Spain and Matt Levitt strike the reader as being so forced that they call undue attention to themselves. At the same time, The Town is the novel most dominated by symbols and symbolic patterns which suggest the world of business. Here, however, Faulkner has been more successful, in that these symbols are integrated into the novel, whereas the incidents involving Gavin Stevens stand out from the overall pattern. The setting of the novel is the town of Jefferson; therefore the images of the land for the most part disappear. At the end of The Hamlet, Flem showed his contempt of, and triumph over, the land; in Jefferson he finds a milieu tailored to his specifications. The other representation of nature in The Hamlet, Eula, does not appear enough in The Town to create a strong pattern of natural images. In The Hamlet she is a personification of nature; in The Town, having lost her complete identification with nature and having a child to consider, she becomes a character. The major weakness of the
novel lies in the lack of integration of structure and symbolic pattern. The rich imagery of *The Hamlet* which fused symbol and structure is missing in *The Town*, with the result that both remain separate and both destroy the unity of the novel by being too obvious. This is partly due to the narrative method of *The Town*. When the characters tell the story, the language becomes thin; when Faulkner himself tells it, as in *The Hamlet*, the language is richer. Since *The Town* lacks the integration of *The Hamlet*, it cannot be discussed as a unit; therefore I shall examine it first in terms of structure, showing where it becomes contrived, and then in terms of symbols and symbolic pattern.

To the basic man–woman conflict of *The Hamlet* has been added in *The Town* the element of cuckoldry; the dual relationship has become triangular. In the opening incident of the watertower the triangle composed of Tom Tom, his wife and Tomey's Turl is contrasted with the major triangle composed of Flem, Eula and Manfred de Spain. Mr. Harker, the power plant engineer, comments upon the similarity of the two situations to the young Charlie Mallison:

> Tom Tom in here wrestling them boilers in that—there amical cuckoldry like what your uncle says Miz Snopes and Mayor de Spain walks around in.... (24)

Such a comment indicates a major weakness of *The Town*. The incidents do not stand alone as they did in *The Hamlet*; rather, the reader's attention is carefully drawn to the parallels so that they appear monotonous in comparison with those of *The Hamlet*. 
The watertower incident sets the standard against which all the following conflicts in the novel can be measured. In the first incident the discrepancy between man's potential and his actual accomplishment is indicated, a discrepancy that is reiterated again and again in the novel. In his first encounter with the people of Jefferson Flem has either forgotten or denied the existence of human understanding and forgiveness, what Gavin Stevens calls "a sanctuary, a rationality of perspective," (27) man's humanity. Tom Tom and Tomey's Turl are able to forget their private quarrel in order to cooperate to foil the man who tried to destroy them both. This incident shows that Flem can be defeated; he is not invulnerable. It also indicates what weapons are needed to defeat Flem: the human qualities, such as understanding and love, cooperation, and above all a determination to fight actively against evil. Tom Tom and Tomey's Turl prove at the outset that the common man living in Jefferson can defeat the forces of evil represented by Flem; the rest of the novel shows the inability of the other people of Jefferson to achieve the standard set by the negroes.

Having seen the success of Tom Tom and Tomey's Turl, the townspeople, however, make no attempt to learn from what they have observed. Although Eula's affair with Manfred de Spain is soon common knowledge, the people take no action either to help or to hinder the lovers. Charlie Mallison explains that
our whole town was accessory to that cuckold-ing.... It was not because we were against Mr Snopes; we had not yet read the signs and portents which should have warned, alerted, sprung us into frantic concord to defend our town from him. (15)

In this statement the character of the society of Jefferson is revealed. The people of Jefferson are not too innocent to recognize Flem Snopes, but too lazy and self-centered. Charlie shows their usual lack of perception with this remark. It is not Flem's method to call attention to himself until after he has acted, and it is extremely doubtful whether the people are capable of so positive an act as trying to defeat Flem by presenting a united front. The main characteristic of the townspeople is not shrewdness, but concern for respectability. As long as the affair is not overt, it can be conveniently ignored; they do not wish to stir up trouble, but merely to preserve appearances. Their attitude toward evil is passive rather than active; like ostriches they bury their heads in the sand.

It is in this regard that Gavin Stevens most definitely proves himself a citizen of Jefferson. Characteristically he blames the Snopeses, Flem in particular, for the evil that the town inherently possesses. He does not see that both the people of Jefferson and the Snopeses are the result of the economic world they have created for themselves. His distrust of the Snopeses in theory is for the most part not borne out by practice. He talks a great deal about the Snopes menace but does very little to counteract it. He learns from Ratliff and from the Montgomery Ward episode that both he and Flem want
respectability, that they are not as different as he would like to believe. And it is from such men as Gavin Stevens that Flem is able to achieve respectability, men to whom outward appearance is the most important quality.

Flem's methods of achieving power in *The Town* are basically the same as they were in *The Hamlet*. Although he appears to sit passively looking at his watertower, Flem, according to Ratliff, is busy: "Farming Snopeses: the whole rigid hierarchy moving intact upward one step as he vacated ahead of it..." (31) Quickly, in line with the increased pace of life in Jefferson, he moves his relatives into Jefferson, as he had once moved them into Frenchman's Bend. Like him, they begin in the restaurant, then branch out. Eck's honesty causes him to be fired from his restaurant job; he then becomes night watchman for a Jefferson oil tank and is permanently struck from the Snopes roster. I.O. bypasses the restaurant to take over the boardinghouse, the Snopes Hotel. Wesley's son Byron is taken on at the bank by Colonel Sartoris. Then, flanked by his reserves, Flem is ready to act.

The pattern of triangles is continued in this section among the Snopeses. Because Eck is not a Flem Snopes in character, Gavin Stevens suggests that his mother "cast a leglin girth herself before she married whatever Snopes was Eck's titular father." (31) This is a weak echo of the Bula of *The Hamlet*, as the novel points out. Although he brings only one wife and family to Jefferson to conform with the
prevailing concern for respectability, I.O. really has two wives and two families. His wives are apparently able to accept this situation though the society of Jefferson is not. Old Ab had two wives also: the first, Vynie, who traded with Pat Stamper, and the second, unnamed, the mother of Flem. Of Ab's first marriage all that is known is that Vynie's father came to get her and ordered Ab never to come near her again. In contrast to I.O. and Ab, Eck is also twice married, but in accordance with the law; he marries his second wife only after the death of the first. And finally there is Wesley, father of Byron and Virgil, the itinerant preacher caught with a fourteen-year-old girl in an empty cotton-house and threatened with castration. The Snopes marriages, Eck's excepted, parody the normal marriage in range from the profligacy of I.O. to the impotency of Flem.

The novel then focuses on the major man-woman relationships, those involving Eula Varner Snopes. The battle between Gavin Stevens and Manfred de Spain is reminiscent of the implied contrast between the schoolteacher Labove and Hoake McCarron in *The Hamlet*. The axe which De Spain uses to get into power links him to McCarron with his riding crop and buggy whip, and establishes both as symbols of devil-may-care masculinity in contrast to the more cautious Stevens and Labove. Again Eula chooses the more masculine and more natural man for a lover - De Spain. The triangular pattern of *The Town* and the greater maturity of the characters, make the human relations more complex than they were in *The Hamlet*;
Labove did not have to examine and defend his way of life and beliefs in the way that Gavin Stevens does. Flem's method in *The Town* as in *The Hamlet* is to remain in the background, letting Gavin Stevens defend Eula's honour as the Jefferson code of chivalry demands it be defended. It is only the chivalric Stevens who feels the necessity of the defence; the realistic Flem accepts the situation and turns it to his own advantage. Again, as in the watertower episode, the inadequacies of the central figures are revealed by a contrasting triangle composed of Maurice and Sally Priest and Grenier Weddel. Unlike Gavin and Flem, Maurice fights and defeats the lover who challenges his marriage. Sally's pride in her black eye shows both her love for her husband and her pride in herself as a woman. The Priests' marriage is meaningful and real.

One of the most significant things in the novel is Flem's discovery of the need for respectability if he is to succeed. This discovery causes him to change his strategy in Jefferson and cloak his motives of desire and greed for power behind something more socially acceptable to the townspeople. A leading citizen of the town must not have skeletons in his closet in the form of relatives working at cross-purposes to him — that is, still focusing on acquiring wealth at any cost. Having farmed his Snopes relatives into Jefferson, he must now farm them out again. During the process of eliminating Montgomery Ward, he identifies himself completely with the world of Jefferson, along with Gavin Stevens and Hub Hampton,
his somewhat unwilling allies. From then on his concern for outward respectability mirrors the town's. In the town he has found the perfect milieu; the townspeople's passivity and desire for respectability and wealth make Jefferson ideal for Flem's purposes. Now identified with the world of Jefferson by altering himself to fit the mold of the town, he is ready to assume power.

His desire for power in Jefferson is even strong enough to influence his attitude toward money. His vision of the function of money is broadened; the more sophisticated Jefferson world has forced him to "think big." No longer, as in The Hamlet, able to be seen snatching Mrs. Armstid's five dollars, he is now forced to pay out money to maintain respectability. He has turned from the money itself to the power it represents. He uncomplainingly buys the corn whiskey to fake evidence against Montgomery Ward, buys Montgomery Ward's services in Parchman, buys out I.O.'s mule business, and even makes recompense for the Pekinese that is eaten by the four Apache-Snopes children. But always the initial outlay brings the expected return as he moves toward the presidency of the bank, a position fusing wealth, prestige and power.

The triangle involving Gavin, Linda and Matt Levitt is a poor shadow of the one involving Gavin, Eula and Manfred de Spain. Linda seems sheltered and unformed in comparison to Eula, a child trying to cope with an adult world; it is hard to believe that Eula was not much older than Linda when
confronted with the same situation. Gavin's interest in forming Linda's mind was foreshadowed by his earlier interest in Melisandre Backus "whose terrible power was that defenselessness and helplessness which conferred knighthood on any man who came within range," (178) and whose power had never quite been destroyed. Gavin's role is, of course, that of the knight in shining armour; he even speaks of his role in the Eula triangle as his "crusade." (49) He can succeed with Linda where he could not with the more natural Eula, of whom even Labove in The Hamlet realized that

there was nothing in books here or anywhere else that she would ever need to know, who had been born already completely equipped not only to face and combat but to overcome anything the future could invent to meet her with. (114)

In contrast to the natural figures such as Eula and Ike with their innate intuition, the idealistic characters such as Labove and Gavin Stevens have to acquire their knowledge by prolonged and intensive study. Like them, Flem has to devote his entire life to learning how to become rich, carefully studying each step of the banking process in order to become a successful banker. Linda, still a child in The Town, becomes a woman only through long and bitter experience, an experience beginning with the study of poetry with Gavin Stevens.

Not only is Linda not the woman Eula was, but Matt Levitt is not the man Manfred de Spain was. Mr. Mallison sums it up neatly for Gavin:
Last time you at least picked out a Spanish-American War hero with an E.M.F. sportster. Now the best you can do is a Golden Gloves amateur with a homemade racer. Watch yourself, bud, or next time you'll have a boy scout defying you to mortal combat with a bicycle. (187)

As Mr. Mallison suggests, the second incident is a parody of the first. Repetition of detail in the two incidents, although perhaps designed to show how little Gavin has learned, becomes mechanically executed and overdone. In both scenes Gavin sits inside the Mallison house listening to the car racing past outside, cut-out open in a male gesture of defiance and challenge reminiscent of McCarron's buggy in The Hamlet. Both scenes have a fight in which Gavin is bloodied and defeated. Matt's departure from Jefferson in his little racer after losing Linda to Gavin and his books foreshadows Manfred de Spain's departure in his car at the end of the novel after losing Eula to Flem and his money. The effectiveness of either of these scenes is spoiled by the other. The details are so mechanically worked out that they detract the reader's attention from the overall significance of the scenes. The fact that the second scene is an anticlimax to the first further weakens the novel. Gavin, himself much older than he was in the first triangle, appears to the same disadvantage in the second scene as he did in the first. This sense of anticlimax is one of the major weaknesses of the novel. Many of the scenes of The Town, such as the one involving Matt Levitt, appear to be merely weak echoes or reproductions of earlier, more meaningful scenes. At this
point in the novel, nothing has approached the opening episode of the watertower, with the result that the repetition has created some rather dull reading. At this point the reader wishes there were fewer triangles and fewer scenes involving Gavin Stevens.

The "Mule in the Yard" episode, one of the best scenes in the novel, offers comic relief and marks the rise to the final conflict between the central characters, Flem and Eula. In spite of the comedy the scene has serious undertones. In the conflict between I.O. Snopes and Mrs. Hait, it is as usual the third party, Flem, who accomplishes what he set out to do, and who makes what little profit there is to be made. Mrs. Hait defeats not Flem but I.O. Flem, in spite of setbacks, has managed to collect half of Mrs. Hait's compensation money, and in buying I.O.'s mules, has for a price succeeded in getting rid of another now-unwelcome relative. The comedy in this scene arises not from Flem, but from the other characters, for even in comic moments Flem relentlessly pursues his goal. This is also true of the final episode involving the four Apache-Snopes children. On the surface comic, in reality the scene shows Flem's continuing concern for respectability since it is what Ratliff calls "The last and final end of Snopes out-and-out unvarnished behavior in Jefferson," (370) yet another tribute to Flem's success at the end of the novel.

The novel rises to its climax as the focus turns to the central conflict between Flem and Eula. The triangular
pattern breaks down as the conflict resolves itself into the familiar form of that of *The Hamlet* - man against woman, Flem against Eula - a Flem whose money is considerably more powerful than it was in *The Hamlet*, and a Eula whose natural force is considerably weakened. Flem's bank and De Spain fade temporarily into the background as these two solitary figures finally face one another. The business world overpowers the weakened natural one; Eula dies to save Linda, and Flem is left with his beloved bank. The townspeople's desire for respectability is triumphant; Eula, abandoned in her moment of crisis, commits suicide so that Linda will never have to acknowledge that her mother is a whore. This is the moment of Flem's greatest power; he has succeeded in exploiting and defeating Eula to gain the presidency of the bank.

Flem has found adjustment to the townspeople's standard of respectability and power very simple, and at the end of the novel he is not only identified with but completely accepted by the society of Jefferson. But in his triumph he has reached the top and has nowhere to go but down. He can set his sights no higher than Jefferson, and so changes at the end of the novel from apparent to real passivity; as Ratliff observes: "It was like he was running a little mild game a-against his-self, for his own amusement, like solitaire." (347) The only hope for the natural world at this point lies in Flem's apathy.

In contrast to the often contrived structure, the symbols of the economic world form an integral part of the
novel. The major symbols - the watertower, the automobile, money, the bank, monuments, Flem's mansion - are a part of the life of the town, and do not seem forced as does the structure. In comparison with *The Hamlet*, not only are the natural symbols gone, but the economic ones are both increased and strengthened. Like *The Hamlet*, *The Town* begins with a monument, the watertower, which is Flem's first imprint upon Jefferson society. The watertower is a reminder of Flem's only failure in the Jefferson world. Charlie Mallison says of it:

> it was not a monument: it was a footprint.  
> A monument only says *At least I got this far* while a footprint says *This is where I was when I moved again.* (29)

The watertower is a warning to the townspeople, a warning they do not heed. Charlie had remarked earlier: "we had not yet read the signs and portents" (15) and apparently they never intend to read them. The watertower, looming over the town throughout the novel, fails to make the people aware of Flem's plans. The huge footprint, "standing against the sky above the Jefferson roof-line" (29) is an indication of Flem's self-confidence and ambition.

Flem gives the people yet another warning by appearing at the Cotillion Ball in a rented dress suit that

> wasn't any more just a footprint than that water tank was a monument: it was a red flag.  
> No: it was that sign at the railroad crossing that says Look Out for the Locomotive. (73)

Although Flem's warnings are becoming progressively less subtle, the townspeople still cannot or will not read them. The dress
suit, symbol of his desire for respectability reminiscent of his tie in *The Hamlet*, is an acknowledgment of his triumph in Jefferson society concealing out the initial failure of the watertower incident. Flem, like the locomotive, is moving rapidly and powerfully forward as a result of the stupidity and indifference of the people of Jefferson.

Other mechanical symbols are apparent. The car has replaced the horse of *The Hamlet* as a symbol of masculinity. Although the car is a result of progress and civilization, it is primarily an indication of the increased degree to which the people of Jefferson have accepted the world of business and mechanization. The tenuous link which the horse had with the world of nature, resulting in its slight ambiguity as a mechanical symbol, has vanished entirely in the car. The automobile, owned and manufactured by man, is a precise and effective status symbol of the business world. The conflict between horse and car, Sartoris and De Spain, is settled quickly and decisively at the outset of the novel.

One afternoon in 1904 he De Spain drove out of his back yard into the street in the first automobile we had ever seen, made by hand completely, engine and all, from magneto coil to radius rod, and drove into the Square at the moment when Colonel Sartoris the banker's surrey and blooded matched team were crossing it on the way home. (11)

As a result of the collision Colonel Sartoris appears before the aldermen "who passed an edict that no gasoline-propelled vehicle should ever operate on the streets of Jefferson." (11) The edict gives De Spain the opportunity to conquer the world of Jefferson with the new mechanical way of life by making
the Sartoris horse and buggy obsolete long before Flem comes to town. As a tribute to his unqualified success, De Spain has Colonel Sartoris's edict framed and hung on the Courthouse wall, a monument to a past that is dead, to the leisure of the Frenchman's Bend and Colonel Bayard Sartoris world, an object of derision to the people of Jefferson.

Although the townspeople have wondered "just what axe Lieutenant de Spain would use to chop the corners off Jefferson and make it fit him," (11) his conversion of the people is not as difficult as the term "axe" would imply. He does not need to use his axe at all; he merely suggests a contest with Mayor Adams' son, a challenge the son does not accept, and he is elected mayor by a landslide.

The new age had entered Jefferson; he was merely its champion, the Godfrey de Bouillon, the Tancred, the Jefferson Richard Lion-heart of the twentieth century.

Oh yes, the motor age had reached Jefferson and De Spain led it in that red roadster: that vehicle alien and debonair, as invincibly and irrevocably polygamous and bachelor as De Spain himself. (14)

The automobile, speedy and mechanical, sets the pace of life in Jefferson, a stepped up pace from that of The Hamlet; Manfred de Spain in his car is a far more mechanical figure than Jack Houston on his horse. Thanks to Manfred de Spain and the townspeople, Jefferson has acquired mechanical characteristics far more pronounced than those of Frenchman's Bend. The people were willing and eager for the motor age; they lacked only a leader.
The world of Jefferson is associated with images of money as well as of mechanical things. Like Flem the people evaluate in terms of dollars and cents; they are interested in profit as well as convention. Gavin Stevens describes the arrival of the Snopeses in Jefferson as an unwise investment:

We've all bought Snopeses here, whether we wanted to or not;.... I don't know why we bought them. I mean, why we had to: what coin and when and where we so recklessly and improvidently spent that we had to have Snopeses too. But we do. (95)

Stevens is not only showing the typical ignorance of the townspeople in not seeing the Snopeses as part of its world, but he is also defining morality in terms of money. The Jefferson world is imbued with money. The symbolic pattern of money and ownership associated with the town narrows to the symbol of the bank itself, as Flem's goal narrows from the desire to make money to the desire to own DeSpain's bank. The bank becomes the object of Flem's love, if Flem may be said to have such a feeling. In contrast to his cousin Byron, whose attitude toward the mystery of money is that of a man "trying to lift a corner of its skirt," (43) Flem, as Ratliff recognizes,

ain't just got respect for money: he's got active...reverence for it. ... the last thing he would ever do is to insult and degrade money by mishandling it. (142)

His love for money is the most real love in the novel, a further indication of the destructive nature of his world and that of the town. He unites the idealistic love of Gavin Stevens and the physical love of Manfred de Spain in his
reverence for and practical understanding of money. The money symbol is so powerful that it is able to exploit a natural emotion, love, so that the strongest love in the novel is that of money.

Eula's death gives Flem the perfect opportunity to use his money to gain absolute power and respectability. His money, used to erect a monument ostensibly to Eula but in reality to himself, forces the town to accept him as a leading citizen. The monument is the symbol of his triumph over her and the natural world she is still part of; in *The Hamlet* he scored a major defeat over the land, in *The Town* over Eula. Everything about the monument, the cost, the carved marble face, the Biblical epitaph, is a mockery of Eula's life, as Flem intended it should be. At the same time he has acquired the two other monuments to his success that he has desired - De Spain's bank and his mansion. The fact that all three are described as monuments rather than footprints indicates that Flem has finally stopped moving; he has reached his highest point and can advance no further. Flem's remodeling of De Spain's mansion shows his desire to triumph over De Spain as his Italian monument shows his desire to triumph over Eula. The enmity is not entirely personal; both represent the natural world of human love which Flem seeks to destroy. Ratliff's description of the renovated mansion reveals it as a façade, a symbol of outward respectability completely in keeping with the town itself:
(it was going to have colyums across the front now, I mean the entry big ones so even a feller that never seen colyums before wouldn't have no doubt a-tall what they was, like in the photographs where the Confedrit sweetheart in a hoop skirt and a magnolia is saying goodbye to her Confedrit beau jest before he rides off to finish tending to General Grant) (352)

As president of the bank and deacon of the Baptist church, Flem now has the two qualities which Jefferson requires — wealth and respectability. He has identified himself with the world of Jefferson completely, and it has accepted the identification. The two qualities are fused in his mansion, once the home of Manfred de Spain, now a larger-than-life tribute to Flem's progress and accomplishment.

Money is important not only as a symbol of power and prestige, but as a symbol of Flem himself. As Flem learns more and more about the things money can do, he is more and more associated with it in his fight for the bank presidency and Will Varner's legacy. As The Hamlet concluded with Flem's defeat of one of the major natural symbols, the land, so The Town concludes with his defeat of another major natural symbol, the woman, Eula. Flem's victory is made possible by the fact that Eula is not as much a part of nature in The Town as she was in The Hamlet. Having and raising a child has turned her into a human being. Whereas in The Hamlet she thought only of herself, if she thought at all, in The Town she thinks of Linda, as her suicide shows. The gun and the hair permanent indicate not only the deliberateness of her suicide but also her acknowledgment of the world of business and economics. Flem has always thought of her in terms of
money and business, as Ratliff knows; his knowledge of her adultery is like money salted away for him:

Not catching his wife with Manfred de Spain is like that twenty-dollar gold piece pinned to your undershirt on your first maiden trip to what you hope is going to be a Memphis whorehouse. He dont need to unpin it yet. (29)

Gavin Stevens remembers this when Flem finally cashes in on his asset: "He has unpinned it now I thought." (335) As Ratliff and Stevens indicate Flem exploits not only the land but human love and whatever else he can to gain wealth and power. He has surpassed the established Manfred de Spain in The Town as he surpassed the established Will Varner in The Hamlet. De Spain tried to mold the world of Jefferson to fit him and failed; Flem molded himself to fit the world of Jefferson and succeeded. The townspeople are too passive and conventional to undergo the moral wrench of accepting Eula and Manfred de Spain; it is much easier to ostracize and condemn them.

The focus is not upon Eula and Flem at the moment of climax, but upon the people of Jefferson. The townspeople, who did nothing to hinder Eula and Manfred de Spain for eighteen years, now do nothing to help them either, so that Flem is easily able to destroy them. Flem has not corrupted the townspeople; they have corrupted themselves by years of taking the line of least resistance. As passively as Flem, they wait and watch, safely removed from action and contamination. Their attitude is revealed by Charlie Mallison, who says,
we were merely waiting now to see in what direction the fragments of that particular tree in our wood (not the saw itself, never the saw: if that righteous and invincible moral blade flew to pieces at the contact, we might as well give up, since the very fabric of Baptist and Methodist life is delusion, nothing) would scatter and disintegrate. (308)

Eula and Manfred de Spain are the natural tree, the shoddy morality of the townspeople the mechanical and destructive blade of the saw. Rather than examine their saw to see whether it was sound, the people have assumed it was the tree that was rotten and have proceeded to destroy it. Self-examination is too painful for the people. By rejecting the lovers they have, in effect, rejected all human qualities such as love and understanding, and even humanity itself. In this test they have displayed the moral attitude of passivity, indifference and conventionality which has led them to their own destruction. They have thrown away their chance for moral growth and have become, like Flem, completely passive as the wheel symbol shows. The wheels which rolled out of Frenchman's Bend toward Jefferson at the end of The Hamlet have rolled to a stop; Flem, by his identification with the society of the town, has become with it the wheel, spinning idly, crushing everything to conform to its pattern:

Jefferson, the center, radiating weakly its puny glow into space; beyond it, enclosing it, spreads the County, tied by the diverging roads to that center as is the rim to the hub by its spokes.... (316)
VI.

THE MANSION.

The Mansion, partially sustained by the structural and symbolic patterns of The Hamlet and The Town, suffers the fate of being a composite work. The sections describing Mink show the unity and richness of The Hamlet; the sections describing Linda, Gavin and the townspeople show the weakness of The Town. The language of these latter sections is neither rich nor powerful enough to fuse structure and symbol, with the result that these portions of the book seem contrived and repetitive. Since these sections are the least integrated into the novel, I shall discuss them first before showing that not only the strength but also the fusion of the novel lies in the sections describing Mink Snopes.

The structural pattern formed by the series of encounters which was established in The Hamlet and The Town begins to disintegrate in The Mansion. The man-woman conflict used to express the more general conflict between the worlds of nature and business in The Hamlet and The Town is not sustained in The Mansion. In The Hamlet and The Town the most natural character was a woman, Eula; in The Mansion it is a man, Mink. The Mansion shows less conflict than either The Hamlet or The Town, and as a result a greater sense of the isolation of the main figures. Flem remains outside the action, completely
passive, having nothing to do but sit in his swivel chair and wait for death. The focus has narrowed from the struggle of the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson to the struggle of the individual, whether he be Mink, Linda, Gavin Stevens or Ratliff.

The sections describing the townspeople are dominated by the business world of The Town. This after all is the same Jefferson society that has accepted Flem Snopes as a leading citizen for nearly twenty years. As in The Town Linda and Gavin Stevens appear ineffectual in comparison to Eula and Manfred de Spain. Linda, returning to Jefferson a deaf war veteran and taking a job riveting ships during World War II, seems more masculine than feminine. Her emancipation is expressed only outside Jefferson, however; in the town she reflects the townspeople's concern for appearances. She adapts herself to the pattern of the world of Jefferson, contenting herself with such minor digressions as a weekly trip to the local bootlegger and talks with the two communists of Jefferson. Her attempt to educate the negroes is only a tilting at windmills which she eventually abandons. Her conversation with the negro principal shows that she has little understanding of the human relations or practical problems involved in her plan; she is only interested in seeing it put into effect. Gavin's account of Linda's marriage to Barton Kohl suggests for a moment the triangular pattern of The Town, but the pattern has disintegrated. Linda has chosen a natural man, Barton Kohl, but since Gavin has relinquished his chance
to marry her, he does not stand in the same relation to Kohl that he did to Manfred de Spain and Matt Levitt.

As time passes the world of Jefferson changes, building up and breaking down. The structural conflict is momentarily revived, as the remaining Snopeses in Jefferson (those not eliminated in The Town) are defeated. Ratliff, using his knowledge of nature, acts decisively to destroy Clarence Snopes's political career. Gavin Stevens helps Effie and McKinley Smith outwit Res Snopes. The only one who continues to prosper is Flem; in his contest with Jason Compson, he adheres to his usual passivity until Jason overreaches and oustsmarts himself. In this conflict as in so many others it is the greed of the person who challenges Flem which leads to his defeat. Good and evil are not synonymous with Snopes and non-Snopes, as the last two examples well illustrate; old Meadowfill and Jason are just as evil and greedy as Res and Flem Snopes.

With the decline of interest in structure and character, the novel becomes increasingly concerned with the struggle between the worlds of nature and business on the levels of symbol and theme. The symbols, therefore, achieve even greater importance here than they did in The Hamlet and The Town. As the title suggests, the most important symbol is the mansion, a symbol of Flem's power and isolation. The mansion represents not only a moment of triumph, but also the appearance of aristocracy and respectability, qualities which Flem, denied by birth, has tried to provide for himself by means of money. His mansion is a facsimile of a certain
type of pre-Civil War romanticism, a recreation of a past that for the most part did not exist, with what Atliff describes as
colyums to reach all the way from the ground up to the second-storey roof, until even when the painting was finished it still wouldn't be as big as Mount Vernon of course, but then Mount Vernon was a thousand miles away so there wasn't no chance of invidious eye-to-eye comparison. (154)

Yet Flem is too shrewd to believe in his creation completely, and deliberately imposes something from his Frenchman's Bend background upon his symbol of luxury and aristocracy,

a reaffirmation of his-self and maybe a warning to his-self too: a little wood ledge, not even painted, nailed to the front of that hand-carved hand-painted Mount Vernon mantelpiece at the exact height for Flem to prop his feet on it. (156)

His Frenchman's Bend shrewdness has won this victory over his Jefferson respectability. The mansion with its unpainted ledge is thus a symbol of both his past and his present, a fitting tribute to his achievement of his goals.

There are two mansions in The Mansion, however; the second one is the home of Gavin Stevens. The association of Gavin with Flem is clearly indicated by the use of the monument symbol in the Trilogy. In The Town they collaborate over the erection of the monument to Eula, Gavin choosing the photograph, Flem the epitaph. In The Mansion both are living in mansions, ornate parodies of aristocratic architecture. Flem loses his wife at the time he succeeds to his mansion, whereas Gavin acquires wife and mansion together. Melisandre Backus Harriss, her mind, like Linda's, formed by Gavin's
poetry, is part of this artificial world as Eula could never be.¹ The Backus home, fallen into decay, was rebuilt by Melisandre's husband Harriss, a New Orleans bootlegger and gangster, in Knight's Gambit until "it looked like the Southern mansion in the moving picture, only about five times as big and ten times as Southern." (135) In The Mansion it is described as

a Virginia or Long Island horse farm, with miles of white panel fence...and white stables with electric light and steam heat and running water and butlers and footmen for the horses,...(196)

Gavin leaves no imprint upon the mansion comparable to Flem's ledge, for his past lies in Jefferson rather than in Frenchman's Bend. The only change he has effected is very slight; to humour him the evening meal is served outside on the terrace.

The only character strong and natural enough to give meaning to a relic of the past, and the only one seen sympathetically in relation to a monument, is Ratliff. He is the only one who understands Barton Kohl's statue of the Italian boy, and he is the one to whom Kohl gives the statue. He has in his house a shrine to Eula Varner composed of the sculpture and the Allanovna tie, representations of beauty and human love. They look not only to the past, but to the present and future as well, for Ratliff, although he finds the past both meaningful and significant, lives in the present.

The old women of Jefferson, in contrast, live in the past. The town's monument, the statue of the Confederate soldier in front of the Courthouse which Faulkner describes
in Requiem for a Nun, is a symbol of the people of Jefferson who are still living in the period before the Civil War. In contrast to the men who with De Spain's leadership have mechanized the town only the aging unvanquished women were unreconciled, irreconcilable, reversed and irrevocably reverted against the whole moving unanimity of panorama until, old unordered variant pilings above a tide's flood, they themselves had an illusion of motion, facing irreconcilably backward toward the old lost battles, the old aborted cause, the old four ruined years whose very physical scars ten and twenty and twenty-five and then thirty-five years; not only a century and an age, but a way of thinking died; the town itself wrote the epilogue and epitaph; 1900, on Confederate Decoration Day, Mrs. Virginia Depre [sic], Colonel Sartoris's sister, twitched a lanyard and the spring-restive bunting collapsed and flowed, leaving the marble effigy - the stone infantryman on his stone pedestal on the exact spot where forty years ago the Richmond officer and the local Baptist minister had mustered in the Colonel's regiment, and the old men in the gray and braided coats (all officers now, none less in rank than captain) tottered into the sunlight and fired shotguns at the bland sky and raised their cracked quavering voices in the shrill hackle-lifting yelling ... epilogue and epitaph, because apparently neither the U.D.C. ladies who instigated and bought the monument, nor the architect who designed it nor the masons who erected it, had noticed that the marble eyes under the shading marble palm stared not toward the north and the enemy, but toward the south, toward (if anything) his own rear - looking perhaps, the wits said (could say now, with the old war thirty-five years past and you could even joke about it - except the women, the ladies, the unsurrendered, the irreconcilable, who even after another thirty-five years would still get up and stalk out of picture houses showing Gone With the Wind), for reinforcements; or perhaps not a combat soldier at all, but a provost marshall's man looking for
deserters, or perhaps himself for a safe place to run to: because that old war was dead; the sons of those tottering old men in gray had already died in blue coats in Cuba, the macabre momentos and testimonials and shrines of the new war already usurping the earth before the blasts of blank shotgun shells and the weightless collapsing of bunting had unveiled the final ones to the old...

The soldier makes a fitting monument for the town, a relic of a past more real than the present to the Confederate diehards who, although accepting the machine age, find their only reality in a war nearly a century old. This romantic and stereotyped view of Southern history is responsible not only for the soldier, but for the mansions of Flem Snopes and Mr. Harriss, a further link between them and the town. The soldier, too, typical of the society of Jefferson has his eyes turned not toward the danger but away from it; he looks impressive although he is not, but then appearance is what matters to the people of Jefferson.

Other symbols are continued in The Mansion. Money and mansions are linked not only because the mansion is a product of Flem's money, but also because Flem's bank is also a mansion, a symbol of his triumph, an arrested moment of time. Reality and safety for Flem exist only at the bank; at night he simply sits, putting in time until he can go and open the bank again the next day. Ratliff describes him as:

The pore son of a bitch over yonder in that bank vault counting his money because that's the one place on earth Mink Snopes cant reach him in, and long as he's got to stay in it he might as well count money to be doing something have something to do. And I wonder if
maybe he wouldn't give Linda back her two hundred and fifty dollars without even charging her no interest on it, for them two years of pardon. And I wonder jest how much of the rest of the money in that vault he would pay to have another twenty years added onto them. Or maybe jest ten more. Or maybe jest one more. (374)

Flem's money, identified completely with him, once the symbol of his power, is now as impotent as he is. The twenty years' immunity he bought has run out, for Mink cannot be bribed. Flem, "belonging simply to Money," (419) is powerless against the natural Mink.

The automobile, symbol of a world becoming increasingly dependent upon money and machinery, plays an important part in The Mansion. Mink, part of the world of nature, walks to his destination, or is given a ride. Characters such as Flem and Linda, part of the business world of Jefferson, own automobiles. First Flem and then also Linda tour the countryside in Flem's black auto. Flem's car represents both the continuation of the banking tradition begun by Colonel Bayard Sartoris and Manfred de Spain and his personal triumph in beating his predecessors at their own game. Gavin Stevens uses his Cadillac convertible to spar with Flem much as Ratliff used his goats in The Hamlet. He is simply indulging himself to annoy Flem in minor ways; this is not full-scale warfare. The automobile here has lost its masculinity and has become only a symbol of wealth and ownership. The most important automobile in the novel, however, belongs to Linda. Her order for the Jaguar indicates her confidence that Flem could be defeated; at the same time it shows that although
she gives up the mansion, she is still part of the world of money and ownership. At the end of the novel she leaves Jefferson in her car, just as De Spain and Levitt left in *The Town*, but in contrast to them she has helped to destroy her enemy.

In contrast to the weaknesses of the sections describing the townspeople, the sections describing Mink show the fusion of structure and symbol that characterize *The Hamlet*. The opening section of the novel traces the development of Mink from the world of money and ownership to the world of nature. Although he is portrayed at first as part of the economic world, his version of the quarrel with Jack Houston makes it clear that the blame is not entirely his. Houston, like Flem, having the law on his side, used it to humiliate Mink. Mink killed him not because of the cow, but because of the pound fee. *The Mansion* begins with the picture given in *The Hamlet* of Mink, "his dirty hands gripping among the grimed interstices of the barred window above the street," (3) his voice trying to bribe its way to freedom. To the young Mink everything in life is a trap - the law, poverty, sex, even the land itself, "that inimical irreconcilable square of dirt to which he was bound and chained for the rest of his life." (90) His name suggests his condition exactly, that of a small animal, trapped and vicious. Envious and embittered, he sees himself being taken advantage of by everything and everybody. He expresses this victimization in terms of sexual symbols; instead of seeing Eula Varner in terms of her rich
fertility, he sees her in terms of sterility of others and exploitation of her by others. The church's function lies in giving the minister ample opportunity to seduce the sharecropper's wife. The soft body of his own wife is "now worn too to such leather-toughness that ... he would be too spent with physical exhaustion to remember it was even female." (90) He contrasts his own sorry lot with that of his neighbour Houston:

rich, not only rich enough to afford a wife
to whine and nag and steal his pockets ragged
of every dollar he made, but rich enough to
do without a wife if he wanted: rich enough
to be able to hire a woman to cook his victuals
instead of having to marry her. (11)

Mink is almost on a level with Flem, evaluating everything in terms of dollars and cents. Significantly he lacks an understanding of the land; he struggles against it futilely, regarding it as enemy and trap:

the ground, the dirt which any and every
tenant farmer and sharecropper knew to
be his sworn foe and mortal enemy - the
hard implacable land which wore out his
youth and his tools and then his body
itself. (90)

The ultimate trap is of course the prison into which he is shut for thirty-eight years.

In prison, however, he undergoes a change, a change which is reflected in the images of time and nature which describe him. The sense of struggling against time which overcame him while waiting for Flem to rescue him from the Jefferson jail gives way in Parchman to an awareness of timelessness, eternity. Time, closing in on Flem, is opening
out for Mink. When he learns patience and understanding time becomes an ally, not an enemy: "he had learned to wait." (93) Having learned patience, he begins to understand the relationship of man to the land, and only then can he truly work with the land to produce a decent crop:

It was a fine crop, one of the best he remembered, as though everything had been exactly right: season, wind and sun and rain to sprout it, the fierce long heat of summer to grow and ripen it. As though back there in the spring the ground itself had said, All right, for once let's confederate instead of fighting.... (90)

He discovers Ike McCaslin's belief that man cannot own the land, that if ownership is possible between the two, the land owns the man.

People of his kind never had owned even temporarily the land which they believed they had rented between one New Year's and the next one. It was the land itself which owned them, and not just from a planting to its harvest but in perpetuity.... (91)

His patience and awareness of timelessness cause him to become "a sort of self-ordained priest of the doctrine of non-escape," (94) and he nearly loses his life as a result.

When he is released from prison it is fall, the season both of maturity and of imminent death. The use of the season to reflect his character and mood indicates that he is once more a part of nature. This pattern, dropped at the end of The Hamlet with the loss of Bula as representation of nature, is resumed again only now with the creation of a figure comparable to her. The two major symbols of the natural world, the land and the natural figure, are again united as they were
in *The Hamlet*. Mink's freedom is almost a rebirth; his appreciation of nature is childlike in its directness:

> It was fall, almost October, and he discovered that here was something else he had forgotten about during the thirty-eight years: seasons. ... But now they belonged to him again.... (104)

At the end of the first section Mink is established as a part of nature, a solitary figure determined to destroy the equally solitary but dramatically opposed figure in the novel—Flem Snopes.

Flem's world of money and Mink's world of nature are juxtaposed as the two old men are brought closer together. As the moment of contact nears both seem to be impelled by forces outside themselves, forces over which they have no control, but which they nonetheless represent. Mink is more and more associated with the earth. Walking in shoes on the new concrete road hurts his feet, so he rests them by removing his shoes and bathing his feet in a puddle of water. Gavin Stevens calls his desire to return home "the gravitational pull back to where he was born;" (371) animal-like, he instinctively heads for home. Mink holds the earth in natural awe, and fears only that it will draw him back into it before he has accomplished his mission, for he knows that

> once you laid flat on the ground, right away the earth started in to draw you back down into it. The very moment you were born out of your mother's body, the power and drag of the earth was already at work on you.... (402)

As quickly as possible he leaves Memphis and the busy highway to follow the old overgrown railway into Jefferson. In contrast to Mink's purposeful and undeviating course, the
world of Memphis and Jefferson whirls mechanically and purposelessly. Mink, coming into Memphis,

became aware of a convergence like the spokes
of a gigantic dark wheel lying on its hub,
along which sped dense and undeviable as ants,
automobiles and what they told him were called
buses as if all the earth was hurrying, plunging,
being sucked, decked with diamond and ruby lights,
to the low glare on the sky as into some monstrous,
frightening, unimaginable joy or pleasure. (283)

So strong is the force of nature within Mink now that he can
enter this mechanical world of Memphis and Jefferson and emerge untouched by it. The world of Memphis has no attraction for him now as it did in his youth; he simply buys his pistol and escapes.

A sense of the inevitability of Flem's death is felt throughout the novel. He has sat through the novel waiting for the moment of death, passive amid the activity around him. He dies sitting in his swivel chair in his mansion, as he sat so often in life - on the flour-barrel throne at the Old Frenchman's place, on the throne of Hell, on the buckboard, in his rocking chair in front of the Snopes Hotel, and in his chair at the bank - the detached observer. It is fitting that it is Mink who destroys Flem. Both are symbolic figures, Flem of the business world, Mink of the natural. Their coming together at the end of the Trilogy represents a conflict not between two men, but between two opposing forces. Flem's death does not represent a clear victory but rather a momentary edge on the part of nature. Flem is held by his apathy, his impotence and what Ratliff calls "Give-me-lief." (430)
Mink, who has been harbouring his strength for this moment, is completely worn out. Since both are in these moments representations rather than real characters, Flem's death is symbolic rather than realistic. Character and structure dissolve into symbol in this powerful conclusion.

The circular structure suggested by the symbols makes The Mansion a fitting close to the Trilogy. The symbol most clearly showing the circular pattern is the mansion; after Flem's death his mansion returns to the De Spain family from whom he so laboriously wrested it, a family now consisting of a bedrode old lady and her retired old-maid schoolteacher daughter that would a lived happily ever after in sunny golden California. But now they got to come all the way back to Missippi and live in that-ere big white elephant of a house where likely Miss Allison will have to go back to work again, maybe might even have to hump and hustle some to keep it up since how can they have mere friends and acquaintances, let alone strangers, say- ing how a Missippi-born and -bred lady refused to accept a whole house not only gift-free-for-nothing but that was actively theirm anyhow to begin with, without owing even Much obliged to nobody for getting it back. So maybe there's even a moral in it somewhere, if you jest knowed where to look. (428-429)

Ratliff is right as usual; Jefferson respectability is as powerful as ever. The De Spains, obliged to support their white elephant, suggest comparison with the Warners in The Hamlet, stuck with the Old Frenchman's place until Flem relieved them of it. Flem's mansion, already beginning to decay with his death, is an echo of the Old Frenchman's place. Gavin Stevens' mansion, having fallen into genteel decay under
Mr. Backus, was raised to its present glory by Harriss. So the pattern is repeated.

The Mansion ends, however, not with the symbol of ownership, but with the symbol of nature. The reappearance of the land further confirms the circular structure on which the Trilogy is based. The fact that the evil has not been completely destroyed upon Flem's death is indicated by the presence of the new Snopeses at the funeral. Nature, too, has survived, in that Mink is not captured after Flem's death. Now that his mission is carried out, he no longer fears union with the earth; on the contrary he welcomes it as a well-earned rest, lying down already feeling the first faint gentle tug like the durned old ground itself was trying to make you believe it wasn't really noticing itself doing it. ... it seemed to him he could feel...Mink Snopes...beginning to creep, seep, flow easy as sleeping; he could almost watch it, following all the little grass blades and tiny roots, the little holes the worms made, down and down into the ground.... (434-435)

The Mansion is thus a fitting close to the Trilogy, for it embodies the ideas and their expression set forth in The Hamlet and The Town. The circle has no beginning and no end; neither does the struggle between good and evil, the struggle which man himself must wage. There is no clear victory for either side, but rather an echo of the cycle of life with the birth, growth and death of good and evil alike. The destructive elements of ownership in man that were present in the society of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson before Flem's arrival remain after his death. Dead, Flem becomes a person
rather than a symbol; the world that he represented does not
die with him. The society of Jefferson is no different now
that he is dead. Gavin Stevens is terrified by the presence
of the new unknown Snopeses at the funeral; he thought that
the evil had been destroyed. Hatliff, however, remains serene;
he knows that the battle against evil is unending. His
suggestion that there might someday be a third Eula Varner
shows clearly his realization of the continuity of life and
man's relation to evil. The cyclic pattern of the Trilogy
reinforces the theme of the necessity of the continued
struggle against evil. The series of conflicts in the three
novels has ended in a draw; although good and evil have been
both triumphant and defeated, each continues to struggle as
must man, who is the personification of this conflict. But
Faulkner offers hope for man in his struggle in the character
of Hatliff, Hatliff who succumbed in *The Hamlet* but recovered
to carry on the battle in *The Town* and *The Mansion*. If man
continues the struggle he will not only endure but prevail.
And Hatliff lives in Jefferson.
VII

CONCLUSION

As the preceding chapters indicate, a careful study of Faulkner's technique in the Trilogy is a fresh approach to the theme. A detailed examination of selected structures and symbols has shown that both are polarized to present and dramatize the struggle between the two ways of life that is the core of the Trilogy. The struggle between good and evil, expressed usually as a struggle between the world of nature and of money, underlies and unifies the three books. The world of nature is expressed by the earth, seasons and women; the world of business by money, monuments, mansions, horses, automobiles and men. This system of classification is of course approximate and oversimplified; the structural and symbolic patterns are neither as rigid nor as precise as the above summary might seem to imply. To avoid monotony, Faulkner introduces variations, such as the replacement of the natural woman Eula by the natural man Mink as Flem's opposite. The majority of the characters are a part of both worlds and cannot be neatly labelled and categorized. The system breaks down, for example, in the Jack Houston-Lucy Pate episode because Houston is a very human part of both worlds. The polar technique serves the purpose, however, of focusing the attention upon the conflict, and upon those people who within
themselves display the conflict. It brings into the spotlight the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson at the centre, the rounded characters who are a part of both worlds, rather than the flat figures of Eula and Flem at the extremes.

For this reason the Trilogy is a study not of Flem Snopes, but of the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson, or of mankind in general. Flem is a representation of evil, not the evil itself. He is a product of the way of life of the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson, a personification of the evil and mechanical qualities present in them. In the same way Eula is a representation of nature, a distillation of those qualities of the people which make them a part of the land and nature. Together the two dramatize in outward and simple terms the struggle within the ordinary human being.

The Trilogy is a study of man and his response to evil. Two aspects of structure express this theme: the polar structure which emphasizes the existence of the struggle between good and evil within man, and the circular structure which emphasizes the continuity of good and evil and the necessity of man's continuing the struggle from day to day. The circle described by the Trilogy has neither beginning nor end; it simply exists. So it is with evil. The passing of time in the Trilogy serves further to indicate the continuity of life, a continuity shown by repetition of incidents and symbols. The death of Eula at the end of The Town is paralleled by the death of Flem at the end of The Mansion;
both, it is suggested, were bored. There can be no decisive victory for one side or the other; there can only be a continuation and renewal of the battle. If Flem defeats Eula, Mink defeats Flem. The Trilogy is incomplete in the way that life itself is incomplete, but this very incompleteness is a fidelity to the continuity of life.

As surely as the sun rises and sets evil-doing recurs, a fact of nature; against this the humane is but tentative, and its repeated assertion out of magnanimity and courage, if this too be part of reality, is likewise enigmatic and a matter for faith. Yet with all its aggressiveness given utmost scope by ruthlessness, evil as an absolute has a static quality, whereas benevolence and beneficence, while relative, are also dynamic. Flem, for all his being on the make, remains the same, as in the vignettes of the continuous chewing and the inert state with feet against the mantelpiece. Conversely Faulkner's men of good will and well-doing, for all their bafflement, are those whose motion, ethically purposeful, gives the fiction breath and pulse and the pace of life,....

The Trilogy studies two protagonists in their struggle against evil - V.K. Ratliff and Gavin Stevens. The fighters against evil must become aware both of the struggle itself and of the necessity of continuing it. Ratliff begins sparring with Flem Snopes in The Hamlet as a form of intellectual exercise. Like the men of Frenchman's Bend he enjoys dicker- ing with a worthy opponent, so he takes on Flem with his goat deal. When he swallows the bait Flem has offered in the Old Frenchman's place he is just as greedy and credulous as any other of Flem's victims. His greed is a form of madness which passes off, however, and with returning sanity comes a
determination to fight the greed and evil which Flem represents, and which he has now seen exists within himself. Aware of his own human weakness, he is now stronger. In The Town and The Mansion he acts when he can to destroy evil, but he can only help someone who is aware of the evil within himself. His gesture of help is really a sharing of self-awareness. Wall Snopes, for example, aware of the evil masquerading under the name of Snopes, desires not to change his name but to live it down. He becomes living proof that a Snopes need not be crooked and deceitful. The eradication of evil must begin with self-awareness.

As the novels illustrate, there are two responses to evil: active opposition or passive acquiescence. The first of these is personified in Ratliff, the second in Gavin Stevens. Stevens is the detached observer throughout most of The Town and The Mansion in spite of his involvement with Eula and Linda. He watches with horror and fright the growing colony of Snopeses in Jefferson, but does nothing to reduce it. The one Snopes under his jurisdiction during the war, Montgomery Ward, flourishes in business since Stevens is unable or unwilling to stop him. Warren Beck insists that "the theme of the trilogy is Snopesism and its confrontation by Stevens as leading protagonist in The Town and The Mansion." Beck's defense of Stevens relies heavily on Stevens' goodwill in trying to save first Eula and then Linda from the clutches of Flem Snopes. Goodwill, however, as Ratliff knows, is not enough. The test of man's response to evil must be his actions.
So long as Stevens cannot or will not act to prevent or destroy evil, he cannot be said to be Faulkner's leading protagonist in the struggle against evil. The best that can be said for him is that in *The Town* and *The Mansion* he is learning what Ratliff learned in *The Hamlet*, that evil exists within himself and that he must struggle actively and continuously if he is to destroy it. Perhaps at the end of *The Mansion* he is beginning to realize this. He acts decisively to prevent Res Snopes from cheating Essie Meadowfill and he discovers, while waiting for news about Mink, that his favourite escapist project, the translation of the Old Testament into classic Greek, "would not suffice any more, not ever again now." (392) His discovery that he has been accessory to murder is a form of self-discovery. However his shock at the presence of the Snopeses at Flem's funeral shows that he still regards the evil that he has seen as existing in Flem alone and destroyed upon Flem's death. It is only Ratliff who sees clearly the relationship of man to evil, only Ratliff who can contemplate the coming of a third Eula Varner, only "Ratliff who can say serenely in *The Mansion* that "it aint nothing but jest another Snopes." (349)

In contrast to Ratliff who is a part of both worlds, the world of money and that of nature, that of intellect and of emotion, that of mind and of heart, Gavin Stevens is in reality part of neither world. Stevens' abstract idealism places him in a world of his own, a world removed from either that of money or that of nature. His position makes it im-
possible for him to oppose Flem effectively. He is not instinctively opposed to him as are Eula and Mink, but neither is he morally opposed to him as is Ratliff, for he lacks the balance between and understanding of the two worlds that Ratliff possesses. He cannot begin to fight because he does not understand the issues involved. He denies and rejects the two worlds; Ratliff unites them.

Ratliff, not Stevens, is the leading protagonist in the fight against the evil of greed and inhumanity. He is superior to Stevens because he is active rather than passive, and because he possesses self-knowledge. He is superior to Mink, who actually destroys Flem, because of his self-awareness. Mink acts personally and instinctively, killing Flem to pay off a grudge. Mink is the instrument to destroy Flem because he is instinctively his opposite, belonging to nature as Flem belongs to money. Ratliff unites mind and heart, thought and feeling in his opposition to Flem. It is he who understands most clearly and acts as proof of his understanding. He is the note of hope and affirmation in the Trilogy; it is in Ratliff and those like him that the interest lies, those who, recognizing the evil within themselves, devote their lives to destroying it.

As a trilogy the novels are not a complete success. The common theme of the three novels does not make them equal in value, and as a result the Trilogy is uneven in quality and texture. Theme alone does not create a successful trilogy, as
Warren Beck seems to think:

some discussion may turn on whether Snopes, Faulkner's most extended work, is a conglomerate miscellany or has been rounded into a genuine composition, intricate yet organized. That it is the latter should appear if the theme of existence in a world permeated by Snopesism is fully credited, and if the variety of men's responses to aspects of Snopesism is broadly looked at.3

Although the novels are linked on the surface by Flem, they do not stand together as a thoroughly integrated unit. Since the focus is not upon the character of Flem but upon that of the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson, his presence alone is not enough to unify the Trilogy.

The range of quality from novel to novel gives the Trilogy an unevenness which greatly reduces its unity and impact. The Hamlet is by far the richest and most rewarding novel, The Town the weakest and least interesting. The unity and synthesis of The Hamlet is felt only partially in The Mansion and not at all in The Town. Symbol and structure are so fused by the imagery in The Hamlet that it is impossible to separate them. In contrast the structure and symbols of The Town lie exposed like the bones of a skeleton. As the detailed examination earlier indicated, the novel can be broken down and analyzed in a way impossible in The Hamlet. The Mansion, showing both the weakness of The Town and the strength of The Hamlet, is saved by the "Mink" sections, which in their way show a power equal to that of The Hamlet or of such great Faulkner novels as Light in August, The Sound and the Fury, and Absalom, Absalom!
The range in quality is also due in part to the method of narration used in each of the three novels. In *The Hamlet* the story is told by the omniscient author without interruption. *The Mansion*, and more noticeably *The Town*, suffer from recapitulation of events told earlier, so that the forward movement is impeded by backward glances. The use of the first person narrator, whether Ratliff, Gavin Stevens, or Charlie Mallison, causes the impetus to lag. This is clearly seen in *The Mansion* where the two methods are combined; the most powerful sections are those related by the omniscient author in the manner of *The Hamlet*, the weakest those related by a first-person narrator in the manner of *The Town*. And only when Faulkner himself is telling the story does the language take on the richness of imagery that makes the novel an integral work of art.

*The Hamlet* is a more synthesized work because of still another technique which helps to reveal the theme. Eula and Flem are so one-dimensional that they become almost allegorical in their representation of a particular quality, and it is in this very allegorical quality that their strength lies. As allegorical figures they have a kind of super-reality, the reality of such Dickens characters as Fagin, for example, a reality of integration of symbol, structure, imagery and theme which they represent. They achieve this reality because of their complete integration into the novel.

In *The Town* and *The Mansion*, Eula and Flem change from allegorical figures to characters in their own right. That
Faulkner was aware of this change is clear from his remarks in the Foreword to *The Mansion*. Eula, as a character in *The Town*, probably as a result of bearing and raising a child, does not have the force that she had as a representation of nature in *The Hamlet*. Flem, particularly in *The Mansion*, loses his one-dimensional quality and is partially humanized so that, as Eula had warned in *The Town*: "You've got to be careful or you'll have to pity him." (331) The reason for this is that Faulkner wishes to make quite clear that the forces of evil which Flem represents do not die with him, and cannot be equated solely with him. At the same time however, Faulkner sacrifices something of Flem's power by presenting him as a character rather than an allegorical figure. *The Town* and *The Mansion* never achieve the synthesis of *The Hamlet*.

In spite of this partial failure as a trilogy, the three novels show superb insight into the people of Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson and, by extension, mankind. Faulkner has presented in dramatic terms not only the struggle but the continuity of life. This presentation makes the Trilogy worthy of detailed and intensive study, a significant revelation of Faulkner's vision of life, and an important part of his body of work. In view of the realistic complexity of Faulkner's view of man in nature and in society, the interpretation here followed, in contrast to the traditional one, is both more convincing and more rewarding.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1 Modern Library ed., New York, 1940. Subsequent references are to this edition. Page numbers are in parentheses.


4 Scribner's, LXXIX (June 1931), 585-597.


6 Harper's, CLXIII (September 1931), 393-402.

7 American Mercury, XXV (February 1932), 200-210.

8 Saturday Evening Post, February 27, 1932, pp. 12-13 et passim.

9 Scribner's, XCVI (August 1934), 65-70.

10 Scribner's, C (August 1936), 80-86.

11 Harper's, CLXXIX (June 1939), 86-96.

12 James B. Meriwether, in William Faulkner: a Check List (Princeton, 1957) cites the original publication of this story under a pseudonym in a French version in Fontaine, XXVII-XXVIII (June-July 1943), 66-81. The English translation first appeared in Furioso, II (Summer 1947), 5-17. Though the French version appeared after the publication of The Hamlet, it was dated 1937.

13 Mademoiselle, XLI (October 1955), 86-89 et passim.

14 Saturday Evening Post, May 4, 1957.
CHAPTER II

1 "Faulkner's Mythology," in Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, eds. Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery (East Lansing, Michigan, 1960), p. 82.

2 O'Donnell, p. 83.


4 "The Snopes World," Kenyon Review, III (Spring 1941), 256.

5 Warren, pp. 254-255.

6 Warren, p. 257.


12 Swiggart, p. 321.


16 Thonon, p. 191.

17 Thonon, p. 194.

18 Thonon, p. 201.

19 Lexington, Kentucky, 1959, p. 194.

20 Waggoner, p. 232.
21 "Faulkner's Snopes Saga," English Journal, XLIX (December 1960), 597.

22 Bigelow, p. 605.


26 Stonesifer, p. 77.

27 "A Dying Fall," New Yorker, December 5, 1959, p. 228.

28 "Flem Snopes and His Kin," Saturday Review of Literature, April 6, 1940, p.7.

29 Benet, p. 7.


33 Hawkins, p. 313.


35 Warren, p. 256.

36 Lisca, pp. 5-13.

37 "William Faulkner's 'The Hamlet': a Study in Meaning and Form," Accent, XV (Spring 1955), 127.

38 Hopkins, p. 133.

39 "The Structure of The Hamlet," Twentieth Century Literature, I (July 1955), 77.

40 "The Theme and Structure of Faulkner's The Hamlet," PMLA, LXXII (September 1957), 777.

41 Greet, p. 788.

42 Greet, p. 788.
43 Greet, p. 789.
44 Norman, Oklahoma, 1951, p. 16.
45 Stonesifer, p. 73.
47 Howe, p. 20.
48 West, p. 234.
49 Waggoner, p. 233.
50 Kerr, p. 69.
51 Kerr, p. 74.
52 Kerr, p. 75.
53 Minneapolis, 1954, p. lll.
54 O'Connor, p. 124.
57 Gold, p. 27.
58 Gold, p. 34.
60 "Snopes Revisited," Partisan Review, XXIV (Summer 1957), 432.
61 Marcus, p. 433.
62 Marcus, p. 436.
63 Marcus, p. 440.
64 Marcus, p. 440.
CHAPTER IV

1 T.Y. Greet calls Ike's refusal to accept the coin Houston gives him an "un-Snopeslike rejection marking him as a courtly lover who accepts no material compensation." p. 784.

CHAPTER VI

1 Melisandre is a more suitable wife than Linda for Gavin, for she has never lost her trusting quality, a quality extremely appealing to Gavin. Linda's Spanish Civil War experiences, including the death of her husband, have changed her from the schoolgirl of The Town into a woman. As Faulkner points out in Knight's Gambit (London, 1951), pp. 141-142, Melisandre, in spite of the violent death of her husband, has retained a "soft still malleableness... stubborn and constant against all change and alteration...."

2 New York, 1951, pp. 239-240.

CHAPTER VII

1 Beck, p. 97.

2 Beck, p. 104.

3 Beck, p. 96.
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______________ "By the People," *Mademoiselle,* LXI (October 1955), 86-89 et passim.


______________ "Fool About a Horse," *Scribner's,* C (August 1936), 80-86.

______________ *Go Down, Moses.* New York, 1942.

______________ *The Hamlet.* New York, 1940.

______________ "The Hound," *Harper's,* CLXIII (September 1931), 393-402.

"Lizards in Jamshyd's Courtyard," Saturday Evening Post, February 27, 1932, pp. 12-13 et passim.


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