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RITUAL, COMMUNITY, AND ALIENATION: STUDIES IN LYTLE, TATE, AND FAULKNER

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RITUAL, COMMUNITY, AND ALIENATION:
STUDIES IN LYTLE, TATE, AND FAULKNER

by

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RITUAL, COMMUNITY, AND ALIENATION: 
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ABSTRACT 

Critics generally agree there was a unique sense of community in the South prior to World War I. However, the novels of the South demonstrate a definite lack of community. In fact, Southern novelists from World War I through the present write about characters who fail to effect communal relationships with others.

Andrew Lytle's The Long Night details the life of Pleasant McIvor, a character who prefers alienation. When confronted by social rituals, McIvor retreats; when faced with a situation requiring the ritual of revenge, Pleasant shuns a familial solution and attempts to effect retribution single-handedly. Lytle shows that the character cannot exist in virtual isolation, and Pleasant does marry and have children, and he does contact a relative from outside his nuclear family when he needs to disclose the events of his life.

In The Fathers, Allen Tate creates Lacy Buchan, a boy torn between the ritualized Buchan world and the isolated Posey world. Lacy can live the public life of his father and can learn the social rules as a guide to life, or he can choose to deny his father's way and follow the
individualized, isolated existence represented by his brother-in-law, George Posey. Tate's novel reveals Lacy's struggle and shows that there is no true closeness among men who follow either manner of life.

William Faulkner's work also demonstrates an ironic attitude toward the concept of community. His novel *Go Down, Moses* depicts characters acting out rituals, but Faulkner demonstrates tensions in the ritual process, forces that work to destroy the potential community. Ike McCaslin, the central character, participates in the hunt, engages in long discourse, and even marries. But none of these actions unites him, finally, to his fellows, and Faulkner shows him alone, without the son he wanted and without the respect of the younger hunters, an old man isolated in a tent in the midst of the rapidly diminishing wilderness.

The conclusion of this dissertation presents a brief look at more recent Southern novels, novels that also illustrate the lack of meaningful community.
This work is dedicated to those who have endured its completion and assisted by their very presence, especially my husband Douglas and our children, Ellis, Cas, and Evan.
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INTRODUCTION

The South as a region has these important distinguishing features: it is rich in natural detail; its pace is slow and close to the rhythm of natural sequences; it tends to develop historically in a slow accession of patterns which accommodate to the atmospheric and biological qualities of setting; it generates loyalties to place that are more highly emotionally charged than is any dedication to ideas; finally, its rhythm of social motion is passive rather than active. All these characteristics tend to encourage a conviction, one that gradually changes into a belief, that human processes and natural rhythms are closely associated and that the passing of time has in itself the generative function of shaping and solidifying tradition. Southern tradition tends therefore to remain static, to be self-protective, and to encourage fierce loyalties to its condition of being.

In I'll Take My Stand, first published in 1930, Southern Agrarians attempted to define the Southern way of life and to recommend means of insuring the continuation of that way of life. C. Vann Woodward suggests, "The agrarian way contains no promise of continuity and endurance for the Southern tradition," contrary to the hopes of the Agrarians. However, Woodward defines other elements that he believes make the South a unique region; he particularly cites the "long and quite un-American experience with poverty" and the contrast to the success story of the other regions of America. For William Faulkner and others, the
institution of slavery resulted in the isolation of the South. Faulkner's works repeat the idea of a collective guilt due to the institution of slavery. Isaac McCaslin delineates this distinction in his long discourse in Part 4 of "The Bear" in *Go Down, Moses* when he explains to his cousin Cass that the South is different due to its climate, its beauty, and the institution of slavery with its resultant guilt for which all men must atone. According to Fred Hobson, Southern writing is characterized by a need to confess, to tell about the South, as Quentin Compson does in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* Hobson says, "The radical need of the Southerner to explain and interpret the South is an old and prevalent condition, characteristic of Southern writers since the 1840's and 1850's when the region first became acutely self-conscious."

The experiential isolation of the South in relationship to the rest of the country resulted in a sense of the South as a unique community, complete unto itself, which the Agrarians wanted to preserve. Whatever the cause, critics generally agree that there was something unique about the sense of community in the South, at least prior to World War I. Louis Rubin notes, "The essence of membership in the old Southern community was the sense of belonging, of being able to define one's place, one's attitudes, one's identity as a man, through one's role in that community life." Walter Sullivan views this community sense as arising from the
Civil War: "The war and its aftermath gave the South a unique history—a unique common experience, and common hardships and a common sense of loss enshrined the tradition of southern romanticism in all its good and bad manifestations and codified the southern attitude toward itself and toward the world at large." Critics consider that this cohesive society was a necessary factor in producing the outpouring of writing known as the Southern Renascence. For Donald Davidson, it was the tension between the traditional order, the order which the Agrarians hoped to preserve, and new, emerging life-styles after the first World War and after the advent of industrialization in the South that produced the Renascence. George Tindall believes that at the center of the important Southern writing, that of Faulkner, the Agrarians, Thomas Wolfe, there was the conflict between looking forward and looking backward at the society of the past. Allen Tate exhibits this dual focus most aptly in his only novel, _The Fathers_, where he depicts the South at the commencement of the Civil War and exhibits the conflict between the old way of life and the emerging new manner of life. Like Andrew Lytle in _The Long Night_, Tate returned to the Civil War as a scene for depicting the breakdown which was occurring with the World War. In an essay titled "The Novel in the American South," Tate cites the changes which occurred in the South at the end of World War I, including new industrialization, new riches, and a revived sense of
unity with the rest of the country. He also cites an awareness of European writers. All of these new elements "generated an image of the past in the present: the pervasive Southern subject of our time." 9

One of the predominant elements that made the Southern sense of community unique was the existence of a set of social mores, prescribed rituals for dealing with everyday actions such as greeting friends and for confronting the more momentous occasions of life. Such social rituals are closely related to the concept of community. The practice of ritual usually involves the "eclectic and syncretic use of symbols" in codified behavior for the purpose of effecting a community of union--what Victor W. Turner calls commun-itas. 10 Many ritualistic practices are centered around crucial times in an individual's life: birth, entrance into maturity, marriage, and death. These events are essentially the most private and individual times in a person's life, yet they are the most fraught with social rituals. One function of such ritual, noted by Chesley Taylor and G. R. Thompson in a drama anthology, might explain this apparent contradiction: "Ritual lends [the participant] the illusion of his direct participation in a timeless world, permitting him to transcend, at least for the moment, the temporal limitations of his condition." 11 Birth, maturation, marriage, and death remind a person and those around him of the briefness of life. Rituals function to mask that reminder
and mediate the isolation by involving the entire community in the event. Writing about Robert Herrick, A. Leigh Daneef states, "By transforming literal and private actions into significant, public rituals, Herrick's poems continually isolate and re-present, in heightened and ordered form, key moments of human experience." Ritual, then, can order the event, give it its accepted meaning, even as it renders the event a community affair. In an essay about Carolyn Gordon, Thomas Landess writes:

Essentially ritual has always been a means of definition—one which gives form and larger significance to man's archetypal actions in the ordinary world. As a participant in traditional rites and ceremonies the individual defines himself in relation to the three great realms of order within which he exists: those of nature, the community, and the supernatural.

Certainly the central of these three realms is the community, because generally it is the community that defines itself and the individual in relationship to the natural and the supernatural, as the community structures rituals to define man's relationships to his surroundings and his gods. For example, a baby's birth is celebrated through the formal ritual of baptism in which the community gathers to watch the child formally enter into a relationship with a supreme being. Without the community to observe, there would be no reason for the formal ritual. Rubin says that the poetry of John Ransom exhibits Ransom's feeling that ritual, manners, and tradition are necessary to counter the "savagery and
horror that lie beneath the veneer of everyday modern life." In order for man to live in a community, he must have some way to order his life and establish a relationship, a way of dealing, with those around him. Ritual, then, has as a central purpose the establishment of ordered community.

Writers in the South during the period known as the Renascence were looking back at the cohesive society of the early South, a society romanticized and idealized in stories of crinoline and lace. Rubin believes that even the writers of the old South themselves were seen as closely related to the communities in which they lived: "Intellectual activity, such as it was, was also a community affair; the intellectual was not cut off from his society." As the regional distinctiveness of the South was diminishing after World War I, writers were faced with a potential loss of the old ways, including the closeness, idealized or real, of the community life. Writers of the Renascence present characters who practice rituals with the intention of effecting community. However, there is irony in the ritual process as presented by these writers, because the rituals which they exhibit serve to sever, rather than cement, communal relationships. Speaking about writers of the post World War I period, Louis Simpson says that "in the breaking apart of Christendom and the rise of modern history, they began to experience a deficiency of wholeness, or, we may say, an incapacity to exper-
ience a cultural wholeness."16 This inability to feel such a wholeness could result in a fiction that depicts characters who cannot create or maintain communities. Rubin points out, "The writers of the Southern Renascence grew up in a closely knit community."17 However, the closely knit community had changed by the time they were prepared to begin their writing careers, and many of them chose the loss of that community as one of the underlying subjects of their work.

Andrew Lytle, Allen Tate, and William Faulkner are three authors of the period who wrote about the erosion of the community. All three demonstrated that rituals could not create or preserve community, that something was missing at the start. In The Velvet Horn, Lytle shows a family which has become too close, but which does not relate to the community beyond the family. A similarly close family exists at the center of The Long Night, and Lytle focuses on one member of that family as he battles the community for violating his family. The McIvor clan attempts to enter into the community in which they live, but when that attempt fails and the evil aspects of the community harm the McIvor patriarch, Pleasant McIvor creates his own ritual which has a form of corruption as its very purpose: he takes revenge as his purpose in life. In The Fathers, Allen Tate shows the society of the old South and introduces a discordant element into it in the form of George Posey. Tate's novel demonstrates that perhaps the old Southern society was not a
truly close community, that the ritualistic manners of the old South might have masked a fundamental alienation between men. William Faulkner also writes about the old South, but he does not show the crinoline and lace; rather he depicts the rougher side of the times as he shows Thomas Sutpen attempting to wrest a place for himself in the social arena and Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin in his endeavors to carve a plantation out of the wilderness. Faulkner's characters participate in the rougher rituals also: Sutpen with his fighting fowls and the characters in *Go Down, Moses* with hunting. Faulkner shows the creation of transitory communities, relationships that have no meaning beyond the momentary event for which they are created. Thus, Thomas Sutpen becomes totally involved with the men viewing and betting on the gaming fowl, but they are not his friends in the light of day. Even the usually genteel rituals of courtship and marriage become rough in the Faulknerian landscape as Sutpen asks Rosa Coldfield to make a child with him and promises marriage if that child is a male; Sophonsiba Beauchamp becomes part of the stakes in a poker game. In *The Long Night*, *The Fathers*, and *Go Down, Moses*, three Southern writers demonstrate that social rituals do not create communities, that they may even serve to destroy community. In this dissertation, I will examine the relationship between social ritual and community in these three novels, pointing out the ironic attitude toward the function of ritual as
exhibited by each of the authors. Lytle, Tate, and Faulkner, all products of the most closely knit communal region in the United States, create characters who practice unifying rituals, but each of the authors demonstrates an undercurrent, a tension, in the ritual process, forces that work to destroy the very community which ritual would structure and maintain. Through close readings of The Long Night, The Fathers, and Go Down, Moses, I will study three Southern writers' attitudes toward the idea of community, focusing particularly on the writers' uses of ritual to demonstrate their attitudes.
NOTES TO INTRODUCTION


3 Ibid., pp.17-19.

4 Fred Hobson, Tell About the South: The Southern Rage to Explain (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p.3.


14 Rubin, Writers of the Modern South, p. 170.

15 Ibid., p.5.


CHAPTER 1: ANDREW N. LYTLE

THE ISOLATED RITUAL: LYTLE'S THE LONG NIGHT

In a discussion of William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished*, Andrew Lytle reveals a fear of the dark side of man, even man in his communities:

Society can solve none of the repetitive involvements which are man's plight and inheritance. It can only hold in abeyance the most destructive aspects of these forces by rules and orders, accepted habits and the convention of property. The animal nature of man is transformed by form into what is called civilized behavior.

In another essay, Lytle declares that he considers ritual, along with manners, conventions, and institutions, a means for man to restrain himself and make himself aware of his limitations. Ritual represents, then, for Lytle, a communal manner of recognizing and controlling the dark side of the individual.

In *At The Moon's Inn*, Lytle's novelization of Hernando de Soto's explorations in the New World, especially in the section published separately as "Oritz's Mass," Lytle presents an ironic commentary on his declarations about the function of ritual. Oritz hears mass with de Soto and his men after he has been rescued from life with the natives of North America. Lytle describes the mass, Father Francisco's sermon, and finally Oritz's communion. Interspersed are the
rescued man's memories of his relationship with the Indians who had captured him, his attempts to follow their mores, and his eventual acceptance by them. The section culminates in two moments of acceptance. Oritz receives communion and is told by de Soto, "'You live again as a Christian, Senor. Among Christians.'" He remembers drinking cassena with the Indian Ucita and his councillors and then vomiting up the bitter fluid with the same composure as that ruler. Lytle uses the symmetry of the two ceremonies to point up the similarities in the cultures: the downcast eyes of Oritz, his sense of not belonging in both places, and finally his acceptance demonstrated by the sharing of "food." Although the two communities, Spanish and Indian, are Christian and heathen, they are alike in their sense of need for closeness and, implicitly, their exclusion of those not acceptable. Lytle demonstrates that the two groups share another characteristic: rituals do not control the dark sides of the men. Instead, even after the communions described, the two cultures clash in battles bloody and long, described in painful detail, often with no visible motivation or definitive outcome. Acceptance into each community means participation in the violence.

The action of The Long Night, Lytle's first novel, centers around a ritual of violence, the revenge ritual, as the epigraph reveals: "To be at ease in the dark. To know what the long night meant. That was the secret of revenge."
The revenge that must be performed is important, for various reasons, on every level of community in the novel: the town of Buyckville with its close, closed society; the subcommunity of Lovell's gang, citizens of Buyckville and elsewhere joined in evil purpose; the extended family of the McIvor clan, injured and insulted by Lovell's men; and finally, after the declaration of Civil War, the brotherhood of the Confederate Army.

Against these various communities of *The Long Night* stands Pleasant McIvor. He lives with his family in Georgia and then in Buyckville, Alabama. He is his father's favorite and emphatically concerned with avenging Cameron McIvor's murder, a matter of interest to the entire McIvor clan. Pleasant also becomes a soldier of the Rebel Army. However, in spite of all these communal relationships, he remains a separate entity. He takes the community responsibility for revenge and makes it his own by creating a violent ritual in response to the violent murder of his father. Rather than hoping to effect community or maintain civilized behavior, Pleasant intends his isolated ritual as an instrument of anticommunity.

I

In *The Long Night*, the depictions of the larger communities of the town in western Georgia and the town of Buyckville, Alabama, demonstrate H. L. Weatherby's claims
about the pattern of community experience: "just as the community involves both good and evil in inextricable connection with one another, it also involves life and death in the same close bond."\(^6\) In fact, Lytle insists on this point: life in the communities of the novel is a life of violence, a life close to death. The rituals presented are either violent and death-dealing in themselves or related to times of extreme violence. Even those rituals that serve to draw the community together often begin or end with death.

The action proper of the novel commences with a community ritual, a militia muster, an event that implies military violence and includes organized violence as part of the ritual. The muster provides an opportunity for families to visit and share gossip, for the army to drill, for speeches; but the focus of the day is the wrestling, the games. "One or two were cut up right smart, but nobody got involved in a killing. Men settled their disputes in those days with their fists" (24). However, Cameron McIvor refuses to fight, despite his reputation as the best wrestler in his part of the state. It is this refusal to participate in the organized violence, a refusal unlike him and unexplained, which leads to his family's expulsion from western Georgia. Violence has been the senior McIvor's way of life: one spectator at the muster remembers Cameron's participation in a duelling ritual—"In them days we didn't have yer fancy meetens" (24)—where he demonstrated his ability by running
and cutting a man with a knife. This time Cameron turns away from the violence, but he thereby angers those who would fight him. Weeks later, the Caruthers brothers force him into confrontation away from the organized, controlled ritual of the wrestling match. When Cameron kills only one of them—a mistake in the eyes of his family—legal battles, civilized and codified violence, cost them their home.

From western Georgia, the McIvor family moves to a tenant farm near Buyckville, Alabama. Newcomers, they feel separate from the community which is represented to them by Lovell and other members of his gang. The McIvors conflict with the ways of the gang, and the McIvor family is isolated from the entire community of Buyckville by vicious lies told about them. "It's a hard thing to be in a strange country without friends or kin" (43), the McIvors acknowledge. They become an isolated community, making their home an armed camp against the threat of the Lovell gang. Then Cameron is further isolated: his children are tricked into leaving their home; Pleasant is tied up and prevented from returning. In the dark of the night, in bed with his wife, Cameron is awakened and shot. Lytle has presented a world in which there are no acceptable rituals to bind a man, an outsider, to a new community. There is only violence in its organized forms (the wrestling and the horse breaking, for examples) and its secret acts (the stealing and murder in which Lovell and his men engage). Opposing both forms of violence,
although he has been shown to be a violent man in his own manner, Cameron McIvor meets with death.

The rituals that surround death and burial have the function of allowing the people involved to come to terms with their loss, find a meaning in the death, and relate it to the continuity of all life. However, the rites surrounding Cameron McIvor's funeral are complicated by several factors. First, his extended family must not participate: they do not want the murderers to know that any avenging kin exists. Second, many of those who do attend the funeral do so only "to see if Cameron had any kin to avenge his death" (63). Thus, although there is a typical ceremony with a parson speaking and the singing of "Amazing Grace," the usual funeral rituals do not integrate the McIvor clan into the community but, rather, serve to emphasize its alienation from Buyckville's citizens.

A sharp contrast is provided by the death rituals for Brother Macon and Alf Weaver. The impoverished rites for Cameron McIvor are described in less than a page of narrative; the rich farewell, or part of it, given to the two members of the community is described in over twenty pages of detail. The Buyckville men are responsible for the actual care of their dead. They must clean them and watch over them during the long night. This ritual unites the men. They joke about the temperature of the wash water to hide their fear and distaste for the task of cleaning their dead. They
recognize in the deaths of Macon and Weaver their own mortality. In fact, this reality is sharply clear for the men: Bob Pritchard's bullets could have killed any of them. "'If that outlaw hadn't turned to plug Brother Macon, Abner, it might 'a been you Brother Macon would be called on to scrub. You wouldn't deny such a little service to the man who had saved your life'" (152). The men also drink to mask their fear of the meanings of death, especially of the manner of these two deaths. In their drinking, they transcend sorrow and reach a kind of merriment, but a merriment that is actually superficial. Abner drinks long and deep before he commences to clean Brother Macon's body. Botterall, Beatty, and Simmons, the first watch, drink all during their vigil, but the drinking does not prevent their fear that a gray cat might be Old Scratch come to prowl. Clearly, the men fear death and rely on the established conventions to put death in its proper perspective and relieve them of their fear.

The women, too, are present and included in the death rites. Weatherby notes that the entire community is present and, "in one sense, that whole community and its actions have been the cause of the death." However, the women do not share the men's feelings of personal mortality, of complicity in the deaths. The women view the occasion as a social event, a chance to gossip and demonstrate their culinary skills, much like the actions of the women at the militia muster. There, in western Georgia, the women would
discuss ailments, marriages, baptisms, deaths, and they would cook fragrant dinners on barbecue pits. Here at the Weaver home in Buyckville, the women perform essentially the same functions. Sally Botterall complains to her friend Betsy about Lem's neglect of her; Mary Lou brags that her husband still treats her the same even after the birth of their child. Because these women see each other often, their talk is much more mundane and detail-oriented than the overviews of the women briefly reunited by the militia muster. The Buyckville women are obviously a close group, sharing secrets about husbands and relationships, about joys and disappointments in life. The occasion of the two deaths of community members has heightened their closeness:

There were spurts of conversation, pauses, long silences, and the close feminine communion that settles over a kitchen at such a time. The voices were freer. They took on the peculiar tones of intimacy, at moments almost of conspiracy, that is never heard in mixed company. Tonight there was an element of excitement of higher tension than usual. The relief from the strain of the last few days, the mark of death in the house, gave to their occupations a special meaning, and they moved in an atmosphere that was close and private. (159)

Like the men, the women realize that death could have come to any of the men; the deaths, the strange accidents that have been occurring in the neighborhood, have threatened the women also, because in this violent frontier world a woman depends upon her husband to provide her with a place in society. Thus, while the women may gossip and complain about
their men, they also assume a supportive role at the funeral: they provide their men with a supper, indeed with a special supper, one to which much preparation is devoted. Weatherby points out that there is guilt in those who brought the food, in the hams from Lovell, for example, as well as in those who prepare the dead. If the women share in the guilt, that sharing must derive from their feelings of relief that the present death has not touched them more closely. They work out any guilt, share in the death, through their work in the kitchen. Lytle imparts as much importance to the women's role at this affair as to the men's. Great Aunt Patsy's recitation of recipes is accomplished "with the cadence of an ancient high priest reciting a familiar ritual" (157), the author relates. In her age and after the fullness of her life, she is removed from the worldly affairs of the other women; she is represented as a sort of high priestess of the kitchen ceremony. Thereby the culinary aspects of the funeral are endowed with as much import as the preparation of the dead.

Besides uniting the men and the women in separate communities, the deaths of Brother Macon and Alf Weaver also provide a time for courtship between Ruth Weaver and Damon Harrison. As the larger community unites in its rituals, this couple finds an opportunity to proceed with one of the rituals which, carried to completion, allows the community to perpetuate itself. Thus, in a sense, death and continu-
ity—or at least the potential for continuity—join in this section of Lytle's novel. Alf, one of the dead men, is Ruth Weaver's cousin; she should grieve his death and feel sorrow for his mother. In addition, she also fears for her newfound lover Damon: like all of the men and women, Ruth is aware of every man's—and in this situation the emphasis is on the males—mortality. Along with her grief for her cousin, she feels relief that Damon was spared. Damon, for his part, views the funeral primarily as an opportunity that must not be missed: he wants to court his love. "'We won't get a chance like this every day'" (157), he coaxes Ruth. In his haste to court her, he forgets, for the moment, to consider his own mortality. He fails to notice shadows out of place, dangers lurking. The description of the funeral rituals for Alfred Weaver and Brother Macon ends with the killing of Damon Harrison, the death of potential union with Ruth Weaver.

Damon's funeral provides a third example of the rituals that surround death. In this case, Lytle again presents a funeral supper, but a supper shared by two, Damon's mother and father. The two share a ritual meal which contrasts sharply with an earlier Harrison family meal and with the community feast that marks the funeral of Weaver and Macon. Describing the earlier Harrison meal, Lytle employs words to emphasize the importance that can come to be placed on empty tradition. The Harrisons live in a small home in town, small
and filled to capacity with furniture from a richer life they once shared. A mahogany table extends the entire length of the dining room; the table is "covered with a heavy linen cloth and down the center heavy candelabra spread their silver branches" (116). The double use of the modifier heavy emphasizes the weight of these symbols of another type of life-style. Heavy linen and large pieces of silver are not usually the property of those who live in small homes and own small shops. Neither is the "massive sideboard" (116) that takes up so much space one can barely pass between it and the master's chair. Quintus Harrison, Damon's father, obviously feels the weight of these heavy items: he squares his shoulders before he enters the dining room. He must venture out into the world every day and function as a businessman, a difficult role for him and one he approaches in a passive manner:

But the most curious thing about Mr. Harrison was the way he looked after his business or didn't look after it. He kept the store at a distance just as he kept people... In time people took to waiting on themselves, making their own change and their own settlements at the end of the year. (110)

In his own home he demonstrates a similar passivity. He squares his shoulders at the weight of all the furniture around him, but he is oblivious to the oppressive family portraits, going back several generations, covering the walls of the dining room: "not once did he notice this evidence of the past thrust in such obvious fashion within the
limits of the small log room" (117). Harrison's entry into the room, shoulders squared, waiting for his wife, then eating a dinner without conversation, is part of a pattern husband and wife have developed, their own ritual for meals. Lytle notes that the candles in the candelabra "dripped monotonously upon the cloth" (116). The unusual adverb highlights the repetitive nature of the dinner. The Harrisons' crowded existence in the log cabin, which smells of poor whites to Mrs. Harrison, has diminished their lives. Mrs. Harrison is a tall woman; she must stoop to pass under the "rough lintel" (117) and enter the dining room, as she feels she has stooped in her life-style to be living in this place. This feeling of hers has determined the nature of the Harrisons' existence together. She does not venture into the community at all, and she shares no form of community with Quintus.

However, the dinner marking the death of Damon Harrison is somewhat different. When Quintus brings his dead son home, he breaks down and Mrs. Harrison feels pain for him. As she performs the last rites for her son, the rites that were performed by all of the men at the Weaver and Macon funeral, "she felt all the hate for her husband wash from her heart. He must suffer now what she had suffered since they had moved to the hill country" (179). Shared grief at the death of their son and her new idea of shared suffering brings the Harrisons together. Mrs. Harrison changes the
dinner ritual. Mr. Harrison is sitting with drooped shoulders: another weight has been added to his burden. When Mrs. Harrison enters the dining room, "she passed her usual place and sat down at his side" (179). Already, by this simple act, they are physically closer. She has shunned her usual place at the other end of the table, the place indicating the authority of the woman of the house. She has chosen instead to be close to her husband at this time of sorrow. She calls his name; she waits with patience for him to notice her; she takes his hand and begs forgiveness for her actions over the past years. When Quintus cries, his wife puts her arms around him and gives him her strength. The funeral dinner for their son is nothing like a typical family dinner. In fact, they never consume any food, but they are nourished in their reunion with each other. The death of Damon Harrison enables his parents to achieve community by turning away from the established rituals, the traditions, the weight, that had taken the place of a real relationship. Lytle purposely contrasts the Harrisons' newfound closeness with life in the other homes in the area:

Strong and erect, she led him from the room, and he held to her like a man who has lost his way. The candles were left to burn until one by one the wicks flared, sputtered, died away.

But in all the other log cabins, dog-runs, and big houses around Buyckville the lights burned late. With the night, fear settled over the hills and people drew close together and talked in low voices. (180)

Mrs. Harrison feels she has always known this country would
kill her son, or take him from her in some manner. Now that Damon is dead, the Harrisons have nothing left to fear. The two are united in a new-found caring for each other, a sort of mutual dependency. The violence that characterizes the larger community around them can no longer hurt them. On the other hand, it is fear of the violence which unites their neighbors as they huddle in artificial light and attempt to find comfort in words to each other.

The Rebel Army, the largest community in The Long Night, demonstrates further that in the world of Lytle's novel violence is a way of life. The Army's function is violence, fighting the War Between the States, killing the enemy. Lytle does depict the life-giving rituals that must be continued even in the midst of such violence, the eating together, the sleeping, the sharing of blankets and warmth, the communicating, but after the Army begins to march, to follow its purpose, he shows such events as marred by scarcity. There are not sufficient supplies for hearty meals, or sometimes for any meals at all; there is no time for enough sleep or for satisfying conversations. In fact, the novel itself is scarce in representations of possibly pleasant rituals. For example, the reader is informed that after the battle of Shiloh what remained of Pleasant McIvor's "mess had been mighty close" (317), but such closeness is never presented in a scene. On the other hand, the times of violence and deprivation are fully documented. Lytle devotes
what one critic considers an inordinate portion of the novel to a full description of the battle of Shiloh, both in the large movements of the Confederate armies and in the particulars, the deaths and woundings of both historical figures and characters in the novel. However, such full development is necessary to make the point that the violence is ritualistic: there are certain codes of behavior in battle, and the manner of a soldier's conduct, rather than the cause for which he fights, becomes the motivation for his actions. In the opening pages of the Civil War section of the novel, for example, Tom Fox approaches General Johnston with a plan for the assassination of Andrew Johnson, military governor of Tennessee appointed by Abraham Lincoln. Johnston's answer emphasizes the importance of proper conduct: "'Sir, the government I serve meets its enemies in open and honorable warfare.' The words were concise, measured, slow. 'It scorns the assassin's knife and the scoundrel who would suggest its use'" (197). Later, during the battle of Shiloh, one regiment balks at following orders. Johnston goes to the men and tells them their bayonets must do the work. He influences them with his presence and his demeanor. "As they saw the light in his gray eyes, his splendid presence full of the joy of combat, life became suddenly unreal, a mean and ignoble thing" (295-296). The men react in the manner of noble soldiers: they run into battle.

Before the orders to march to battle are written or
received, the armies presented form close community units. Lytle says that "in the Southern armies every man took for granted his equality with every other" (213). Thus, Pleasant, a private, can associate with officer Roswell Ellis and eat dinner with his cousin, Colonel Armistead McIvor, and his officers. In fact, the latter dinner indicates the closeness of all of the men. Pleasant can "hear the cheer of close comradeship, the noisy banter of the soldiers who had already come to think only from meal to meal" (225). The officers share a succulent meal of roasted pig; the men listen to the good-natured bantering of Armistead and Colonel Rob and then to Colonel Rob's involved story about a horse race. There is plenty of food and good talk. The enlisted men share, albeit from a distance, from beyond the fire, in the largess of the officers. The sense of community and mutual purpose is strong. Armistead reveals, after Rob's departure, that the Colonel sacrificed his horses, which were his whole life, sold every one of them to equip a battalion for the Confederate Army. This heightens the sense of shared times and shared ideals. However, the feeling is shattered when Roswell Ellis decides to walk Pleasant part way back to his own regiment. Pleasant is annoyed at the careless haste of a staff officer, but Ellis correctly assumes that the haste might have some significance. Tomorrow the orders for battle will be given. The men will become another type of community; they will become a
true army. Then comes the time of deprivation, of violence as the sole unifying ritual. Gone will be the time of the "foolish formality" (244) of falling in, of the "stupid game" (245) of daily roll call. The rituals will become much more serious.

The change in demeanor and in relationships brought about by engagement in battle is exemplified by a strange sort of community Pleasant stumbles upon as he wanders around after receiving a minor wound in the fight. He wants some companionship to counter the loneliness of battle, and he wants something to drink. He goes to a pond he remembers and finds a group of men there.

Some were dressed in blue, some in gray, one wore a hat, another's head was bare, some grew hair as black as ink, falling long about their shoulders, others were fair and blond. One with rigid arm clasped his fist over the dark red water. But all their faces, fair or dark, were set, were marble-smooth and still. (305)

Lytle points out first the diversity of the men, how they are representative of both armies, North and South, and of all physical types. Then he notes that they share one thing: all are dead. Instead of the lively and fulfilling dinner party of the time before the men knew they would fight, Pleasant now sees dead men leaning in to drink bloody water. The ritual of violence effects such a community.
In addition to the communities of violence in *The Long Night*, Andrew Lytle also depicts family units that function as communities within the larger social context. Lytle has written often about the relationship between the family unit and the concept of community.

Nowhere else in this country is the family as a social unit so clearly defined as in the South. Its large "connections" amplifying the individual family life, the geographic accident which allowed the family in this greater sense (it was the community) to extend itself in a mild climate and alluvial soils where the physical barriers were not too severe, and slavery too, gave the family a more clear definition of its function as not only an institution but the institution of Southern life.

[Family] is the structure through which the cultural image, with its temporal and spiritual rituals, complicates the human drama, receives and modifies by its conventions the archetypal happenings which forever recur between birth and death.

In its private life the family is a whole with members and connections, while publicly it is a unit in a larger whole, the state.

In *The Long Night*, the relationship between family and community is complicated by the fact that the McIvor family, actually a small community of the extended family, exists as outcast from two successive communities. Within the novel, the family unit functions as a separate social entity and as an alienated individual unit.
Viewed as a separate social entity, the McIvor clan looks like a small, close-knit community. When Cameron and his wife and children are driven from Georgia, many of the members of the extended family join him in undertaking the intended journey to Texas. "In this way they proposed to show their loyalty to the family head" (28). The family members indulge in ritualistic activities on the journey, but the rituals are not necessary to effect unity. The desired unity is already present; it is enhanced by all of the shared experiences. Thus, the hunt in which the men engage functions as a ritual. The men are not intent on providing food for dinner, but merely on sharing an experience and breaking the monotony of the trip.

It was an hour or so before dark, and the men slipped into the woods with their guns. They came back, most of them, empty-handed. I really believe they didn't care whether they shot anything or not. The guns were an excuse to get away and stretch their legs. (30)

The youngsters' version of this getting away is a game Eli and Pleasant play, climbing trees together and wrestling as they fall to the ground. To please the women, there is a dance where the old and the young feel free to share in the fun. However, immediately after Pleasant McIvor as narrator describes this idyllic day and night, he reveals that all of the families except Cameron's elected to stop their voyage at Opelika. He also discloses divisions within his immediate family, divisions that suggest something other than the ideal community seen prior to this point. "For some reason I
was [father's] favorite. In every generation it has been a family habit for the father to single out one son for his especial confidence and affection" (32), Pleasant narrates. Cameron McIvor follows family tradition by having a favorite son; however, his choice is not the typical one. He has not favored his eldest son. William McIvor's coloring and build are different from those of the other McIvors, and he prefers not to hunt or participate in sports. He prefers the law of the courts over the unwritten rules of violence. In short, Pleasant informs his audience, his brother William "just warn't a McIvor" (33). Lucius McIvor is the mother's favorite and little Levi worships William. Thus, the seemingly ideal community of the extended family is composed of a montage of small factions.

The McIvors are, however, united in the face of the larger community of Buyckville. In the first part of the novel, narrated by Pleasant in the first person, the aged narrator recalls the time of his youth as a time of isolation from the community beyond his family. Tyson Lovell recognizes the vulnerability of the McIvors because of this isolation and warns them, "'You are without friends or kin, so far as I know, I would advise you to be very circumspect about what you see'" (40). Pleasant notes, "It's a hard thing to be in a strange country without friends or kin" (43). Cameron does, in fact, have one friend, his son William's new father-in-law, but even Malcolm Holcombe
avoids Cameron when Cameron gets drunk, his initial response to the trouble he has with Tyson Lovell's law. There follows a series of lies about Cameron McIvor and his family, lies that "isolated us in the community whose support we could have had if the truth was known" (46). Because Cameron feels that his own extended family would be misinterpreted if they came to his aid, he must depend on the law, which will not believe in the guilt of Lovell and his fellow seemingly outstanding citizens. The McIvors' complete alienation from the community of Buyckville erases all of the divisions in Cameron's immediate family. William even leaves his wife alone in town and stays to support his father, mother, and brothers. They farm, eat, and live together in total closeness for a time.

But even this closeness does not save Cameron McIvor from the death planned for him by Tyson Lovell. As he used lies to alienate the McIvors from potential allies in Buyckville, so he employs a simple lie about an ill wife to get William and Pleasant away from their home. In words that evoke the incantation of ritual, an older Pleasant recalls what he knows of the murder:

In that part of the night when people sleep the hardest, our enemies slipped around the house as easy as smoke. Pa didn't hear them until they broke into his room. As he raised up in bed, Penter Wilton and his brother Jeems held him--ma saw them by the flash of the gun--while a man by the name of Fox shot his head off. (53-54)

The fact that Lovell's gang could accomplish this action
demonstrates the McIvors' total alienation from the community in which they dwell. Even after the murder becomes known, no one from Buyckville rushes to their aid.

The death of the acknowledged head of the clan unites the extended McIvor family, although those not living in Buyckville stay away from the funeral so that Lovell and his men will not know of their existence. Because of the importance of the concept of family honor, all of the McIvors feel that they share in the slander of Cameron's name and in the humiliation of Lovell's statements about Cameron's wife Susanne. In a rather dramatic sentence, Lytle reveals that Susanne's tears about her husband's death "did not melt the sullen, outraged heart, nor cleanse the shame from the ravished house, nor the empty bed defiled with her love's secret blood" (59). That house refers to the family more than to the place is revealed when the McIvor men meet and are "silent with shame" (64) because "all share this dishonor" (66). The response to this affront to the family is to call a family muster, a more private version of the ritual that opened Pleasant's narrative. As Walter Sullivan views it, this meeting establishes the integrity of the family as a moral force. "There is an overall harmony of feeling among those at the gathering which transcends individual differences concerning the proper method for obtaining justice."14 However, the feelings and statements of the men at the meeting do not bear out this interpretation. Bob
Pritchard announces early that the men are "ready to ride" (64). In this intention there exists general unity; however, William, oldest son of the dead man and thereby entitled to authority, wants to try legal recourse first, much as his father did against Tyson Lovell in the early stages of the confrontation. The response from the other family members indicates a breakdown in their closeness. "The tension might at any moment break, for all felt William had betrayed them" (65), Pleasant says. One asks, "'What have we come here for?'" And another questions, "'Why were we allowed to call our family together?'" (65). Pleasant almost unites the clan again with his assertion that "'every one that had anything to do with it are going to die'" (67). However, he refuses to elaborate on this theme.

Again the common hope had been balked and with it the patience, never too strong, of the McIvors. There was some show of irritation, and men turned to their neighbors with the great need to relieve their minds by speaking them. (68)

Then Cyrus Long, kin from Georgia, provides the men with a slogan, one that Pleasant approves and repeats: "'Let us meet secret death with secret death'" (68). In spite of that, however, the group never coalesces as a community with one common purpose. Instead, the larger number of kinfolks, those more remote from Pleasant's acquaintance, move outside of the home. Bob Pritchard, Armistead McIvor, and Pleasant remain as those who will act, but they agree to let William attempt his method first. Lytle never reveals how the others
in the family, having come so far for the muster, react to this decision. William, Bob, and Armistead seal their newfound closeness with talk of hunting, horse buying, land, and national affairs. Pleasant will share in the plot against the Lovell gang, but he does not participate in the mundane closeness of family discussions about other matters.

Lytle repeatedly emphasizes the importance of blood relationships within the McIvor family. For example, Armistead's "double first cousin" relationship to Cameron is mentioned four times by the various kinsmen (61, 62, 70, 71). Obviously, with four repetitions in only ten pages, all of the citations are not necessary for the reader to identify Armistead McIvor. Rather, the insistence on relationship and the characters' interest in blood relationships indicates that the concept of family has an important role in the formation of communities. Armistead delineates the fact that a family is a community:

"I'd go mighty far and wait a long time to deal with the people who have killed your pa. We are double first cousins. I've got more of your pa's blood in my veins than you have. We played together, hunted together, stood by each other at our weddings, and I'm not going to desert him now, when he needs me most." (71)

Being family, doubly related, Armistead had been present with Cameron at all of the ritual occasions: the games of youths growing to maturity, marriage, and even death. Family relationship makes his presence imperative.

However, Lytle makes the concept of family more compli-
cated than a confrontation of the united McIvor clan versus the Lovell gang. In each of the sets of enemies against which Cameron McIvor battles, both in Georgia and in Alabama, there are close relatives. The Caruthers brothers, who become the enemies of the McIvors after Cameron's refusal to wrestle at the militia muster, "were more than twins. Their love was nearer what a man holds to himself. Sympathy was so close that their physical movements, even, were the same" (26). When Job is humiliated in hand-to-hand combat with Cameron, he is nursed back to health at the McIvor home and leaves under friendly terms. As Pleasant referred to the entire affair as "our humiliation" (20), including the entire family in any shame, so Mebane Caruthers' "heart stings for his brother's humiliation" (27), as Susanne states. Again, in Buyckville, a close pair of brothers is among the members of the Lovell gang. Jeems and Penter live together and work together on the slave-running operation that has earned so much money for Tyson Lovell. Together, they even held Cameron McIvor while Fox shot him. Thus, Lytle demonstrates that family closeness is a trait of both sides of the conflict.

Besides the close brothers in the Lovell gang, Lytle also presents a full picture of the Harrison family, their story developed in an extended flashback, to highlight the situation of the McIvors. Both families are shown first in relatively high social positions, occupying homes with sen-
timental meaning to the individuals. Both families lose their social positions as a result of ritualized violence. In the case of the McLvors, it is Cameron's failure to participate willingly in the wrestling, at least as Pleasant analyzes the situation, that results in the family exodus. Quintus Harrison, on the other hand, indulges in a supposedly friendly game of marbles on the Sabbath. The violence of this game is, of course, totally beneath the surface. Malcolm Buford observes the arrogance of Quintus and feels Quintus's contempt for him. As Buford prepares the playing place, Quint stands "aloof, his proud head thrown back" (120). When Harrison announces he will shoot first in the preliminary contest for position, Buford reacts. "At this last touch of arrogance Buford set his face. Damon stood by the post stiff with excitement" (120). Even though he is a youngster, Damon recognizes the danger in what is to follow. When the game is over and Buford has won all of Fair Meadows, the men still speak the required words of gentlemen, but the undercurrent of violence remains present.

"Of course, Quint, you understand that I can't take advantage of your vanity."
"I will send you the deeds Monday, Mr. Buford."

Malcolm Buford, as he rode away, did not notice his familiar companion turn on his heel and step back to the piazza; he did not see the few beads of sweat gathering on his pale forehead. He heard only his own heart sing with triumph and sweet vengeance. In one afternoon he had returned arrogance for arrogance, contempt for contempt. He had given back at one blow all that he had been forced
to take from the hands of all the Harrisons. (122)

Although the violence between the two men has not been physical, it is obvious in the sweat of Mr. Harrison and in the "one blow" that Mr. Buford feels he has administered.

The two women's reactions to their respective losses are similar in general feelings, but totally different in particulars. Susanne McIvor feels deep sorrow, but she shares this feeling with her family only implicitly. "Not once did ma turn back her eyes upon the place where she had been brought, twenty years before, a bride" (29), Pleasant recalls. "She never complained, but we could see it had hurt her bad to leave the home place" (31). Susanne does not assume the role of martyr; instead she makes punch and joins in the family's dancing on the abortive journey to Texas. Mrs. Harrison, who is always addressed in this formal manner even by her husband, feels similar sorrow, but she withdraws with her sorrow, makes no effort at all to be a part of her new community in Buyckville or even of her family in their new location. When she first learns of the loss of Fair Meadows, her reaction is silent and immediate:

The husband and son could hear the retreating steps and follow them to her chamber, but they could not follow the bitter workings of her heart, nor could they know how a woman's despair may, falling steadily about the things she has loved, slowly wither the affections; nor how an old passion once betrayed may torture in hidden ways, may eat backward until the secret things snap, and there is no decay but a dry emptiness. (123)
Mrs. Harrison removes herself from the company of her family, and after the move to Buyckville she remains sequested in the small family home. Damon "had early learned that he must never mention before his mother any occurrence in the Buyckville world. He remembered with shame what he considered her lack of courage in the face of misfortune, how she had made this cabin her shell, never leaving it, pretending the up-country had no existence" (118). She lives among her symbols of the past, her furniture and family portraits from Fair Meadows. She does not participate in even small joys, such as shared conversation at dinner. In fact, Mr. Harrison's thoughts reveal that she often does not share even the dinner itself: a day of heavy eating will be followed by a day of fasting. She is making of her body, that body which must stoop to enter the dining room, a dry emptiness, an empty shell. Susanne McIvor speaks to her husband with the love of many years. Mrs. Harrison's despair has been steady, and her affections had withered even before the loss of Fair Meadows. Her complete withdrawal from social life is similar to Pleasant McIvor's solitary actions after the death of his closest companion, his father.

Damon Harrison exists as a foil to the actions of his mother. As she retreats further into herself, he enters more fully into the Buyckville society. Weatherby says that the novel presents "Damon's progress from the fringes toward the center of the community." For Weatherby, the mule-breaking
incident at Sheriff Botterall's is the entrance to acceptance, Damon's initiation into Buyckville and its standards. However, Damon was obviously already involved quite deeply with the community before this incident. He was present at the murder of Cameron McIvor, a fact which reveals that he is accepted in the small community of Lovell's gang. Perhaps the mule breaking gains him acceptance by others, by members of the community not involved in the illegal doings. His proficiency with the mule certainly pleases his father. Significantly, this incident takes place on the same day on which he met Ruth Weaver, in a scene reminiscent of Cameron's courtship of Susanne:

[Cameron] had just ridden out of the woods into the open, his mind on anything but wiving. There she stood, so neat and trim, driving chickens off the porch. At that moment he knew he had met his wife, although it was a year before he came back courting. (41-42)

Damon comes upon Ruth Weaver as he is riding to the mule-breaking event at Botterall's place. His mind, like Cameron's, is not on courting. Like Susanne working with the stock, Ruth is chasing bees and, with Damon's help, she gets them into her apron. The similarity of circumstances suggests that the close community of marriage shared by Cameron and Susanne could be duplicated; ironically, the fact that it is not is because Damon participates in Cameron's murder. The similarity of circumstances also underlines the fact that the impetus for family community is felt on both sides
of the conflict depicted in *The Long Night*.

At the funeral of Alf Weaver and Brother Macon, Damon Harrison is again on the fringes of the social community. He has been a member of the Lovell gang, or at least involved in activities of the gang. He has earned the respect of the men by riding and taming Botterall's mule. Now he must meet the women of Buyckville. One woman notes that she has not yet seen any of the Harrison folks. However, Damon makes himself useful around the kitchen in hopes of seeing Ruth. He also enters the laying-out room with water to clean the bodies, an action which Weatherby considers further progress in his integration into the society. However, Damon does not actually enter into the close group of the men. He is offended by their seeming jocularity. He is not asked to join in the drinking and, indeed, he probably would not, counting, as he is, on seeing Ruth. Ruth represents the promise of full community for Damon, the promise of full acceptance by Buyckville, and of closeness such as the elder McIvors had shared. However, even as Ruth utters the words that promise this closeness—"I'll love you all my life" (173)—Damon dies in her arms. As Weatherby views this scene, Damon is "killed for belonging to a world which in the person of Ruth Weaver promises him the life and happiness which his mother and father in their exile have lost." Thus, Mrs. Harrison's fears for her son are justi-
fied; however, he does at least feel the possibility of true community, something his mother does not know¹⁸ until she is rehumanized in response to Damon's death.

In *The Long Night*, the concept of family is complicated by the presence of violence that both unites and severs family members from one another. Pleasant McIvor adopts a purpose of revenge which demands that he distance himself from his family, yet, ironically, the purpose is one he has adopted because of his close connections to his family.
III

Pleasant McIvor, the protagonist of Andrew Lytle's novel, completes his withdrawal from community with the killing of Damon Harrison just at the latter's entrance into the inner circle of close community ties. Pleasant had entered Buyckville with his father and family in the hopes of rebuilding the life he had had in Georgia. Lovell welcomes the McIvors with the statement "'There can't be enough gentlemen in any community'" (35). However, by the time they are fully settled, with a crop planted and places for all members of the family to live, the McIvors have noticed that Lovell does not conduct business in an ordinary manner. The family withdraws from the evil that they discover around them. But they cannot withdraw far enough. Lovell violates the sanctity of their home when he sends his men to kill Cameron McIvor in the night. In A Wake for the Living, Lytle notes that the front door is the symbol of the family, that it separates the domestic intimacies of family life from the world, from the public affairs of mankind.19 Entering Cameron's home in stealth, entering his bedchamber, Lovell's gang violates family sanctity. This violation necessitates, for Pleasant, the violations to follow. Pleasant's killing of Damon Harrison in the arms of Ruth Weaver, in the midst of a ritual of courtship already demonstrated to be like
Pleasant's own father's courtship of his mother, is a declaration of the son's attitude toward all community.

Pleasant is led naturally to the course he chooses. First, the concept of family honor is important to him. Even years later, when speaking to his nephew, he refers to the events in Georgia as "our humiliation" (20). Second, violence is a way of life for the McIvors. Pleasant feels pride in his father when he overhears an old man telling of an incident in which Cameron killed a man with whom he could not get along. Later, he wishes his father had not stopped with the killing of Job Caruthers but had killed Mebane also. The very games of Pleasant's childhood have been games that prepared him for the action he determines to take in response to the events in Buyckville. When he climbs trees to reach his cave near the Staircase, he is playing the game he and Eli played on the wagon train. When he stalks the murderers so quietly, he is using the skills he learned hunting. The games of his youth were ritual games of restrained violence that prepared him to engage in rituals of actual violence in later life.

Third, Pleasant comes naturally to his chosen course of action because his close relationship with his father remains his only true community relationship. He is his father's favorite; the two are together when they decide to stay on Lovell's property in spite of the turn of events and when they discover the cabin where the Wilton brothers are
guarding stolen slaves. Pa has been his teacher in the ways of the wilderness. In fact, Pleasant's close relationship with his father does not even end with that man's death. After Pleasant raves madly about Cameron's death, in a locked room, shutting out even the other members of his family, he calms down and begins "talking in a conversational tone. There were questions, pauses for answers" (59). At the revenge muster of the McIvor kin, Pleasant admits that he hears his father talking. "'Did you hear?' His voice cracked like a whip. 'That was pa talking. He came to tell us what to do.' He paused and his sight dulled. 'He comes to me like that!'" (68). The youth even feels pressured by his dead father to complete the revenge and later asks, "'Give me a little time, pa. Give me a little time, and you'll rest easy'" (174). The closeness between father and son transcends death.

The revenge of the death of the head of the clan is, traditionally, a family responsibility. In addition, the revenge can be seen as a community responsibility. As Walter Sullivan points out, the revenge will cleanse the community as a whole, purge it of the criminal elements. However, Pleasant prefers to make the revenge his individual responsibility. He begins in community with Armistead, Bob Pritchard, and Eli McIvor, close companions to Pleasant before his sudden aging after his father's death. However, Pleasant is not comfortable working with the other men,
close as they are to him in relationship and purpose. At the family meeting on revenge, he divorces himself from them when the talk turns to something besides his sole concern.

Pleasant took no part in this talk. He heard as a man in a light sleep hears the strange footfall. He was thinking how things had turned out—the family disposed of without offense, Brother William satisfied—and he left to do what he had to do. (71)

When he is working with Bob and Eli on his first mission, a reconnaissance to Botterall's ranch, he worries that they will not perform as they are supposed to: "He would always know what to do about the unknown things that were bound to come up. But they . . ." (103). Pleasant cannot submit to the trust that must be part of any true community. After he kills Damon Harrison and Sheriff Botterall in one night, he laments the slowness of the revenge and blames it on his attempt to work with the others.

"Too slow," and then later, almost with pain in his voice, he repeated, "too slow, too slow."

The cool fall air pressed heavily upon his eyes, and he felt the dry lids closing, yielding up his exhausted senses to the quiet night. No. Not yet, not yet could he sleep. He jerked upright and drove his fists into the spongy earth.

"I will not," he cried aloud, "I will not be at their mercy."

The still night replied, "From now on I'll strike alone."

He lay aback down and, almost before his head struck the saddle, he was asleep. (181)

In this incident Pleasant cannot sleep because he is troubled at the number of deaths he must perform to complete the revenge and the time it takes to achieve each death. In
addition, the slowness of the killings gives others involved in Cameron's death the opportunity to escape Buyckville, slowing Pleasant still more because he must then locate them before he can obtain vengeance for his father's murder. Pleasant feels constrained by the others who would kill with him. Planning with them, worrying about their movements, slows him down. Only when the night tells him, speaking for him in the first person, that he should strike alone, only then can he relax into sleep. Pleasant chooses alienation as necessary to the revenge. As H. L. Weatherby states, "To sustain the honor of his family, which is the principle of community, he must sacrifice that very principle and become an alien, a 'loner.'" However, the choice does not seem to be a "sacrifice" for Pleasant; he prefers working alone. He feels that other members of the family simply slow down his intended actions, give him other worries. Elmer Davis asserts that Pleasant is "morally supported by relatives who lived at a distance." While this is probably true, as can be inferred by the reactions at the meeting on revenge, Lytle does not demonstrate in Pleasant any need for this support. Instead, Pleasant is shown acting completely on his own during the section preceding the announcement of the Civil War.

As alienation is necessary for Pleasant to complete his intended revenge, so too is the development of a ritual to use in performing the task. Writing about the revenge of
Rosa's murder in William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished*, Lytle asserts, "The boys in pursuit of the murderer give death for death, but the act of vengeance, in spite of its motive, is private and dangerously close to chaos itself."\(^{24}\) Certainly the same could be said about all of the killings Pleasant and his relatives commit in *The Long Night*. What perhaps saves Pleasant's actions from becoming chaos is his creation of a ritual for performing revenge. In the essay cited above, Lytle notes, "The animal nature of man is transformed by form into what is called civilized behavior."\(^{25}\) And elsewhere he recommends that the characters of Howard Nemerov's *The Homecoming Game* and "the agglomerate mass of the community" need to be restored "to the constraint of ritual rather than mob violence."\(^{26}\) If Pleasant can be said to act in a civilized manner, then it is his development of a ritual that accords him that dignity.

In the description of the killing of Dee Day, the form of Pleasant's individual acts of revenge is first shown fully. Pleasant identifies himself prior to the taking of each life. He wants his victims to know the reason for, and the agent of, their deaths. This necessity for identification is part of what complicates a later opportunity for the death of one of Cameron's murderers. Pleasant has a chance to kill Awsumb, as the man sits on horseback, dozing on guard duty. He could kill the man from afar, but "he couldn't bear to think of Awsumb dying, believing that a Yankee
bullet brought honorable death" (326). After he reveals his identity to Dee Day, Pleasant says, "'I'll give you two minutes to make what peace you can with your Maker'" (137). These words become part of the formula; he regrets when he cannot offer his victim a moment to make such peace. Even in the face of five of his father's murderers on outpost duty during the War, Pleasant grants the men time to prepare for death. He recalls incidents when he was unable to provide such time, and, confessing to his cousin Armistead, admits how upset this made him. Aspects of Pleasant's created ritual derive apparently from his duties as a gentleman of the South, one who would follow prescribed forms of behavior.

Of the victims, only Tyson Lovell is allowed to modify the revenge ritual. Judge Wilton's story to the disguised Armistead McIvor has revealed the evil of Lovell, the ease with which he disposes of men. When young McIvor loses his patience with Lovell, the gang leader reminds him of the forms that must be followed:

Pleasant stepped back. "Well," he said, "shut your God-damned mouth and pray."
"Come, come, my young savage. Let us behave like gentlemen. One may be brutal but never rude before the dark portal. I, who have sent so many through it, should know the amenities." (187)

Lovell assumes that Pleasant has heard of the impending war and returned to kill him because he has lost hope of killing all the others involved: "'for surely you had intended
saving me until the last'" (188). However, this was obviously not Pleasant's original intention, otherwise he would not have been at Lovell's home because he had no knowledge of the Civil War to make him fear that he could never find all of the men involved in his father's death. The young man seizes on the gang leader's suggestion and determines that he will save Lovell's death for last so that "'every day of those years, you will think of death'" (189). Lovell succeeds in modifying the ritual, making himself the symbol of completion rather than simply another link in the chain.

Often Pleasant's actions appear ritualistic because Lytle presents them as determined from some source outside of Pleasant. For example, as Pleasant approaches Lovell's home, he suddenly changes his original plan; he does not go to hide near the barn, but instead, "without knowing why, began to walk down the road, like a man coming in from the fields... In the darkness he was never at a loss what to do" (183). He is "walking like one led by the hand. Then he knew that he was being led, led in his doubting moment... He let himself be led straight toward Lovell's dwelling place. Such boldness was not of this world: another's boldness drew him on" (183-184). Later, when he has seen Fox and lost him, he does not worry: "When Fox's time was come, he'd find him" (203). His communion with another world, with his dead father, provides Pleasant with the assurance he requires to perfect his ritualized vengeance.
In most of his writings Lytle presents ritual as a positive force, part of man's fortress against the dark aspects of human nature. However, the role of ritual is complex in *The Long Night*. As Pleasant performs it, his ritual is one of violence. Writing about novels by Andrew Lytle and Allen Tate, James Keeney states that "Posey and McIvor both sought the answer to their lack of tradition and loss of communion through violence."\(^{27}\) While this rather simplistic interpretation may be true for George Posey in Tate's *The Fathers*, at least on some level, it does not apply to Pleasant McIvor. He is acting within that eye-for-an-eye tradition that had its basis in biblical law and governed frontier communities. In addition, the violence practiced by Pleasant is a response to communion; he acts as he does because of his close communion with his father, even in death, and because of his concern with family honor. Indeed, when his purpose begins to flag, he becomes somewhat renewed by being with his mother and seeing the message in her eyes: "You will never turn away and spend yourself on things that do not matter" (315). Despite the violence of the revenge, Pleasant renders it even more a gentleman's act by his ritualizing of it. He gives a form to his killings. The usual purpose of ritual, however, is to effect community closeness, to bring members of the community together to celebrate the mysteries of life and death. Pleasant's created ritual is a rite of anticommunity. First, he insists
on performing it alone. Second, he kills men, intending not to purify them or bring glory to a god, but to repay his victims for a killing in which they had participated. Pleasant's purpose is as private as his ritual.

The advent of the Civil War complicates The Long Night in a variety of ways. Suddenly the world can no longer be as private as Pleasant had made it. At first, his killing of the men he believes are responsible for his father's murder could be seen as a purging of the evil elements of the Buyckville society. However, once the Confederate Army is formed, all of the men are needed for a higher purpose: to fight for the sovereignty of the South. Colonel Armistead McIvor reminds Pleasant of this new responsibility: "'You must forget this thing until the war is over and our country is free. It's every Southern man's duty to put away his private life now'" (224). Thus, by donning the uniform of a private, Pleasant actually becomes a public man, responsible for the fate of the entire South. Pleasant, however, cannot accept these limitations. He regrets confiding in Armistead and vows to keep even more to himself, to perform his public duties in such a way as to make his private purpose possible. He therefore makes friends with men involved in his father's death, gets sent out on guard duty with them, and there reveals himself and accomplishes his ritualized revenge. He makes himself useful to the Confederate Army as a scout so that he can have the freedom of being often on his
own, alone in the woods at night. There he can locate his chosen enemies, those members of his own army who helped to kill Cameron McIvor, and kill them.

However, the conflict between public and private duty becomes more intense for Pleasant after he meets Roswell Ellis and fights in the battle of Shiloh, both incidents happening within a few days of each other. Robert Nisbet makes the following generalization about soldiers, which can explain the nature of the conflict for Pleasant:

Under the spur of the danger ahead, of dangers and hardships faced communally in the past, of the fruits of victory won in common effort, and of the moral exhilaration that comes from achieving objectives in concert, the feeling of community can be very intense indeed. . . . [T]he individual soldier fights in, finds psychological reinforcement in, the communal spirit of mutual aid that develops to a far higher degree from membership in a military unit than from anything arising out of the alleged purposes of a particular war.

Obviously Pleasant has no concern with the objectives of the war; he joined the Army for the convenience of finding all of his enemies gathered together in the same place. However, the friendship with Roswell and the battle of Shiloh instill other feelings in Pleasant, feelings that conflict with the singularity of purpose he had exhibited before this time. He begins to think in the manner discussed by Nisbet. Lytle shows the development of the friendship in its very beginning stages, and he describes the important battle in full detail. In fact, these two matters comprise most of the
material of the final third of The Long Night.

The relationship between Roswell and Pleasant begins with a supper with Armistead McIvor, but it develops significantly in the preparation for fighting at Shiloh woods. When the two men are walking together to McIvor's brigade, Pleasant has little interest in the workings of the Army. He is angered when a staff officer splatters mud on Roswell and him as the officer hastens toward some goal. Pleasant's thoughts, as he half-heartedly shakes Ellis's hand, are on his own private purpose: "the colonel had made it plain that there was no room for private vengeance, at least in his brigade. If Cousin Armistead thought he would waste his time, the opportunity this war had given him . . ." (237).

The next night, when Roswell and Pleasant meet for their adventure of scouting the Union troops in preparation for battle, they share experiences that draw them closer to each other. Pleasant leads the scouting, demonstrating his ease in the woods and in the dark. Suddenly the two hear a noise and fear discovery; the noise turns out to be a cow, something that results in shared laughter. "This incident drew them closer together" (261). Mentally, psychologically, they are united through the experiences they must endure to complete their mission. In the woods Pleasant suggests, in a businesslike manner, "We'd better get closer" (261) to ward off the elements. They move physically closer. Later, as the two endure a violent rain storm, they become even
closer.

He moved closer to Pleasant and put his arm around his waist for warmth. Pleasant reached out and fixed the blanket, and they sat close together, soaked to the skin, keeping each other warm as best they could until the storm broke. (263)

They even share a meal with Pleasant telling Roswell, "'What's mine is yours'" (264). This ritual of shared food, after the adventure of the scouting and the storm, brings the two men into close communion. "In this way, briefly, almost casually, the two young men declared their friendship. No more was said about the food; but as they ate it in silence, the fresh sense of close comradeship, as well as their sharp hunger, made it taste rich and sweet" (264). For the first time in a long time, Pleasant is being nurtured by closeness with another living being, by sharing something of himself with another. That he shares genuine feelings of close community with Roswell Ellis is exhibited by his authority in telling his friend that Ellis would not be killed in the battle.

Pleasant heard himself with surprise. He had spoken with the same feeling of certainty which the communion with his father's spirit inspired. With a little start he realized that he hadn't thought of his father or his father's enemies since that afternoon in his cousin Armistead's tent. This was the first time he had even gone so much as a day without making some plans to trap them. It must be the confusion of the army moving toward battle. (265)

The new relationship with Ellis gives Pleasant the same sort of authority he receives from his closeness with his dead
father. In addition, Ellis gives Pleasant an obligation, the duty of bringing Ellis's locket to his sweetheart should he die in battle. This is the first obligation Pleasant has assumed outside his intense need to avenge the death of his father. The new friendship is pulling him away from his private purpose.

When the battle of Shiloh commences, other new feelings are born in Pleasant. He sees the Confederate flag and "his hands clutched for the throat of any Yankee who might touch it" (276). This demonstration of patriotic feeling certainly brings the young soldier outside of his own personal sphere. When his kinsman Eli is killed in the battle, Pleasant again feels a yearning for revenge. His private enemies in this case are his public enemies. He has no weapon, but "he'd be willing to die if he could just get that far and beat their brains out" (281). At that point, public affairs take over the private story. Lytle narrates many details of the battle of Shiloh, telling of General Johnston's leadership of the men and his death in the battle. When the story returns to focus on Pleasant McIvor, the private is panicked by the fact that he now feels nothing for Eli's death: "He's dead and I'll never hear him speak again. He stopped, but the words carried no meaning. He felt nothing, and the more he spoke the less meaning his words seemed to carry" (299). In this state, Pleasant rejoins the fighting until he is wounded in the hand, becoming "a useless machine, of no
further value in the fight" (302). This loss of function, this inability to carry out either private or public purpose, instills in Pleasant his first feelings of true loneliness.

"He was a broken wheel, with no companions and no food. Everywhere the debris of battle littered the fresh green earth, and he was a part of it" (304). Up to this point, Pleasant has been a person who reveled in aloneness. His goal demanded alienation from all others. At this moment, however, he cannot bear to be apart from some kind of community. He feels like part of a machine, a broken part, a piece of the debris left after the battle. In the past Pleasant had seemed to Roswell Ellis to be "only a force, a hard voice" (257), although he was also compared to a cat in his movements through the woods. Now Pleasant is nothing alive; he is mechanical, a piece of machinery. In the past he had scorned men who could not move in the night the way he could, but now, wounded and separated from his fellow soldiers, he feels fear: "It wouldn't be long till sundown, and he would be left alone in the darkness. He could not bear the thought. To be lost in the night . . . if only he could find his comrades" (304). These are new feelings for Pleasant. He has no enemy at this point except for the approaching night. He has only the desire for community, for someone with whom to share his plight. "After a while, out of sheer loneliness and wretchedness, he walked up to a
group of wounded Federals" (305). These men, public enemies, become his companions for the night. They share their incapacity, and they pool their resources in order that they might eat. They talk together and they sleep together. Despite the noise of battle, "Pleasant slept as a man sleeps who has no cause to wake" (306). In the past, Pleasant could not sleep because of his deep commitment to his personal cause. This cause has been erased from his mind, as is revealed by his deep sleep. In the morning, the Federals, his supposed enemies, wake him, shake his hand, and send him from their camp.

He found that his old habits were returning, and he retired easily from cover to cover. But his wet clothes bore heavily upon him, his shoes made enough noise to wake the dead, and his hand throbbed with sharp pains, especially when his foot slipped on the slick earth. (306)

This is the man who could walk through the woods in the dark, step on a berry without popping it. His old habits may have returned, but—and the but is an important word denoting that all is not as it had been—his skills are not as they were. Lest the meaning be unclear, Lytle states, "His old life with its clear sure purpose lay somewhere lost in this confusion, and he would never reach it again" (306). The confusion of the battle of Shiloh has helped to cause, and reflects, Pleasant's inner confusion as—he ponders the loss of his clear goal.

The section of Lytle's novel dealing with the battle of
Shiloh ends with Pleasant joining the wounded and listening to the continuing battle. His thoughts reflect his confusion: "Can friends die for nothing, and all yesterday's blood and sweat be wasted?" (307). The forest that has been his security, served as his place of refuge from public concerns, now seems hostile to him. He follows orders, walks the narrow road, stays with his fellow wounded. At this point, he is a confused man but, for the first time, fully integrated into the Confederate Army. Clearly, his experience validates Nisbet's observations about soldiers. Pleasant is not impressed with the ideals motivating the War, otherwise he could not have so easily joined the group of Union soldiers. Instead, he has become tied to all soldiers by the very fact of being in the fierce battle, sharing the noise and the death. At the end of the fourth section of _The Long Night_, Pleasant appears totally integrated into the community of the Confederate Army.

However, the battle of Shiloh is not the end of the war for Pleasant, and it is not the end of his personal battle between private and public duties. In Walter Sullivan's judgment, "The private action of the novel is overwhelmed by the public action of the war."31 Actually, the public action serves to shift emphasis from the private action that has been Pleasant's focus, divert him from his single-mindedness. Without the Civil War to provoke Pleasant's internal conflict, _The Long Night_ could have developed into a mere
listing of murderers of Cameron McIvor and descriptions of the manner in which Pleasant took vengeance on each. Instead, the young soldier is presented with a new moral dimension. He is torn apart by the two duties. The battle of Shiloh provides him with a feeling of fellowship with all soldiers, but other incidents impinge with reminders of his personal duty. The deaths of brothers William and Levi leave him as the only one to avenge Cameron's murder, a fact of which he is reminded by the bitter look still in his mother's eyes. Unlike him, she is not influenced by the Civil War. She does not desire revenge on the Union Army for the killing of her two sons. Rather, she remains immersed in the private revenge, the revenge against specific, known enemies. His mother's single-mindedness changes the lack of purpose Pleasant has been experiencing since he departed from the Shiloh woods. He feels personal shame for neglecting his commitment to the memory of his father:

Not since Shiloh woods had he attended to what he had to do. For months he had held his hand, had let his father lie uneasy in his grave. All that time his father's blood enemies skulked in the army. He had let them, he had left them alone to die like other men, like Brother William and Levi. There was the shame. (316)

This is almost amusing in its irony: that Pleasant regrets leaving the private enemies to die in some way other than by his own hand. Obviously, the true desire for revenge is more than mere death-for-death. The avenger himself must inflict the ritualized death, the death with the known assailant.
Any other death is not suitable for Cameron's murderers, according to Pleasant.

Opposed to his mother's eyes and his brothers' deaths pushing Pleasant toward the revenge, Roswell Ellis unknowingly pushes Pleasant in the opposite direction. "For he and Roswell had become like brothers" (317). Theirs is a community of the living. They have shared scouting adventures and they share daily life, all of the mundane rituals that draw men closer together. They eat together, march together, play games in the evening, share a blanket. When Roswell meets Pleasant's train as he returns to the Army after helping his mother find the graves of William and Levi, the two soldiers do not even need to speak to each other about their feelings, for "each man understood the other's mind" (319). Their closeness is that complete. They even smell the same! They celebrate Pleasant's return with a mundane ritual of bathing and eating, sharing, as in the first days of their relationship, food Pleasant has brought. But underneath these quiet rituals is Pleasant's inner conflict.

He has made a decision, but a decision with which he is not comfortable. The old death ritual of revenge has been replaced by the events of daily life in close communion with Roswell Ellis. The decision Pleasant has made involves renouncing this closeness and once again becoming an alien in the Army. He tries to convince himself that there is no conflict, but Lytle's careful reporting of Pleasant's
thoughts reveals that he is far from certain about his decision. As the train crawls to Murfreesboro, he is glad of the slow pace. "He was glad, for when the cars rolled into Murfreesboro, his mind had to be made up... not made up, it was already that. It was that, once arrived, there could be no turning back" (311). Again Pleasant slips and thinks, "In a few hours he would be a part of that army again... a part of the Army of Tennessee. Then he remembered he could never belong to it nor to any other army again" (312). Pleasant can no longer keep his mind set to his decision nor can he concentrate enough to plot the continuation of the revenge. "He had never known that there would be anything more to lose. But it was plain that he had come to have other loyalties" (319). In fact, his father's spirit has not visited him during the time he has been forming his close relationship with Roswell. He regrets that he must give up one relationship to achieve closeness with the other.

There was no way for him to travel now but one way: he must go alone. It was almost treachery to keep his thoughts from Roswell, and the full force of the sacrifice he must make came over him. Sacrifice! To think that he would ever, for a moment, weigh the price of serving his father. But it was so. (320)

Pleasant is appalled with himself for thinking of the loss of Roswell's friendship as a sacrifice. The bitterness he observed in his mother's eyes has instilled in him tremendous guilt for the meaningful relationship he has developed. Pleasant tries to force himself to choose the course that
was his original choice at the time of his father's death, the course of life that exists as a service to that death.

And he thinks he has made the choice. He locates a cave from which to assault his enemies, not the public enemy but the private enemies of the McIvor family. "His mind grew sharp with plans, and he lay awake for hours waiting for dullness and sleep" (323). Out of inner necessity, Pleasant begins to act coldly toward Ellis, even fighting over blankets. Then he plots to kill Awsumb, approaches him while the man sleeps on picket duty, but cannot determine a course of action. "His will had snapped. He had forced it until it could be forced no longer. . . . His private vengeance had been swallowed by something greater than his love for his father--no, not greater, only more overpowering" (327). Pleasant cannot perform the old ritual, kill the private enemy. Life, symbolized by the friendship with Roswell Ellis, calls too strongly. If their old closeness could not be restored, "he might throw himself into the war, lose himself" (328). In a letter to a Mrs. Mannon, apparently written as he worked on The Long Night, Lytle describes Pleasant McIvor: "The man I developed has too much sensitivity not to be affected by the tremendous drama of a war, which became the world." The public responsibility of the war is included in the private relationship with Ellis. These two forces are too strong to be overcome by the earlier single purpose.
However, happy endings are not possible for Lytle's character. Roswell Ellis has been killed as Pleasant battled with himself over private duty. The private concerns had prevented him from fulfilling his public responsibility of reporting on the observations of his scouting venture; as a result, Ellis is killed in an unnecessary skirmish. Pleasant has finally renounced his vengeance and found himself, and now he is responsible for the death of his only close friend. "Pleasant stood without motion, alone in the still dark world" (330). The two men with whom he has had close relationships have canceled each other out. His love for his friend had made him forget the necessity of revenge for his father. His love for his father had caused him to neglect his duty and, indirectly, kill Roswell. Pleasant becomes an empty shell. "Then suddenly he knew what he had done, what no man in this world may do. Twice he had loved---once the dead, once the living, and each by each was consumed and he was doomed" (330). He must flee both worlds, both loves. Again quoting from Lytle's letter, "there is nothing left for him but the long night, the retreat from the world and vengeance."33

Pleasant McIvor's retreat from the world leads him to develop his own individual life-style. Near the end of his life, he summons his nephew Lawrence, the oldest of Cameron McIvor's descendants, to his home. Lawrence provides a perspective for viewing the aged Pleasant. "Before me stood the
rough wilderness mountain within whose confines lay somewhere my uncle's place" (15). Pleasant has removed himself completely from society, but the word confines suggests that Pleasant is somehow in prison, that he cannot escape the double loss he has experienced with the deaths of his will for revenge and of his friend Roswell Ellis. Lawrence notes that the setting is like a "feudal retreat" (17), and indeed Pleasant is the lord of the manor, the master whose wishes are always deferred to. He has expected Lawrence; in fact, Pleasant says, "'I had no notion you wouldn't come'" (18). He is used to commanding and does no physical labor at all. The family he has assembled, a wife and several children, are not developed as characters. Pleasant appears as an alien within his own immediate family, a ruler but not an intimate. Equally he has isolated himself "from the family he had served" with his revenge, from his blood relatives. However, there are intimations that Pleasant has continued to observe his mother and relatives from afar. Pleasant's letter to Lawrence proves that he has knowledge of the young man's plans; he mentions in the letter, "I have known you since you were a small boy playing with your little sister upon the rough boards of your sainted mother's cabin in Coosa County" (14). Now Pleasant must tell his story, must talk to the closest kin not of himself but of Cameron McIvor. It is as if he must draw one last communal circle with himself and Lawrence and Cameron; if he can render the
story fully for his father's closest male relative, he will perpetuate the memory of Cameron. The very act of summoning Lawrence with the sudden letter recalls Pleasant's communion with his dead father. The nephew Lawrence feels that the letter is a "communication from the other world" (14). When he arrives at Pleasant's isolated home, he will learn all about that other world.

The very act of Pleasant's telling of the story to Lawrence demonstrates the truth of Brewster Ghiselin's observation that Pleasant "is never truly restored, either to the community of man or, in the depths of his nature, to himself: he cannot dispel the darkness he has drawn about him." He takes Lawrence into that darkness. In one of the long nights of the novel, he relates his story to Lawrence, removing the warmth, the light, and the actual world itself. Lawrence becomes one with the story: "For hours my will had been the creature of that voice, rising and falling in its ceaseless monotony" (13). As he relates his tale, Pleasant changes from the genial man Lawrence first meets into someone else.

Pleasant McIvor had dropped the mask from his face. He sat rigidly in the chair, leaning slightly forward. A shadow from the big kettle cut across his neck and chest, and his square white face seemed to hang in darkness, free from its body. But it was the eyes which were worst of all. (20)

Pleasant has chosen his own audience for this ritual telling of his life story. He has admitted the nephew to his iso-
lated family, caused his feet to be bathed, fed him, treated him with care and courtesy. However, when he tells the story, carries out the purpose of his summons, he becomes demanding. Pleasant's eyes spit Lawrence to his chair where he remains for the whole night of the tale's telling. Pleasant becomes to Lawrence not his uncle, not a man, but merely a voice telling a story. And, by the time the story is told, there is a new community. *The Long Night* represents the merging of the two men. Lawrence notes that he "pieced the whole thing together" (14), that he took an active role in the story telling. And he further admits that he does not know any longer whose words are whose. Through the technique of direct address, Lawrence invites the reader of the novel into this community with the words with which he closes the frame section that opens the novel:

From what he told me that night and from what I could learn from other sources, I was able to piece the story together, and of course you must understand that, at this late date, I cannot tell which words are his and which are mine. . . . (20)
IV

Just as Andrew Lytle's character Pleasant McIvor chose his own audience for his relating of the events in *The Long Night* by summoning his nephew to his home rather than telling the story to his son, so Lytle himself believes that every artist chooses his own audience: "Ideally the artist creates his reader as well as the book, establishing in his mind that perfect communion of sympathy and understanding which, unfortunately, remains ideal."\(^36\) The reader, too, shares in the responsibility for the creation of the community; Lytle says that "he should bring to a book no preconception which will prevent him from following in all its levels of action."\(^37\) If these conditions could be met, the storytelling ritual would unite the writer and his reader in a close, if temporary, community.

The importance of story telling to Lytle is emphasized by several well-developed stories related by separate narrators within the main action of *The Long Night*. Each functions to point up various aspects of Pleasant's revelation of his story to his nephew Lawrence, Lytle's unfolding of the story to his reader. First Judge Wilton relates his version of his past to a Mr. Weatherford. He tells his story in the third person as if he were talking about a friend he names Purtle, but his purpose is obvious to Weatherford,
actually Armistead McIvor incognito. Wilton hopes to define and justify himself, hopes for understanding and help from his new-found friend.

"For he wasn't by nature a bad man. From this moment life became unbearable. His nights were tortures, and his days were haunted with the memory of his nights. Then suddenly, as miracles happen, he met a stranger who, unknown to himself, promised to come to Purtle's rescue." (96)

Wilton's hope for understanding and help and his seeking of fulfillment of these needs from a stranger underlines Pleasant's summoning of an unfamiliar relative to listen to the story of his past. Wilton's aspirations for his relationship with Weatherford also parallel Pleasant's hopes for redemption through his friendship with Roswell Ellis. However, Wilton has not chosen his audience well. Weatherford appears friendly enough, insisting on providing the ritual meal to accompany Wilton's "entertainment." Wilton does not know that he is eating his last supper! He has come, in a brief time, to regard Weatherford "as a friend, as more than a friend" (85) until the man reveals his true identity. Just as Wilton masked his pleas for understanding, his narrative of his life, in the third person, so Weatherford has been masquerading. He reveals that his actual name is Armistead McIvor at the very moment that he pushes Judge Wilton to his death. The long, involved story which the Judge had told, hoping for communion with a new friend, only provides clearer motivation to Armistead for the revenge that must be
performed.

When Abner Buchanan begins his tale to the men lounging in front of Quintus Harrison's store, it is obvious that he is following a formula developed over the years of such sitting together. "A small redheaded man threw his stick away, brushed the shavings from his homespun clothes, closed his knife and, leaning over on his left hip, dropped it down his long pocket. This was, as all knew, a prelude to a yarn" (111). The story he tells is laced with comments meant to annoy other members of the group, just as Abner is no doubt sometimes the recipient of similar jibes. In fact, the entire telling of the story involves much bickering between Abner and Brother Macon, the point of the story being the lack of complete honesty in a particular Campbellite preacher. Abner obviously chose the story to suit his audience, because he had a running battle with Brother Macon about the workings of the latter's religion. The story produces its intended effect, laughter from all of the listeners except Brother Macon, who is enraged. This event demonstrates the closeness of these men who know each other so well that they recognize each other's tender spots and can risk taunting each other about them. The event also humanizes Brother Macon, one of the later victims of the McIvor revenge. This community of storytellers is a group from which the McIvors have been totally excluded.

The final fully developed tale within the novel is
Colonel Rob's rendition, often practiced, of the race between the horses Grey Eagle and Wagner. Like Abner Buchanan's story, this one begins with ritual bickering, with Armistead and Rob teasing each other about age and responsibility. Colonel Rob, however, is strongly affected by the story he tells. "Colonel Rob rolled the words reverently over his tongue as an old man recalls the sweetheart of his youth, to whose memory he has ever been faithful" (229). Rob provides descriptions of the horses and minute details about the running of the race. The men even toast President Davis, Colonel Rob, and the two horses. The telling of the story draws soldiers of the Confederate Army together as the enlisted men listen from afar and the officers drink together and share memories. However, the mood of comraderie is one that cannot last, given the situation of the world. "Through the town and the forest a hush had spread over the camps, warning at last the brigade headquarters that sleep must come against the morrow, that peace was dead, that the things of peace were no more" (235). Thus, the ultimate result of Rob's story is to drive home the fact that the world is different, that such rituals as horse races no longer have meaning. The group breaks apart; the battle orders on the morrow will emphasize the difference between the world of the horse racing and the world of the Civil War.

The reader is, of course, most fully involved with the
central story of The Long Night, Pleasant's story of his vengeance. This involvement is complicated by the fact that the story begins in the first person with Lawrence narrating the frame setting, then Pleasant proceeding to relate his history, also in the first person. However, early in the novel, immediately after the death of Cameron McIvor, the narration shifts to the third person, with insights into the minds of many of the characters. The reader's relationship to this shift is complicated. With the first-person narration, the reader is included in that he is also "hearing" the "I." However, he is not part of the actual group, the community of teller and auditor which is so apparent in the I/you mode of story telling. The reader assumes the role of looking over someone's shoulder to hear the narration. When the narration shifts to the third person, obviously the reader's orientation shifts also. He becomes, in some manner, more involved in the story. There are no narrators between him and the action, at least no obvious narrators. In addition, more of the story can be revealed. In The Long Night, the third person is in the manner of what Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg call the histor, "the narrator as inquirer, constructing a narrative on the basis of such evidence as he has been able to accumulate."38 Indeed this is close to what Lawrence says in the frame story about the events to be reported being pieced together from many sources. Lytle calls this method the Hovering Bard: "Every-
body in a country community knows something about a happening, but nobody knows it all. The bard, by hovering above the action, to see it all, collects the segments. In the end, in the way he fits the parts together, the one story will finally get told." The reader shares in the process by observing the collection and the results. However, third-person narration also serves to limit the reader's involvement. When the story is told in the first person, there is a definite persona to whom the reader relates. With the use of the third person, with views into so many varied minds, the reader's position is not so certain.

Andrew Lytle came to feel that a writer, and by implication his reader, needs this distancing. In an essay written in 1963, he provides some insight into why he might have felt the need to shift to the third person during his first novel:

'[T]he impressionism of the ego' makes of the first person not an aesthetic procedure but a subjective fusion of subject and method, a kind of autobiography of the author's stream of consciousness, with little critical examination or restraint on his part. It is a cultural phenomenon and an artistic regression. An art is first of all selective, and that means frequent withdrawal for critical appraisal and revision from the stream of creating which holds tangential and diverting material that has to be thrown out. The impressionism of the ego seems to want to keep everything, whether it advances the action or not, keeping it worshipfully because it is part of him. It follows that in this kind of fiction the author may dispense with decorum, convention, all the formal restraints and institutions by means of which society governs and recognizes itself.
In the first person, Pleasant would be a narrator who left nothing out, one not governed by society's regulations. He demonstrates that characteristic by formulating his own rituals to deal with his father's murderers. The third-person narration, then, lends a more public air to the events of The Long Night. Thus, it is more available for the reader to share the events, even though there is, in some manner, less to share because there is less of Pleasant himself in the story. The matter is further complicated by the public letter that Lytle as author employs as a preface to his novel. It is a letter which Lytle writes to Frank Owsley, close friend and fellow Agrarian, thanking him for the story Lytle has used as the basis for The Long Night. The novel had its genesis as a private story related as part of a pleasant event, "sitting on the porch in the cool of the evening waiting for supper" (7). Like the novel itself, the letter provides a problem for the reader. He is included in the implied community of writer and addressee, because the letter is presented for his perusal. However, the "Dear Frank" and the specific memories exclude the reader. In fact, this letter prepares the reader for his feeling of "listening in" to the first-person section of the novel. Still, Lytle presents both the letter and the novel for public reading. In addition, he uses the letter as an opportunity to present his philosophy under the guise of a personal note: he lauds country living because it forces men
"to find the greatest pleasure in their own society" (7). However, the author also admits that the life of the town is necessary too, "as a place where the artist may mingle with other artists and learn the conscious practice of his craft" (7). Lytle uses the letter, too, as a public dedication to his friend and as an opportunity to point out that he has changed much from the original story. He is clearly speaking both publicly to his readers and privately to his friend, just as within the novel the characters speak privately to select auditors but are listened to publicly by readers of fiction.

The shift in point of view forces the reader to examine his relationship to the story, his communion with the author and with the characters in the novel. There are a number of places in the novel where the reader is brought clearly into a relationship with the characters. As the writer enters their minds when he invents them, creates their thoughts, so he includes the reader when he presents those thoughts in such a way as to demand the reader's participation. For example, when Pleasant attempts to escape after burning Lovell's house, he wonders abut what Eli and Bob Pritchard will do.

But would Eli and Bob Pritchard run into them? Would they give the meeting place away? He had fired Lovell's house, but would that draw enough of the posse in the other direction? Would the negroes get together and put it out and discover the evidence of Day's death, undoing his plan to throw a spell of mystery about the deaths? (139)
Obviously Lytle could have written that Pleasant worried about Eli and Bob, about the fire, and about the plans he had made for his revenge, just naming the concerns. However, the use of questions includes the reader in the process. He is not told of Pleasant's worries; he shares them with him. Lytle uses this technique to unite the reader with the characters in the novel and, less obviously, to espouse his own historical judgments. Lytle shows Roswell Ellis in the presence of General Johnston as Ellis suddenly becomes aware of the man. "Could that be he?" (194), Ellis questions, and he remembers his only previous glimpse of the military leader, the power of his presence, detail by detail, the shape of his face, the size of his body, and finally his general aura. In addition, Lytle shows the thoughts, the self-doubts of Johnston, making the reader share in those doubts by couching them in the form of questions: "What is this thing that makes what is strong in me weak? That at every turn neutralizes my powers?" (242). Through the characters' minds, the reader is drawn into the creative process, searching for answers to the questions.

Sometimes, however, the reader can feel left out, the community of writer/reader frustrated by the characters or events in the novel getting in the way. For example, the marble game between Quintus Harrison and Buford Malcolm is frustrating to readers unfamiliar with the rules of the game. The fact that the rules of the game are not explicated
indicates either that the writer assumes a similarity of understanding in his reader or that he is unconcerned with whether or not his reader understands. Either alternative is frustrating to a communal relationship. Another frustration to the formation of reader/writer community in The Long Night is the lack of any judgment, explicit or implicit, of the actions of the characters. Robert Penn Warren asks, "Whose side are we on? The doubleness of view, and the irony it entails, is a fundamental fact of the story as it appears in the novel."\(^42\) The murder of Cameron McIvor is a horrible deed, but Lytle does not dwell on it. He shows other, more pleasant aspects of the gang members' lives also. He demonstrates both their vices and their virtues, their "relations with each other and with all the people around them so that a sense of community, flawed but not totally dominated by evil, begins to emerge."\(^43\) The ability to accomplish this view of Lovell's gang is one of the positive results of the shift to third-person narration, but it does complicate the reader's position. There are no totally evil characters. Judge Wilton is exhibited laboring in guilt over the evil he has been a party to; he dies a horrible death at the very moment of his hope for redemption. Harry Ransom notes that the revelations of the villains' lives are evidence of the "author's own act of sympathetic projection."\(^44\) If the writer can project himself into their lives, so can the reader as a result of Lytle's full development of
their lives. This is especially true in the case of Damon Harrison. He is presented as a typical youth, flushed with the first taste of love, confused with the ways of women. His death instills sympathy and even horror rather than satisfaction with the progress of the revenge. Sheriff Botterall is shown in all his weaknesses, with his intense fondness for his horses and with the complaints of his wife. He rides to his barn, exhilarated at the thought of sleeping with his animals because his wife is still at the Weaver house; as he rides he sings her favorite hymn, an ironic choice, considering the fate that awaits him:

As the saints go march-ing in,
As the saints go march-ing in,
Oh, I want to be of that number,
As the saints go a-march-ing in.

... As the riv-er flows with blood
As the riv-er flows with blood,
Oh, I want to be of that number ... (175)

This song is both a song of community and, in this situation, of prophecy. Botterall's blood will be flowing; he will be one of those avenged for the death of Cameron McIvor. Lytle makes him a complete person, with positive and negative human characteristics; thus, his death is a loss of one of those with whom the reader has been encouraged to relate. And, of course, the reader is not aware of all those who are guilty in Pleasant's eyes, sometimes causing the revenge deaths to be something of a surprise, as in the case of Damon Harrison.

The character of Pleasant McIvor is another block to
the achievement of community between writer and reader. He
does possess admirable characteristics. However, some
aspects of him are chilling. The first thing revealed about
Pleasant is that his telling of the story has taken the
warmth from his nephew's body and left only terror. He is
presented as a voice, "rising and falling in its ceaseless
monotony" (13). Of course, he becomes sympathetic in the
eyes of the reader in the scene when he is locked up as his
father is murdered. However, since that scene is rather
over-dramatized, the sympathetic effect is somewhat dimin-
ished.

This last effort set me crazy. I ground my
teeth against the gag. The bloody foam nearly
choked me, and I was so out of my mind that I
wondered how cotton could bleed and foam. It
was the longest time before I realized it was
my tongue I had hold of. (53)

On the first reading, the sympathy is with Pleasant at this
point, despite the dramatics in the rendering of his situa-
tion. However, on subsequent readings, other aspects of
Pleasant have embedded themselves in the reader's mind.
First, Pleasant is definitely not pleasant. Lytle apparently
intends the irony; the character's name was Dink in Owsley's
story. The old man who relates his story to Lawrence is
unpleasant in the telling, instilling terror as he talks. As
a youth, he had killed a small dog who might foil his plan,
an inhuman task, but one which he performs with some human-
ity: "her eyes pleaded with such humility that he did it as
quickly as possible" (182). There is no such indication of
humanity in the recitations of the murders of the men who had taken part in his father's killing.

Most confusing to the reader's perceptions of this central character in *The Long Night* is the imagery Andrew Lytle employs frequently as he describes Pleasant. He is repeatedly compared to a snake in both appearance and movement. He even views himself in these terms: "he saw his arm glide along a piece of quilt, his fingers fluttering about its edges like a snake's tongue" (105). Even when the snake is not explicitly mentioned, the comparison is implied: "The head at once came to life. Swaying upward, it lifted along the wall and the body slid noiselessly after it" (136). The snake is traditionally the symbol of evil, the shape Satan assumed to tempt Eve in the Garden of Eden. Pleasant's eye-for-an-eye Old Testament revenge is shown to be justifiable, because of the communion he shared and shares with his father. But it is also, implicitly, an evil act. The Judeo-Christian ideal, evoked by the emblematic snake, rejects the eye-for-an-eye revenge in which Pleasant indulges, recommends instead turning the other cheek. The reader is encouraged to examine Pleasant in these terms but also to see him as the hero for the purpose to which he resolves himself and for the intensity of his commitment to his family. Lytle does not provide an explicit judgment of his central character, thereby frustrating any attempt by the reader to understand the writer's meaning fully, to achieve closeness with
him spiritually.

Reading *The Long Night* is a very private experience. Each reader must make his own judgments about the culpability of the characters; the reader cannot look for a standard of judgment within the novel. But he can attempt to create his own communities, his own relationship with those who share his understanding of the novel, by writing about the action and the characters, by taking the private story *The Long Night* is for him and making it public.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 1


3Andrew Lytle, A Novel, a Novella, and Four Stories (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1958). In this collection, "Oritz's Mass" was published separately.

4Andrew Lytle, At the Moon's Inn (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1941), p. 150.

5Andrew Lytle, The Long Night (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), title page and p. 106. Future references to this novel will be presented parenthetically in the text.


7Ibid., p. 385.

8Ibid., p. 386.

9Walter Sullivan, A Requiem for the Renascence: The


11 Andrew Lytle, "Forward" to A Novel, a Novella, and Four Stories, p.xvii.

12 Ibid., p.xiv.


15 Weatherby, p.385.

16 Ibid., p.387.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p.385, where Weatherby makes a similar point.

19 Lytle, Wake for the Living, p.5.

20 In this discussion, Pleasant ascribes the words "secret death with secret death," spoken by Cyrus Long in the novel, to a conversation he has had with his father.

21 Sullivan, A Requiem for the Renascence, p. 28.

22 Weatherby, p.388.


25 Ibid., p.102.

26 Andrew Lytle, "The Displaced Family" in *The Hero with the Private Parts*, p.85.


29 Even when not making plans for the revenge, however, Pleasant relates to what is going on around him in terms of his secret life. He recalls stalking the private enemy when he wakes in the morning (243), and he thinks about his freedom of movement in the wilderness stalking his father's enemies as he prepares for scouting (257), for example.

30 Eli and Pleasant have been mess mates and have shared blankets. One of the strange inconsistencies of this novel is that Pleasant and Armistead did not discuss Eli at all in their intimate talk in Armistead's tent. Nor was Eli mentioned in terms of the transfer. For some unexplained reason, Pleasant considers leaving one kinsman, a close conspirator in the revenge plans, to join the brigade of another kinsman, without ever mentioning the relative he is leaving!


32 Andrew Lytle quoted in Noel Polk, "Andrew Nelson

33 Ibid., p.446.


36 Lytle, "Forward," p.x.

37 Ibid.


40 Andrew Lytle, "The Hero with the Private Parts" in The Hero with the Private Parts, p.52.

41 This is the basis of Lytle's theory about Johnston and Johnston's command, which would have figured thematically in the biography he had planned to write about that Civil War General.


43 Sullivan, A Requiem for the Renascence, p.29.
CHAPTER 2: ALLEN TATE

THE CULTURAL RITUAL: TATE'S THE FATHERS

In the world of Allen Tate's The Fathers, the distinction between the public and the private facets of life is not clear-cut as it was in Andrew Lytle's The Long Night. For the Buchan family, especially the patriarch Major Buchan, life is fully public in the sense that all of the important moments of life are shared publicly, shared through rituals that Tate suggests are so uniform in the South of his novel that they must be considered cultural rituals. The first major scene in the novel presents such a ritual in Lacy Buchan's rendering of the funeral of his mother. When the actual walk to the grave site begins, after the relatives and friends have been properly welcomed and fed, Major Buchan knows just what to do. He leads his young son in the ritual, including the placing of the deceased Mrs. Buchan's personal servant closest to the casket. Reminiscing about that day from the perspective of fifty years, Lacy recognizes that his father's actions were those expected by the culture, things that Major Buchan "had no need to learn nor even to understand . . . , for to him there could have been nothing whatever to understand." Major Buchan, the young Lacy comes to recognize, is one of those honorable
Southern gentlemen who "thought more of their code than they did of themselves" (210). Even those of the Major's personal relationships with his family that are depicted within the novel are guided by the public code.

Opposed to the public manner of facing life is the Posey family's private mode of existence. Arthur Mizener views the contrast between the public and the private approaches to life as the central tension of the novel:

a tension between the public and the private life, between the order of civilization, always artificial, imposed by discipline, and at the mercy of its own imperfections, and the disorder of the private life, always sincere, imposed upon by circumstances, and at the mercy of its own impulses.²

However, the members of the Posey family who assume the more minor roles in the novel do exhibit types of order even in their privateness. Each knows what to expect from the others. Mr. Jarman will not leave his room in the garret; Aunt Millie will only eat her bananas; and Aunt Jane will only discuss those events that bear on her life directly. It is mainly George Posey, as he endeavors to move in the public world, who is governed by unordered impulses. He cannot follow the rituals expected by the Buchan family, by the Southern culture. He attempts to follow his private dictates while moving in the public realm of the novel, as Pleasant McIvor did during much of his tenure in the Confederate Army. Just as Pleasant was in conflict with the purposes of his fellow soldiers, so George Posey finds himself in con-
flict with the Southern culture.

The relationship between the public and the private realms of Tate's novel is further complicated by the kind of story _The Fathers_ relates and the manner of its narration. The story is one of the fall of a family and of a culture. For R. J. Gray, the importance of _The Fathers_ lies in Tate's demonstration of the way in which, in a traditional society, the public and the private levels of experience are integrated. It is not simply that the personal history of the Buchan family is taken to be representative of the larger history of the South, although it is partly that. It is also that these two histories, as Buchan develops them, are so thoroughly interrelated as to be inseparable: they do not just represent each other, they affect each other as well.

Gray fails to note that the Buchan family is in no sense a personal family; the Buchans live in and of the society around them. Being so fully a part of that society, they are, of course profoundly affected by changes in the culture. However, even the personally-lived existences of the Poseys affect the history of the South as that history is presented in Tate's novel. The story _The Fathers_ reveals demonstrates that all of life has an effect on history. The very fact that Lacy, a Buchan, relates the events recorded in the novel complicates the issue. Lacy reveals private events that occurred behind the front door of the Posey home. He even tells of his visit to Mr. Jarman's sanctuary, the most private place in the Posey home. Being a Buchan,
Lacy represents the public, cultural world of his father, but he also enters the private world of the Poseys and makes that world somewhat public by the events he chooses to relate in his narrative. Mason Smith regards Lacy as the center of the conflict between the private and the public realms of the novel:

[The Fathers] tells of the loss of any public occasion, which Lacy's telling it may be seen as a conscious effort to regain. For Lacy's father there was scarcely any private dimension to life; if a word was not public, it was not spoken. In the twentieth century Lacy has to make his private experience public or be lost, alone.

What Smith fails to note is that George Posey is also a father to Lacy Buchan. He presents Lacy with the gun that symbolizes Lacy's impending maturity. He serves as a role model for Lacy, who even follows him into battle on the side of the Confederates. George later provides Lacy with a home and sends him to medical school. Lacy Buchan, as an old man, must mediate the conflict between the modes of existence of his two acknowledged fathers, must render his private world public and thereby unite his dual heritage.

I

For the Buchan family, ritual serves the function defined by Andrew Lytle, that of transforming the animal nature of man into civilized behavior. Lacy feels that the
rites he must follow are initiations into that code of behavior toward which he is ambivalent: "Our lives were eternally balanced upon a pedestal below which lay an abyss I could not name. Within that invisible tension my father knew the moves of an intricate game he expected everybody else to play" (43-44). Lacy calls the observed Southern code of behavior a game, but he also asks, "[I]s not civilization the agreement, slowly arrived at, to let the abysss alone?" (185-186). He learns to walk with a book on his head in order to achieve the necessary posture of a gentleman. This lesson in posture symbolizes Lacy's learning to balance his life above the abyss. Lacy recognizes the importance of civilized behavior, Major Buchan's ritualistic code, in keeping the blackness outside of the windows at bay. In The Fathers, Tate demonstrates Major Buchan's life as a life of culture, a life of ritual in which each person has his designated role. Tate also shows that there often is an emptiness beneath the stylized behavior of the Buchan mode of existence.

The Fathers opens with a scene which Walter Sullivan considers a full rendition of Southern community, the funeral of Sarah Buchan. This event, which includes elements both private and public, exhibits the stylized manner in which the Buchans live. A funeral involves personal grief at the loss of a loved one; however, it also includes the sharing of that grief with others similarly affected and
with some people who mourn the loss only in a peripheral manner. Thus, the rites of the funeral are public events, and they generally follow ritualized behavior developed as a manner of dealing with the grief and of demonstrating the universality of the circumstances. Lacy Buchan's mother's funeral is typical of such occasions as the family gathers to share "the forms of death which were, to us, only the completion of life, and in which there could be nothing personal, but in which what we were deep inside found a sufficient expression" (23). The forms, the rites, become a means of sublimating the personal, putting private feelings aside, even ignoring the sense of loss. Thus, Major Buchan does not demonstrate any grief at his wife's funeral; instead, he exhibits concern for the welfare of his guests. He undertakes the social responsibility of ascertaining that those attending the funeral have food to eat and places to sleep. Lacy recognizes that the "old gentleman was crushed but in his sorrow he knew what everybody else was feeling, and in his high innocence he required that they know it too and be as polite as he" (98). Indeed, Major Buchan's politeness carries him through the day, enables him to know what to do, and provides him with the words to address to his guests. Gray explains:

Ceremony, the implication is, offers the Major the only possible means he has of understanding and controlling the more extreme pressures to which he is subject, and of doing this without denying their power: with its help, the amorphous energies of his
inner life are projected into the outer, to be given shape and the release which would not otherwise be theirs.

As he is presented in the novel, however, the Major appears to have scant inner life, because few of his actions can be seen as release from the tensions of inner energies. He does look after the welfare of his guests at his wife's funeral; he does take care that Sarah Buchan's personal servant has an appropriate place in the rituals of the day. But mostly he is seen as simply existing on that day, not actually acting or reacting to anything until George Posey's absence and then presence give him something to focus upon. Gray says that the social actions, the concern for others, somehow represent a release of inner pressures; however, nothing in those purely ritualized social niceties suggests the power of grief or the force of sympathy with the sufferings of his children, particularly the sorrows of Lacy, who suffers so visibly. For the Major, the ceremony of the funeral is pure ceremony, doing what is expected for its own sake. Lacy's emphasis on his father's ceremony suggests that what would ordinarily be expected to be grief has become mere ceremony. This is in sharp contrast to the funeral rituals presented in Lytle's *The Long Night*, where all of the residents of Buyckville share the labor necessary for the rites at the deaths of Brother Macon and Alf Weaver. In that novel, the dead are discussed, even in jocular terms, and the mundane aspects of the event, such as the preparing
of the bodies and the cooking of the meal, are described in rich detail. Formal ceremony becomes secondary to community closeness, whereas in Tate's novel the formal ceremony exists as the sole means to closeness.

For Lacy Buchan, the ceremony of the day does not suffice. It neither provides him with knowledge of the proper actions to perform nor soothes his sorrow. Significantly, as he endures the pains of his mother's funeral, Lacy remembers another day, a day when the ritualized behavior of his father was not adequate to provide the Major with the proper—or useful—words or actions. Lacy's thoughts emphasize the fact that the rituals of his father's life have no power to provide release or even to order life in the face of forces not ruled by social rites. Lacy relives the day when George Posey brought him that symbol of manhood, his own rifle, and informed Major Buchan that Susan had reached womanhood by declaring that he intended to make her his wife. On this occasion, George becomes the symbolic paterfamilias of the Buchan family, raising the two youngsters to the state of adulthood by his actions. Major Buchan, the actual patriarch of the Buchan family, is paralyzed in the face of George's unprecedented behavior. Lacy describes fully a confrontation in the formal parlor in which the Major utilizes all of the forces at his command in an attempt to defeat George Posey; but the two men are fighting on different grounds, and George is undaunted by the forces
which Buchan calls to bear. Lacy fears he will have to return the gun when he observes the formal manner in which his father addresses the visitor. He notices that his father does not ask George about the health of his family, "the first thing he always did when he met anybody, black or white" (34). Lacy realizes that his father's social omissions are deliberate and that they should have meaning for Posey. But, as Lacy notes, George is "cool as a cucumber" (35) in the face of the strongest attack that the Major can muster and still remain what he must remain, the polite Southern gentleman. For Lacy, the confrontation between his father and George Posey represents something new; he is not accustomed to seeing his father's motives so misunderstood and so ignored. "I winced a little: what papa said to him would have blasted off the earth most of the people I knew, yet George Posey was not affected at all, and sat imperturbable at what I felt now was the end of the storm" (35). Major Buchan cannot insult his son's invited guest directly, because that would be in violation of the code that governs his life, so he is now powerless in the face of George's refusal to be insulted by the social rituals that were not observed. Furthermore, even after the Major has leveled his most potent ammunition, George does not leave the Major's presence; he furthers the interview. That action leaves Lacy's father aghast and George calm. The Major's reaction derives from the fact that he had never been confronted by a
similar situation. He has lived his whole life in a world where social rites were shared by those around him, where such rites had the meaning that derives from shared ideals and shared behaviors. Lacy recognizes the fact that George cannot, however, be described as rude for not following the conventions observed by the Major. George "had, as a matter of fact, been courteous. He had simply refused to recognize the only danger-signals that papa knew how to give" (36).

Lacy also remembers the entire tournament of two years previous as he waits for the final moments of his mother's funeral. Like the day when Lacy received his first gun, the tournament was a time when George Posey defied all the expected forms of behavior. Although Major Buchan was not present to be confounded by George's actions, other established members of the Southern culture were present. The tournament, like the militia muster in Lytle's The Long Night, represents a ritualized, thereby acceptable, form of violence. Ferman Bishop refers to the tournament as "a polite, stylized way of seeking for power. It was the brilliant surface for a set of values that had a much darker side." In fact, this darker side actually emerges at the tournament. The Virginians have borrowed a ritual from ancient times and made it modern, given new form to the old rites of knighthly jousting. George harkens back to the earlier practices and presents himself as the mystery knight. When he wins the tournament in a judgment call over
John Langton, insults are traded and a duel is threatened. The polite seeking for power is forgotten as the matter becomes serious. Even in the seriousness, the Southern reliance on ritual is not forgotten, as those present at the tournament assume that a traditional duel will be fought. Seconds and weapons are chosen, as if the duel is to follow the code. However, once again, George refuses to follow the expected forms of behavior. He refuses to fight the duel with John Langton, but instead knocks his opponent down with a punch. By reacting in this manner, George indicates his scorn for the prescribed code of behavior, and he also averts the possibility of death as an end to the tournament.

Both of Lacy's memories, the day of the gun and the day of the tournament, seem strange events to recall at the funeral of one's own mother. However, Lacy spends most of the afternoon of the funeral alone thinking about the two past events. He has seen George flee the funeral, run away from his confrontation with the forms of grief. As a result, Lacy recalls other times when George avoided such formalized behavior. Lacy's feelings on the day of the funeral must have made George's escape seem enviable. The boy is part of the family, a Buchan, familiar with the Buchan way of life. However, the rituals of the funeral offer him no comfort, no sense of community. Instead, the rituals serve to underline his alienation from the rest of the company who at least share some superficial closeness, superficial because it
lacks the depth of understanding and empathizing that might be indicated if any real conversation, any actual communication, took place. Lacy shares nothing on the day of the funeral. He tries to talk to his brother Semmes, but Semmes walks out on the conversation to go sit with their father. Lacy's sense of isolation then is profound:

I could hear no sound. The house seemed empty, and I thought how deserted it would be if we went away to live in a town. I thought of myself now as all alone, the halls empty and no life inside the closed doors. The dead coals in the brazier smelled damp in the chilled air. (21)

Lacy, in his lonely situation, imagines himself as the house with everyone moved away. He speaks of himself and the house in one sentence and in a manner which suggests that he identifies himself with the house his family may leave. When the smell of the dead coals in the brazier is mentioned, it is purposefully ambiguous as to whether the thought amplifies Lacy's image of the empty halls or whether the thought refers to something Lacy smells as he awaits his mother's burial. The fact that the coals are dead emphasizes the meaning of the day for Lacy, underlines the death he must confront. The rites of the funeral have not brought the young man comfort, not united him with the community of family and friends that has come to share this time of sorrow. Instead Lacy has turned within, remembered other times when social conventions failed to serve other people in Lacy's social sphere. The memories reflect the fact that the
social rituals of the conventional funeral have not united Lacy in shared catharsis with other members of the community or even with other members of his own family.

The winter after this funeral, Pleasant Hill is abandoned by the Buchan family. In the section of The Fathers entitled "The Crisis," the country is severed in two as the Civil War commences. This public rupture is mirrored in, and is one cause of, the severing of family ties. That the public conflict reflects a private disease is evidenced by the fact that Major Buchan first admits to the impending public crisis at the family's morning prayer, and he does so by reading the prayer for "the threat of calamity to the family" (125). While Andrew Lytle feels that the front door of the home separates the affairs of the family from public life, Allen Tate creates a character, in Major Buchan, for whom there is no distinction between the public and the private. Lacy notes, "Our domestic manners and satisfactions were as impersonal as the United States Navy" (125). The Major simply does not separate the public crisis of the impending war from the events of his family's life. Marshall McLuhan might view this as the result of living in the presence of slaves. He says that in the presence of servants, "Formality becomes a condition of survival. Moreover, to represent one's family first and oneself second in all social intercourse confers a special impersonal character on human manners and actions." Thus, it is not surprising that
the Major announces the coming crisis at the morning devotions, a daily ritual which each member of the family, either by his presence or his absence, celebrates in an established manner. Lacy, as an old man narrating the story, feels that the ritual of the event is important enough to warrant detailed descriptions of each participant's usual words and actions. The morning of Major Buchan's announcement of the danger to come (the possible war) is marked by variations of the ritual, including the change in the morning prayer. For the Major, the calamity that could result from civil war is clearly a danger to his family as well as to his country.

In *The Long Night*, Andrew Lytle exhibits some of the communities that can develop in the face of war. Even unorganized violence, he shows, has its rituals and provides opportunities for the establishment of communities. Allen Tate does not show the community of soldiers except in one brief scene on the morning of awakening at the only battle described in *The Fathers*. In that scene, Lacy shares in the coffee and conversation of the soldiers, and the potential for some sort of meaningful community is present. However, the events of Tate's novel do demonstrate the veracity of the reflections of Robert Nisbet, who suggests that the community of the family is superseded by the community of soldiers. All of the forces of the family, he states, are defeated by the force of "invading principles." This was
the inner conflict of Pleasant McIvor, who felt drawn to sharing with his fellow Confederates but also felt compelled to fulfill the goals of the family-oriented revenge. In *The Fathers*, Semmes Buchan must follow what he believes to be the correct course of action. He fights for the South, although that is opposed to the course Major Buchan expects his entire family to follow. Lacy imagines that his father "made a stern ceremony of disowning his son" (188), making a ritual even of the antifamilial action of disowning his own child. Lacy, who knows his father well, imagines the old man replacing feelings with ritual, covering any anguish over the choice of losing his son with a ceremonial event. As a contrast to this, Pleasant McIvor of *The Long Night* creates a ritual as a means of acting out his intense feelings for his family and the honor of that family, honor as determined in a family meeting. When Major Buchan chooses the conservative course, he refuses to accept Semmes's choice of the opposing belief. If his son will not fight for the Union, then the Major no longer wants Semmes united to the Buchan family. Major Buchan has Lacy removed from the scene in order to prevent Lacy, too, from being swept up into the battle, but, in the midst of his inner struggles, Lacy chooses sides and declares, "'Yes, I'm seecesh'" (188). Thus, the patriarchal Buchan was correct in his assessment of the effect of the war: it has brought a calamity to his family, a calamity to which he contributes by his inability
to accept any position other than that chosen by him as the stance of the Buchan family. Discussing Mr. Buchan's disowning of Semmes, Louis Rubin notes, "The Major believes in honor to the extent that it becomes a concept, divorced from the love and passion of the family situation itself." The honorable course for his family, as determined by Major Buchan, becomes more important to the Major than the family itself. His disdain at the loss of what he views as family honor, because Semmes does not share in the family stance toward the war, allows the Major to sacrifice the very family whose honor concerns him so much!

Major Buchan follows his determined course, even to the ending of his own life. He will not share communal ties with his former friends and neighbors who are fighting for the Confederate cause; he possesses no closeness to men in the Union Army. It is a paradox that the man of the Old South, the man who epitomizes the ritualistic society associated with the Old South, severs his ties with those members of his family who fight for the South in the Civil War, who fight to maintain the way of life that has meant so much to the Major. The concept of the Union, the conservation of some ideal unity, is more important than the unity of his family and the preservation of the way of life he represents. In the face of the conflict, he returns to Pleasant Hill and attempts to recreate the life that is being destroyed by the Civil War. The Major is working on the farm
when Lacy locates him after the horrible deaths of Semmes and Yellow Jim. However, the Major is not actually farming the land in the sense in which he had farmed previously. Now he is simply parroting the conventions that are being destroyed by the War. Radcliffe Squires states, "He is the continuation of a form of life rather than life, and toward the end of the novel the boy sees that his father is beautiful the way pure forms are beautiful. . . ." The Major has allowed his life to become so dominated by forms that it has lost its meaning as life. Lacy knows that his stance toward the Civil War is opposed to his father's even as he lives quietly with his father and recovers from the events of his life to this point. The Major makes of the recuperative period another set of rituals as Lacy's days proceed in unvarying sameness: his father visits him at the same time every day; he is placed outside for the same periods; meals are mirror images of previous meals. In short, Mr. Buchan takes the new set of circumstances at Pleasant Hill and forges a new set of conventions to exist within the changed circumstances. At this time, Lacy recognizes the "arrogant set of the old gentleman's shoulders" and his "certain footsteps on the bare stairs" (280). The word certain underlines Lacy's view of his father as a man who knows where he is going, and the word also points up Major Buchan's conviction that his way of life is correct. Lacy, however, although living quietly under the protection of his father and his
father's convictions about the course of action to follow, does not share in the certainty about the past or about the course of the future. Lacy has been living away from the immediate Buchan family, and the Major is no longer the sole authority he recognizes. When he is recovered from his ordeal, Lacy leaves the comforting daily rituals for the uncertainty of following George Posey off to war.

In the face of all of the desertions, Major Buchan does not abandon his conviction about the correct course to follow. When he is confronted by Yankee soldiers who do not follow a code of Southern chivalry, he refuses to serve them, indicating that he wants to preserve both the Union represented by the North and the code of behavior practiced by the South. The codified behavior appears to loom more important to the Major when he ends his own life rather than submit to the demands of the Northern officer. With what Frank Kermode calls "his roots in immemorial custom,"12 Major Buchan hangs himself. He changes from the clothes of a working farmer into those of a Southern gentleman when he realizes that the plantation is ruined, and he ends his life when he sees that there is no course remaining for him, no way to preserve all he desires to preserve. He cannot surrender his home, the place that defines him, but he cannot fight those who represent the cause he had chosen to support. His self-inflicted death is the only choice open to him, faced with the situation he must face. It is ironic
that the Major's death is not marked by any of the ceremony he has observed so properly for others. Instead, he is placed in a grave scratched into the earth, and his son leaves to fight for the South. Ronald Bryden points out that the Major, unlike the Poseys, "belongs to a society . . . from which he draws a strength to meet the realities by which George, with his private passions and unchanneled will, is torn apart."\(^{13}\) Bryden fails to take into account that the Major is without any society at the end of his life. The events of the Civil War tear him apart: it is he, not George Posey, who ends his life, because he is not armed to face what is happening to his world. Arthur Mizener recognizes this fact when he writes that the novel exhibits

the conflict between the static situation which a society reaches when, by slow degrees, it has disciplined all personal feelings to custom, so that the individual no longer exists apart from the ritual of society, and the forces that exist—because time does not stand still—both within and without the persons who constitute the society, which will destroy that discipline and leave the individual again naked and alone.\(^{14}\)

Mizener intimates that it is George Posey who represents man naked and alone. However, the death of Major Buchan demonstrates that his reliance on custom and ritual has not spared him from ending his life, if not naked, alone. The Buchan way of life, the ritualistic manner of behavior exhibited by the Major, does not preserve the family, and it does not hold together the community of the South.
II

Despite the fact that the public, ritualized life of the Buchans masks an emptiness, an underlying lack of cohesion, at least the sharing of the rites, the facades, indicates a collective vision of life. "They were accustomed to a society in which the individual found himself through shared sensibility with others. Because George could only act individually, he became all the more conspicuous to those habituated to action within a framework of shared values." In fact, not only George but all of the Poseys act individually, each living out his private vision of life. These private visions function as private rituals, individual formulae for dealing with existence. In their privacy, the Poseys are more obviously isolated than those who lived by the cultural rituals, but they are not actually very different.

Like the Buchans, the Poseys demonstrate a sense of family: They travel together to Mrs. Buchan's funeral; they share a home in Georgetown; they know each other's habits and needs. Thus, Mr. Jarman is left alone, because that is the manner in which he chooses to live his life. It is he who indicates to an intruding Lacy that the Posey family possesses a lineage that would be impressive even to a Buchan. Part of the way in which the Poseys demonstrate
their sense of family is that each member of the household allows the others to exist primarily behind the closed doors of their own rooms. Jane visits Susan's room for lessons and lectures, and Miss Milly peeks from her door in curiosity, but generally the doors are closed, the individuals locked in individual cells. The Poseys demonstrate that, lacking cultural ritual, events that force or require community, there may be no sharing of existence at all. Although Major Buchan is presented as a character who does not form close emotional ties with those around him, his insistence on the daily and celebrational rituals does result in a life lived in close proximity to others, at least until the end of his life. The Poseys do not even have that form of closeness.

When Lacy is sent to live with the Poseys, he experiences what he calls "the Posey world of closed upstairs rooms" (182). In Alexandria with his father and the rest of his family, he had been allowed to wander rather freely, but there had been events in each day for which he was expected to be with the family, such as morning prayer and mealtimes. He learns that there is no family dining at the Posey home. Susan first greets her younger brother in her room rather than in the parlor; this would indicate a family intimacy, except that Lacy indicates that the parlor is a largely unused room because there is no ceremony in the Posey home. The family areas of the house are simply not used, except when it becomes necessary to set out the body of George's
dead mother. Lacy views the setting out of the body in that house as an irony, noting that "nobody was dead, nobody had ever lived" (237) in that residence. When Susan attempts to follow the expected forms, demonstrating that she has not completely abandoned her Buchan heritage, Lacy notices that she is wearing the same dress which she wore for her own mother's funeral. He suggests that "it was absurd to see anybody in black when the dead person had not been alive, and only the living were dead" (242). In Alexandria Lacy could not approach his father in an intimate, close manner; in Georgetown he lives among the dead and learns to close his own door. When he must finally make a decision about the fate of Yellow Jim, he chooses to hide from that necessity in the darkness of his room. Jim, who had violated the sanctity of the closed upstairs doors, becomes the most confined person of the novel as he is placed in a small cell and forced to remain there alone.

The Posey house, then, is filled with a set of autonomous individuals. Mrs. Posey has her own set of conversational topics, all of which revolve around her own health. Even at the public ritual of Sarah Buchan's funeral, Mrs. Posey can only remember her own personal existence: she fails to commiserate with the Major about the loss of his wife. Mizener states that Aunt Milly represents the only social existence in the Posey household. Susan informs Lacy that the peeking out at such life as occurs in the
halls is all that makes Aunt Milly alive. Mr. Jarman does not even live that much life: he sees nothing of what is going on around him, except for the one day in which he takes the carriage out to ascertain that a Confederate flag is actually flying over the city as he has somehow heard. In his solitary confinement, self-imposed as it is, Mr. Jarman is the symbol of the Posey life-style carried to the extreme. Representing that extreme is Jarman's sole function within the novel, as he has nothing to do with advancing the story or relating to the other characters. He can trace the supposed family history, but he does not talk to the living members of the family.

Unlike the rest of his family, George Posey has opened the door to his room, and even the front door of the Posey house, and entered into a sort of social life. His past, however, has not prepared him for such a life. Lacy remembers that at the tournament and at the funeral, facing a commitment to marriage at the first event and a commemoration of death at the latter, George does not act in the expected manner. Lacy notices repeatedly that George seems alone even in the presence of others, even in the face of the very social Major Buchan. However, for Lacy this is not a negative aspect of George; he sees George as "incredibly at his ease, the way a man is at ease when he is alone" (36). George can be like a man alone, even in the midst of social situations. Clearly, though, George does seek commun-
ity with other men. His refrain to Lacy is "'You're my friend, Lacy boy.'"\(^{17}\) He pursues Susan Buchan for marriage, and he becomes involved with others in the military efforts, even outfitting a militia. Frank Kermode points out that this latter role is an ambiguous one, that he smuggles arms to benefit neither side, but for his own gain, "carrying the carpet-bag which a few years later was the hated emblem of Yankee exploitation."\(^{18}\) Tate describes George carrying the bag, opening it and dumping its contents, thus aligning Posey with the destruction caused by the North both during and after the Civil War. This is important, because Lacy sometimes views George as a force of destruction, especially at the deaths of Semmes and Yellow Jim. J. A. Bryant, Jr., says that George would not want to kill anyone, because he hates death.\(^{19}\) However, what George actually hates is not death itself, but the formalized approach to death, such as the ritual of Sarah Buchan's funeral and even the rites of his own mother's funeral. Lacy suggests that for the Poseys the ideal would be to bury their dead, without ceremony, in the river. Gray says that George "has no ritual to supply him with catharsis and satisfaction and so has recourse to the kind of random violence, the incoherent gestures towards establishing a contact, which succeed only in driving Susan insane."\(^{20}\) Lacy hints that George may have a violent relationship with Susan in the privacy of their room, indicating his feeling that the man cannot relate to others except
through some form of unaccepted groping toward relationship.

In the course of *The Fathers*, Lacy suggests that rituals are necessary to allow men to face the unknowable. Rituals provide the balance that allows men to stand above the abyss, which exists as the unknown for Lacy. He recognizes his father's ability to move through life above that abyss, always knowing how to act around other men. However, George Posey, as presented by Lacy, does not know the rules of community ritual, having been raised in the isolation of the Posey household, and he must therefore face the abyss. In fact, he even holds confrontations at the abyss. In the section of the novel entitled "The Abyss," civilization is abandoned as George takes Yellow Jim, Semmes, and Lacy to the river bank where he is supposed to provide the ritual revenge for Jim's supposed "violation" of Jane Posey. In his admiration for his brother-in-law, Lacy has felt that he would ride over the abyss with George Posey, but he did not know at that time that he would have to observe as George kills Semmes Buchan at the abyss. There, George performs the only death rite with which he is comfortable: he pushes Semmes's body over the edge of the river bank. If the purpose of revenge is to restore order, then Susan's insistence that Yellow Jim be killed can be seen as the concern for the restoration of a certain order, similar to Pleasant McIvor's inability to discontinue seeking the deaths of all who had killed his father. However, George states that he
did not intend for Jim to die. He revenges the death of his black half-brother then by killing his brother-in-law. The next logical step in the revenge motif would be the killing of George by Lacy. Instead, Lacy will later fight side by side with George Posey and will ultimately conclude his presentation of his story in *The Fathers* with words intended to vindicate George's existence. George has avoided the violence of the duel, where he could have killed John Langton, and he wants to avoid any killing over the situation with Jane Posey. It is impossible to ignore the fact that Lacy does eventually kill John Langton, and at a time when the men should have been working together to further the cause of the Rebel Army. The other men who are aware of the situation between the two men do, however, condone the killing by encouraging George to ride away from the scene and return to civilian life. These reactions grant a validity to George's killing of Langton. Perhaps the men grant this validity because they know that it was George who outfitted the men whom Langton comes to command and because they recognize, given their Southern cultural background, the insult which Langton has inflicted upon George. Significantly, when George does kill John Langton, he does so outside any of the accepted, codified manners of dealing with such violence. George does not offer Langton a duel; he tells the man to look at him, then he shoots him in the face.

The killing of Langton is not all of the death with
which George Posey will have to deal on this particular day, the last day recorded in *The Fathers*. George, who has avoided the scenes of death whenever possible, even when it meant abandoning his wife at her mother's funeral or walking away from the death rites of his own mother, returns to Pleasant Hill with Lacy to find the home destroyed and the Major dead. George does assist Lacy at the "funeral" of his father. George makes Mr. Higgins relate in a straightforward way the events that have led to the Major's death. Then George changes from his uniform into his black suit in a symbolic act of respect for the dead and as an indication of his decision to leave the fighting. The writer of an essay titled "Southern Style" claims, "George rides away unscathed; Lacy is left alone, to try to prop the ruins of a tradition."22 This interpretation ignores the anguish of George's "'I have done too much'" (306) as he rides away, leaving Lacy to return to the conflict. It also fails to take into account Lacy's view of the unbending attitude of his father, the representative of the tradition mentioned. Tradition, ritual, has not served the Buchan family well. Instead, Lacy comes to see that it is George Posey who serves his family well. In "The Death of an Order," John Peale Bishop makes the statement that Tate "sees that everything George Posey does is damnable."23 Certainly the novel does demonstrate that George has been limited by the society in which he was formed, but Tate has modified the ending of
the novel to clarify his intention (or what he wants the reader to see as Lacy's intention) that George Posey be viewed as a hero. In a brief "Preface" to the novel, Tate writes:

My chief revision in this new edition of The Fathers tells the reader in a few words what George Posey did after he rode away into the dark. This revision gives the novel two heroes: Major Buchan, the classical hero, whose hubris destroys him; George Posey, who may have seemed to some readers a villain, is now clearly a modern romantic hero. (xxi)

Lacy relates to the reader at the end of the novel that George goes on to cure Susan, and he reminds the reader that George provided Lacy with his medical education. He concludes, "What he became in himself I shall never forget. Because of this I venerate his memory more than the memory of any other man" (307). For Lacy, at least, George Posey is a hero. Lacy hints that George is able to transcend the individuality that was his Posey heritage and to structure a community that includes at least his wife, daughter, and Lacy Buchan. What Lacy does not provide is any analysis of why George Posey might change in this manner. Lacy leaves it to the reader to determine how the events of the narration have resulted in the changes in George. By making his closing statement, Lacy does, however, indicate that he has resolved the conflict that has plagued him throughout his story, as George appears to have resolved the problems that had prevented him from uniting himself in commitment to others in his social arena.
Central to *The Fathers*, caught between the Buchan world he inherited and the Posey world he admired andcoveted, is the narrator, Lacy Buchan. Lacy tells the story of his biological father, Major Buchan, and the story of his spiritual father, George Posey. Because he exists as heir to two such divergent ancestries, Lacy belongs to no one. In the midst of all his family and all the communal rituals of the funeral at Pleasant Hill, Lacy feels alone. When he is living with the Posey family in Georgetown, he faces life in solitary. As he is throughout the events he narrates, Lacy is alone in the telling of the story, "an unmarried old man" (5) compelled to tell a story he defines as "not my story" (152). Yet, of course, it is Lacy's story, because it is the story of his fathers.

Relating the story, the elder Lacy continually stresses the loneliness he felt at the events he describes. Lacy is alone at his mother's funeral, even in the presence of his extended family. Pleasant McIvor felt alone after his father's death because he had been his father's favorite and because he found himself most fully committed to the revenge which the situation demanded. Lacy is the youngest of his siblings and, therefore, probably had a close relationship with his mother. The novel demonstrates that his relation-
ship with his father was largely defined by formality and by ritual, and lacked emotional closeness. Lacy is also alone at the tournament, too young to be one of the jousting knights or to follow Wink Broadacre and too old to be left at home with the true children. Lacy witnesses the "phallic ritual" both in the jousting and in the earthy coupling of Winston Broadacre with the mulatto girl under the bleachers. But Lacy is only an observer at both locations. He refuses to participate in the sexual adventure under the bleachers and he cannot participate in the jousting.

Besides being alone in the midst of the major ritualistic events of the novel, Lacy is intensely alone when he is living in Georgetown with his sister and the Posey family. The solitude he feels is emphasized on the night he must determine what actions to take with regard to Yellow Jim, who has supposedly violated the privacy of the Posey home and violated the honor of Jane Posey. Lacy lies in his bed in the dark, confronting the immediate future in the form of the decision facing him. Susan refuses to tell her younger brother exactly what to do; George is not available for consultation; and Lacy feels responsible for the events that have occurred because of the lie he told to Semmes in denying his own love for Jane Posey. The code which Lacy has learned from his father offers no formula with which to deal with this situation. Lacy faces the abyss with no ritual to inform his actions and no friends to share in his anguish.
This is the situation Pleasant McIvor desired; he indicated that he would have preferred to have been able to act out his revenge with no reliance on others, no fear that others would not act in the best manner. On the other hand, Lacy seeks direction as he visits with Yellow Jim, Susan, and even Mr. Jarman, but he ends the night alone: "falling upon the bed without even putting the pistol down, I knew that I had achieved my full measure of darkness. When I closed my eyes I was sitting on a big rock listening to the water in the run, and again I heard the panther scream" (238). Even Lacy's dreams do not bring him comfort; his thoughts of pleasant places are invaded with the screams of wild animals. There is no help for him in the Posey household.

Lacy comes to deprecate both of the worlds in which he has lived. Pondering the moment of death and the meaning of marriage, both of which are united in his mind at his mother's funeral, Lacy feels:

None of these could draw to itself all the life around it or even all the life in one person; not one of them but fell short of its occasion, warning us all to fear, not death, or love, or ecstasy or calamity, but rather to fear our own expectancy of it, good or ill, or our own lack of preparation for these final things. (101)

With these thoughts, Lacy indicts the practice of ritual. The rituals he has observed have not provided him with what he seeks. He does not foresee that other rituals would suffice either. For Major Buchan, the rituals surrounding his wife's funeral provide him with the fitting conclusion
to the fact of her life, just as the McIvors regretted the necessity of denying Carothers McIvor a family gathering similar to that presented in Tate's novel. Major Buchan is able to tell Lacy at the end of the day, "'bring me your Ovid in the morning!'" (110). The Major can face the idea of the continuity of life. But for Lacy the rituals do not provide comfort. He cannot come to terms on that day with either his mother's life (in terms of her sexuality) or her death. Thus, he avoids the thought of her wearing the clothing he sees falling from her drawers, as he avoids thinking of her death. The old man, narrating the story, remembers the lack of preparation for the feelings he experienced on the day of his mother's funeral. The life he has lived as a Buchan has not prepared him for such feelings. Lacy most damns his biological inheritance when he explains that his "Papa thought more of his honor than of any of us" (210), but he mitigates the charge by saying that the Major himself was not aware of his own feelings. By rationalizing the matter this way, Lacy reaches an understanding that allows him to state the problem with life as it was lived by Major Buchan, but also to exonerate his father from any complicity in living his life in this insulated manner. Honor for the Buchans, then, was similar to the concept of honor for the McIvors, but the McIvor clan is shown uniting, sharing as they seek to uphold the family's honor.

In addition to seeing the problems inherent in living
the public life of his Buchan heritage, Lacy also cites the
damage that can result from exposure to a closed world such
as the one the Poseys inhabited. Sullivan points out that
such a world can damage even a person who has been exposed
to different world views. Thus, Susan Buchan Posey is
changed by being incarcerated in a room in the Posey home.
Like her father, Sullivan notes, Susan is helpless against
the Poseys, but he says that "she cannot contain the pain of
her loss within herself." Susan functions as she can in
order to prevent other members of the Buchan family from
facing what she has faced. In her efforts to prevent Lacy
and Semmes from uniting with Jane Posey, however, she fails
to offer Lacy such community as she could provide to allevi-
ate some of the loneliness he feels. Trapped in a world of
closed rooms with no communication, Susan seems to forget
the meaning of family that she wishes her husband could
remember. Perhaps the artificial closeness of the cultural
rituals she has witnessed in her own family have failed to
provide her with a manner of creating closeness in the face
of closed doors. There were no closed doors at Pleasant
Hill; there was also no close sharing of feelings, only the
sharing of forms for dealing with such feelings. After the
death of George's mother, Lacy says that the Posey household
is the home of the living dead, but there is not even a
funeral ritual to unite the Poseys in common mourning.
George does not listen to the commiserations of Mr. Jarman,
but says, "'She's dead, ain't she?'" (256). The words and
the ceremony would not alleviate that fact. Susan does not
attempt to bring either the words or the ceremony to her
life in Georgetown.

Lacy is repeatedly isolated by the feelings he experi-
ences both at Pleasant Hill and in Georgetown. Because he
has learned no method for confronting feelings and because,
in Georgetown, he is no longer a part of a community of
shared values, Lacy has no way to test his feelings. He
feels fear in response to death and in response to sugges-
tions of sex. This fear renders him separate from family
members around him. At the funeral of his mother Lacy envies
George Posey, but he does not know how to unite himself with
George and leave the scene which is causing him so much
pain. His mother's death forces him to face the fact that
she had lived and that she had been a sexual being. In fact,
the day of the funeral serves as Lacy's sexual awakening as
he discovers his attraction to Jane Posey. Lacy's feelings
for Jane are united with his need to escape from the cere-
mony of the day. He says to himself, "I've got to go, Son,
I've got to go" and then "I've got to do it, I've got to. I
went to her and put my hand on her arm" (94). Later, when
Susan takes Jane to another area of the bedroom/dressing
room, away from Lacy, he takes his dead mother's petticoat
and her slipper and holds them "till I desired to see Jane
again so desperately that my hand shook" (95). Fifty years
later, narrating the story, Lacy feels he would again react in the same manner if confronted with a similar situation.

Patricia Kane discusses the piece of leather strap which Lacy collects on the day of the funeral, noting that it represents his need to violate the ritual which is bringing him no comfort. She points out that when he drops the strap and goes to view his mother's body, the language the older Lacy uses, recalling the event, becomes more formal. Kane suggests that Lacy speaks like his formal, ritualistic father when he is behaving like his father. However, she fails to consider that the entire narration is prepared fifty years after the fact of the funeral. At that time Lacy is acting most unlike his father, the man who had had no private life, the man who took no action that was not public and prescribed. In telling the story of The Fathers, Lacy is taking an intensely private action: he is attempting to understand his own life, and he is making intimate details of that life public in the attempt. Lacy the narrator does have a full command of the language and tends to present himself and those around him in formalized tones. Perhaps the formalization of the intensely personal represents Lacy's attempt to render the private subject matter a more universal matter. Thus, he mythologizes George Posey by seeing him as a man riding over a precipice. He gives Mr. Jarman, by his full description of the man's living quarters and his literary endeavors, an importance beyond that justi-
fied by his role in the novel. Besides helping to universal-
ize the events, the formal language of the elder Lacy empha-
sizes the younger man's distance from those around him. Lacy
cannot recount simple, straightforward feelings because he
cannot allow himself to feel them, even fifty years later.
As he was separated from the members of his extended family
and the family friends on the day of the funeral, so he must
separate his older self from the youngster by relating the
occurrences of the past in a formal manner. At the onset of
the story Lacy points out, "In my feelings of that time
there is a new element--my feelings now about that time"
(24). Lacy does not reveal which feelings are which, but the
formality serves to underline the fact that there was a boy
and there is now a man telling that boy's story.

Lacy is also distanced from community with others by
his feelings about himself: because he regards himself as he
does, he distances himself from his fellow men. The child
Lacy suffers from feelings of inadequacy relating to himself
and to mankind in general. When the happenings at the Posey
home require him to avenge what happened to Jane, Lacy
blames himself: "Why hadn't I gone away? Only because I
wanted to stay and make all the trouble I could out of my
life" (246). This must be viewed at least partially as self-
pity. In addition, Lacy hates the necessity for action, and
he feels that his absence might have prevented the entire
incident. He remembers that he lied to Semmes about his
feelings for Jane, thus allowing Semmes to propose to Jane and requiring Susan to take action to prevent such a union. Lacy even considers that the fault is part of his heritage. He acted as he did because he is a Buchan, just as the Major had disowned Semmes because the Major must act in the Buchan manner. Like Lacy's fears about death and sexuality, Lacy's feelings about himself are complicated by the fact that the feelings are filtered through the elder Lacy Buchan, who deprecates the boy more than he shows the young Lacy deprecating himself. Discussing his mother's funeral, he notices that the one emotion he did not feel at that incident was guilt for her death: "What good man does not feel that he has been in at the death of a loved one? I could not feel it, and I was not good, but I knew none of this then, understanding it with the body, not the mind, and I acted out my understanding" (92). Here Lacy admits that he did not realize he was not good, not consciously, at the time of the funeral, but he does realize it at the telling of his story. Thinking about his desire for night, for darkness, after the attack on Jane, the elder Lacy states that the craving for the coming of the night indicates that "one must have deep inside one's secret being a vast metaphor controlling all the rest: a belief in the innate evil of man's nature, and the need to face that evil of which the symbol is darkness, of which again the living image is man alone" (219). Lacy's feelings now are that the desire to do good cannot be
equated with actually doing good. When he feels that he has done no good, but rather that he has participated in, and even been the cause of, evil, then Lacy isolates himself even further. He runs away from the precipice where Jim and Semmes have died. For a time he runs away from life itself. On his journey back to Pleasant Hill, Lacy appropriately chooses his dead grandfather as a companion. The Posey world has failed to provide him with a sense of belonging. Lacy longs to see his father, although the Buchan world has also failed him. That he also wants desperately to understand what has happened, what has motivated George, is indicated by the fact that his "grandfather" tries to explain George to him. Lacy's lapse into a coma when he reaches Pleasant Hill is indicative of the fact that he is not prepared to accept either the Buchan or the Posey way of life. Lacy lets go of both and becomes more isolated than at any other point in the novel. For six weeks he is unaware of the presence of Coriolanus and his father, of the Confederate soldiers who come to visit, of the meals he is fed. Lacy's removal from community is complete. The elder Lacy offers no indication of his feelings about that time; he just presents the events as he remembers they occurred. When the young Lacy recovers from the trauma, he is able to come to terms with the conflict, to relate quietly to his father, but finally to choose George Posey and the Rebel Army.

Lacy says that the story of The Fathers is not his
story and, indeed, he attempts to make it a universal story by his elevated tone and his mythic presentation of George Posey. He also attempts to make the story George's story by focusing on George throughout, particularly at the end of the novel. Bryant says that the novel is "Lacy Buchan's account of George Posey's slowly achieved victory over the threat posed to his sensibility by the elemental fact of death, which George fears because his isolation requires him to confront it directly." Lacy focuses on George, then, as a means of discussing his own fear of death and his own isolation. He states his veneration of Posey at the end of the narration to demonstrate that he has mediated the conflict between the Buchan father and the Posey father and that he venerates the Posey heritage more. This reveals much about Lacy. Kane suggests, "Because Lacy grown-old decides to relate this story, one could infer that his choice of Posey has haunted him and that he continues to seek its meaning." Lacy's narration does indicate his need to explain himself, perhaps to himself. At the opening of the novel, Lacy asks, "Is it not something to tell, when a score of people whom I knew and loved . . . scattered into the new life of the modern age where they cannot even find themselves?" (5). Lacy shows that he, too, senses such a loss of self. He admits that he does not have the life he wanted, because he was not able to marry Jane Posey. Instead, he is unmarried and essentially alone. He asks why the changes
that occurred at the commencement of the Civil War had to change so many lives, particularly innocent lives, suggesting his regret at the loss of the innocent, uninitiated life he had lived at Pleasant Hill. Lacy wonders how and why innocence can be lost. But he admits, "These questions must go unanswered" (5).

The Fathers represents Lacy's attempt to answer the questions for himself. His closing words suggest that he understands George Posey and what he made of his life, why he lived it as he did. What he apparently does not understand is his own life. William McMillen cites the fact that the crises the elder Lacy describes in his story, the initiation into the knowledge of sexuality and of death, parallel the crisis which the narrator must face, his own impending death. The older Lacy notes that he still feels the cold of death that was present at his mother's funeral. McMillen further suggests that the fever and coma the boy experiences are foreshadowings of the death to come.30 Lynette Carpenter points out that Lacy begins to define himself in the second paragraph of the novel and suggests that the remainder of the novel can be regarded as a continuation of the self-definition process.31 Lacy's use of controlled, formal language informs that self-definition. The novel recounts events of intense violence; it is replete with death. Lacy's language removes him from the community of violence, situates him beyond the uncontrolled world of death and destruc-
tion. Such language may be the only control he feels he can exert over the events he has experienced. Interestingly, the story is closed prior to Lacy's formally joining the Confederate Army, although he does state, "I went back and stayed until Appomattox four years later" (306). His four years of fighting the Civil War are not included as part of his story. He does not exhibit himself in the community of soldiers as Pleasant McIvor did in The Long Night. Neither does he describe the healing aspects of his life as a doctor. He deals, instead, only with that time in his life when he made a telling choice between two fathers, two modes of facing life. Lacy exhibits a self pulled between two manners of existence, neither offering him the solace of real community or true kinship. Only after he removes himself entirely from all commerce with the world can he mediate the conflict of the two fathers and relate to both, quiet closeness to his father prior to that man's death and life with the Poseys after the Civil War.

Lacy may venerate the memory of George Posey more than that of any other man, but he has not followed George's model for life. Lacy returns alone to the Civil War battlefield once he has ended the civil war within himself, unlike Pleasant McIvor who left the battlefield once his internal conflict was resolved. Lacy remains a single man and becomes a doctor. The choosing of George as the primal parent has been different from the following of a way of life, which
would have been what he would have done if he had chosen his biological father as the primal parent. Choosing the Major would have demanded following in the footsteps of the paterfamilias and becoming a gentleman farmer, or at least preserving the ways of Pleasant Hill, the ritual culture represented by that home. What Lacy has actually accomplished, at least as he defines himself in the story, is to find a personal way. The fact that he remains alone and dissatisfied with himself and his life is indicative of the fact that the cultural heritage of the Buchan family has not prepared him for life and that the personal heritage of the Posey mode of existence has not brought him any solace. The Fathers exists as Lacy's self-definition and as his criticism of that self.
Lacy's definition of self is of primary importance to the reader of The Fathers because the reader knows the events of the story only through Lacy. In fact, the reader shares, is forced to share, Lacy's confusions and conclusions. As Carpenter views it:

The narration is Lacy's attempt to comprehend a series of past events that had been the central force in shaping his own life and consciousness, and to justify to himself his own response to those events. Thus the relationship between Lacy and his reader becomes something of a conspiracy in which the reader's implicit function is to sympathize and affirm.

Lacy does frequently draw the reader close to him with his emotional openness; however, he also alienates the reader, breaks the reader/writer community, with his failure to render some scenes fully and his failure to explain, or even to reach, some conclusions. The reader, then, alternately feels a part of a community with Lacy and alienated from him.

The reader's most basic sense of unity with Lacy Buchan stems from the fact that most people have felt some of the emotions he describes. Every reader has suffered the sense of being on the threshold of sexuality as the Lacy of the story does. When Lacy gives Jane Posey a kiss at the end of the section called "The Crisis," it is clear that the kiss, or the sexuality it represents, is part of the crisis, the
private part. Mason Smith says, "The kiss was like some awful passage or ordeal. . . ." When Lacy kisses Jane, he cannot see because they have moved into the dark. At the completion of the kiss, he can see: he has become accustomed to the darkness, that same darkness he will describe so vividly when he spends the night attempting to determine a course of action regarding his feelings about the pending marriage of Jane and Semmes. At that time, too, the reader shares Lacy's fully described agony. His careful description of the burning candle and the objects around him makes the scene visible to the reader, creating a shared atmosphere. In addition, Lacy is at this point telling about that sense of not knowing which course of action to follow, that indecision about important matters that would be familiar to most readers of the novel. Lacy's desire to understand is also a feeling he shares with his readers, but it is a desire he sometimes frustrates for his audience. At his mother's funeral he laments, "I did not want to be there in the midst of things I could not understand" (12). The reader recognizes this concern and is brought to feel sympathy for the youngster who must endure this agony with no one to comfort him.

The reader also feels a closeness to Lacy because the two often share the same perspective on the events that occur in The Fathers. Smith points out that the characters in the novel often seem strange to Lacy, and Lacy describes
them as if he were an observer, rather than a participant in
the events he records. 34 This is, of course relevant to the
problem with which Lacy deals throughout the novel: he does
not feel a sense of community with those around him, even
though he is present for the communal rituals. He describes
appearances and actions from a distance, because he feels
distanced from them. This is emphasized by the number of
times that Lacy relates events he observes from outside the
area of the occurrence. He watches George and Susan talk on
the day of the funeral, but he is so far away that he cannot
hear what is said. After the night of the attack on Jane, he
sees Susan and Blind Joe talking from his window above them,
and it is some moments before he even realizes that the
white-haired woman is his sister. Lacy is even an observer
at the one Civil War battle he describes to the reader. He
does not understand the meanings of the battle sounds he
hears or the things he sees. He renders the sounds in de-
scriptive terms that bring them alive for the audience--
such as his calling the gunfire "big piles of lumber clat-
tering to the ground from an immense height" (297). In this
way Lacy also shares with the reader his sense of the un-
known in the face of the war. But the description clarifies
the fact that Lacy is not actually a part of the Con-
federate Army at this point. While the language Lacy employs
makes it possible for his reader to share his sensations
and to participate in his role as observer of the action, it
also underlines the fact that observer is frequently his sole relationship to the events within his social milieu.

Lacy the storyteller also acts to frustrate any sense of sharing the reader might be tempted to feel. While the reader is invited in some ways to feel close to the young Lacy, he is not asked to participate with the storyteller at all. The elder Lacy only directly addresses the reader once, and that one address is contained in a footnote (17). That sole message to the reader is a discourse on the various levels of language spoken by Major Buchan. This discourse could be seen as an attempt to insure that the reader will understand the language of the novel, but it seems to function more as a justification of the ways of Lacy's father. There are no places in The Fathers where the use of a dialect inhibits the reader's understanding. The footnote cites the fact that the Major's language usage changes to suit his audience, but there is no sense on the part of the elder Lacy that he himself is aware of any specific audience for the story he tells in the novel. Pleasant McIvor, at the opening of The Long Night, addresses an audience he has chosen himself, a distant relative to whom he can relate his story, but Lacy speaks to no specific person. Thus, there is no one in particular with whom the reader can identify, as the reader of Lytle's novel can identify with the nephew who is hearing the story. Instead, Lacy's story is spoken with no awareness, except for the single footnote, of any partic-
ular audience. He could be speaking only for himself, except for that sole indication of concern for an audience. Pleasant McIvor requires a family member to tell his story to, perhaps because he thought a family member would understand the concept of family honor that motivated his revenge. Lacy's lack of any family at the time of the telling of the story emphasizes his continuing estrangement from community. It would be a contradiction for the elder Lacy to establish a close relationship in which he addresses his story directly to an audience.

Besides not appearing aware of a particular audience, Lacy as narrator prohibits community with the reader by his elliptical manner of presenting events. Lacy tends to present those facts he does include in an ambiguous manner consistent with the sense of alienation he conveys to the reader. Carpenter points out that Lacy tends to provide either no motivation or multiple motivations for the actions of the characters. For example, Lacy uses his dead grandfather to provide one explanation of George's killing of Semmes, and he tells of his father's receipt of a letter that provides another explanation, but neither the young Lacy nor the elderly man preparing the story fifty years later provides a definitive explanation for the action. There is, in fact, no speculation by Lacy except through the agency of other characters. The few words added to the novel convey Lacy's admiration of George Posey, but the admiration
is expressed in terms of things George accomplished after the events narrated in *The Fathers*. During the course of the story, Lacy tends to avoid judging George. He does express astonishment at the way in which George reacts to Major Buchan before becoming a member of the family, and he does indicate his envy of George's riding away from the funeral. But he avoids condemning George for leaving Susan alone as he smuggles guns during the early days of the Civil War or for killing Semmes in retaliation for the death of George's half-brother. Carpenter cites the fact that this is a willful failure of understanding. If Lacy were to examine too closely George's motives, he might have to condemn his brother-in-law, she says. She suggests, for example, that George is as silent as he is leaving the house with Lacy, Semmes, and Yellow Jim, "because he either consciously or unconsciously wants to kill Semmes." It is not clear why George would want to kill Semmes, but Lacy does report some conversation that could indicate that George's business dealings with regard to the Civil War were creating a conflict with Semmes. George frowns at Semmes as he explains how he had to cover up the sending of some material to Richmond, otherwise he could have been sent to jail (250). It is possible that George believes Semmes is somehow to blame for the possibility of going to jail, but Lacy provides no conjecture about the matter at all. Instead, he merely quotes what purports to be exactly what was said and
what looks were given fifty years previously. When the three men leave the house to get Yellow Jim, Lacy notes, "George took Semmes by the arm" (254). He also points out that George gives a look that agrees with Susan's assessment of Semmes as a fool (253). These details do provide some indication that Lacy might have a suspicion that George planned to kill Semmes, but, as Carpenter cites, he cannot verbalize such a suspicion. To do so would negate his laudatory comments about George at the end of his narration. The scarcity of the details and the failure to make a definitive statement leave the reader in doubt about what actually motivates George and about what Lacy thinks was the motivation. With neither clear, the reader is twice removed from understanding the situation.

An event central to the novel in which the reader's understanding is thwarted is the supposed attack on Jane which necessitated the death of Yellow Jim. When Susan is first told of Semmes's intention of marrying Jane, Lacy says that she looked as if she "had drawn a good hand at whist and waited impatiently to play the cards" (215). His remembering this look after fifty years suggests that he believes she had a plan at that very moment that would enable her to prevent the marriage. Like his possible suspicions about George, however, Lacy never states such a thing about his sister. Regarding the attack on Jane, Lacy observes only a torn sleeve and a few scratches. He admits, "I suppose I
could have known more; I didn't want to know any more. Did-
n't I know what had happened? I thought I did, and I still
think what I thought then, which was what any man would have
thought" (227). In this statement Lacy appears confident of
his understanding of the event. However, this confidence is
eroded with his next sentence: "I suppose Susan's continued
stare ought to have started a little doubt in my mind, had I
been able to take it in" (227). Whatever certainty the read-
er may have had, this statement removes it. First, Lacy
states that he thought he knew what had happened and that he
still thinks the same thing, then he admits to the doubt
which has gnawed at him. Obviously, the doubt is too fright-
ening to admit directly. Doubt is reinforced in the reader
by Lacy's descriptions of Susan's insistence on swift re-
venge and then her desire that Jim be set free. The reader,
like Lacy, is confused about what has occurred. However,
rather than share his confusion with his audience, either
Lacy forgets that he is telling the story to anyone or he
acts as if he is telling the story to everyone and still has
concern that the Buchan honor not be sullied, especially by
another Buchan. If Lacy thought he had an auditor whom he
could trust, with whom he could communicate, he would state
his suspicions overtly, unless, of course, he dare not admit
those suspicions even to himself.

Lacy provides a very simple and straightforward narra-
tive of the events he observed, but he avoids any interpre-
tation of those events. Smith suspects a deliberateness in the withholding of conclusions. "Connections and explanations which the narrator perfectly knows are often as perfectly withheld. In what seems an arbitrary, unnatural mode of storytelling, the narrator, an old man, renders only what he saw and heard and understood as a fifteen- and sixteen-year-old boy." Smith does not provide specific examples of where he believes Lacy withholds connections and explanations, but his point is apropos. A reader would naturally expect a man in his sixties to bring some additional understanding to events such as those Lacy records in The Fathers. He claims, for example, to continue to think what he originally thought about the "attack" on Jane Posey, but even the words and actions he remembers, especially Susan's, suggest otherwise. The reader thus develops the suspicion that he is not receiving the full story from the narrator. In addition, the reader is frustrated because he is forced into the position of judging characters whom he does not know as fully as Lacy does. For example, Lacy has known George Posey for years after the events he records in The Fathers; surely he possesses some additional understanding about why George killed Semmes. It would be difficult to believe that the two men had never discussed the subject as they shared the same household while George was sending Lacy to medical school. Lacy's decision to keep any discussions private frustrates the reader's need to know what the narra-
tor knows and forces him to trust the narrator.

In addition to keeping the reader distant by withholding information, Lacy avoids community with the reader by withholding emotions. Smith points out that there are no spontaneous outbursts of emotion, "nor any solicitation of our sympathy." Smith suggests that the telling of the story becomes a noble act due to this lack of emotion. However, it seems that rather than nobility through lack of emotion, Lacy exhibits a sterility similar to that evoked by the ritualistic culture of Major Buchan. As Lacy speculates that his father probably disowned Semmes in a stern, emotionless ceremony, so Lacy makes a remote ceremony of the telling of his story. He avoids the anguished cries one might expect to hear at the death of his brother. There are no feelings of the narrator Lacy other than his statement that he is alone, and there is no indication about how he feels about that aloneness. He tells the reader he does not have the life he wanted, but he does not lament that fact. The emotions expressed in the novel are the expected puerile emotions of the young Lacy: childish loneliness and fears. But there is no bridging of the gap between that child and the sixty-five- or sixty-six-year-old man telling the story. Lacy withholds his feelings, thus emphasizing his failure to trust the reader, to embrace him in a possible community of understanding. The absence of emotions also contributes to the reader's inability to trust Lacy. Gray points out that
Lacy writes out of a sense of loss, that the reference to the new element in the story, the feelings Lacy has at the time of the writing, refers to Lacy's feeling that he has lost something. The result of this need to create in order to deal with the loss results in Lacy's construction of a myth of his own: "The reader is once again witnessing the construction of a myth, created out of a sense of loss. The only difference is that in this case the sense is not just communal but personal too." Lacy alienates his reader because what he is creating is a personal myth that will allow him to deal with the death and destruction he has observed, but he fails to provide the emotions that could render that myth public, which would allow him to share the myth with his readers.

The language Lacy uses in telling his story also serves to alienate the reader. He presents the story through fifteen- and sixteen-year-old eyes, but he uses language that one would expect from the elder Lacy rather than from the child. The sentence structure used in the novel is complex, and the vocabulary is extensive. Describing Jane, Lacy refers to "the lovely insipidity of her docile eyes, the constantly parted lips, and the languid posture that was yet instinct with a vitality" (183). These are not the words a boy uses to describe a girl with whom he is infatuated. Lacy employs the language of his later years, but he does not reveal anything of the education he has received about the
happenings recorded in the novel. The knowledge from books, including references to classical materials, such as the epic of Apollonius of Rhodes, is used easily by Lacy, but it serves to alienate him from, rather than unite him to, the reader. The extensive knowledge exhibited by Lacy is not indicative of an address to a particular audience because Lacy also presents mundane farm conversations in the same stream of events. By including allusions and events on all levels, Lacy unites himself to none.

Besides the community that might have existed between Lacy Buchan and his audience, there is also a potential for community or alienation between the novelist and the reader of the novel. In an essay entitled "Regionalism and Sectionalism," Allen Tate reflects on the role of tradition in writing. He suggests that tradition must be "unconsciously operative: in literature it is the writer's decorum in the widest sense, a powerful instinct of selection and arrangement... It permits the writer to achieve the kind of detachment, very rare at present, that literature more than any other art so much requires." These words suggest that Lacy Buchan's distance from the reader could be purposeful, that the elder Lacy is an example of the kind of writer that Tate felt one should be. Tate, then, would not want to attain an emotional closeness with the reader. For him, the distance between the reader and the novelist is desirable. Tate says elsewhere that the writer is forced to be a re-
clude from commerce with other men. He believes that soci-
ety expects the man of letters to perform his function while
withdrawn from the society he is supposed to enlighten. 43
There is obviously a tension here between the need to be in
the society before one can understand it and the need to
withdraw before one can enlighten. Perhaps Tate has created
Lacy Buchan as the solution to that duality. He was at least
tangentially involved in the events of the novel, but he is
removed from them by fifty years, and he maintains that dis-
tance by, as much as possible, keeping the elder Lacy out of
the story altogether, except that it is necessary for him to
exhibit his knowledge through the words and the references
he chooses.

When asked his vision of the ideal audience for his
work, Allen Tate responded that he wrote as if he were his
own audience. 44 With such a perception, it would not be
necessary for the writer to attempt to achieve a community.
He could write to no one in particular, as Tate apparently
does in The Fathers. However, he is obviously concerned that
the reader have some understanding of his meanings. In 1975,
Tate provided a note at the opening of the novel and addi-
tions to the ending so that the reader would comprehend
George Posey as Tate meant him to be understood. For the
1977 edition of The Fathers and Other Fiction, Tate prepared
some notes on the novel. These actions indicate his intent
to establish rapport with the reader, to evoke understanding
of his meaning from the reader. Donald Davie, writing about Tate's poetry, says that Tate deliberately avoids closeness and sharing of events with his readers, obscuring meanings and neglecting the literal in favor of the symbolic.\textsuperscript{45} However, Tate provides the notes and even explicates two scenes of his novel in an effort to clarify events for his readers. This attempt at sharing is mitigated somewhat by the fact that Tate, like William Faulkner, refuses to make definitive statements about his characters, but instead talks about them as if they are actual people. Thus, he says, "Yellow Jim may have raped Jane."\textsuperscript{46} This refusal to be definitive severs the possibility of a reader/writer community, but, at the same time, indicates some concern with the reader's need to understand the happenings of the novel. Tate may believe that the ideal writer requires withdrawal, but he also approaches the reader when he thinks it is necessary in order to achieve understanding for his novel. Tate's supplying of notes to \textit{The Fathers} is similar to Andrew Lytle's letter as the prologue to \textit{The Long Night}: both writers want the reader to understand the genesis and purpose of their novels. There is the need for at least that much felt sharing between writer and audience. Allen Tate distances himself as author and his character Lacy Buchan as narrator from the readers of his novel, with the intention of establishing what he views as a necessary alienation in order to achieve the proper perspective for his creation. The reader must struggle
with his own judgments of the events and the characters, understanding the novel in his individual manner.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1 Allen Tate, The Fathers in The Fathers and Other Fiction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), p.101. Future references to this novel will be presented parenthetically in the text.


6 Gray, p.42.
7 Ferman Bishop, Allen Tate (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc. 1967), p.120.


12 Frank Kermode, "Old Orders Changing (Tate and Lampedusa)," Allen Tate and His Work: Critical Evaluations, p.144.


15 Bishop, Allen Tate, p.118.


17 Tate, The Fathers, p.7 and, with variations, pp.107, 111, 130, and 302.

18 Kermode, p.145.

19 J. A. Bryant, Jr., "Allen Tate: The Man of Letters in

20 Gray, p.44.


22 "Southern Style," *Allen Tate and His Work: Critical Evaluations*, p.139.


24 Smith, p.233.


27 Ibid., p.15.

28 Bryant, p.276.

29 Kane, p.15.


32 Ibid., p.19.

33 Smith, p.236.

34 Ibid., p.227.
35 Carpenter, p.13.
36 Ibid., p.20.
37 Ibid., p.12.
38 Ibid.
39 Smith, p.207.
40 Ibid., p.231.
41 Gray, p.41.
44 Allen Tate, "The Situation in American Writing" in Collected Essays, p.28.
46 Allen Tate, "Note on 'The Migration' and 'The Immortal Woman' with a Glance at Two Scenes in The Fathers" in The Fathers and Other Fiction, p.313.
CHAPTER 3: WILLIAM FAULKNER

THE MYTHIC RITUAL: FAULKNER'S GO DOWN, MOSES

In *The Long Night*, Andrew Lytle focuses on one particular character, Pleasant McIvor, with his personal goal of revenge which he pursues according to a self-ordained procedure, an individual ritual through which he defines his own behavior and makes it acceptable to himself. Allen Tate's characters in *The Fathers* are either firmly entrenched in the socially codified behavior epitomized by Major Buchan or totally alienated by such behavior. In the novel *Go Down, Moses*,¹ William Faulkner's fictional characters exhibit the stances toward life depicted by both Lytle and Tate. For example, Lucas Beauchamp, in "The Fire and the Hearth" chapter, develops a ritualized pursuit for hidden money, his personal response to a legend of the McCaslin plantation. Owners of the plantation, the Edmonds family follows the code of expected behavior; the family members "live together in herds to protect ourselves from our own sources,"² while Sam Fathers, spiritual heir to the McCaslin land, chooses isolation from the social world, although he continues to participate in the rituals of the wilderness. In Faulkner's novel the rituals presented are raised to mythic events, with the actions of the characters part of
the acting out of the mythic history of the South as explicated in the Yoknapatawpha novels.

Unlike *The Long Night* and *The Fathers*, there is no particular narrator relating his story to an audience in *Go Down, Moses*. The history presented in Faulkner's novel centers on Isaac McCaslin, but it reaches beyond one man's history. Lytle's novel and Tate's novel include events from the Civil War, implying significance beyond the lives of the central characters of the novels, but any such significance has to be inferred by the reader because it is not explicated in the texts. Conversely, Faulkner's novel includes discussions and application of events beyond the specific action of the novel. In "The Bear," for example, Isaac McCaslin talks about the whole history of the South, even speculating about the possible future of the region. Irving Howe says that the collective conscience of the community is the voice in "The Bear." Although Howe does not designate which of the potential communities of "The Bear" he is referring to—that of the wilderness of the hunt, the plantation, or the town of Jefferson—he asserts that the novel rises above the individual statement. The communal voice in *Go Down, Moses*, however, unlike that of other Faulkner works, such as "A Rose for Emily," is not judgmental. Ike's repudiation of his inheritance is condemned, admired, and misunderstood, all within the context of the novel. The presentation of multiple viewpoints makes the novel more
than the individual statement of a single character.

Faulkner's use of language in *Go Down, Moses* also raises the work above the individual statement to the mythic level. William Nestrick points to Faulkner's technique of expounding and amplifying on character descriptions and actions by supplying multiple descriptions and examples as one means by which the novelist imparts mythic dimensions to his characters. This meditative method of presentation magnifies the proportions of events or characters being depicted and renders the characters of events archetypal. Florence Leaver cites Faulkner's use of abstractions which take a specific character or event "from its earth-bound state to universal significance." In *Go Down, Moses*, for example, Faulkner summarizes Ike's relationship to the woods not in terms specific to Ike, but in language that evokes timelessness: "summer, and fall, and snow, and wet and saprine spring in their ordered immortal sequence, the deathless and immemorial phases of the mother who had shaped him if any had toward the man he almost was" (326). When Lucas Beauchamp waits for the dawn before he approaches Zack Edmonds's home, Faulkner writes that he sat "motionless as the windless obscurity itself while the constellations wheeled" (52), phraseology which places that particular event in terms of eternal time and which recalls phrases from other Faulkner works, thus expanding the boundaries of this individual novel.
Faulkner also evokes mythic qualities by the presentation of concepts of the ideal relationship and the ideal action. Ike says that men and women, in sexual relationships, can become God, although *Go Down, Moses* demonstrates some very ungodlike actions which involve sexual union. As an old man, Ike says, "'I think that every man and woman, at the instant when it dont even matter whether they marry or not, I think that whether they marry then or afterward or dont never, at that instant the two of them together were God.'" (348) This intense closeness is the ideal against which all of the relationships presented within the novel must be measured. Ike continually evokes "the communal anonymity of brotherhood" (257) as the holder of title to all of the land of the earth. Against this ideal, the novel shows various responses to ownership of land and to ownership of men. Ike also describes the South as the preferred land of God "with woods for game and streams for fish and deep soil for seed and lush springs to sprout it and long summers to mature it and serene falls to harvest it and short mild winters for men and animals" (283). The masculine society where Ike hears "the best of all talking" becomes the social epitome. The ideals evoked in *Go Down, Moses* function as the myth of the novel, against which the events of the novel, the characters, and their actions, are to be measured. What Faulkner presents in the novel are attempts to approach these mythic ideals and attempts to negate the
ideals completely, then repetitions of such attempts, with each repetition becoming a further reduction from either the ideal or the negation of the ideal.

I

The social rituals in *Go Down, Moses* have to be measured against the mythic, ideal society. In *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Ernst Cassirer states that in early development "we find the feeling of self immediately fused with a definite mythical-religious feeling of community." He explains that the self has then to learn about the I in opposition to the community. However, there is also a sense that men want to relocate that feeling of complete unity with other men. This is the impetus behind rituals of social behavior. In *Go Down, Moses*, the characters practice rituals that have as their goal unity with other men, but there is irony in Faulkner's depiction of such rituals: even as he shows characters practicing potentially unifying rituals, he demonstrates that these are corrupted at their very commencement and that the corruptions work to destroy the community which the ritual is intended to structure and maintain.

The ritual of courtship, for example, is a stale ritual as demonstrated in the novel, characterized by role reversal
and the playing of stylized games. Sophonsiba Beauchamp's pursuit of Buck McCaslin, although unwanted by him, requires a series of actions that have no true relationship to the purpose of courtship. Sophonsiba and Buck perform actions according to conventions, but there is a lack of meaning and commitment at the heart of their movements. Buck dons a tie whenever he goes in pursuit of his runaway slave Turl, because he knows that Turl has run to Warwick, the rather rundown plantation home that Sophonsiba insists on elevating to suit her pretensions, and it is necessary to wear a tie when one is at Warwick. Thus, Buck capitulates to the meaningless pretensions of Miss Beauchamp as she acts the role of the "southern white lady" who can sweeten her man's drink by taking a sip of it. She expects the men to bow formally to her, although to young Cass Edmonds the action is merely a dragging of the foot. Sophonsiba finally feels that she has captured her man when he is tricked into crawling into bed with her, for no gentleman would defile the honor of a Southern lady! However, the "game" aspect of the courtship, for until this point it has not appeared serious but merely repetitions of expected actions, is carried one step further by the participants: Hubert Beauchamp, Sophonsiba's brother, and Buck McCaslin play a poker game with Sophonsiba and two slaves as the stakes. Buddy McCaslin is able to save his brother from losing the game and winning Sophonsiba this time, but at some point that is not revealed in the novel.
Sophonsiba attains her goal and is married to Buck. There is no indication within the novel that the marriage results in the close community that is the ideal of marriage, but it is clear that the wedding sunders the close relationship between Buck and Buddy. The socially pretentious Sophonsiba insists on living in the McCaslin plantation house, which the brothers had previously eschewed, perhaps because she knows that Buddy will choose not to accompany his brother in this move. No actual picture of the marriage itself is presented in _Go Down, Moses_, but a strained relationship is implied in the description of Sophonsiba's continued ties with her brother, ties Ike's father did not desire to share. When the family drives to see Hub, it is as a result of Sophonsiba's dominance: "at last his mother would prevail and they would depart in the surrey" (302). The visits serve as opportunities for Ike's mother to check on her brother's life-style, to claim such of the family heirlooms as she can carry away from Warwick, and to participate in Hub's pretension, the viewing of his inheritance for Ike.

The courtship between Isaac McCaslin and his wife exhibits a role reversal similar to that of the courtship of Buck by Sophonsiba. Ike's wife pursues him, sits and watches as he builds a barn for her father, and then learns from her father about the McCaslin plantation. In fact, a discussion about the plantation house is all that is presented of the courtship between the two. She questions the basis in fact
for Cass's position as head of the McCaslin plantation, indicating her reliance on the facts of the matter rather than on feelings. Ike, however, bases his concept of his relationship with Cass upon feelings, stating "'We were the same as brothers'" (311). She retorts, "'You are the same as second cousins and that's all you ever will be" (311). She fails to see the emotions that underlie Ike's closeness with Cass; she does not understand that part of the meaning of the relationship stems from the way the two men have lived together--Cass helped to raise Ike and also treated him as he would a brother. As Ike bases his relationship with Cass on his feelings rather than the facts of their bloodline, so he bases his hopes for marriage on feelings, on an ideal of the emotions rather than a realistic model. Faulkner outlines the ideal:

and they were married, they were married and it was the new country, his heritage too as it was the heritage of all, out of the earth, beyond the earth yet of the earth because his too was of the earth's long chronicle, his too because each must share with another in order to come into it and in the sharing they become one: for that while, one: for that little while at least, one: indivisible, that while at least irrevocable and unrecoverable.

... (311)

However, even as the description of the ideal is written, the reductions commence: union, community for a while, becomes community for that little while. The author emphasizes that the time of oneness is short by the repetition of at least, underlining the fact that Ike did have some short
time of true community. Earlier in *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner had indicated the sorrow that develops in the marriage in a description of Ike's wife talking to him in their home:

She was a young woman then; they had been married only a few years but he had already come to know the expression which her face wore, looking at it as he did now: peacefully and with pity for her and regret too, for her, for both of them, knowing the tense bitter indomitable voice as well as he did the expression. . . . (107)

This incident indicates the distance between the husband and wife, in spite of the fact that Faulkner also noted, in implied presentation of Ike's ideas, that "husband and wife did not need to speak words to one another" (107). Both had already said all there was to say, a few years previous, when they were first married and living in the rented room. During that time Ike's wife seduced him, but not as an effort at unity with him. She seduced him to try to convince him to move to the McCaslin plantation. She let him see her naked body for the first (and last) time, "composite of all woman-flesh since man that ever of its own will reclined on its back and opened" (314). Ike thought then that women are born with more knowledge of sex than men ever have.

The seduction of Ike by his wife recalls Eve's seduction of Adam in the Garden of Eden, but the seduction in the novel is a reduction of the mythic seduction in Eden. There is no garden, only a cheap, rented room with the landlady knocking on the door. Like Adam, Ike is initiated into knowledge he did not desire; he understands his wife's greed
for the plantation, and he learns that she will deny herself to him because of his refusal to compromise his ideals in order to fulfill her desires. Sexual union, the union that, ideally, would make the two as one and, in Ike's terms, would make them God, does not enhance the marriage community but renders it inert. Andrew Lytle suggests that Ike's wife seduces him "for the sake of a communion of real marriage." Indeed, in the "Delta Autumn" section of the novel, Faulkner summarizes Ike's marriage: "lost her, because she loved him. But women hope for so much" (352). At the moment of the seduction, however, there is no love exhibited by Isaac's wife. She asks him to promise to accept the farm, but he repeats his negative responses to her demands. The "Yes" in the scene is not within quotation marks, as Ike's other statements are, suggesting that that word was not something he said out loud but, rather, the response of his body accepting hers. When the lovemaking is completed, loving "like nothing he had ever dreamed, let alone heard in mere man-talking until after a no-time he returned" (315), then Ike's wife laughs hysterically and tells him she will never make love with him again. By denying his wife her wish, Ike renounces the marriage community; by making her material desires more important than the union, Ike's wife effects a similar renunciation. They continue to live together until her death, sharing their home with her sister and the sister's family, but there is no marriage, no commu-
nity of closeness.

Ike's lack of marital community recapitulates the life of his grandfather, Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin. Unlike Ike, the elder McCaslin sought substitutes for marriage that were similar in what they brought to him (sexual fulfillment), but that lacked any sort of meaningful commitment from him. Thus, he purchased Eunice and got her with child, then married her to one of the other slaves on his plantation. When the child of that union became attractive to him, he summoned her to his bed as well: "that evil and unregenerate old man who could summon, because she was his property, a human being because she was old enough and female, to his widower's house and get a child on her and then dismiss her because she was of an inferior race" (294). This description of the events, presented as Ike's thoughts, underlines the essential corruption at the heart of the matter, the owning of one person by another. The institution of slavery eliminates the necessity for courtship. Old Carothers did not have to woo Eunice; he paid for her. He did not have to court Tomasina; she was born his property. There is no sense of community in the relationships with which old Carothers surrounded himself.

Generations later, Roth Edmonds reenacts the union of his ancestor McCaslin with Tomasina: unknown to Roth, the woman with whom he lives and with whom he has a child is a distant relative, a descendant of Tennie's Jim. Nothing is
seen of the courtship of these two, but it is known that the
meeting is pure chance, the result of groceries being
knocked off the skiff as the hunters travelled to camp for
the yearly hunting trip. As revealed in the "Delta Autumn"
section of Go Down, Moses, the woman functions as the
aggressor, like Ike's mother to his father and like Ike's
wife in her seduction of him. Roth and his woman have an
unofficial marriage; they participate in the process of
courtship, create a child, and live together. However, the
actions do not result in a lasting community. The couple
agree to separate permanently, but in "Delta Autumn" the
woman comes in search of Roth, unable to accept the termina-
tion of the relationship. Although he realizes she will
come, Roth makes no effort to ease her pain, but, instead,
avoids a direct confrontation and leaves her a packet of
money and the answer "No," just as his ancestor Carothers
McCaslin had left a legacy to Turl rather than say "yes" to
a partially black son. The woman is left with the child who
parallels Tomey's Turl, a son known to the world by his
relationship to his mother as if he had no father. Roth's
woman tells Ike, "'I would have made a man of him'" (360),
indicating her feeling that Ike has spoiled Roth by making
him the owner of the McCaslin plantation. She would have
made him the head of his own household and she would have
united him to the male line of the McCaslin family! Roth's
inability to accept the community offered is due to his
sharing of the feelings of old Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin, the fear of cementing a relationship with one of the inferior race.

In contrast, Faulkner demonstrates in Go Down, Moses that the black characters are able to form more lasting communities than the white characters, particularly in reference to the marriages presented. First, the courtships among black characters are not presented as inversions. Turl pursues Tennie. Lucas Beauchamp asserts that he is the man in his household as he secures Molly's return from the Edmonds' home. When Lucas married Molly, he built the ritualistic hearth fire as a symbol of his and Molly's wedded unity, a "symbol of man's need for communion and his wish for continuity." For Lucas the fire becomes inseparable from the time which it represents. As the old Negro feels the heat of the bricks beneath the fire, Faulkner refers to "a condensation not of fire but of time, as though not the fire's dying and not even water would cool it but only time would" (51). The fire remains burning throughout the time of the novel, although Lucas almost extinguishes it when Molly is staying with Zack Edmonds to care for the infant Roth. But the symbol has too much meaning for him; instead of destroying it he tells Zack he must have Molly back and he reaffirms his community with his wife. Zack's taking of Molly is, of course, reminiscent of old Carothers McCaslin's taking of Eunice and Tomasina. As Wesley Morris states, it
is "a mythic repetition that will be repeated again" when Roth takes the female descendant of Tennie's Jim. Morris asserts that Lucas confronts Zack over the bed not with the actual intention of murdering him, but to fulfill the need for a ritual confrontation.

... that gives rise to a mediating, archetypal figure. On the empirical level, however, there is only contradiction. Lucas, even after the ritual action has mediated the conflict, still ponders its experiential impossibility.

Regardless of his uncertainty about the incident with Zack, however, Lucas chooses to accept Molly and to allow her to continue to care for the children, both his own son and Zack's white child. Thus, unlike Ike, he fulfills his own needs and grants his wife her desire.

In _Go Down, Moses_, Faulkner also depicts the marriage community of Lucas and Molly at a crisis when she asks for a divorce because she cannot live in the shadow of her fear that he or George Wilkins will find the legendary money hidden on the McCaslin land. Lucas allows Molly to file for the divorce, but he stops the procedure at the final decree. His determination to maintain their unity is so strong that he completely gives up the money-finding machine that has precipitated Molly's action. When Roth suggests that Lucas have him keep the machine for Lucas's occasional use, Lucas declines, capitulating completely to Molly's desire, a desire, incidentally, not of selfishness but of concern for her husband. Their marriage, then, would appear to be an
example of true community. The only disturbing element is Lucas's absence from the chapter "Go Down, Moses." In that episode, Molly\textsuperscript{13} walks seventeen miles into town alone, intuiting that something has happened to her grandson Samuel Worsham Beauchamp. She tells Gavin Stevens that she "done left" (371) the Edmonds place to find her boy. That Lucas does not accompany her and that his absence is not explained implies that he has not shared her concern for the boy, felt her intuition. Lyall H. Powers cites Lucas as a sharp contrast to Ike and to Gavin Stevens, noting that Lucas has courage to stand up against those who wrong him and that he takes the responsibility to care for his family. However, Powers, too, thinks Lucas's absence from "Go Down, Moses" is important. Lucas's virtues would be useful during the events related in that chapter, Powers says.\textsuperscript{14} The execution of Samuel Beauchamp represents the death of the sole surviving descendant of Lucas as presented in the novel; it is surprising that he would not be with Molly on that occasion.

Rider and his wife Mannie in "Pantaloons in Black" have emulated Molly and Lucas's hearth fire, but with Mannie's death their fire becomes "a dry, light soilure of ashes" (140). David Riesman says that when rituals fail to provide what the participants desire, then there is a lack of comfort.\textsuperscript{15} Rider exemplifies the person for whom there is no comfort in any of the usual rituals. He cannot bear watching the dirt shoveled over Mannie's casket so he takes on the
task himself. He drinks, he works prodigiously, but nothing soothes him. Those present at the funeral warn Rider that Mannie may be "wawkin," that her spirit might not have left the earth. That is precisely what Rider hopes for and why he returns to his home. Walter Brylowski states, "For the mythic mind, death does not constitute an annihilation of existence, but a translation into another form of existence."\textsuperscript{15} Rider is not sophisticated enough to articulate any such belief; what he hopes for is Mannie's return in her living form. When he sees her, he exhibits what Warren Akin calls the strength to act with love.\textsuperscript{17} Rider does not grab for Mannie or yell for her; instead he attempts to attract her to a simple domestic ritual. He sets the table and fills the plates with food, then calls to her in the manner he might have used had she been alive: "'Come on hyar, now,' he said roughly. 'Come on hyar and eat yo supper'" (141). It is natural for Rider to expect such a method to succeed, for his and Mannie's lives followed simple ritual, doing the same things every workday and sharing the times off in the same manner each weekend. Now there is no comfort for Rider in such rituals. He goes to work the day after Mannie's death, arriving early and working more vigorously than ever. But this will not suffice. Nor will drinking provide him with the relief he craves. Ultimately, Rider enters a dice game he knows to be crooked, thus returning to the vices he had indulged in prior to the commencement of his relation-
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Henry" (114) until the two were a
and Lucas's son Henry share a b
brotherly relationship, havin
infants by Molly, until Roth realizes that he is white and Henry is black. Faulkner's language in detailing this realization suggests that the event was inevitable:

Then one day the old curse of his fathers, the old haughty ancestral pride based not on any value but on an accident of geography, stemmed not from courage and honor but from wrong and shame, descended to him. He did not recognise it then. (111)

Roth then alienates himself from his friend, an alienation couched in terms that render it a sort of "repudiation ritual," a ritual for ending an inappropriate community. Later, when Roth wishes he could change his action, he cannot act contrary to the assigned role of the "master." He goes to Henry's home and talks to Molly, "his feet slightly apart, trembling a little, lordly, peremptory: 'I'm going to eat supper with you all tonight'" (113). Roth watches Molly prepare dinner, a domestic ritual he has observed before, but it is not to be the same. Molly sets Roth's place for him to eat before her family eats, as the master would eat and the slave would sup on the leavings. "So he entered his heritage. He ate its bitter fruit" (114). Like many of Faulkner's characters, Roth is destined to accept his heritage. Sam Fathers, with his small portion of black blood, lives among the blacks except when he is isolated by his own volition in the wilderness. Molly, without question, becomes wet nurse to Roth when his mother dies in childbirth, even remaining in the white child's home until Lucas insists on her return. Ike recognizes the race of Roth's mistress in
"Delta Autumn" only when she informs him that her family takes in washing. The races of the characters demand certain roles.

The fullest presentation of the master/slave relationship between blacks and whites is developed in the section "Was." Turl is one of the McCaslin slaves, inherited by Buck and Buddy at the death of their father along with the uncompleted edifice that was to be the McCaslin plantation home. The twins are morally opposed to slavery, but whenever Turl runs away to visit the slave Tennie Beauchamp, Buck pursues him. This pursuit, meaningless if the brothers do not believe in slavery, necessitates other meaningless social rituals, including a visit to the Beauchamp home. For Buck, and for young Cass Edmonds who generally accompanies him, the event is a game, a hunt but not a serious one. Buck plots strategy as if for the killing of wild game: "'You stay back where he wont see you and flush. I'll circle him through the woods and we will bay him at the creek ford" (8). For Cass, it is "the best race he had ever seen" (8) and later, when the pursuit is less vigorous, it "wasn't any race at all" (15). In the same section, when the brothers and Cass chase a fox through the house, as they do twice during the story, it is described as "a fine race while it lasted, but the tree was too quick" (30). The similarity of the language points up the lack of seriousness of the brothers concerning the role of master. In fact, they go out
to catch Turl only to participate in the ritual race and to prevent Sophonsiba and Hubert Beauchamp from capturing the slave and returning him, which could involve a stay of days.

The similarity of the language describing the fox hunt and the man hunt also underlines the failure of the brothers to recognize the humanity of their black relatives. It is significant that Faulkner develops "Was" as the only full picture of the master/slave relationship, presenting an ironic picture because the brothers are not serious slave owners. They have tried to give each of the slaves his freedom. Being unsuccessful in that attempt, they are allowing each of the slaves to work out his purchase price. Buck and Buddy have created their own domestic ritual, which defines the sort of master/slave relationship they have chosen. They moved all of the slaves into the partially built plantation house, built their own cabin, not using slave labor except when work could not be effected by the two men alone. Then there evolved a sort of agreement between the erstwhile masters and their slaves:

that, after the white man had counted them and driven the home-made nail into the front door at sundown, neither of the white men could go around behind the house and look at the back door, provided that all the negroes were behind the front one when the brother who drove it drew out the nail again at daybreak. (263)

Thus, the masters and their slaves could assume the ritual functions defined as "master" and "slave," but each could also have his freedom from his delineated role.
The social rituals associated with death also point up the racial differences among the characters of *Go Down, Moses*. No actual death rites for white characters are treated in the novel, except the ritual of providing a legacy, a separate topic to be discussed later in this chapter. Faulkner exhibits his black characters in the rites of death, perhaps emphasizing that they do not have property to bequeath, as the white characters do. The funeral of Mannie follows typical form, except that Rider insists on assisting with the burial of the casket. He is not comforted by the funeral, does not leave with the aunt who raised him. He hastens the end of the event that, for him, has no meaning because he does not want to accept the death. One purpose of ritual is to allow the sharing of such events with a defined community, but Rider would prefer to be away from all society except what he can find remaining of Mannie on earth. Eunice's death, as presented in "The Bear" section of the novel, is incomprehensible to the white characters. Uncle Buck, Ike's father, questions, "Who in hell ever heard of a niger drownin' him self" (267). Ike searches for the answer to that very question and, when he finds it, imagines Eunice, "solitary, inflexible, griefless, ceremonial, in formal and succinct repudiation of grief and despair who had already had to repudiate belief and hope" (271). In his re-creation of the event, Ike endows Eunice with a ritualistic approach to her death, imagines her making a ceremony of
her statement against the treatment of her daughter by the man who had been her own first lover and the father of that daughter.

The most fully developed funeral scene in the novel is that of Samuel Worsham Beauchamp in the "Go Down, Moses" section of the work. In this story, Faulkner demonstrates Molly's need for a satisfactory conclusion to the life of her grandson. Gavin Stevens provides the funeral, contributing his own funds in order that Molly might have what she requires. Cleanth Brooks sees this story as establishing a sense of community. Miss Worsham's assumption of the burden with Molly exhibits "a powerful reminder of the fact of the community." All of the inhabitants of Jefferson "take part in a kind of ritual action" as they view the hearse traversing the center of town. The residents of Jefferson have also contributed monetarily to the funeral, so that Molly's Samuel can have a casket, flowers, and a hearse to drive the body to the gravesite. Part of Miss Worsham's sense of unity with Molly stems from the fact that Miss Worsham's family once owned Molly's family and, when Molly took her grandson to raise, she gave him the name Samuel Worsham, the name of Miss Worsham's father. Gavin notes that the expression on Miss Worsham's face shows her unity with the old Negro Molly in this time of crisis: "it merely embodied some old, timeless, female affinity for blood and grief" (376). However, this community appears to be a closed community, one that
Gavin cannot enter despite his efforts on Molly's behalf. When he goes to the Worsham home to express his condolences, he is confronted with Molly and her brother and Miss Worsham chanting together about how Roth Edmonds sold Samuel out of Egypt. The chanters are taking parts at random in the song for which the words "Go Down, Moses" are the refrain. They are so involved and united in their chanting that Stevens knows Molly cannot hear his justification of Roth's actions. Stevens flees from the room and the house.

Audrey Vinson believes that the black and white communities are united in the funeral that follows the return of Samuel's body. As Brooks does, she cites the monetary contributions made to the funeral. However, the townspeople merely observe the procession. Even Gavin Stevens and the editor do not attend the actual services. While Stevens appears to understand Molly's motives for desiring the typical rituals of the funeral, even to the printing of the story in the paper, his final words, the closing words of the novel, indicate that he has far different concerns: "'Come on,' he said. 'Let's get back to town. I haven't seen my desk in two days'" (383). His duty completed, his thoughts are now on his own interests. The unity provided by the funeral is broken with these words. The implication is that any unity is transient, effective only as long as the tragedy and grief have their hold on the characters, and for Stevens it is purely an intellectual, not an emotional,
hold. Significantly, Lucas is absent from this section of the novel, although Samuel Worsham Beauchamp is also his grandson. Isaac McCaslin is also absent from this section. Morris believes that this absence "puts Ike outside the burgeoning life that Faulkner describes."^21 The stories that present rituals in society are the stories from which he is largely absent, indicating that he is not a part of the life of the typical community.

Like the black characters, Faulkner's Indian characters also do not have property to bequeath. The deaths of Jobaker and Sam Fathers demonstrate the importance of funeral rites to each character and the importance, to those who care about the characters, that the rites be carried out completely. Thus, when Jobaker dies Sam burns his home and leaves the life of the town because his one contact with the life of his blood is gone from the earth. When Sam Fathers dies, or is killed by Boon at Sam's request, Ike and Boon provide Sam with the death rites of his heritage so that, in death at least, he can be an Indian. Sam has lived in the wilderness, but knows that the death of Ben signals the end of the life he has known at the de Spain hunting and fishing camp. Sam's death is mandated by the death of the way of life he has chosen. Boon says, "'This is the way he wanted it. He told us exactly how to do it. And by God you aint going to move him. So we did it like he said, and I been sitting here ever since to keep the damn wildcats and
varmints away from him" (253). Sam is allowed to die as an Indian and to become part of the earth. Later, when he returns to the site of Sam's burial, Ike brings small tokens of his affection for Sam, tobacco, a new bandanna, and peppermint candy. Faulkner describes these objects as becoming one with the wildnerness "almost before [Ike] had turned his back, not vanished but merely translated into the myriad life which printed the dark mold of these secret and sunless places with delicate fairy tracks . . . because there was no death" (328). Ike's mythos at this point, at the age of eighteen, includes all that has ever lived or existed "free in earth and not in earth but of earth" (328), defying the power of death. In the wilderness, in nature, then, Ike sees the ideal of community, but it is an ideal which is not exhibited in the social relationships of the town and farm and not, finally, in the human relationships shown existing in the wilderness.
Olga Vickery points out that each story in *Go Down, Moses* presents a hunt ritual. The hunting ritual that takes place in the wilderness is the most obvious of these, but the social rituals of husband hunting and the slave hunt for Turl are other examples. The wilderness hunt creates an opportunity for an artificial community to be in existence once or twice each year. The men are united with each other and opposed to the game "in the ancient and unremitting contest according to the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regret and brooked no quarter" (192). The wilderness, as idealized, is a world without death, in which a decayed log "heals" into the earth (205) and the momentoes of Sam and Lion "healed already into the wilderness' condondant generality" (328). The wilderness is a place of healing, of merging into an arena that encompasses all time and all space. Irving Howe says the events of the hunt are a pageant-rite, "symbolizing communion in escape from the social world." However, in spite of the youthful Ike's belief that the hunt is eternal, the repetitions of the hunt presented in Faulkner's novel exist as diminishments of the archetypal hunt for old Ben.

One ritual associated with the hunt, the most stylized ritual in *Go Down, Moses*, is the initiatin of Ike McCaslin
into the wilderness community in "The Old People" and "The Bear" sections of the novel. Basically, Ike progresses through the four necessary steps of initiation.\textsuperscript{24} He has the requisite spiritual father in Sam Fathers, the man who sets him free by teaching him about hunting and the wilderness. Ike "loses his old life as the child of a woman by a return to the labyrinth womb of the ceremony."\textsuperscript{25} Significantly, by the time Ike is of an age to participate in the hunt, his mother is actually dead, as is his father, and he is being reared by his older male cousin. He has hardly been the child of a woman, not remembering a mother and being almost totally under the care of men. Sam Fathers has schooled Ike in hunting prior to his first participation in the wilderness hunt, but when Ike enters the wilds he commences his initiation to the true hunt: "He entered his novitiate to the true wilderness with Sam beside him as he had begun his apprenticeship in miniature to manhood after the rabbits and such with Sam beside him ... It seemed to him that at the age of ten he was witnessing his own birth" (195). Brylowski says that Ike's initiation "is a rebirth in the true mythic sense."\textsuperscript{26} He will be separated from society, will eat special food, and will learn the mysteries of the wilderness.

In the woods, when Ike determines that he wants to see Ben at all costs, he puts down all of the trappings of civilization, the tools of society, his gun, his watch, and
even his compass. As William Nestrick says, "Mythic identity depends upon a sacrifice of social conventions." At that moment he is the child of no one, but is simply another creature of the wilderness. Here Ike enters into an actual labyrinth as he loses his way and casts circles in his attempts to relocate the watch and the compass. It is while he is casting about for these items that he fulfills the third step in the initiation process: he sees the tribal god. Ben appears to him and then vanishes after returning him to the implements he needs to find his way out of the wilderness. The fourth step involves Ike's rebirth to the world of men. Faulkner shows Ike entering the world of men in the wilderness when he kills his first deer and Sam performs the ritual of marking his face with the blood of the deer. The "symbolic gesture transmits to the white youth the physically interrupted continuity of his own [Sam's] ancestral heritage." Stuart James, evoking the Christian symbolism many critics find in the novel, calls the event the "wilderness Eucharist." After this event, Ike earns the respect of the men, respect he will continue to earn as he continues to prove himself an excellent woodsman. Ike will also demonstrate his rebirth into the world of men in his discussion with Cass in the commissary, to be discussed later in this chapter.

Significantly, on the day on which Ike kills his first deer, Sam shares a special initiation ritual with him. Sam
shows Ike his totem animal, the deer, "its head high and the eye not proud and not haughty but just full and wild and unafraid" (184). Sam salutes the deer, "'Oleh, Chief . . . Grandfather'" (184). This is an event Sam has also shared with Cass Edmonds when Cass killed his first deer. As Morris notes, the deer is "a unity of opposites--life and death, food and the kill." These oppositions are the heritage of the hunt. Several years later, after the deaths of Ben, Lion, and Sam, Ike visits Sam's two-year-old grave and there sees a similar apotheosis, only the grand deer has become a snake:

more than six feet of it, the head raised and higher than his knee and less than his knee's length away, and old, the once-bright markings of its youth dulled now to a monotone concordant too with the wilderness it crawled and lurked: the old one, the ancient and accursed about the earth, fatal and solitary. . . . (329)

Ike salutes the snake with the same words Sam had addressed to the magnificent deer. The snake here is emblematic of the interpretation many critics have adopted toward the novel, seeing the wilderness as an Eden. Ike's choice of totem animal indicates that he has also viewed the wilderness as edenic, rather than seeing it for the world Sam saw. Ike's view results in a reduction from the emblem of the deer to the snake with its "thin sick smell of rotting cucumbers and something else which had no name, evocative of all knowledge and an old weariness and of pariah-hood and of death" (329). The smells of the snake reinforce its symbolism for Ike: he
smells the knowledge that Adam found in the garden of Eden. He smells the pariah-hood, the solitary fate that is to be his life. By the time Ike sees the snake, he has also seen the McCaslin family ledgers and learned of the evil of his grandfather. This knowledge, along with the ideals Isaac has learned in the wildnerness, will be the motivating force for his decision to repudiate his inheritance, an action that will result eventually in his removal from any meaningful community.

Powers suggests that the death of Ben is deliberately staged by Sam "for Ike's evident edification."\(^{31}\) Morris states that the hunt on which Ben is killed is "no end but a culmination of the vital forces of life, no last day, but a most typical day" for Sam.\(^ {32}\) However, Sam does choose to die after the death of Ben; as the doctor sums up the situation, "'He just quit'" (248). Powers says that Sam's purpose is to show Ike that beauty lives even after death. He points out that Faulkner refers to the action of the novel as a "set stage," which demonstrates that the "ritual drama of Ben's death is intended . . . to be the imitation of an action which expresses a truth, even though in itself it may not be that truth or may only participate in it."\(^ {33}\) This implies that Sam chooses to die after he has achieved his end, made his statement.

For Ike, the hunt for the old bear continues even after the death of Ben, at least on some level. He imagines that
"they would give him his paw back: then the long challenge and the long chase, no heart to be driven and outraged, no flesh to be mauled and bled" (329). The hunt for Ben, in Ike's imagined eternity, will become an action that causes no change, no mauled and bled flesh, no death. However, in the world of the novel there is change after the death of old Ben. Major de Spain sells the land to a lumber company. In place of Ben, who has been compared to a locomotive in Parts 1, 2, and 3 of "The Bear" (193, 211, and 238), a real locomotive enters the wilderness in Part 5 and carries out lumber, carries out the trees, which are artificially felled rather than allowed to die and be healed back into the wilderness. The community of the particular hunt exhibited in "The Bear" is broken up utterly. Major de Spain never returns to his land. Boon, who had killed the magnificent Ben, is reduced to a maniac screaming that the squirrels belong to him. The sharing of the ritual hunt did not draw the men together beyond the confines of that particular series of events. Sam did not pass on his heritage through Ike, because Isaac does not function as the ideal in Sam's rendering of the wilderness or in Ike's own imposed Judeo-Christian ethic. He does not pass on Sam's teaching to other youth; although Ike is shown hunting with the younger men in "Delta Autumn," he is not teaching the ways of the woods to a youth 34 nor is he treated with reverence or respect by those present. Nor does Isaac emulate the achievement of his
biblical namesake: he does not found a nation. Faulkner incants periodically throughout the novel that Ike is "a widower now and uncle to half a county and father to no one." 35

Robert Penn Warren makes the point that the hunt is a "ritual of renewal" for Ike. 36 This is demonstrated by the fact that Ike continues to journey to the woods to hunt each November, even after he is old enough that the trip is difficult for him. Faulkner presents an example of the hunt in Ike's old age in the "Delta Autumn" section of the novel, an incident that exhibits the ways in which the ritual of the hunt have diminished from the events depicted in "The Bear." First, the men of the original hunting party are dead; it is their offspring with whom Ike goes on the yearly hunting trips. Significantly, there are no new young men among the hunting party, implying that the end of this group will mean the end of the hunt. The one male child mentioned, Roth's illegitimate child, is given no legitimacy within the context of the story: he will not become a member of the party. The men among the group in "Delta Autumn" have learned about the wilderness from Ike, but they have lost their respect for him. Roth asks him, "'where have you been all the time you were dead?'" (345). In addition, the men argue with Ike about his views, do not simply follow his directions for setting up camp. Roth refuses to explain why he has changed from a rifle to a shotgun. Ike is no longer
the revered leader of the camp.

Besides the changes in the hunting party, the wilderness itself has also contracted utterly.

Now a man drove two hundred miles from Jefferson before he found wilderness to hunt in. . . . the land across which there came now no scream of panther but instead the long hooting of locomotives . . . the land had retreated not in minutes from the last spread of gravel but in years. . . . (340-341)

Ike feels the wilderness contracting concordantly with the contraction of his life, "the two spans running out together" (354). The female element also invades the world of the wilderness in "Delta Autumn." The woman Roth has spurned ventures into the camp, because she cannot face the finality of the decision to sever their relationship. The hunting world, then, has to cope with the problems of civilization. The woman and the infant enter the tent, impose their presence on an unwilling Ike—and an even more unwilling Roth who has left his answer to the woman with Isaac. The entrance of the woman into the camp is discussed in terms of hunting, similar to the mode of discussion about Tomey's Turl is "Was." The men joke with Roth about hunting does, referring to the fact that he had met her the previous November during the hunting period. It is interesting that Roth left the world of the wilderness to enter civilization on that trip; in fact, he only pretended to go hunting when actually he was going to town to court this woman. His leaving the wilderness, because the world of civilization
offered something he desired more than he wanted to hunt, is
a distinct change from hunts such as those described in "The
Bear." It is this change that results in the intrusion of
civilization (the woman and her child) into the wilderness
the following November. The men's jokes about doe hunting
prompt Isaac to reminisce about past hunts when game was so
plentiful that does were hunted. Faulkner ends the story
ironically, with Roth killing a doe on the present hunt.
This indicates that he has violated the rules of the hunt,
which now forbid the killing of does. But he has not done so
in an effort to return to the rites of the past; instead, he
has violated the rules because the pressure of civilization
has changed the hunt for him. The fact that he must use a
shotgun rather than a rifle demonstrates that he is not the
skilled woodsman such as men became when Ike commenced
hunting seventy years ago. The killing of the doe also sym-
bolizes his killing of the possibility of communion in mar-
riage with the woman, referred to as a doe by the other
hunters. The final hunt presented in Go Down, Moses suggests
the end of the all-male world of the wilderness hunt, the
world Sam Fathers had bequeathed to Ike. The loss of this
bequest highlights the other inheritances included in the
novel, all of which fail, in one manner or another, to
provide meaningful continuity with the past.
III

Vickery states that the promise of the hunt ritual is not fulfilled in Ike's life: "The significance of any ritual must be in its power to create order and to establish a sense of continuity with the past."³⁷ The need to establish a sense of continuity with the past is a central theme in Go Down, Moses, a theme that centers on Faulkner's depictions of characters' responses to the legacy of their genealogy. Speaking of Light in August, Brooks asserts, "The real issue is whether one's relationship to one's heritage permits participation in life or isolates one from life--whether it connects past with present or is simply a private obsession."³⁸ Morris points out that Go Down, Moses demonstrates "the revolutionary idea that one can reject one's heritage."³⁹ This is what Isaac McCaslin intends to do, reject his heritage, but he actually rejects only the physical part of the inheritance (the real estate). He takes the lesson of the freedom of the wilderness and intends to apply it to all land. He takes the knowledge of the hunt and uses it to seek his black cousins, to distribute the legacies of Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin and Amodeus and Theophilus McCaslin. The Edmonds branch of the McCaslin family, the distaff side of the family, demonstrates the continuation of the life initiated by old Carothers McCaslin. However, as the central events of the old ancestor's life are recapitu-
lated by his progeny, these events are diminished.

Throughout the novel, there is the continuing sense that the older generations were better, that the men of previous generations lived life more meaningfully than their offspring. Lucas feels that "Zack Edmonds had been as much better a man than his son as old Cass Edmonds had been than both of them together" (43). Speaking of the game that was once so readily available, Roth says, "'And better men hunted it'" (345). Both men refer to the feeling that the older generations, particularly that of old Carothers McCaslin, represented a more enduring breed of men, men who obtained what they obtained, achieved what they achieved, by the force of their bodies and the strength of their wills. Thus, Lucas cites Roth's use of automobiles and electric lights as indications that he is not as good a man as Zack Edmonds, who did not allow such modern conveniences to come to the plantation. Only Ike, who has read the McCaslin ledgers and been deeply influenced by what he found there, opposes this idea. He tells Roth in "Delta Autumn" that there are good men everywhere and at every time. As he has repudiated his inheritance, so he repudiates the idea that those from whom he derived were somehow superior because they brought their seed to the new world, peopled a wilderness, and shaped the world.

There is also the sense within the novel that the male line of the blood is somehow superior to the female line. Thus, Lucas is assumed to be superior to other blacks be-
cause he carries within him the male line of blood from old Carothers: "Lucas was descended not only by a male line but in only two generations, while Edmonds was descended by a female line and five generations back" (104). The closer the relationship to the patriarch of the family, the stronger the inherited blood is assumed to be. Ike's wife will not accept Ike's claim that Cass is entitled to at least half of the plantation because of the shared ancestry. Only a statement in Carothers's or Buck's will would make such a claim meaningful, she asserts, while Ike's claim to the land is evident. As he refutes the claim that all of the better men are to be found in older generations, Ike also objects to the idea that the male line derives some special rights. But Roth, as a boy, fears that this might be so, that "a nigger McCaslin is a better man, better than all of us" (115-116). Roth feels that the derivation from the male line grants Lucas an inherent superiority, and indeed Lucas's actions indicate that he holds himself somewhat superior. He addresses the Edmonds males as "Mister Edmonds" rather than as "Mister Zack" and "Mister Roth," the form of address the other blacks use. Lucas farms the land which is his to farm, not according to the dictates of Mister Edmonds, but according to his own ideas and preferences. Thus, the importance of blood, genealogical background, is given credibility by the characters within Faulkner's novel.

The very names of the central characters are endowed with meaning through references within the text. Isaac
McCaslin, the central white character, compares himself to the biblical Isaac who was almost sacrificed by his father Abraham: "an Isaac born into a later life than Arbraham's and repudiating immolation: fatherless and therefore safe declining the altar because maybe this time the exasperated Hand might not supply the kid" (283). Ike defines himself as fatherless, because his father died when he was very young. Cass Edmonds, to whom he addresses these words, has been his father as much as his cousin. Ike also says that he is safe declining the altar, the trial, refusing the land, because there may be no salvation for him if he does take the land. Powers states that Isaac compares himself to Abraham because he is retaining none of the serious responsibility of the legacy from his biological father. However, Ike, unlike Abraham, actually does sacrifice his son to his beliefs, something he does not know will be required of him at the time that he makes the quoted self-reference to Cass. When Ike's wife informs him that she will no longer make love with him because he will not accept the McCaslin plantation, Ike loses the son he had hoped to have: "he would at least save and free his son and, saving and freeing his son, lost him" (351).

Ike's thoughts in Section 4 of "The Bear" endow Lucas Beauchamp's name with meaning within the context of the novel. Faulkner shows Ike thinking that Lucas uses three parts of old Carothers's name, but changes the first name from Lucius to Lucas, "simply taking the name and changing,
altering it, making it no longer the white man's but his own, by himself composed, himself selfprogenitive and nominate, by himself ancestored, as ... old Carothers himself was" (281). There are several points to consider here. First, there is no other evidence within the novel that Lucas did actually change the name himself, but it is interesting that Faulkner here designates that action to him and refers to him in terms similar to those used to refer to old Ben, who is his "own ungendered progenitor ..." 41 Morris thinks the meditation concerning Lucas's name encourages the reader "to read 'Lucas' with every mention of 'Lucius' and, conversely 'Lucius' for 'Lucas.'" 42 Faulkner's referring to Lucas as a self-made man makes the reader equate him with old Carothers, also a self-made man, patriarch of the McCaslin clan. Of course, the idea of Lucas as self-made underlines the fact that Lucas has no avowed male ancestors, because old Carothers declines to recognize his black offspring as his children, even though he was both father and grandfather to Lucas's father Turl. In this respect, Lucas, Fonsiba, and Tennie's Jim are all self-progenitive, as one must be when he has no grandparents who will acknowledge him. Thus, the genealogy is denied from both sides.

The Edmonds family does not deny the connection with old Carothers, but feels that the blood is diluted because it is derived from Carothers's daughter rather than from one of his sons. Thus, Cass does not feel entitled to inherit the McCaslin plantation in Ike's stead. The lives of the
Edmonds males, however, indicate that they carry the seeds of their ancestor Carothers as the generations of Edmondses recapitulate the action that represents, to Ike at least, the essence of the old man's life. Of Cass's life, aside from his closeness to Ike and his rearing of Ike as a son, little is known. Absolutely nothing is known of Cass's father, nor of his grandmother, the daughter of Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin. The two generations following Cass, Zack Edmonds and Roth Edmonds, are not described fully, but Faulkner does demonstrate that each of these men recapitulated Carothers's taking of Eunice and Tomasiná to his bed and getting them with children. Zack summons Molly to his house, where she functions as the wet nurse for his white child Roth after the death of Roth's mother in childbirth.\(^4\)\(^3\) Zack's action is a repetition of his ancestor's actions only in potential, because none of the characters ever know for certain whether Zack takes sexual advantage of Molly's presence in his house. Lucas meditates on this fact:

\[
\text{I wont never know. I donts want to. I ruther never to know than to find out later I have been fooled. . . . "How to God," he said, "can a black man ask a white man to please not lay down with his black wife? And even if he could ask it, how to God can the white man promise he wont?" (59)}
\]

Lucas's question emphasizes the master/slave relationship between the races, in spite of the freedom granted by the Emancipation Proclamation. Lucas has, however, felt capable of demanding to Zack that he return Molly to her home with him, to the marriage fire. He attributes his ability to
perform this action to the presence of Carothers's blood in his veins: "So I reckon I aint got old Carothers' blood for nothing, after all. Old Carothers, he thought. I needed him and he come and spoke for me" (58). Lucas also blames old Carothers for the time and effort which approaching Zack demanded; he states that he has had to beat not only Zack, but also their common ancestor (54). What Lucas refers to is the necessity of conquering the past and that attitude, exemplified by Carothers, that the Negro woman can be used sexually by the white master. Thus, Zack's action parallels Carothers's, while Lucas's approaching Zack equates to a denial of the typical slave stance, a denial made possible by the presence of the blood of the McCaslin ancestor in his veins.

Roth, nursed and mothered by the Negro Molly Beauchamp, recognizes her devotion to him. In words similar to the dedication to Go Down, Moses, Faulkner cites Molly's giving "without stint or expectation of reward that constant and abiding devotion and love which existed nowhere else in this world for him" (117). Roth, then, has been exposed to the kindness and loving of the black race. But he, too, recapitulates Carothers's act. He does not take the black descendant of Tennie's Jim without her consent, but he discards her in a manner similar to that of old Carothers: he leaves money in an envelope to be delivered by Ike when the woman comes in search of him. He does not legitimate the child who is the product of their union, as Carothers did not acknowl-
edge his Negro progeny. Faulkner writes that Samuel Worsham Beauchamp has in him something "from the father who begot and deserted him and who was now in the State Penitentiary for manslaughter--some seed not only violent but dangerous and bad" (372). As this seed serves as Faulkner's explanation for the bad actions of the son Samuel, so the miscegenation and incest of old Carothers explain the actions of his progeny. The Edmonds males do possess his seed, in spite of being descended through the female line, a fact indicated by their recapitulation of his central action, the definitive action of his life-style. Roth apparently treats his black woman with more kindness than his ancestor did the women he simply summoned to his bed. Roth lives with her as a husband, alienating himself from his family and hometown, while trying to make a life with her. However, ultimately he can not face living with a woman of the black race. He makes the determination to end their relationship. She indicates to Ike in the wilderness that they made the decision, but her very presence in the hunting camp indicates that her will was not reflected in that decision. Roth has assumed the expected role of the master and treated her as little more than a slave. Of his son he says nothing to the men who form the hunting party. He verbalizes the no that Carothers merely implied by his will, but his failure to verbalize the response in the presence of the person to whom it is addressed indicates that he continues, like Carothers and Zack before him, to view blacks as subservient creatures.
Ernst Cassirer writes about ancestor cults, where the individual is bound by his genealogy and "knows himself to be identical with the ancestors. The souls of his ancestors are not dead: they exist and are. . . ." Although not formally belonging to such a cult, Pleasant McIvor in *The Long Night* feels his dead father's presence, talks with his dead father, and assumes the revenge of that man's murder as his purpose. Similarly, the descendants of Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin assume aspects of his identity. The Edmonds males assume his derogatory notions about the black race. They reenact his miscegenation and, in the case of the unknowing Roth, his incest, for Roth's mistress is his distant cousin. Isaac McCaslin is morally offended by his ancestor's acts of miscegenation and incest, but, without realizing it, he recapitulates certain of Carothers's actions that are directly related to the sexual offenses. To a great extent, Ike chooses his life in response to the knowledge he gleans from the McCaslin family ledgers, learning that occurs when Ike is sixteen, the very age at which he witnesses the death of old Ben, the end of the ritual hunt at the de Spain hunting camp.

Speaking of other novels by William Faulkner, John Irwin writes that those of the novelist's characters who face their fears are able to slay their fears, but that those characters who are dominated by their fears are rendered impotent by them. The latter is the situation with Ike in *Go Down, Moses*. The lessons of the wilderness
have made him feel that the land should belong to no individual man, and the knowledge of the ledgers has made him fearful of the role the McCaslin blood must play in his life. The knowledge has also instilled in him a feeling of guilt, a sense of the need for atonement. As Morris states, he is "excluded from the true benefits of belonging yet not free from the genealogical myth's heavy burden of responsibility." Of course, Ike himself has chosen which parts of the genealogy to accept and which to refuse. Paul Ricoeur says that the guilty conscience effectively removes itself from relationship with others "in the very act by which it takes upon itself, and upon itself alone, the whole weight of evil." This is what Ike does when he determines the necessity of relinquishing the land and of distributing the monetary bequests to the black descendants of Carothers. Lytle writes that his social sacrifice results in a sacrifice of his bodily self when he gives up his sexual being by denying the plantation house to his wife. For Ike, however, the assumption of the burden of guilt is the responsibility required by his McCaslin heritage. Ironically, though, it is the assumption of the responsibility that results in Isaac's recapitulation of Carothers's failures, Isaac's continuation of the McCaslin tradition of failing to regard those of the Negro race as equal human beings. The actions Ike performs in inadvertent duplication of his grandfather, the giving of money to the McCaslin blacks, do not serve to enhance the community of man but, rather,
function to limit the family of Isaac.

Ike's interpretation of the bequest made by Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin to Turl is that the old man was not acknowledging his relationship to Turl, but "penalising his sons with it, charging them a cash forfeit on the accident of their own paternity" (269). Turl refuses the money Ike realizes was willed to him by Carothers because it "was cheaper than saying my son to a nigger" (269). Ike, unlike Buddy and Buck, does not have to pay a cash forfeit, but he does assume the responsibility for delivering the funds that the brothers had increased to $1,000 for each of Turl's immediate descendants, increases the twins made, in turn, without acknowledging their kinship to the Negro Turl, who was both their cousin and brother. In assuming the task of locating Turl's sons and daughter to pay them the legacy, Ike is repeating the sin of his ancestors because delivering the money, troublesome as it is, is easier than saying "my cousin" to the Negro members of his family. Faulkner emphasizes Ike's complicity in his grandfather's sins by the fact that Ike, rather than closing the ledgers, adds to what is written in the book of the family fall--and his very handwriting is "like that of his grandfather's save for the spelling" (273).

Ike cannot find Tennie's Jim, the eldest of Turl's living children, but he uses all of his tracking skills to locate Fonsiba. Faulkner labels him "an experienced bloodhound" (277), because he knows how to track game in the
wilderness, but also because he has had practice in the human hunt when he attempted to find Jim. Ike does find Fonsiba, and he leaves her without acknowledging their kinship; instead, he provides her with the means to receive a portion of the monetary legacy each month. This encounter with Fonsiba and her husband is Ike's most active functioning as agent of retribution for the McCaslin family, a role which he assumes again, but in a more passive manner each time. Lucas Beauchamp, the third child of Tennie and Turl, approaches Ike on Lucas's coming of age and asks for his part of the money and for Jim's share as well. Still later, when Ike is an old man, he gives money to Roth's mistress, money that is to take the place of Roth's recognition of the woman as his "wife" and mother of his son. Ike hands her the money, fumbling with "his heretofore obedient hand with what his brain was commanding of it, as if he had never performed such an action before" (357). Ike has, however, performed such an action before: he has delivered the money from Carothers McCaslin, which was easier than acknowledging his family. In "Delta Autumn," the woman comes in search of Roth, comes to Ike, as far as the wilderness. Ike has not sought this retribution; instead, the ritual of the bequest has become reduced to meaningless reaction. The woman even drops the money, because she wants something more substantial. Ike cannot give her what she wants, but he hands her his hunting horn, a prized possession, saying it is Roth's, making it a symbol of the child's relationship to his
family. However, he cannot verbally acknowledge the relationship. Instead, he tells the woman to return to the North and marry "a man in your own race" (363). This is Ike's final reenactment of the repudiation of the black members of his family in Go Down, Moses, and it is a reduction of the previous of such actions. When he sought his relatives out to make the bequests, at least Ike was taking an active role. As an old man, he becomes a passive participant in the retribution. In addition, through Roth's mistress, the evil of Carothers's old sin is allowed to permeate what is left of the wilderness.

Faulkner further emphasizes the meaninglessness of inheritances by his rather comical presentation of the legacy of Hubert Beauchamp to Isaac McCaslin. Hubert makes a ritual of preparing the gold cup and coins, a ritual re-enacted each time Ike and his mother visit Warwick. Hubert shows the wrapped parcel and, for a time, has all of the viewers test its weight. When the inheritance is finally opened by Ike in the company of Cass, the package is found to contain many notes of indebtedness from Hubert to Isaac and a tin coffee pot. The notes are all dated and signed, but they are worthless to Ike. The inheritance from Hubert will not set Ike free from dependence on the McCaslin money, which Cass intends to provide for him each month.

Faulkner also points out that Ike refuses the inheritance his wife leaves to him, the home they share even after they no longer share a marriage, "which his wife had willed
to him at her death and which he had pretended to accept, acquiesce to, to humor her, ease her going but which was not his, will or not, chancery dying wishes mortmain possession or whatever" (4). This bequest could even be viewed as Ike's wife's attempt to rectify her failure to acknowledge him as husband after he would not take the McCaslin property, her action not unlike his responses to the needs of his black family members. As he did not want to own the real estate of the McCaslin family, that symbol of Carothers's grand design for social prominence, so he does not intend to own even a small home in town. The ideals Ike has assumed are of prime importance to him; maintaining them transcends his commitment to any of the standard practices of society. He is content with one room or, even more, with a cot inside a tent. Just as he limits his family, does not acknowledge those who are not acceptable as relatives and does not accept the property that could have "bought" him his wife and maybe a son, so he limits his space. David Minter says that Ike is so concerned with "maintaining his own purity" that he "ends in virtual isolation." He views Ike as "too reductive an imitation of Jesus." At the same time, Ike is not reductive enough a copy of Carothers McCaslin. He has inherited more than he intended to inherit.
IV

The bequests left behind by the dead are messages, often ambiguous, to those remaining alive. Communication, intercourse with one's fellow men, is necessary if one is to provide continuity in relationships and effect meaningful communities. Like W. H. Auden, Brooks defines community in terms of shared values and beliefs. Communication is certainly necessary if one is to learn to share values and beliefs. In Go Down, Moses, Faulkner presents his characters engaging in various forms of communication. Lewis P. Simpson says that Faulkner, in his writing, assumes the role of the storyteller who is the seer and prophet; defining Faulkner's role, Simpson states that the Biblical "storyteller told his people their story out of his own heart and out of his own art as God gave him the power to tell it." Simpson also makes the point that Ike, despite the talk he indulges in during the novel, does not achieve the status of the biblical storyteller. Ike delineates the ideal of communication in his conversation with Cass Edmonds in the McCaslin commissary in Part 4 of "The Bear." He says that men's hearts know truth: "if truth is one thing to me and another thing to you, how will we choose which is truth? You don't need to choose. The heart already knows" (260). When men communicate through their hearts, then there will be true community.
However, the communication exhibited in the novel effects transitory communities at best and fails totally at worst.

One type of communication Faulkner utilizes in the novel is the folktale, those stories generally passed on orally from man to man, communications of events and ideas about events. The folktales used by Faulkner in *Go Down, Moses* demonstrate the manner in which men create their own myths. The author begins his presentation of this process at the commencement of the novel with the section "Was." Lewis Dabney believes that the introductory segment at the beginning of "Was" demonstrates the importance of the oral tradition for Faulkner. The opening introduces Ike and then asserts that he is neither a participant nor an observer of the events to follow: "not something he had participated in or even remembered except from the hearing, the listening, come to him through and from his cousin McCaslin" (4). The tale that follows is of importance to Ike because it presents part of the courtship of his mother and father. Faulkner emphasizes the fact that the story is a tale told by Cass by pointing out Cass's lack of knowledge about some aspects of the situation. Cass does not understand all of the adult talk: "Then Miss Sophonsiba said something about a bumblebee, but he couldn't remember that" (11). Cass refers to the formality of bowing to Miss Sophonsiba as dragging his foot. Still, he remembers the events and relates them to Ike, telling him about the races, the chase for the fox, for
the slave, and for the mate. The story is related by Cass as a legend of the McCaslin family, much like the oft-repeated story about the understanding between the slaves and the McCaslin twins, who are reluctant slave owners: "for fifty years afterward, when the boy himself was big to hear and remember it, there was in the land a sort of folk-tale" (262) about the night freedom of slaves. Even Ike becomes a kind of folktale among the people of Jefferson. Faulkner indicates throughout the novel that the other characters view Ike as a victim of the Edmonds males, a man cheated out of his inheritance. In his introduction to Ike in "Was," Faulkner states that the Edmonds males are bequestors of the land, "which some had thought then and some still thought should have been Isaac's" (3). Lucas thinks that Cass Edmonds cheated Ike out of his inheritance, which affects Lucas's attitude toward the Edmonds males, who attempt to advise him on what crops to grow and how to farm them. Carl Rollyson believes that the story told in "Was" becomes a type of family inheritance, as all of the tales and rumors told about the McCaslin family become part of Ike's inheritance and part of the understanding others develop concerning Ike and his life. Because the tales do not necessarily represent the truth or the whole story about events, the sense of relationship among characters in the novel is not generally augmented by the tales as shown.

Besides passing down the family history in talk, an
action that confuses as much as it clarifies, Faulkner's characters in *Go Down, Moses* engage in other forms of extended discourse. For example, as John Scharr suggests, the conventions of the hunt are passed on verbally, creating what he labels a "communal memory." Talk of this nature has served to unite Sam Fathers and Ike as Sam was teaching Ike the ways of the hunt:

And as he [Sam] talked about those old times and those dead and vanished men of another race from either that the boy knew, gradually to the boy those old times would cease to be old times and would become a part of the boy's present, not only as if they had happened yesterday but as if they were still happening. . . . (171)

The shared talk makes Ike feel such a kinship with Sam that it is as if they have shared the same life. Indeed, Faulkner demonstrates that they do share a similar life, because both limit their social involvement increasingly as they grow older. Sam, however, has continued to teach Ike and work with him until Sam's death, while Ike is shown in "Delta Autumn" with no apprentice in the ways of the wilderness. In "The Bear" section of the novel, the talk of hunting is idealized as "the best of all talking . . . the best of all breathing and forever the best of all listening, the voices quiet and weighty and deliberate for retrospection and recollection and exactitude" (191-192). The men on the hunt in "The Bear" are shown in petty bickering and jealousies, such as the constant arguments between Ash and Boon, but overall there is the shared purpose of the hunt. By the time
of "Delta Autumn," sixty years later, the hunt has changed. The reverence is missing, probably because the hunters are not confronted with an awesome and extensive wilderness such as that at Major de Spain's hunting camp. In "The Bear" Faulkner indicates that the talk of the hunt permeates even town life, that it takes place "in the libraries of town houses or the offices of plantation houses or (and best of all) in the camps themselves where the intact and still-warm meat yet hung" (192). Thus, although the talking is best on the scene, it exists away from the hunt; the men carry the spirit of the wilderness into the community. The differences between Ike's life as he intended to live it and as he actually lived it suggest that the ideal can become a meaningless gesture. In "Delta Autumn" it is the talk of the town that pervades the wilderness. The men joke and tease Roth about his affair with the Negro woman, an affair that commenced during times Roth had pretended to be out hunting. The voices in the camp are not shown to be "quiet and weighty and deliberate" but rather are bantering and disrespectful. The men do not show respect in their manner of address to Ike, unlike the previous generation's stance toward Sam Fathers. The community of the hunt cannot be revitalized by the talk shown in "Delta Autumn," just as even the reverence of the earlier talk could not insure the perpetuation of the hunt community.

William Nestrick states that the voice in Part 4 of
"The Bear," a voice he identifies as Faulkner's, "assumes ritual's function of returning a fluidity to social institutions." 57 Indeed the talk of Part 4 renders thought and time fluid as well. Cassirer writes, "Mythic thinking . . . discloses an increasing endeavor to articulate all substance in a common spatial order and all happenings in a common order of time and destiny." 58 This is the apparent aim in Part 4 of "The Bear," where Faulkner presents a history of the South, a history of the McCaslin family, and a view of the past, present, and future of Ike's life, all in a sentence fragment! J. Douglas Canfield says that in this scene in the commissary at Ike's coming-of-age, Ike makes the myths; he explains social and family origins, determines the way of final justice, defines history; and when Cass objects to his findings, Ike alters his myths. Thus, the talk in Part 4 creates fictions. 59 The voices of Cass and Ike in Part 4 are probably quiet and weighty and deliberate, like the voices of the hunting talk, and they do lead to retrospection and recollection, but not to exactitude. Community is not achieved by the ritual of the talk in the commissary, because Ike and Cass do not, finally, understand each other. Ike's arguments are based on the Bible, on what he believes God intends for the land: for man "to hold the earth mutual and intact in the communal anonymity of brotherhood" (257). As Ike sees it, God's intent is perfect and complete communitas, even to the ownership of the land. The Bible tells
of the fall of man, and Ike views himself, at least in part, as an instrument for man's redemption. The ledgers, remembering of which is part of the ritual Ike and Cass share in "The Bear," record the fall of Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin. Ike feels that God intends him to right that wrong by repudiating the McCaslin plantation in an effort to set some of God's people free. Ike's arguments are also grounded in the teachings of Sam in the wilderness, where Ike observed the beauty of freedom. Cass argues with Ike, asserting his cousin/son's ownership of the land, either through the McCaslin bloodline and the wills or through his inheritance of the meaning of the wilderness from Sam. However, the talk of Part 4 of "The Bear," like the talk of Ike and his black female relative in "Delta Autumn," is an unsuccessful ritual because the two never truly understand each other. Cass finally accepts what his young relative has decided, but accepts it with no real comprehension. In fact, even Isaac must admit that he does not completely understand his decision. "I'm trying to explain to the head of my family something which I have got to do which I don't quite understand myself, not in justification of it but to explain it if I can" (288). The ultimate lack of understanding between the two is exemplified by the fact that Faulkner does not record the end of their conversation. It could have no conclusion because the two could reach no unity, no community of understanding.
The oral tradition presented in *Go Down, Moses* reveals a fluidity, an ability to modify and reinterpret events and ideas, even after they have been verbalized a number of times. In "Was," Cass says he does not remember what Miss Sophonsiba said about Buck being a bumblebee, but then moments later he modifies that assertion by paraphrasing her comparison of Buck to a flitting bee. Ike talks to Cass in "The Bear," revising his explanation of his decision as necessary in response to Cass's questions and arguments. When Cass develops the point that Ike should inherit the land because of his relationship with Sam Fathers, if not because of his bloodline to Carothers McCaslin, Ike states that it was Sam who set him free from the ownership of the land, augmenting an argument formulated previously in terms of biblical explanations.

In the novel, Faulkner also presents a form of history different from that of the folk-tale, discourse different from the talk in the novel: the history written in the McCaslin ledgers. Rollyson makes the point that the ledgers are fixed, immediate, as opposed to the history exhibited in "Was." Ike must learn the meanings of the ledgers, be initiated to them, just as he was to the ways of the wilderness. When Ike first begins his perusal of the ledgers, he is confronted with writings by his father and uncle, "the twins who were identical even in their handwriting, unless you had specimens side by side to compare, and even when
both hands appeared on the same page... they both looked as though they had been written by the same perfectly normal ten-year-old boy, even to the spelling" (263). Faulkner writes of Ike's initiation in the reading of the ledgers but, like his review of Ike's initiation in the ways of the wilderness, he presents the steps out of chronological order, forcing the reader to reorganize the order of the entries. Faulkner writes of Ike's reading of Buck and Buddy's communication about the death of Eunice in 1932, seeing Buddy's handwriting, "the first time he had seen it in the ledger to distinguish it as his uncle's" (267). Earlier Faulkner had quoted the ledgers on the death of old Carothers in 1837, Ike reading "the hand which he could now recognise at first glance as his father's" (266). Just as Ike learned to read Ben's print when compared to other bears', and not merely the crooked print, so he learns to read the writing of his father and uncle, then to distinguish between the two, and finally he learns the meaning of what he reads. Once he has done this, Ike does not return to the ledgers, just as he did not return to the de Spain camp but once after the death of old Ben. "He would never need look at the ledgers again nor did he; the yellowed pages in their fading and implacalbe succession were as much a part of his consciousness and would remain so forever, as the fact of his own nativity" (271). Nestrick writes, "Ike internalizes the ledgers in order to keep the totality
intact in a single instant.\textsuperscript{61} In fact, this is the manner in which the parts of the ledgers are presented in "The Bear": they flash through Ike's mind during his conversation with Cass. Faulkner indicates that the ledgers are also part of Cass's consciousness; during their conversation Cass waves his hand to refer to the ledgers, which contain the history shared by the two men, a history Ike does add to as he records his attempts to make the bequests granted by his predecessors. Learning to read the ledgers has been part of Ike's education, one of the events of his sixteenth year that lead to the decision to repudiate his inheritance and necessitate the discussion with Cass in the commissary. Learning to read the ledgers leaves Isaac with the need to write additional items in those volumes, to attempt to write an acceptable conclusion to the story he found within the old journals.

Ike also has to learn to read the will of his grandfather McCaslin, the will written with "no effort to punctuate or construct whatever, just as he made no effort to explain or obfuscate the thousand-dollar legacy to the son of an unmarried slave-girl" (269), just as he left it to Ike to construct the meaning and to punctuate by attempting to complete the legacy, attempting to put a period at the end of the story. With Cass as his teacher, Ike learns to read and understand "Ode on a Grecian Urn" as a response to the events he witnessed with Sam in the wilderness in "The Old
People." However, Ike's insistence upon completing the histories as recorded in the ledgers proves that he did not understand the entire lesson of the poem. Cass explains that Keats was talking about truth, which "covers all things which touch the heart--honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love" (297). In the commissary at the age of twenty-one, Ike will remind Cass that the heart knows truth, explaining how he can determine what is truth among his readings from the Bible. But Cass does not explain to the young Ike that Keats was also talking about the need for process to continue; Cass does not explicate that perhaps Ike had not shot old Ben when he had the chance because Ike did not want the hunt for Ben to end. Indeed, the death of the bear results in the end of the hunt as it was practiced in "The Old People" and "The Bear," suggesting that it was right for Ike to desire not to hasten the death of Ben. However, Ike fails to take this empirical lesson and the lesson of Keats's poem and apply them to life outside the wilderness. He works to complete the process exposed in the McCaslin ledgers, to write a conclusion to his reading.

In Go Down, Moses, Faulkner uses imagery relating to communication to demonstrate the failures of understanding in the novel, the ways in which the characters exhibit their distances from each other, their estrangement from community, especially across racial boundaries. Nestrick says that the use of the white man's language by the husband of
the black Sophonsiba demonstrates his entrapment within the social structure. It is interesting that the man also mocks the ways of the white man in his attempt to be like the white man: he sits in his desolate house, wearing "a pair of gold-framed spectacles which . . . did not even contain lenses, reading a book in the midst of that desolation" (278). Isaac attempts to reason with the man, to point out the absurdity of the situation, but the man cannot communicate with Ike. On the other hand, Lucas Beauchamp routinely talks in an educated manner, but, when it suits his purpose, he can become the stereotypical black farm hand. When he informs on George Wilkins to Roth Edmonds, he adopts the farm hand mode: "Without changing the inflection of his voice and apparently without effort or even design Lucas became not Negro but nigger, not secret so much as impenetrable, not servile and not effacing, but enveloping himself in an aura of timeless and stupid passivity almost like a smell" (59-60). By disguising his true self, Lucas can become what Roth expects of a black man and thereby achieve certain ends. What he does not do, however, is effect any meaningful communication with Roth, because it is impossible to share thus when one is playing a role. Roth understands and hears Lucas's message, but he does not learn the truth for Lucas does not intend for the truth to be interpreted.

The section "Pantaloons in Black" most fully develops
the theme of the failure of communication between the races. Even the grave of the black Mannie is outside the realm of the white man's understanding, perhaps purposely so:

the grave, save for its rawness, resembled any other marked off without order about the barren plot by shards of pottery and broken bottles and old brick and other objects insignificant to sight but actually of a profound meaning and fatal to touch, which no white man could have read. (135)

The inability of the white race to understand the graveyard parallels the failure to understand Rider's reaction to his wife's death. This is demonstrated by the discussion between the deputy and his wife, which takes place at the end of the section. First, they barely manage to communicate with each other, he talking as she enters and leaves the room, preparing his supper but not responding to the story he relates. Warren Akin points out that even after the eventful story her husband has told, the woman must seek drama at the movies. 64 The deputy interprets Rider's actions as showing a lack of love for Mannie. He does not even consider the possibility Faulkner develops in the story: that Rider is so overcome by grief that he cannot bear to be on earth without his wife. Faulkner offers the deputy's comments as an ironic coda to the story, following the author's intense descriptions of Rider's anguish. However, he also shows that the deputy is a victim of the way whites view blacks. He judges Rider as he does because he has a stereotyped picture of what a black man's response to death will be. To the deputy,
Rider's sharing in the grave digging means Rider is not grieving. Then Rider reports to work when everyone "expected him to take the day off since even a nigger couldn't want no better excuse for a holiday than he had just buried his wife, when a white man would have took the day off out of pure respect no matter how he felt about his wife" (156). Walter Taylor says that the deputy and his wife are "through their very insensitivity equipped to survive in Yoknapatawpha society. . . ." Rider's sensitivity to his loss makes life in society impossible.

Yoknapatawpha seems to be a world where the races do not want to understand each other. However, in the "Go Down, Moses" section of the novel, Faulkner shows Gavin Stevens attempting to relate to the grief of Molly Beauchamp. Karl Zender says that the illiteracy of Molly prevents her from the knowledge of her grandson's true fate, but Stevens feels that she knows the truth, just as she knew to come to town to inquire about him. Gavin's visit to Miss Worsham's house indicates that he does not truly understand Molly and her feelings. When he enters the room he hears Molly, Hamp Worsham and his wife, and Miss Worsham all singing a chant about the fate of Samuel Worsham Beauchamp. Stevens attempts to penetrate this participatory chant and insert his view of what happened to the young man, but he fails to realize that his words have no meaning for those present. He admits to Miss Worsham that he should not have come, and she responds,
"It's our grief" (381). Morris labels Gavin the last "failed interpreter" within the novel. Miss Worsham's understanding of Molly derives from sharing of maternal feelings, female instincts. But Gavin Stevens does not share these instincts. His presence in the novel, a man of the city in a novel composed almost entirely of incidents taking place in the wilderness, underlines the universality of the failure of communication, whether spoken or written.
Zender says that Ike reads the ledgers to discover a truth he has long suspected; then, according to Zender, Ike returns to the text to reread and understand. Faulkner tells the reader of *Go Down, Moses* that Isaac does not reread the ledgers because he does not need to. However, as indicated in Part 4 of "The Bear," Ike does return, in his mind, to the ledgers. He recalls what he has read and he contemplates anew the meanings he found there. So, too, the reader of Faulkner's novel seeks meaning and must work to comprehend the characters' actions and the author's intentions in *Go Down, Moses*. The reader thus shares in Ike McCaslin's experience of learning to read correctly. Unlike *The Long Night* and *The Fathers*, which were narrated by a specific narrator and addressed to an implied audience with which the reader could identify, there is no specific narrator in *Go Down, Moses* and no address directed to the reader. There is no implied community of storyteller and listener within the novel. The reader must learn to read on his own, without a character created by the author to share in the learning process.

It appears that Faulkner structured some elements of the novel deliberately to confuse the reader, to frustrate understanding and eliminate any prospects for a reader/writ-
er community. Like the marble game in The Long Night, a game not familiar to the average reader of the work and for which no rules were even implied in the text, the poker game in the "Was" section of Faulkner's novel mystifies the reader. Stud poker is a game with rules familiar to most readers, but the manner of placing bets in "Was" renders the outcome of the game confusing. Hubert Beauchamp structures the betting somewhat ambiguously from the first in an effort to preserve the dignity of his sister Sophonsiba. He says to Buck, "'The lowest hand wins Sibbey and buys the niggers'" (24). He does not want to say that the loser has to take his sister, so he structures the game so that the lowest hand, the traditional losing hand, "wins" Sophonsiba and the privilege of buying a slave from the player with the higher hand. When Buddy challenges Hubert, in an effort to redeem Buck, who lost to Hubert the previous night, the betting becomes even more confusing. Hubert summarizes the possibilities, but the manner in which Tennie is obtained by the McCaslings is not entirely clear, even after the summary. This confusion forces the reader to read more closely, but it also distances him from those events he cannot comprehend.

Critics have often pointed out that Faulkner frustrates his reader through his use of confusing pronouns and other referents. Gail Mortimer, while agreeing that Faulkner uses ambiguous referents, notes that such use enriches his writ-
ing, leads to a fullness, as words "leap both forward and backward for meaning." 69 The other side of the fullness is, of course, the sense of confusion that precedes the realiza-
tion of the enrichment. For example, in Go Down, Moses, Faulkner uses the single name McCaslin to refer to Cass Edmonds in Part 4 of "The Bear" and later to Ike McCaslin in "Delta Autumn." This results in some confusion when Faulkner switches from calling his character Uncle Ike in "Delta Autumn" to labeling him McCaslin: "'I was awake,' McCaslin said. 'Are you going to shoot that shotgun today?'" (355). The reader has come to think of McCaslin as Cass after read-
ing "The Bear" and, in that section, Ike as he. However, once the confusion in "Delta Autumn" is overcome, the reader is reminded of the close relationship between the two men, exemplified in their sharing of the same name. Similarly, the use of unclear pronouns can both frustrate and enrich. David Walker cites this practice as one of the elements of Faulkner's writing that distances the reader. 70 To take one example of this practice, in "The Fire and the Hearth" Faulkner writes of Turl's bequest of $1,000 from his unacknowledging father Carothers McCaslin; in the same paragraph Faulkner discusses the relinquishment of the McCaslin plan-
tation by Isaac, noting that Ike's action was not understood by others. Faulkner then writes that Ike

had retained of the patrimony, and by his own request, only the trusteeship of the legacy which his negro uncle still could not quite seem to comprehend was his for the asking.
He never asked for it. (106)

The *He* that opens the new paragraph is confusing, coming as it does after the references to both Ike and Turl. Faulkner has indicated elsewhere within the novel that Ike could have had the plantation at any time. The *he* then seems to refer to either Ike or Turl. Of course, the following sentences clarify Faulkner's intended antecedent, but for the moment the reader is confused. In addition, the reader is enriched by being reminded of the closeness of the Negro Turl and the white Isaac, who share the same grandfather and who both refuse their inheritances. The confusion, then, demonstrates and emphasizes the closeness of the white and black branches of the McCaslin family.

Walter Slatoff writes of Faulkner's "marathon sentences whose structure and syntax are often perplexing or obscure." Such sentences, of course, tend to frustrate a reader's involvement in the text. Conrad Aiken cites his annoyance at the convoluted sentences used by Faulkner, as many critics indicate confusion about Part 4 of "The Bear" due to its sentence structure. Aiken admits, however, that the style is also immerging, and suggests that the sentence structure relates to Faulkner's manner of withholding meaning, which serves to involve the reader in ferreting out the truth. The novel cannot be read in a light or careless manner, certainly, but must be studied by the reader. Attention must be paid to the changes in speaker in Part 4 of
"The Bear." The reader must order the hunts discussed in "The Old People" and "The Bear" if he is to obtain a chronological picture of Ike's development as a woodsman. Attention must be paid or the reader will not know which of the Edmonds males is being discussed in the parts of "The Fire and the Hearth" as Lucas mentally reviews his past relationship with Zack even as he prepares to enter into a milder form of conflict with Roth Edmonds. Faulkner's fluidity of language and time both frustrates and involves the reader. Nestrick writes about the fluidity of language in words that could also refer to the fullness of time in the novel: "By stretching out the syntax, Faulkner requires the reader to hold the elements in a state of fluidity." He believes the reader's relinquishment of the conventions of grammar parallels Ike's relinquishment of the land. The difficulty of the language makes comprehension of the text a problem for the reader, but paradoxically unites him with Isaac McCaslin.

Richard King writes that the reader is also placed into a limited community with Ike in that he must work with Ike to construct the ledgers. Ike takes what King labels "proto-journals" and composes a chronicle that becomes a narrative in his mind. Rollyson notes that Isaac becomes a historian in reading and comprehending the journals, a role the reader shares. The reader, in fact, has to work at what amounts to a parallel understanding, because Ike does not explicate
his findings in a clear, straightforward manner. As Lacy Buchan in *The Fathers* cannot state that Jane Posey was raped, so Ike cannot make the flat statement that his grandfather committed incest and miscegenation. Even as he realizes what must have happened, he undercuts his realization: "His own daughter his own daughter. No No Not even him" (270). Then, like Quentin and Shreve in *Absalom, Absalom!*, Isaac develops a scenario of the event as it might have occurred. Canfield believes that the reader of *Go Down, Moses*, as he constructs the ledgers' meaning, acts like Quentin and Shreve. 76 However, Canfield fails to note that the reader is sharing a role with Isaac McCaslin, who shares with the reader such knowledge as he possesses—the text of the ledgers and the knowledge that Tommie's Turl had more than one-half white blood—even if he has trouble stating his knowledge and conclusions outright. The serious reader, as he rereads Faulkner's novel, shares Isaac's experience even more closely. Writing of Ike's reading of the ledgers, Faulkner states, "He knew what he was going to find before he found it" (268). This is the experience of rereading *Go Down, Moses*: the reader knows what is there, because he has read the novel previously, but he still has to find it again, read the text more closely, and discover more about the events recorded in the novel, just as Ike learned more about the McCaslin genealogy from his reading of the ledgers, learned more about the facts of which he was
already, if unconsciously, aware, although he had not yet found them asserted prior to the reading. As Ike reads, he is piecing together the evidence of Carothers's actions, "finding, beginning to find on the next succeeding page what he knew he would find" (268). Lawrance Thompson explains that Faulkner "forces the reader to worry over, struggle with, and piece together, various clues as to family relationships, in order to understand even the surface significance of the actions." What Thompson does not point out is that this unites the reader with Ike, who must accomplish the same tasks to understand the actions taken by his own family. Thus, the reader does share a relationship with Ike in this endeavor, a community that will be broken when Ike repudiates his inheritance and, later in the novel, when Ike, after all he has read and all he has said in "The Bear," can tell his black, distant cousin in "Delta Autumn" that she should return to the North and marry a black man, even in revenge if she desires. While it is possible to identify with Ike in the work of understanding the events of his genealogy, it is not so easy to comprehend his subsequent actions. Part of the reader's confusion results, of course, from Isaac's admitted uncertainty about why he feels he must act as he chooses to act.

Minter writes that Go Down, Moses is the "text of a text" because it is fragmentary and cryptic, not fixed in meaning. The novel is the "reader's perfect text" because
interpretation of it "must be carried on beyond the text. . . ."
Not only does the reader share in Ike's task of understanding, but the reader must work to comprehend other events of the novel, to order all of the actions therein. Zender offers a close interpretation of the ledgers and then states that "the act of reading, if properly done, is very nearly as strenuous and demanding as the act of writing." Thus, Zender thinks that the reader shares in the work of the writer. Faulkner, like Allen Tate, had some interest in communing with his reader, as he indicated when he helped readers to perform the arduous task of reading by answering questions at seminars in various colleges and universities around the world, although he was generally reluctant to make such appearances. In spite of statements that he would prefer to be able to remain separate from his work, he did explicate the work. Also like Tate, Faulkner refrained from making definitive statements about the actions of his characters, indicating that they were real people for him, that their motivations were complex and could not be pinned down, even by the author! This places Faulkner as author in a position similar to that of the reader: another interpreter of actions.

Andrew Lytle writes of Faulkner's overall theme in terms that explain how Faulkner's difficult style functions as an element of his interpretation of life:

For the literary man to act is to write. [The agrarians] were conscious of time, certainly,
but their action concerned itself with the structure of society, the contradictory assumptions as to its being. The structure is in its institutions. The institution is defined by conventions. Belief, the life of the state, functions through its conventions. When these are out of joint, the state is in peril. Indeed Faulkner's technical convention is the fragmentation of the social conventions.

As Lytle develops it, Faulkner's convoluted style is part of his message to the reader. While the style serves to distance many readers, to make some avoid any attempts at reading his works, Faulkner's style also functions to communicate his understanding of the world. The fragmentary nature of life is reflected in the fragmentary ordering of Go Down, Moses. Unlike The Long Night and The Fathers, Faulkner's novel is not told in chronological order in one movement from beginning to end. Rather, it is related through a series of stories, overlapping, recapitulating, leaving gaps, mirroring men's relationships with one another. Morris thinks this manner of presentation enhances the possibility of the author's relationship with the reader: "Through participation in the order of language created by the author's articulation, the reader experiences the basic human struggle to stabilize his own, always tentative, being."82 Thus, the reader is united in purpose with the author, but it is a tenuous union because of the many aspects of Faulkner's writing that frustrate any reader's attempts to arrive at a full understanding of his work.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1 Critics have debated whether Go Down, Moses is a collection of short stories or an integrated novel. According to Faulkner himself, "I remember the shock (mild) I got when I saw the printed title page. . . . [N]obody but Random House seemed to labor under the impression that GO DOWN MOSES should be titled "and other stories" . . . Moses is indeed a novel." Quoted in Joseph Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography (New York: Random House, 1974), p.1102.


6 Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Volume Two: Mythical Thought, trans. Ralph Manheim (New

7 Ibid.

8 "I think that every man and woman, at the instant when it don't even matter whether they marry or not, I think that whether they marry then or afterward or don't never, at that instant the two of them together were God." (Ike in Go Down, Moses, p.348).


12 Ibid., p.24.

13 Faulkner, either inadvertently or for some unexplained reason, changed the spelling of Molly's name to Mollie for the "Go Down, Moses" section of the novel. For clarity, I shall spell the name Molly throughout, regardless of which section I am discussing.


16 Walter Brylowski, Faulkner's Olympian Laugh: Myth in


18 Morris, p.81.


21 Morris, p.75.


23 Howe, p.93.


25 Ibid.

26 Brylowski, p.155.

27 Nestrick, p.132.


30 Morris, p.15.
31 Powers, p.172.
32 Morris, p.16.
33 Powers, p.185.
34 Brylowski makes a similar point on p.162.
35 Faulkner, p.3 and, with variations, p.106. Faulkner specifies that Ike is called "Uncle" (336) and emphasizes throughout his lack of a son (pp.315 and 351, for examples).
37 Vickery, p.133.
38 Brooks, p.60.
40 Powers, p.175.
41 Faulkner, p.210. Faulkner also compares Lucas to a bear when he faces Zack Edmonds over the latter's bed: "[Zack] saw the whites of the negro's eyes rush suddenly with red like the eyes of a bayed animal--a bear, a fox" (55).
42 Morris, p.30.
Cassirer, p. 176.


Morris, p. 85.


Powers makes a similar point on p. 173.


Ibid. Simpson, at this point, discusses Ike as he was presented in the version of "The Bear" that was published in *The Portable Faulkner*.


Carl E. Rollyson, "Faulkner as Historian: The Commis-


57 Nestrick, p.132.

58 Cassirer, p.80.

59 Canfield, p.375.

60 Rollyson, p.31.

61 Nestrick, p.135.

62 Ibid., p.132.

63 The reading of Sophonsiba's husband in the face of the desolation that is his farm parallels Major de Spain's turning back to his papers to avoid Ike's questions about returning to the wilderness of the Major's camp after the death of Ben (p.317).

64 Akin, p.404.


67 Morris, p.76.

68 Zender, p.96.


73 Nestrick, p.136.


75 Rollyson, p.35.

76 Canfield, p.360.


78 Minter, p.187.

79 Zender, p.93.

80 Faulkner reiterated this desire many times in his communication with Malcolm Cowley prior to the publication of *The Portable Faulkner*. Citing his wish to have no biographical material included in the volume, he writes to Cowley in a letter dated Monday [18 Feb. 1946], "I would have
preferred nothing at all prior to the instant I began to write, as though Faulkner and Typewriter were concomitant, coadjutant and without past on the moment they first faced each other at the suitable (nameless) table." Quoted in Selected Letters of William Faulkner, ed. Joseph Blotner (New York: Random House, 1977), p.222.


82 Morris, p.11.
CONCLUSION

In an essay entitled "The Communal World of Southern Literature," Louise Cowan writes:

When we view modern Southern writing within the framework of its time, we should be struck by a remarkable distinction: in this whole body of literature there is little sign of that insistent theme of loneliness which has so noticeably marked the twentieth-century arts.

She continues with this idea, stating that the communal world with its culture and diversity, engendering love and loyalty, is a strong theme in Lytle, Tate, and Faulkner, among others. C. Vann Woodward believes that Southern writers create man as "an inextricable part of a living history and community, attached and determined in a thousand ways by other wills and destinies of people he has only heard about." Writing in 1982 about the actual, rather than the fictional South, Bertram Wyatt-Brown suggests that community values continue to be of primary importance to people in determining the conduct of their lives.

While Wyatt-Brown's statement may accurately reflect the reality of life in the South today, it is not a reality reflected in the fiction of the South, despite the contentions of Louise Cowan. Andrew Lytle's The Long Night demonstrates the importance of family to the author and exhibits
the role of the code of family honor. The need to maintain
the honor of the family does not, however, unite the family;
instead, it splits the family into factions. Eventually, the
responsibility for vengeance falls on young Pleasant McIvor,
who desires the sole responsibility and creates a ritualistic
manner of performing the necessary killings. H. L. Weatherby
says that the theme of the novel becomes the "conflict
between existence and its negation."\(^6\) Pleasant clearly
represents the negation of existence as he pursues his
vengeance, but the ritual does not bring him the peace he
expects. Contrary to Cowan's analysis, he becomes an in-
tensely lonely character as he battles within himself to
determine the course of action he should follow, the contin-
uation of the revenge ritual or full involvement in the Army
of the Confederacy and its implied brotherhood. When his
only friend, a friend in potential more than actuality, is
killed as a result of his neglect of his Army duties, Pleasant
retreats from both courses and isolates himself
totally, both socially and geographically. Even his own im-
mediate family cannot provide the solace Pleasant requires
toward the end of his life, so he summons a distant relative
to witness the ritual telling of his story. Lytle provides
no indication of whether the confessional telling of the
story offers any comfort, but the listener expresses fear
of, rather than community with, Pleasant as a result of the
story: "By degrees the steady fall of his words had beat all
the warmth out of my senses, until terror crept over my body, leaving it defenseless in the grip of rigid nerves."  

Allen Tate's *The Fathers* also presents a character who is compelled to relate his own story. At the opening of that novel, Lacy Buchan reveals that he is "an unmarried old man" with "nothing else to do" but tell his story. He indicates no community at all in his life, as he addresses his story to no particular auditor. Lacy presents the story of his conflict between the heritage of his natural father, Major Buchan, and that of his brother-in-law, George Posey. Major Buchan is the totally social man, a person whose life is dominated by ritual. For Arthur Mizener, the way in which the Buchan patriarch lives shows "the static condition a society reaches when, by slow degrees, it has disciplined all personal feeling to custom so that the individual no longer exists apart from the ritual of society and the ritual of society expresses all the feelings the individual knows." The Major relates to his relatives, even his youngest son, by following the dictates of ritual, ritual that provides a substitution for community rather than effecting community. Lacy tells of his father's formal address, even to his children, and his failure to demonstrate closeness as they mourn the death of Sarah Buchan. Lacy even imagines that the Major would disinherit Semmes Buchan in a ceremonial manner. In addition to his presentation of the fully ritualized world of the Buchans, Lacy depicts the isolated,
individualized home of the Posey family, where the extended family resides together, but in a house characterized by closed bedroom doors. When Lacy lives there, he experiences intense loneliness as he lies awake in the dark, pondering the experience of the Posey life-style: "... I recalled the long procession of silent evenings in that house. There would be talking for five or ten minutes, then doors would close, and silence for a while... I had nothing to do with anything in that house but I saw no way of getting out of it."10 When Lacy does finally get out of the house, it is after he witnesses the supposed defilement of Jane Posey and the deaths of George's mother, his own brother, and George's black half-brother Jim. Lacy escapes to the formalized life at Pleasant Hill. But the novel demonstrates that he receives no lasting solace there. Lacy's solitary condition as he narrates his story indicates that neither of the fathers of his life has provided him with a means for community.

Like Lacy Buchan, William Faulkner's Isaac McCaslin receives no inheritance that enables him to develop meaningful communities. Many social rituals are presented in Go Down, Moses, but none are shown providing the characters with lasting, sharing relationships. Although Faulkner's novel is not presented as the narration of one of the characters, there is much talk within the work. Ike talks throughout Part 4 of "The Bear" section, discussing the real estate and the guilt he has inherited from Lucius Quintus
Carothers McCaslin and the ideal of freedom of life in the woods he has inherited from his spiritual father, Sam Fathers. But he never does achieve true closeness with Cass Edmonds as a result of the talk in "The Bear," because he never makes Cass understand why he chooses his particular course of action, why he relinquishes the plantation. There is also "the best of all talking"11 of the hunt, one of the central motifs of the novel. The hunt produces transitory communities that exist for a brief period each year, but generally do not transcend the time in the wilderness to exist in civilization. Faulkner's novel suggests that Ike ends his life in virtual isolation, having relinquished the plantation and thereby sacrificed his wife and physical love and any chance for a family of his own. Faulkner describes him in his isolation at the end of the "Delta Autumn" section: "McCaslin lay back down, the blanket once more drawn to his chin, his crossed hands once more weightless on his breast in the empty tent."12 The wilderness, of which he had refused to own any part, had contracted utterly, and Ike imagines it running out just at the instant his own life does "because there was just exactly enough of it."13 Of course, Ike is not the only character in Go Down, Moses, but the others are also shown alienated from each other, relating only by social rituals as stale as those exhibited in The Fathers.

The three novels I have discussed in this dissertation
were all written within a seven-year period, *The Long Night* in 1936, *The Fathers* in 1938, and *Go Down, Moses* in 1942. However, this is not the only period during which southern novelists demonstrated the idea that community closeness was crumbling, that rituals did not result in community but, instead, often created alienation. In fact, this is a theme that continues to the present. Eudora Welty, for example, depicts characters that, unlike Faulkner's characters who at least seek social relationships, are determined to remain outside of established communities. Under duress or for reasons of their own, they may participate in social rituals, but they do so with no intention of becoming integrated into close relationship with the other participants. A case in point is Gloria Renfro in *Losing Battles*, published in 1970. She is proud to be an orphan, divorced even from the community of immediate family: "'I'm one to myself, and nobody's kin, and my own boss, and nobody knows the one I am or where I came from.'"\(^ {14} \) She does have kin by her marriage to Jack Renfro, and she even participates in the rituals of his family's yearly reunion, telling her story when the appropriate time arrives. However, far from desiring acceptance into her husband's family, she wants to take him away:

"I was trying to save him!" Gloria cried. "I've been trying to save him since the day I saw him first. Protecting his poor head!"
"From what?" Miss Beulah demanded, both hands on hips.
"This mighty family! And you can't make me
give up! . . . I'm going to take Jack and Lady May and we're going to get clear away from everybody, move to ourselves."  

In The Golden Apples, a more complex and serious work published in 1949, Welty presents similar characters, characters who participate in social rituals in defiance of society. King MacLain marries and produces two children, but he refuses to become a member of Morgana society; he never remains at home long enough to acquire either a family role or a social role. Virgie Rainey takes part, as a young girl, in the required rituals of growing up. The "June Recital" of the novel details Miss Eckhart's yearly presentation of her students' piano talents—and Virgie is her star pupil. However, Virgie's participation does not make her a member of the group. She plays and practices and takes her lessons in defiance. She feels no need for the approval of the community. When she outgrows family control, she applies her piano talents to playing for the motion picture show, not at all what Miss Eckhart had dreamed for her. In the chapter entitled "Moon Lake," Welty uses another orphan, Easter, as the character scornful of society. Easter claims even to have named herself, and she sets her own standards of behavior. Walter Sullivan finds that in this section "some of the foundations and assumptions of community are being called to question" as Nina and Jinny Love attempt to comprehend Easter. Easter participates in the required activities of the summer camp, but she also manages to escape the
structured community, to walk in the woods, to observe Loch Morrison, and even to approach death. Louis Rubin writes of Welty's characters in general, "Their very community existence, their constant coming and going in company with each other, is a way of protecting their privacy." He notes that community in Welty's novels functions to "screen out from its inhabitants' awareness the awful knowledge of individual separation and loneliness." In an essay on The Wide Net, Robert Penn Warren summarizes by pointing out that "the fact of isolation, whatever its nature, provides the basic structure of Miss Welty's fiction."

William Styron's Lie Down in Darkness, published in 1951, is concerned with the family as community, as Styron depicts the rituals of Peyton Loftis's wedding and funeral. The family should be drawn together by these events and by the prescribed ceremonies with which they surround the events. However, these events cannot unify the Loftis family because, finally, Milton and Helen Loftis do not desire unity. They only want to appear united during the public performance of the rituals because that is the appearance expected by society. The couple wants no quarrels to mar what should be the celebration of Peyton's wedding, and Milton desires Helen to accompany him to the funeral because "'simple decency demands that you come.'" But they do quarrel at the wedding, and they do not attend the funeral together. Clearly, the funeral director Mr. Casper is uncom-
fortable with the fact that the Loftis family will not act according to the usual rituals. He cannot bear emotional women, but he is upset with Helen's lack of emotion. "The fact that Mr. and Mrs. Loftis seemed to be taking such a secretive—even un-Christian—attitude toward the remains of their own daughter shocked him profoundly and, in some obscure fashion, seemed an insult not only to him but to his profession." Joseph Baumbach views Peyton's suicide as having "all the ritual aspects of a purification." She removes her clothes and falls to her redemption. But the event does not redeem her family. For Baumbach, Lie Down in Darkness presents "a southern family's almost effortless self-destruction." Peyton dies alone, not saved by her ritual death, and her parents continue in their loneliness and alienation from each other. However, Styron does indicate that community is possible, a suggestion of hope, but one that renders the situation of the Loftis family even more sorrowful. In the final episode of the novel, the Negro maid, Ella Swan, and her family attend a revival meeting at which Daddy Faith, the King of Glory, addresses them. Rubin suggests that the preacher is effective in uniting his people because his audience is unsophisticated. However, the fact remains that Daddy Faith is able to engineer a community while the very real events of Peyton's life are not sufficient to unify her parents, into even a superficial community. A similar comparison of white and Negro charac-
ters is implied in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, in which the Compson family's disintegration is depicted. Toward the close of that novel Dilsey attends a church service Olga Vickery describes as "the one meaningful ritual in the book." 25 The communal closeness of the Negro participants at the two religious services emphasizes the isolation of the white characters in each of the novels.

As a final example of this theme in southern fiction, Anne Tyler's *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, like Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness*, concentrates on the nuclear community of the family and depicts the family isolated from society in general and the individual members of the family alienated from each other. In such an atmosphere there is no hope for community. Ezra Tull, owner of the Homesick Restaurant, laments the fact that his family cannot even practice the simple ritual of a family dinner: "'I wish just once,' he was always saying, 'we could get through a meal from start to finish'. . . ." 26 Ezra worries because he does not know how to talk to people, but even as he tries to talk to his mother about this problem she belittles his concern and concentrates on the cracked eggs she has purchased from the store. Throughout the novel, Ezra and his brother Cody vie for their mother's approval, and Cody fights to keep all of the women he admires from falling for his ungainly brother. The sister, too, enters into two marriages in an attempt to achieve a meaningful relationship. Before the publication of
Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant, Paul Binding described the typical Tyler novel as having a family at the core and then a variety of characters who impinge on that family.27 This 1982 novel is no exception. The family manages to remain isolated from the social community, even as the children of Pearl Tull enter into personal relationships with varying degrees of success. At the end of the novel the death suggested on the opening page occurs as Pearl, mother of the Tull siblings, dies. Her funeral is an occasion for social ritual, with Cody's wife Ruth insisting that their son Luke's relationship as grandson to the deceased "obligates him"28 to attend the funeral. The eulogy is a parody of the dead woman's life: "Pearl Tull, the minister said, was a devoted wife and a loving mother and a pillar of the community."29 However, her husband has been absent from her life since the birth of the three children; "she'd been a frantic, angry, sometimes terrifying mother"30 who had no interest in affairs outside of the family. The meaningless eulogy fulfills the requirements of the ritual, but does not comfort the family. The funeral is also the occasion of a final meal of the Tull family at the Homesick Restaurant, a meal even their long-absent father attends. Like the other meals in the novel, this one is not completed within the text, but there is an indication that the characters might return to the Homesick Restaurant and complete the meal. The closing words indicate that Cody remembers events of his
childhood and sees his mother in a positive manner: "He remembered his mother's upright form along the grasses, her hair lit gold, her small hands smoothing her bouquet while the arrow journeyed on." With the memory, Cody leads his father back to the meal, although Beck states that he will leave again before the meal is concluded. Still, there is the hope that the family will be, in some manner, united. It remains to be seen whether the faint hope at the conclusion of Tyler's novel will be developed and will blossom in future southern novels. Perhaps Louise Cowan's assertion that the "primordial loneliness and fear is missing in all the writing making up the Southern renaissance," not accurate then or even now, could come to have some validity in the future.
NOTES TO CONCLUSION


2. Ibid., p.254.


5. Andrew Lytle stated his feeling about the importance of the family in various essays as well as in his novels. In "The Displaced Family," he writes, discussing a novel by Peter Taylor, "Nowhere else in this country is the family as social unit so clearly defined as in the South." Andrew Lytle, *The Hero with the Private Parts* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966).


10. Tate, p.222.


12. Ibid., p.365.

13. Ibid., p.354.


15. Ibid., p.307.


18. Ibid., p.148.


21. Ibid., p.20.


23 _Ibid._, p.124.

24 Rubin, p.204.


28 Tyler, p.286.

29 _Ibid._, p.291.

30 _Ibid._, p.292.

31 _Ibid._, p.310.

32 Cowan, p.248.
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