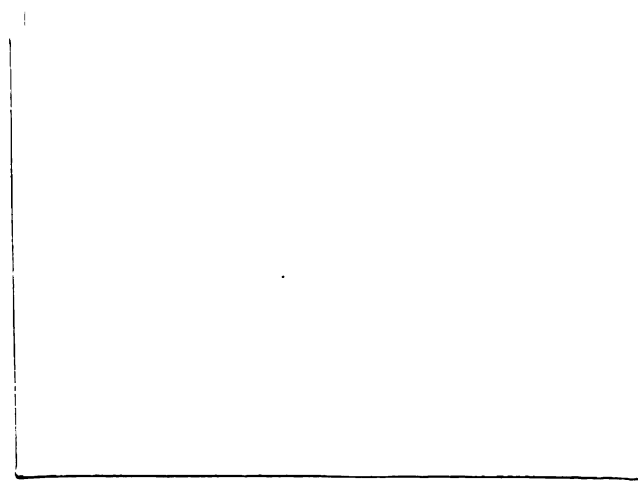
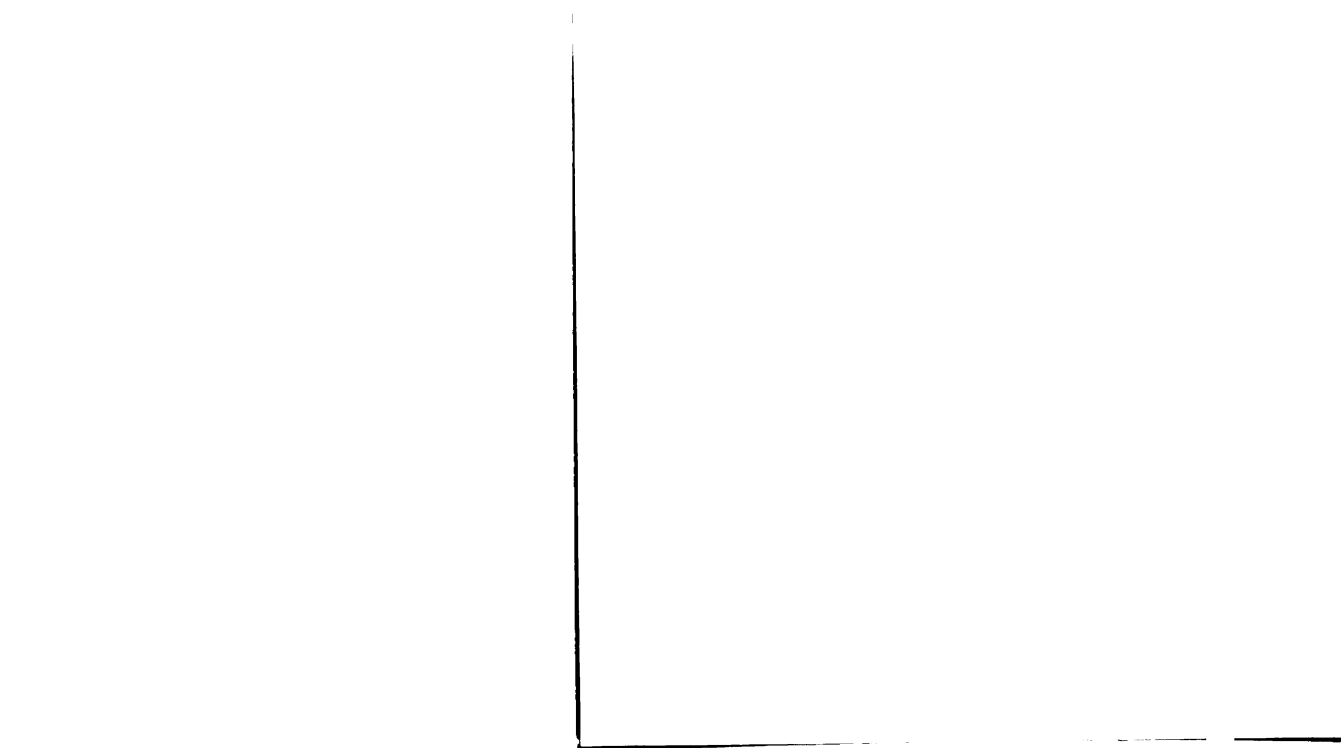


THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE NOVELS OF
ROBERT PENN WARREN

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
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ABSTRACT

THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE NOVELS OF

ROBERT PENN WARREN

By

Rodney Meryl Vliet

The present study is an analysis of the concept of evil presented in the nine novels of Robert Penn Warren. After a chapter considering evil as a recurring theme in his novels, the three types of evil commonly used in philosophical and religious discourse are studied in a chapter each. The first is metaphysical evil; that is, the evil we are: the limitation found at the core of being. The second is moral evil; that is, the evil we do: the pain and suffering caused by the free actions of intelligent beings. The third is non-moral evil; that is, the evil we suffer: the psychological and physical pain and suffering endured in life regardless of its source. The last chapter considers the problem of evil and self-knowledge.

The data for the study was drawn primarily, but not exclusively, from twenty-six selected religious characters in four categories: ministers, minister's children, devout laypersons, and lapsarians. Such characters as Willie Proudfit, MacCarland Sumpter, Jason Sweetwater, Jack Burden, Cass Mastern, Lettice Poindexter

Rodney Meryl Vliet

Tolliver, Willie Stark, and Isaac Sumpter were found to be representative vehicles for the concepts consistently presented in the novels. The characters were emphasized because thematic concerns are presented principally through their development. Also, evil is essentially a personal problem because by it someone is hurt, harmed, frustrated, or in some way left unfulfilled or threatened with destruction, punishment, or failure. Therefore, the human beings of the works were the primary sources of information about Warren's concept of evil.

The chapter on metaphysical evil treats the relationship of idea and factuality, the nature of God, and the roles of history, necessity, and original sin in Warren's concept of evil. Discussions of the nature of the self and reality in general as related to evil conclude the chapter. In the chapter on moral evil, the prides of power, knowledge, virtue, and spirit are investigated. Further, sensuality as self-love in the forms of sexual license, love and greed is considered as an aspect of evil. The chapter ends with a treatment of moral evil and Warren's emphasis on responsibility. The development of nonmoral evil concentrates upon death, disease and deformity, failure and fear, and madness as vehicles for suffering in the novels. The chapter ends with consideration of the interpenetration of things shown in the inevitable and far-reaching consequences suffered because of evil. The final chapter is a discussion of the concept of the osmosis of being, its implications for self-knowledge, and its relationship to evil. It shows that Warren's principal concern for the necessity of adequate self-knowledge and the inevitable

consequences of both the achieving of and the failing to achieve self-knowledge are related to Warren's concept of evil.

This study demonstrates that Warren presents a concept of evil which, firstly, includes the continual threat of metaphysical evil because reality is essentially and necessarily finite, limited, and unperfectable. Secondly, moral evil is essentially an expression of self-ambition in the forms of pride and sensuality. Because of the tendency to self-love, love itself is one of the central concepts used in the novels to express the fallibility of man. Because man loves himself too much and others too little, he must acknowledge responsibility for the evil he does. A person cannot use finitude as an excuse for his inhumanity to others. Thirdly, man is a sensitive, feeling being. As such, he is subject to the elements of his total environment. Pain and suffering are a necessary aspect of experience because the world is the way it is and man is the way he is. It is hopeless for anyone to want to extricate himself or anyone else from this world of sin and pain because his efforts are predoomed to failure. Similarly, he cannot remove evil from the world because evil is an essential aspect of the nature of things. Ironically, even attempts to escape evil or the responsibility for evil become sources for pain and suffering. The inevitability of the abuse of freedom and the inability to avoid imbalanced and excessive modes of behavior make man's moral and physical abuse of himself and others certain.

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To Sharon, Danai, and Melanie who will
never again have to hear, "Wait until
the thesis is done."

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INTRODUCTION

Even though it is not remarkable that a twentieth-century American novelist of stature should write about evil, a student may be surprised to find that Robert Penn Warren has concentrated upon the nature of evil as much as he has in the nine novels published to date. When a student first confronts these novels, he will discover that each one of them is centrally concerned with the nature of evil in human experience. In each of the novels, evil is presented as an essential aspect of all human experience, and one must learn how to live with it by acknowledging its reality within and around him and by accepting his personal responsibility for contributing to its total force in life, if he is to find a meaningful self-definition.

This study was undertaken because of the lack of a lengthy study of the nature of evil in the novels of Robert Penn Warren despite the general attention given to it by his critics over the years. The basic design is to consider evil as a recurring theme in the novels and then on the basis of selected, representative characters from the novels, to investigate each of the three types of evil in order to discover the nature of their development and treatment in the novels. Finally, there is a concluding statement about the nature of evil in relation to Warren's fundamental concern: self-knowledge. In developing this topic, the three types of evil commonly used in philosophical and religious discourse are used: first, metaphysical

evil, that is, the evil we are, or the evil that is at the base of being itself; secondly, moral evil, that is, the evil we do, or the nature of the pain and suffering caused by the free actions of intelligent beings; thirdly, nonmoral evil, that is, the psychological pain and suffering humans must endure in this life regardless of the source.

The next principle which governed this study was the selection of characters who are in some way associated with the religious concerns expressed in the novels. The reason for this is the conviction that evil is substantially a religious or religio-philosophical problem. Even though this study is not intended to construct a theodicy as such, one is implied in the novels because it has been discovered that, in general, the responsibility for evil rests upon the people and their human inability to accept that responsibility for the presence of evil in their lives. There are in each novel certain types of significant characters who were considered important as religious characters. Most often, they are not the major characters in the novels; however, they are occasionally among the most important. Significantly, the views of the nonreligious or purely secular characters with respect to the nature of evil are given in contexts in which the religious characters also appear. Therefore, even though the dominant views expressed in the novels may not be those of the religious characters, the religious characters provide a practical means of access of the concept of evil presented in the narratives.

The religious characters were classified according to four categories: first, the preachers or ministers of the Gospel; second, the children of the ministers or preachers; third, the devout laymen;

and fourth, the formerly devout or lapsarians. In some cases it was possible to place a given character in more than one of the groups. In such cases, the group which reflects his principal role in the story was selected. Beyond the first chapter, however, these categories were not frequently used, even though the evidence for the study was selected primarily from among that provided through them. The decision to use them was based upon the need to limit the body of material for this study, and not as an organizational principle for the study. It was decided that these four classes of characters were generally an adequate selection to study the concept of evil in the novels because they do, in fact, represent the range of opinion expressed in the novels as a whole, and they are a widely differing group of characters. In other words, this group of twenty-six selected characters from the nine novels is fairly representative of the various world-views presented by all of the characters in the novels.

However, when necessary, there was no hesitancy to make reference to characters who were not considered religious characters. Therefore, while this study is based primarily upon the religious characters, it is not restricted to them. For example, there is little reason to consider Murray Guilfort of Meet Me in the Green Glen or Bradwell Tolliver in Flood as religious characters; however, because they make observations about the nature of evil independent of their relationships to religious characters, it was deemed necessary to include their views in this study in order to make this treatment of Warren's concept of evil as complete as possible.

The study has emphasized the role of the characters in the presentation of the concept of evil because the thematic concerns of a piece of fiction are revealed primarily through the characters. Further, evil in particular is a personal problem. In the revelation of evil, someone has to be hurt, harmed, frustrated, or in some other way left unfulfilled or without meaning and threatened with destruction, punishment, or failure. Because evil is a human problem, the humans of the works are the primary source of information.

Fundamentally, this study has demonstrated that Warren does present a concept of evil which includes the continual threat of metaphysical evil at the very core of being itself, because man is essentially and necessarily finite, limited, and unperfectable. Secondly, moral evil is essentially an expression of self-ambition in the forms of pride and sensuality. Because of the tendency of man to self-love, love itself is one of the central concepts used by Warren to express the fallibility of man. In his natural tendency to love himself too much and others too little, man is responsible for the evil he does. A person, therefore, cannot justifiably use his condition of finitude as an excuse for his inhumanity to others. Thirdly, man is a sensitive and feeling being; as such, he is very subject to the influence of the elements of his total environment upon him. Pain and suffering are very much a part of his experience because the world is as it is, and he is as he is. It is a hopeless dream for man to want to extricate himself from this world of sin and pain because he cannot. Ironically, even efforts to escape evil or the responsibility for evil become sources of pain and suffering because of man's abuse of his freedom

and his inability to avoid imbalanced and excessive behavior. The nature of man and the nature of the world are such that abuse is certain.

CHAPTER I

EVIL AS THE THEME OF THE NOVELS

The nine novels of Robert Penn Warren constitute a remarkably unified body of work with respect to their thematic consistency and concentration upon evil. Consequently, critical attention directed toward the novels frequently has indicated that the problem of evil was one of Warren's principal concerns. For example, in 1948 after only three of the novels were published, John L. Stewart observed that the pattern of Warren's concentration upon a single story--"the story of man's efforts to flee from the problem of evil and his ultimate return to the problem"--had grown out of his even longer concern for evil as reflected in his early poetry.¹ Certainly, within the scope of Night Rider (1939), At Heaven's Gate (1943), and All the King's Men (1946) the general problem was defined and repeated attempts were made to deal with the human tendency to escape personal responsibility for the pain and suffering one creates and endures. Clearly, the notions of flight and the fallibility of man were established among Warren's basic concerns. How important these three works are in the body of Warren's novels is seen in the emphasis upon them in the study which follows.

Over the years, similar acknowledgments of the centrality of the concept of evil in the thematic concerns of Warren's novels have been recorded. For example, Father James S. Magner stressed Warren's recurring emphasis upon evil in 1959; and C. Hugh Holman cited Warren's

awareness of human guilt and the inescapability of evil in 1958.² Even Warren's personal friend and co-worker, Cleanth Brooks cited the problem of evil as one of Warren's "characteristic themes" in 1963.³ In addition, the book-length criticism of Robert Penn Warren by Charles Bohner in 1964 mentioned the unity of Warren's concern for the problem of evil despite his variety of forms.⁴ In the Spring of 1970, Allen Shepherd based one of his articles on the concurring opinion that "Warren seems to have come to many of his principal themes by the time he was 35, . . . the year in which he published his first novel, Night Rider."⁵

Even in the most recent critical works, Warren's "insatiable need to renew the journey of exploration for the final truth of man's existence" is cited. "He struggles for the truth again in Meet Me in the Green Glen," Robert Cayton concluded, "and leaves us with the same questions which were examined 32 years ago in Night Rider. As Murray Guilfort learned, illusion is the only truth and that's all there is."⁶ I believe Cayton has misread the novel by making Murray Guilfort's point of view the climactic one for the novel. As indicated below, Leroy Lancaster and Cy Grinder are actually the concluding focal points for Meet Me in the Green Glen. Nevertheless, Cayton does perceive a unity in Warren's works, and he associated that thematic unity with notions that are a part of Warren's concept of evil.

Warren's continual involvement with the problem of evil has caused him to deal with difficult religious and philosophical questions. Furthermore, he is "a philosophical novelist in the tradition of Conrad," as John Bradbury correctly observed in 1963, who "seeks out meaningful

patterns in the data of experience and finds symbolic patterns in the flow of images."⁷ The narrative patterns in the novels are reasonably consistent in that the experiences they record almost always have the cultural clashes of the South as a common denominator. Warren is concerned with tensions in the poverty ridden agrarian society confronted by elements from the more aggressive and progressive urban society and the various forces which represent it. In addition, his treatment of the problem of evil almost always has one or more of the central characters who has been absent from the home, agrarian environment long enough--usually during college and career activities--to become conscious of the faults which are a part of his own past. In these confrontations, evil is found in every aspect of life and human nature, and it is presented in stories described in dark images of illusion and corruption. There is a blending and flowing of experience which make clear-cut perception and decisive decision-making nearly impossible. Whether it is Percy Munn reflecting upon the killing of Trevelyn in Night Rider, Angelo Passetto walking along a muddy, rut filled road during a Fall rain in Meet Me in the Green Glen, or any of the principals in between, the pattern of philosophical concern is borne out.

Further, the characters are involved in attempts to solve rather ordinary, yet difficult problems by applying their own initiatives, skills, and perspectives. In circumstances which present quests for justice, and defense of ideals, the search for freedom, the reestablishment of human relationships, or the exploitation of others for one's own selfish benefit, the desired solutions are hindered and people are usually destroyed by the ineffective way the problems are

attacked. Within the movement of the complexities of life, we see carried out, time after time, the observation of Captain Todd in Night Rider that we cannot expect to settle everything because life is too complex. The characters struggle to find the way to live within the world of indifferent factuality, but they usually fail and cannot reconcile themselves to the misery they suffer.

The characters are caught in the struggle for self-definition in their confrontations within themselves and with the socio-economic forces around them. The involvement with the problems of evil comes when this inner struggle is frustrated, and the character becomes aware of the loneliness caused by his self-love or the alienation caused by the external force which binds him. For example, he might be bound by such things as the past or his concept of parental expectations, but he is bound nonetheless. All of the novels contain some characters who are like Leroy Lancaster in Meet Me in the Green Glen. He had to overcome the idea that he was merely an extension of his father's conscience upon the community of Parkerton, Tennessee. He had to come to the realization of his own identity in separateness which would allow him to assume his individual, self-defined role as a member of the community of mankind, both because of and in spite of the evil which is necessarily a part of his experience.

In addition, evil goes beyond the characters in the novels: the land itself is defiled. The flux of time has captured the land in change and decay. For example, the last two novels in particular concentrate upon the pastness of a great or near-great potential of river valleys in Tennessee. Both are subject to flooding out by the

backwaters of dams built to sustain the progress of the regions beyond the valleys themselves. The flooding of the valley around Fiddlersburg--allegorically a place where nothing serious can happen--dramatizes the tragic dislocation of human lives. Also, the flooding of Spottwood Valley--allegorically, the rotting of wood and the depleting of the land--is a graphic symbol of human attempts to create good by covering up the spoiled nature left after years of decaying exploitation.

A survey of the novels reflects the thematic unity of the novels with respect to their treatment of evil. Warren's first novel was Night Rider (1939). In it, Percy Munn becomes the victim of his own participation in illegal vigilante activities to force farmers to join an association of tobacco growers. Amidst the betrayal of himself, his family, his friends, and ultimately his good intentions, Percy Munn is destroyed as he was unable to bring himself to kill the father image Senator Tolliver who lay defenseless upon a sick bed. In a parody of the teaching of Jesus to give water to the thirsty and to care for the needy, the savior Munn, who fought the economic exploitation of the large tobacco interests, dies, unable to fire a shot in self-defense, because his evil is without defense.

At Heaven's Gate (1943) is a complex story of lust and greed, emphasizing those who are like the people in Dante's purgatory that stand just "at heaven's gate" because they are guilty of inordinate love shown in their lust, greed, and gluttony. The novel actually tells two stories which ultimately are interpenetrating. The first is of the collapse of the financial empire of Bogan Murdock, a prince of

demons among the exploiters of men who diabolically sought to destroy others for his own gain. To the end he denies his own responsibility for any of the misfortune he causes anyone, even his own daughter. Sue Murdock has been destroyed by the lust and gluttonous alcoholism which is also destroying her mother. Her friends all use her for their own purposes. On the other hand, the alternate story is the confession of Ashby Wyndham. He tells his tale of misery from the jail cell in which he attempts to purge his soul and renew contact with God. He is guilty of the sin of pride; therefore, he has run before the Lord in the power of his own might. Others have suffered, and he is lost and alone. The tie between the two stories comes when Private Milt Porsum, a World War hero, is moved to acknowledge his part in the Murdock scandal because of the simple honesty of Ashby. Porsum is Wyndham's cousin, and when a reporter tries to bribe Porsum in order to keep Ashby's tale from becoming public knowledge, Porsum is moved to his own honest confession of guilt.

The most famous of Warren's novels is a very complex story of many souls' attempts at self-definition. The central character is Jack Burden, the "dirty works" man for the corrupt and corrupting governor of a Southern state, Willie Stark. The story line of All the King's Men (1946) is so well known that it is unnecessary to repeat it here, but the important thing is that through the influence of Willie Stark, Adam Stanton, Anne Stanton, Judge Irwin (his biological father), Ellis Burden (his legal father), and Cass Mastern (an ancestor whose story is embedded in the novel as a parallel to Burden's own development),

Jack Burden comes to accept mankind for what it is and to accept his own responsibility for the evil which is done.

Jeremiah Beaumont's attempt to find justice through the gravest sort of injustice is the central story of World Enough and Time (1950). However, Jerry finds that he has neither world enough nor time to bring about his ideal through the corrupt methods he chose for his own self-gratification. The principal thing he learns is that he has made the mistake of separating the ideal and the real world to such a degree that he thought the ideal could exist separately from the painfulness of the real. The evil in this story is disclosed step by step throughout the novel by the intertwining of lies and deceit, death and corruption. Jerry not only murders his own father-image in the person of Casius Fort, but he also causes the emotional death and suicide of his lovely wife, Rachel Jordan. However, even Rachel is not innocent, because none is innocent, as Munn Short, the religious character in the novel, has said. Ironically, Rachel is Jeremiah's greatest personal prize, and therefore, she is both the greatest source of his potential joy and the greatest source of his destructive pride and victim of his love.

The fifth novel is Band of Angels (1955). It is the quest for identity of Amantha Starr who has found it hard to forgive her father for the grave injustice he has done her in begetting her by a slave and not setting her free. In a terrible tale of misery, slavery, and the dark corruption of the Civil War, Warren demonstrates that Mandy can have freedom only when she frees herself of the evil her father has done. He was no better or no worse than any of the fathers

of all time; therefore, she must forgive and keep going. Finally, Tobias Sears, her husband, and she find the anticipation of the fulfilling potentials of love as they accept each other in their misery and failure.

In a story of illusion, reality and pain, the sixth novel, The Cave (1959), tells of many people who are struggling to find the nature of themselves in the world of illusion. Jasper Harrick is lost in a cave he is exploring for Isaac Sumpter. Isaac is not brave enough nor self-confident enough to explore it for himself, but Jasper will do it for him. While on an expedition into the earth, Jasper is lost. The story is the impact that this tragedy has upon the people of Johntown in general and John and Celia Harrick, MacCarland and Isaac Sumpter, Monty Harrick, Jo-Lea Bingham, Jo-Lea's parents, Dorothy Cutlick, and the Greek Restaurant man, Nicholas Pappadoupalous in particular. Each struggles to clear himself of the illusions that surround him in the inner shadows of the cave of human life, while they reflect upon their significance during Jasper's suffering in the cave.

A Jew is the hero of the seventh novel. Adam Rosenzweig comes to America to fight in the war to free the Negroes. He has a club foot which he has tried to hide by a specially designed boot, but he fails--who can hide his inherited flaw? He is disillusioned by the corruption, the greed and moral decay demonstrated to him as he becomes a sutler for the armies in the Virginian wilderness. In Wilderness (1961), however, he finds the truth that is within himself;

and in apparent disgrace and defeat, he comes from the wilderness with a new heart.

Flood is the eighth novel (1964). An entire community has to come to terms with its dislocation and destruction because of human progress. In the shadow of the symbol of their bondage, the prison which is the focal point of the town, the Tollivers, Fiddlers, Cottshills, and others have to find what significance they can within themselves because their past is being washed away in the rising waters of the river. Even the Oscar-winning script writer, Brad Tolliver, cannot artistically function under the threat of dislocation, until he looks into the heart.

The last novel, Meet Me in the Green Glen (1971), continues Warren's emphasis upon the problem of the mixture of the real and the illusory in human experience. What is the reality of what happened? Who murdered Sunderland Spottwood? However, in this story that ends with Leroy Lancaster and Cy Grinder successfully finding the way they can live with the appearances around them, it is possible to find truth in love and in self-knowledge. But Murray Guilfort, the latest of the many exploiters in the novels, must commit suicide in order to find the threat of nothingness and nonbeing which is within himself. Cassie Spottwood, who did murder Sunderland, is mad in the illusion of her love and the reality of her guilt. However, she is not able to know the reality of her guilt because of the illusion of her love for Angelo.

The theme of a novel is the concept it all adds up to: the total impact of the people, places, images, comments, symbols, dialog

and action. Overall, this summary of the novels highlights the possibility of evil as the central controlling idea behind them all. The nature of reality, the threat of illusion, and the possibility of nothingness are all aspects commonly recognized in philosophy and religion as aspects of evil. They are present in every one of the novels. Therefore, I conclude with Allen Shephard, who has described the scope of Flood, in what I believe is a valid statement of the range of concerns for all the novels. "[Warren] attempted an anatomy of the old and new South," he concluded, "with the conflict of traditional and progressive values embittered by class and racial antagonism, a dramatization of the process of self-definition and of man's place in nature, analysis of love, marriage, sexual relationships, and the creative process, socio-economic-historical-literary reflections, the presentation of the case for the intellectual, meditations upon the meaning of justice, and extensive experiments in narrative chronology."⁸

While Shephard was not concerned directly with the concept of evil as such in the novels, he has presented in his concise summary, many of the elements of experience which Warren typically uses to present his concept of evil. The conflicts and tensions dramatized in the attempts at self-definition consistently reflect the failure, finitude, frustration and destruction which dominate the atmosphere of the novels. Throughout his novels, Warren presents people who hurt, harm, and destroy others and themselves unless they know or learn to know about life.

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Selected Religious Characters

In the analysis of evil which follows, the evidence is drawn primarily from the statements, actions, and implications associated with certain of the "religious" characters. The reasons for the selection of religious characters for the study are easily stated: first, there are representative religious characters in each of the novels; second, because the problem of evil is essentially a religious problem, it was thought that it would be useful to concentrate on how Warren would use religious characters to present such a concept; third, there is a wide range of different types of religious characters represented in the novels from which to select representatives. Among the preachers, preacher's children, devout laypersons, and lapsarians selected there are a variety of subcultures, races, faiths, and genders.

From the nine novels, seven preachers have been selected. The earliest, and one of the most extensively drawn upon, is Ashby Wyndham from At Heaven's Gate. He is a fundamentalist, a traveling evangelist, who has it laid upon his heart to tell the story of his conversion to any and all who will listen. He is not formally educated, and he has a tendency to "sinful pride in the Lord." As an employee of the Massey Mountain company of the Murdock conglomerate, he lost his job because he was erroneously thought to be a supporter of Jason Sweetwater, a self-styled Marxist labor leader, who happens to be an Episcopalian minister's son. Wyndham is trying to purge his soul, as indicated earlier, by confessing his prideful ways. His story is replete with his consciousness of sin, lust, corruption and

depravity. He is one of the characters primarily responsible, I believe, for Warren's reputation as a "Calvinist."

The second preacher selected is Ellis Burden from All the King's Men. Several of the statements which the old man makes are incorporated in this study; he is well-educated, having been a successful attorney from aristocratic Burden's Landing before leaving his wife and son for the gospel mission work on skid-row. He has been the victim (cause?) of a friend's betrayal with his wife, and one of the discoveries of Jack Burden is that the Scholarly Attorney is not his real father. Speaking freely of the foulness and wicked corruption of politics, the old servant of God will not tell Jack about any possible corruption in the background of one of his old friends, Judge Montague Irwin. Ironically, Jack discovers that Irwin is his real father, and infidelity of his mother with Irwin was the cause of Ellis Burden's leaving the mansion to her and his (?) son. It is his insights for some tracts which he is trying to write in his old aged feebleness that give Jack Burden some final food for thought as the events of the novel come to an end with Jack's realization of his responsibility for the things which have happened.

Next, Seth Parton from Band of Angels was selected. He could perhaps be classified otherwise, because his post-preaching days are ambiguous in their relationship to the faith. However, because he is presented as the stern, preacher-type, Pharisee, "Puritan" in the mind of Manty Starr, I have placed him in this group. He is from an Oberlin, Ohio sect which believed the world was fallen and corrupt, but yet by hard work they believed a utopia for the faithful would be established.

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Because of the hard work they were successful, and in his post-way days, the success followed Seth to whatever he did. However, Seth and some of the others of his Oberlin group are very useful in developing an awareness of the concept of evil in the novels as a whole.

A Baptist minister is the fourth one in this group. MacCarland Sumpter in The Cave is one of the several central characters in the novel. Of the ministers, his role in The Cave is more important to the overall story than any of the others, in terms of his total contribution to the story. In addition to this, however, his own growing doubts about himself and his relationship to God and to his son, Isaac Sumpter, are influential upon his understanding of suffering and pain. He is very conscious of sin, and he is subject to severe self-criticism. He wants the best for his son, but his pride of virtue and spirit are great. The sermons he preaches are very influential upon two of the devout laypersons--Mr. and Mrs. Jack Harrick, his prize convert and long-time friend, sexual rival and confidant. He is a man who earns sympathy and contempt at once. He lies to protect his son, and his plaintive cry is, "Is it wrong for a man to love his son?"

The fifth, sixth and seventh ministers selected are minor characters; however, their statements and narrative functions are significant toward developing an understanding of Warren's concept of evil. Corinthian McClardy from World Enough and Time was a frontier revivalist, whose meetings became more famous for their fornication than for their preaching. The impact of these experiences upon Jeremiah Beaumont is clear. Jeremiah turned from the faith, despite or because of his conversion experience and his sexual initiation with a hag following one

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of the meetings. The sixth and seventh are from Flood. The White, Brother Potts, and the Black, Leon Pinckney, are significant because of the issues they raise as the destruction of Fiddlersburg is imminent. In their own way they are concerned and compassionate, but Potts' influence on Brad Tolliver in the end is greater than that of Pinckney, even though at one time Brad wished he were the Black preachers. This is an interesting way to say that Brad's self-concept had gotten very low. How much lower could he have gotten than a Black preacher (even though a Harvard graduate) in Tennessee?

For the second group, the minister's children, I have selected four: Jason Sweetwater (At Heaven's Gate), Jack Burden (All the King's Men), Isaac Sumpter (The Cave), and Corinne Lancaster (Meet Me in the Green Glen). Two of these are children of Episcopal rectors, Sweetwater and Lancaster. One is the son of a Baptist, Isaac (Ikey) Sumpter. The remaining one, Jack Burden, really is not the son of a minister, but since he was six years old, he grew up with the idea that he was the son of that embarrassing old man on skid-row who spoke of Jesus, handed out tracts and did good to the unfortunate bums. Hence I have included him here.

In the order of their appearance in the novels, Jason Sweetwater is the first son of a minister. He, too, is an ambiguous character. In his youth, he glories in his impiety in the church. He appears to be so spiritual, but he fooled the people. He had been prepared by his father for college, but he left for the rough road of travel and hard knocks that eventually brought him to Massey Mountain and the labor organization which cost Ashby Wyndham his job. He, along with

Milt Porsum mentioned earlier in the summaries, is a contact between the two stories which comprise the novel. He is a man of idea and ideals who will fight for his right with all his might. As his father had taught him, it was necessary for him to believe in something before he could believe in himself. His quest for justice brought much pain and suffering to others and to himself. He would not marry Sue Murdock on principle, because he believed marriage a form of prostitution of the grossest kind. After the death of Sue Murdock and the establishment of his alibi, he fades from the novel.

So much has been written about Jack Burden and he is such a rich character, he just about defies summary. The spoiled, neurotic, rich kid became an historian; but he could not finish his Ph.D. thesis because of the threat the necessary understanding of Cass Mastern's story held for him. Jack was both a man to whom everything and nothing happened. He was Willie Stark's "dirty works" man. As an historian he was dedicated to truth, and he is a significant study of the role of objective, scientific efforts to understand human suffering. He could not understand evil until he confronted himself in the events of his personal tragedy. Afterward, he could go to Judge Irwin's house to live after finally getting to marry Anne Stanton and take the Old Man Burden into the house. Through Jack Burden, some of the clearest presentations of the nature of evil in the novels are presented.

Along with Jason Sweetwater, Isaac Sumpter could have been discussed as one of the lapsarians or left out as a nonreligious character. However, because his heritage as a Baptist minister's son was so influential upon his progressive isolation and alienation during

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his abortive college career, I have included him in this group. During the central events of the novel, Ikey has returned to Johntown to bury himself from the failures at Nashville while at the University. After having been expelled for gross immoral behavior, he is alone and is the epitome of alienation. However, his alienation is caused by his own refusal to accept others and to acknowledge his own responsibility for his evil. He has had a torrid affair with a beautiful Jewish artist. Rachel "Goldie" Goldstein has refused to take him back after he betrayed her love by a thoughtless round of sexual intercourse in her car with one of her friends as he was taking the friend home in the rain after a party at Goldie's. He does not feel any responsibility for the evil he does. He even resents his father's efforts to save him. Because he has come to believe love is a form of betrayal, all acts of love are understood as acts of betrayal. He is a diabolical character, as close to totally depraved as any in the novels.

The last of the minister's children used in the study is also the most recently developed. Also the child of an Episcopalian, Corinne Lancaster is a pretty, although not strikingly beautiful, very buxom, and highly sensually appearing young woman. She was courted and won by a not very handsome and only moderately successful lawyer, Leroy Lancaster. She is not able to accept herself as a body as well as a soul. Even her actions of charity and kindness are an emasculating threat to Leroy. He comes to view her as a plague causing his failure. He knows she is alone and lonely, but he will not, he cannot return to her. The frustration of their relationship is symbolized in their fruitless union: they have no children. However, after Leroy is able

to come to terms with himself, she apparently is able to come to terms with herself and to accept herself as she is as well, because they have a child, a son, and Leroy is filled with anticipation as he can go home to be with her. I believe it is significant that Corinne is the only one of the minister's children who is both a faithful Christian and able to find self-realization. Perhaps Warren's implication is that in the self-acceptance and the acceptance of others she demonstrated, we can find the key for dealing with evil.

There are ten individuals and two groups of devout laypersons who were used in the development of this study. The groups may each be counted as one person, because they represent coherent views of evil. The first is the group of devout who followed Ashby Wyndham down the river, to the trouble which caused them to be placed in jail because of their having traded one Bible sin for another. They are an excellent example of Cass Mastern's observation in All the King's Men that "man is never safe, damnation is ever at hand." The second group is the Oberlin group of devout separatists who were a part of Amantha Starr's youthful education in Band of Angels. Their usefulness rests in their hypocritical stand on sanctification.

Of the individuals, some of these laypersons are the most important ones used in the study. Willie Proudfit in Night Rider, Cass Mastern in All the King's Men, Munn Short in World Enough and Time, Jack and Celia Harrick in The Cave, Adam and Uncle Rosenzweig in Wilderness, Lettice Poindexter Tolliver in Flood, and to a lesser degree, Lucy Stark in All the King's Men and Leroy Lancaster in Meet Me in the Green Glen furnish an impressive collection of examples of

devotion, struggle, suffering, sin and conversion. Also, these devout people are among the few who find some degree of successful self-definition. Their overall importance in the novels is certainly significant.

Again viewing them in the order of their appearance, Willie Proudfit in many ways set the pattern from which Warren never varied. He was a man who at one time was found in the world of "a-gettin and a-begettin." He was familiar with the lust and greed of wild frontier life, to which he had gone when his sap started rising. He was, however, led to leave that wildness and sin, and he found the peace of secluded mountain life. After five years of peaceful withdrawal from others, his isolation came to an end because he nearly died during a fever. He then, because of a dream, went back to Kentucky to find the love of his dreams and to face whatever the Lord had in mind for him, regardless of the suffering it would entail. He had seen the brutality of the frontier and the blessedness of the Lord's face, and the Lord led him from the mountain to the draught ridden valley to be the friend and protector of Percy Munn. His narrative function is to serve as a counterpoint to Munn.

Certainly one of the most significant of all Warren's characters is Cass Mastern. An introverted man with highly sensitive spiritual possibilities, he was led into sin in Lexington while going to Transylvania College studying for the ministry. However, he never was able to preach to others because of his own self-concept. In a way he is a combination of the later characters: Seth Parton and Ikey Sumpter. Not as self-righteous as Seth and not as corrupt as Ikey,

Cass came through the valley of the shadow of spiritual death to find the bullet in the battle field, so he could atone for the suicide of his friend and the betrayal his adultery had caused. His acute awareness of the evil in man and the community of common guilt all men share are among the most significant observations given in all of the novels.

Also in All the King's Men, Lucy Stark, the wife of Willie Stark, is used only slightly, but significantly, to discuss resignation to God's will in the presence of the suffering for evil. She takes the sin of her son upon herself in honor of the father who had died in his own sin. She is a powerful, but meek woman to be admired for her ability to suffer, with glory and resignation.

In World Enough and Time the spiritual crisis of Jeremiah Beaumont is caused by the story told by Munn Short. The old man, who had known about the pain of body-dying and the even more painful experiences of spiritual death, had been saved by Jesus to go and tell his tale. He was the jailer who told all who would listen about how Jesus had washed away the mark of the curse of Mr. Perk. He had committed adultery with Lottie Perk which on one occasion led to her being killed during an Indian raid and Perk's saving Munn Short from the death at the hand of an Indian. He was a man like other men who know the pleasure of sin and the pain of sorrow.

Among the few encouraging stories in the novels is the one associated with Jack and Celia Harrick. In The Cave, they alone are fully presented as coming out to the light of self-understanding. He is dying of cancer, and she is very much in love with him and suffers greatly for it. However, it is the death of their son in the cave

which is the center of the novel. Jack's ambiguous realization that he is both like and unlike all other men is the key to his self-understanding. Because of the frequent use of this couple in the study below, further summary is not included here.

Christians are not the only devout followers of God presented in the novels. The Rosenzweigs in Wilderness are Jews. The old uncle who stayed in Bavaria is the more devout; he is avidly orthodox. Adam, on the other hand, is more off-hand about his devotion to God, and more excited about the possibility of man in freedom, but his transformation, as the central character in the book, is one of the most important in this study. He overcomes his inherited weakness by acceptance of it, and he comes out of the wilderness with a new heart. His inner nature is sympathetic and his development powerful.

Without Lettice Poindexter Tolliver from Flood, Warren's presentation of sensuality would be much weaker than it is. She is a beautiful sex machine. Very much like some of the flat characters from the other novels, such as Lois, Jack Burden's first wife in All the King's Men, Lettice represents the rejection of lust and what she called "wicked foolishness with Brad." While it may be that she over-reacted by becoming a Catholic, the only one in this study, and working in an old folks home, she totally lets her beautiful, well-cared for body go from lack of care. However, because of this neglect she is able finally to deal with the psychological rivalry she experienced with her mother. Lettice is able to accept her mother as she is, and she is able to speak kindly of Brad. He rejected her change at first, but he came to realize that for the first time, he has seen her as a person.

The final example of the devout used in this study is Leroy Lancaster. It is not clear that he became as devout as this classification might indicate, but he did turn to and confess his self-blaspemy to God, and he did turn to his wife in her love and acceptance. His transformation is complete, and he does it "in God's eye" to quote Cass Mastern.

One of the smaller categories is the lapsarians. Willie Stark, Jeremiah Beaumont, and to a lesser degree, Milt Porsum and Monmorency Pugh were selected for this group. Like all of the major characters in All the King's Men, Willie is very much discussed. It is his view of human nature that sent Jack Burden on his second and successful journey into history which ended in the death of Jack's father, Anne Stanton's becoming Willie's mistress, and ultimately the murder of Willie by Adam Stanton. Willie had attended Presbyterian Sunday school and a Baptist college. He had little respect for either, but he used what he could from both, just as he used what he could from anyone. The pragmatic politician, his ambition for purity in a hospital to commemorate his own pride brought about his own death.

In World Enough and Time, after the traumatic conversion of his youth, Jeremiah Beaumont became a philosophical idealist dedicated to purity of the ideals of justice and beauty. He betrayed his conversion, and his spiritual ideal of the nobility of man he had learned from Dr. Burnham; but he is used here as an example of one who falls from his high philosophical-religious ideals to demonstrate the sinful nature of man he had once rejected after his horrid sexual initiation in McCurdy's meadow.

Private Milt Porsum had been devout in his youth in the mountains, but his betrayal of his folk included the leaving of his religion. He is apparently coming back at the end of At Heaven's Gate, but his return is not yet complete. Another minor character used fairly frequently in the study is Monmorency Pugh in Wilderness, who ironically killed to keep from killing, because of his desire to obey Jesus. The irony of the act and the death of his two-year-old son caused him to reject Jesus and become a naturalist in ethic, so that he would "scratch where it itched."

These four types of characters, the ministers, the ministers' children, the devout laypersons, and the lapsarians are not the only characters referred to below, but they are the ones primarily used.

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

¹John L. Steward, "The Achievement of Robert Penn Warren," South Atlantic Quarterly, XLVII (1948), 562, 563.

²James Magner, S. J., "Robert Penn Warren's Quest for an Angel," Catholic World, CLXXXIII (1956), 179; and C. Hugh Holman, "Literature and Culture: The Fugitive-Agrarians," Social Forces, XXXVII (1958), 19.

³Cleanth Brooks, The Hidden God: Studies in Hemingway, Faulkner, Yeats, Eliot, and Warren (New Haven, 1963), p. 98.

⁴Charles H Bohner, Robert Penn Warren (New York, 1964), pref.

⁵Allen Shepherd, "Robert Penn Warren as a Philosophical Novelist," Western Humanities Review, XXIV (1973), 158.

⁶Robert Frank Cayton, "The Fictional Voices of Robert Penn Warren," Four Quarters, XXI (1972), 52.

⁷John M. Bradbury, Renaissance in the South: A Critical History of the Literature, 1920-1960 (Chapel Hill, 1963), p. 67.

⁸Allan Shepherd, "Character and Theme in Robert Penn Warren's Flood," Critique, IX (1969), 101.

CHAPTER II

METAPHYSICAL EVIL

In philosophical and theological terminology, metaphysical evil designates those ontological conditions, principles, or forces inherent in the nature of things which either furnish the circumstances under which evil necessarily exists, or cause the particular conditions, deeds, or practices considered harmful, painful, undesirable, or frustrating to well-being or happiness. Because the acknowledgment of the possibility of such a quality as metaphysical evil depends upon an individual's total world-view, many philosophers and theologians deny that there is, in fact, such a condition, principle or force present in reality. However, the purpose of this present inquiry is not to discuss all the possible choices available concerning the nature or possibility of metaphysical evil; rather, our problem is to determine whether or not Robert Penn Warren presents a concept of metaphysical evil in his novels and its nature, if it is present.

In order to establish the presence and nature of metaphysical evil as an aspect of Warren's concept of evil, four basic questions have been adopted from Radoslav A. Tsanoff's The Nature of Evil. While these questions are not discussed separately, they were used as the basis for the examination of the aspects of metaphysical evil presented in the novels. According to Tsanoff, if any of the following

questions are answered in the affirmative, metaphysical evil may be said to be present in the system under study:

1. Is Evil dualistically a principle of being itself in opposition to the Good or Perfection?
2. Are Good and Evil somehow mixed in a world that is futile or void of ultimate rhyme or reason?
3. Is Evil somehow involved with the very stuff of reality?
4. Is Evil a permanent characteristic of finite existence, a limitation of being proper to the creatures themselves?¹

The term metaphysical suggests an abstraction or a transcendental concept. In this case, it must be remembered that the novels of Robert Penn Warren are not technically philosophical or theological treatises which speak directly in normal theological or philosophical language about the abstract power or force(s) which give rise to or are the basis for the evil(s) in common human experience. However, as it has been suggested by Albion King, metaphysical evil is graphically and impressively presented in the concrete and personal images of works of art and literature such as the Divine Comedy and Paradise Lost. In these concrete personifications, evil has a particularly hopeless quality because of its consistent appearance in imaginative works as it confronts the Good.² While there is no consensus among the philosophers as to whether metaphysical evil must of necessity be pessimistic, there certainly is a tendency to treat it as such. Of the apparent defeat of man by evil forces does have a pessimistic quality; and certainly, many of Warren's characters do suffer permanent loss because of their losing the battle with evil.

The overall impact of several of the novels is that man's efforts to conquer evil are futile because evil is always present and must always be dealt with regardless of the amount of effort previously expended to attempt to eradicate it.

Since publishing Night Rider with Percy Munn's ultimate destruction after his failure to deal with the forces of evil around and within him, Warren persistently has presented forces of good and evil in a never-ending confrontation. As long as there is life, there is misery; and this suffering is a part of life itself. Because of this pervading presence of evil, it is safe to conclude that the evil in Warren's novels definitely does have a metaphysical quality about it. It is seen time and time again, in some of the novels more than in others; but it is virtually always there. It is certainly true that some of the characters do come to terms with evil; but the evil is always there as a permanent characteristic of finite existence. We might see it as the struggle for life Willie Proudfit had in contrast to the defeat of Percy Munn or as the wickedness at the core of human nature as presented by Proudfit, Wyndham, Stark, Sumpter, or others of Warren's many characters who present and confront the ever present threat of evil in human life. The belief that the confrontation with evil is never over is expressed by Jack Burden in All the King's Men when he affirmed the following: "But if anything is certain it is that no story is ever over, for the story which we think is over is only a chapter in a story which will not be over, and it isn't the game that is over, it is just an inning, and that game has a lot more than nine innings. When the game stops it will be called on account of

darkness." These stories which do not end, but are "called on account of darkness," have led many critics to conclude as John L. Stewart did, that Warren is a persistent dualist in ontology with respect to the conflict between good and evil.³

The first question Tsanoff poses has to do with the presentation of good and evil as dualistic forces. Dualism technically requires that good and evil exist as mutually exclusive, irreducible elements in conflict. Commonly in dualistic systems, evil is presented by symbols of darkness, filth, death and other comparable entities and forces which produce those things destructive to well-being.⁴ Further, metaphysical evil may be presented as any real physical force bent on destruction which controls people and impedes their path to fulfillment and happiness.⁵ In addition, the force of metaphysical evil may be made visible in any external dehumanizing compulsions which degrade man; however, there is some irony in that it is the awareness of evil as a dehumanizing force that marks the humanity of man.⁶ Evil then may be seen as both the destructive dehumanizing element in experience and also as the force which makes man's awareness of his humanness possible.

However, these hostile metaphysical forces need not be outside of the self. It is possible for them to be those spiritual or nonmaterial forces within the individual which keep him from his full development and self-definition. In figures of darkness, filth, corruption, deformity, pain and suffering, and death, evil forces may come from within an individual to keep him from fulfilling his potential. Further, metaphysical evil may be presented as an illusion or a deceptive appearance in reality. One example of such presentations of evil

in the novels occurs as Murray Guilfort in Meet Me in the Green Glen is dying from an overdose of pills. The threat of the evil in his life is presented in flickering hallucinations of reaching hands and varying lights, shadows, and darkness as his consciousness sinks into a final darkness in which he is unable to tell the real from the unreal around him. To him, "the dream is a lie, but the dreaming is truth." Throughout the novels the characters are frequently unable to tell if what they perceive is true, real and substantial in external reality or merely false, unreal, illusory figments of their corrupted imaginations. This final novel begins with Cassie Spottwood's inner conflict being expressed by her inability to separate the inner reality and illusion from the external reality and illusion. In such cases, there is no clear agreement among philosophers whether evil is a genuinely true entity in itself or not; however, the consequences of such imagined forces are just as devastating to the fulfillment of being as a "real" one. Guilfort's pain is real and destructive to him regardless of the "reality" of the evil he fears. The threat seen everywhere around him in the totality of his experience forced him to self-destruction whether it is real or illusory. However, his ironic efforts to deny the reality of both evil and love around him eventually cause him to succumb to that evil.

It is a characteristic of evil that to treat an evil force "as if it were real" is just as destructive as one that is a simple reality. That is, the imagined threat to being can kill just as well as the disease, flood, bullet or knife. "Man is subject to fictitious evil as well as to real," Paul Siwek has observed, in support of this

concept. "The difference between the two is merely exterior; it only depends on the object. . . ; fictitious evil is still a true evil. It is sometimes even more painful than what is called 'real.'"⁷ Evil may be an illusion or a "Great Mirage," as Warren called it in his essay on Conrad's Nostromo; evil is a powerfully destructive force anyway. "In the end," Warren said, "the land, its people, and its history had to be dreamed up, evoked out of the primal fecund darkness that always lies below our imagination."⁸ The following discussion demonstrates that this same darkness lies at the base of Warren's imagination. Within this darkness the force of evil is found which is ever and always present and can never be irradiated. According to the standards indicated by Tsanoff, this makes this aspect of evil in Warren's novels a genuinely metaphysical principle.

In the discussion which follows, the relationship of ideas to factual existence, the relationship of God to evil, the metaphysical force of history, and the relationship of necessity and evil are considered as ways in which metaphysical evil is presented in Warren's novels. Also, Warren's continual preoccupation with the weight of original sin as a special aspect of an individual's past is discussed. Following the consideration of original sin, attention is given to alienation, emptiness, despair, and nothingness as parts of the dark shadow of the self which is omnipresent in Warren's characters. The Osmosis of Being in relation to the notions of Illusion and Truth are considered in the closing portions of the chapter as a part of the interrelatedness of life in that spider web metaphor of existence portrayed in the novels.

Relationship of Idea to Fact

An abstraction, such as metaphysical evil, is presented in literature in concrete images and dramatic actions. The nature of a writer's concern necessarily is expressed within the framework of his works of art. In Warren's novels, there is a continual presentation of the problem of evil in the lives of the characters. As he stated in his speech, "The Knowledge and Image of Man," each of the stories is the story of a soul's attempt at self-definition, for good or evil.⁹ The form which these stories take in his novels is the expression of the ideals and the desires of the characters in actions which are, more often than not, morally questionable or morally ambiguous actions of evil and the pain and suffering which are the results of those ambiguous actions. Most of the overt actions are actually analyzable under considerations of moral and nonmoral evils; viz, the evil that people do and the evil they suffer. However, the basis for these actions is found in the nature of things, because evil is considered as a part of the real stuff of the world portrayed. While considering an abstraction, such as metaphysical evil, it is very interesting to note that virtually all of the stories in the novels are comprised of the efforts of the characters to give shape to the ideas they hold or the desires they wish to fulfill. Such a motif places Warren squarely in the tradition which Tsanoff treats in his Nature of Evil: "Evil and the problem of evil seem to arise from an experienced clash and disaccord of the actuality with the ideal, whatever this may be."¹⁰

The ideas which Warren's characters hold must be expressed in their actions. The conflict between these ideas and the factuality

of experience mixed with human loyalty was first expressed by Percy Munn in Night Rider (1939). Within the first chapter of Warren's first novel, the first central character speaks to the potential members of the tobacco growers' association as they are challenged to band together in an attempt to fight the evil of the big money interests in the tobacco industry. "There is nothing here but an idea," Munn declared to them. "And that idea is dead unless you have brought it life by your long trip here. It does not exist unless you give it life by your own hope and loyalty." The remainder of the novel is the unfolding of the complications that arise from bringing this idea to life.

Eventually, the ideas held by the characters of the novels become more important to them than anything else, often even more important than life itself. In the case of Percy Munn, his obsessive involvement with the association cost him his marriage, his friends, his integrity and eventually his life. Typically, these things happened to him because his efforts given to his idea became an embodiment of the evil that is at the very core of his being. He lost sight of his own limitations and his finite understanding became the basis for his extreme behavior. He became a vital force for evil in the community and brought destruction to himself and many others. In this first novel, the imbalance between the ideal and the real, between the thought in the character's mind and the actions he used to bring fulfillment to his desires are typical of the action in the subsequent novels. I also believe the thematic structure of the novels demonstrates that even the most noble ideals of man can be

brought to evil ends because of the failure of those who embrace the noble ends to keep the idea in prospective with all the limitations which necessarily pertain to finite beings. The very act of devotion itself becomes a force for evil and an expression of human limitation.

The most important religious characters in Night Rider is Willie Proudfit. He is the pious farmer with whom Percy Munn finds refuge. During Munn's flight, Proudfit provides a counterpoint of stability and acceptance of personal responsibility. Willie once had gone out to gain his fortune, but he had come in close touch with death and had been turned from his willful ways. His importance centers in the fact that at the end of the novel he is alive; he has come to terms with the forces of evil within and around him. Willie tells Munn the way he came to know what the Lord had in mind for him. Munn eventually came to realize what Proudfit told him, but he made his discovery too late to reverse the direction of his fate. The force he has given form to destroys him.

Proudfit's importance to this study rests mainly in his being the first of the many religious characters who populate Warren's novels. Even though his story is not developed in the detail that the major character's is, it is a typically Warrensque tale. "This is the pattern, as it relates to Warren's fiction," Hoffman has indicated.

"1. The beginnings are in innocence, in the form of immaturity or an incompleteness.

"2. The world is next in the sequence, and the person facing the world. The world is a place of particulars, and man must find a 'path of action' that will test his principles, whatever they may be.

"3. Man, entering the world, can commit one of two kinds of sin (or both of them): he can violate the particulars of the world in order to achieve power, or he commits acts of violence on the assumption that they are principled acts."¹¹ The world of particulars into which the innocent young Proudfit journeyed was the West of buffalo hunting and eventually wilderness seclusion. The desire for economic independence and the desire for solitude and isolation reflected in these two experiences are symbolic of two of the ways that Warren's secular characters in several of the novels bring themselves into the conflict with others and become embodiments of the force(s) of or for evil.

While slaughtering buffalo in the Kansas plains, Willie is obsessively caught up in the idea of killing these creatures for his own profit. The imagery of the smelling carcasses and the rotting hides are graphic in their portrayal of the forces of natural evil set loose by Proudfit's obsession. The greed and other associated moral evils are made possible or brought into being because of the inability of Willie Proudfit and his associates to control the forces which are at work within them. Warren did not develop this story with the detail he did the larger tales of characters like Percy Munn in Night Rider, Bogan Murdock in At Heaven's Gate, or Jeremiah Beaumont in World Enough and Time, but Willie's obsession in an idea and his subsequent isolation from the human community illustrated in his flight into the mountains away from the "likker" and the "hoggishness in man, and a hog-blindness," are just as real. His attempts to escape moral evil brought him fever and suffering, and realization of the force of

metaphysical evil in him. "But no, ain't no man knows what the Lord's done marked out fer him," Willie Proudfit told Percy Munn. "And many's the pore, weakid man done looked on the face of blessedness, bare-eyed, and ne'er knowed hit by name. Lak a blind man a-liften his face to the sun, and not knowen. Hit was a blessen the Lord laid on me, and I praise hit." Willie had seen what Percy had not.

A concluding incident which Willie told Percy Munn was about Willie's pa. In Willie's youth, his father had taken the family to Arkansas because he did not want to fight in the War Between the States; but, ironically, while Willie was away losing his innocence and learning the lesson of the power of evil in and around him, his father was killed in a knife fight while defending the rebels he would not fight with because they were not any more responsible for the war than any other men. The murderer is never caught; Willie's father is dead, and justice is never obtained. There is an apparent futility in the story of Willie Proudfit; nevertheless, he has accepted the evil around and within him. He is aware that he cannot escape from evil or remove it from experience. He is able to live, while Percy Munn must die, running from the law, pursued for a murder he did not commit. Munn had not learned in time that simple, finite man could not irradicate evil even from his own experience. His own actions will find their inexorable conclusions, and he must face his own responsibility.

In order to illustrate further the principle that the devotion of a human being to an ideal will lead him to evil when that ideal is exposed to real experience or fact, any one of a number of religious characters could be selected. Ashby Wyndham in At Heaven's Gate is led

to jail as an accessory to murder, because of his dedication to preaching the Gospel. Munn Short in World Enough and Time is kept alive by the man he had cuckolded. Ellis Burden forfeited his family in order to preach the Gospel and show God's mercy to the poor in a Spanish ghetto in All the King's Men. In Band of Angels Seth Parton's dedication to the ideal of the possibility of sanctified joy is lost because of his dedication to the abolition of slavery. In The Cave, MacCarland Sumpter's dedication to his son cost him the love of the son for whom he sacrificed his own reputation in his community. The very desire to obey Jesus and not kill ironically led Monmorency Pugh in Wilderness to murder the conscripser who came to force his service in the Civil War. Calvin Fiddler was brought to murder and prison break because of his jealous love for Maggie in Flood. His emphasis upon service in the prison hospital highlights the futility of the empty lives of those around him. The latest novel, Meet Me in the Green Glen returns to the more pervasive pessimism. After the death of Angelo Passetto, the insanity of Cassie Spottwood, and the suicide of Murray Guilfort, the love and devotion of Corinne and Leroy Lancaster and the growing secular realization of Cy Grinder are contrasted to the imbalance of those who did not come to the calling of the game because of darkness. Throughout his novels, Warren demonstrates again and again that the abstract becomes the force of evil when it is improperly mixed with factuality by the human failure to keep limitations in perspective or denying the reality of the limitation. The message is again and again given that for the vast majority of ordinary people, the improper mixture is

inevitable, as one learns that evil is an inevitable force in whatever one does.

This principle is best illustrated by two of the "religious" characters selected for this study, who were not named above. From At Heaven's Gate and World Enough and Time, Jason Sweetwater, an Episcopal priest's son, and Percival Skrogg, a former ministerial student, as lapsarians, best represent what happens to most of Warren's central characters.

Jason Sweetwater, the son of an Episcopalian Rector, had rejected his father's view of God, had left the church, and thought his father to be a simple-minded menace; but he did love and to a degree respected his father. Some fifteen years after he had run away from the University and a life which his father had planned for him, Jason had come to believe one lesson his father had taught him: "A man could not believe in himself unless he believed in something else." He had come to know that what his father had taught him was the truth by his continuous exposure to evil. Even though this exposure is not developed in detail, the nature of it is indicated in a single paragraph which is typical of the process by which Warren's characters lose their innocence:

He had begun to learn that on the miserable, rat-infested, pest-ridden schooner as it heaved greasily southward toward the Caribbean. He had learned that in the Marine Corps, in which he had enlisted after one year at sea. He had learned it in France, in great bitterness, and it had generated in him a cold ferocity and a capacity for endurance. He had learned it later, in a dozen ships, in fifty ports, San Francisco, Bombay, Aden, Lisbon, Guayaquil, in hotels, barrooms, brothels, flophouses. He had learned it in factories, on docks, in jails, on picket lines, at the point of a gun, under the impact of the sawed-off baseball bat, and from the electric, inchoate delight which tingled clean

to the shoulder when he first found the brittle bone of a jaw or the softness of the belly. He had learned it from great dissipation from the observation of death, from violence, from loneliness, and from considerable suffering.¹²

For the purpose here, the important thing is not only that he had learned that he could not believe just in himself--simple self-affirmation did not bring him any sense of fulfillment--but he had learned also to accept his own past actions, despite the evil they contained. "Now he could think back to that and see it," Warren tells us of Sweetwater's reflection upon his past, "without the shame and nausea. . . . It had had to be that way. I reckon, he said to himself, a fellow dumb as I am has to get it the hard way, he has to be a son-of-a-bitch before he can ever recognize one." The principle he had come to believe in was the recognition and acceptance of himself and others as human beings. Warren tells us that this principle gave him an objective way to live his life: it made living simple. He could now look at another person and see "just a poor, benighted hunk of bone and gristle and fat meat, wearing pants or skirts as the case might be, just a poor God-damned man or woman moving in the world."

Sweetwater's belief in the common humanity of man led him into the life of a self-styled Marxist labor leader. It is he who started the strike on Massey Mountain that eventually cost Ashby Wyndham his job and sent him off the mountain and into the arms of Jesus. As a labor leader, Jason had a messianic complex appropriate to a Marxist. He believed himself to be the savior of men from suffering and pain. "Sweetie, he said to himself, his hand lying on [Sue's] hair," in a statement which reflects his self-concept, "you are a wonderful guy.

You are not a mess. You are superb. You are Socrates. You are Bruce Barton. You are the Child Jesus expounding in the Temple. You are Dorothy Dix. You take away the sins of the world. Your personality is so God-damned fascinating." Certainly Jason Sweetwater began to believe in himself when he began to believe in something else; however, he also began to lose perspective upon his own humanity and to elevate his own importance. It is at this point that he becomes an example of Warren's man of Idea who turns his potential good into evil. His efforts to bring justice and equity, "to take away the sins of the world," for the laborers instead brought them misery, pain and suffering. Even his effort to love Sue Murdock brought her death.

He is one of the most important forces behind much of the moral and nonmoral evil in the novel. Love of justice, the fighting for the rights of the downtrodden, his effort to bring perfection and to irradicate evil from human experience, his refusal to marry Sue after she has become pregnant are primary forces behind the conflicts and the encounters which end so disasterously for so many in the novel. The ambiguity of his efforts is highlighted by his simply walking out of the life of Sue Murdock after she tells him she is going to have an abortion. He will not marry her, his principle will not allow it; but his principled act brings her death because while she is weak and indefensible after the operation, Slim Sarret kills her. Further, Sweetwater had humiliated and dehumanized Slim in an earlier meeting during which Slim had attempted to reestablish his relationship to Sue. The ridicule heaped upon the homosexual Sarret by his defeat in the rough and tumble fight with Sweetwater at Sue's caused Slim to

return and kill Sue. We are told nothing more about Sweetwater in the novel. The morally ambiguous conclusion comes, as the story of Sweetwater's actions clearly shows, as he became an embodiment of an evil force even though his intentions were good and his actions based upon his principles.

Through Jason Sweetwater, we are introduced to the notion of the attempt to find meaning for one's self through belief in something else. This is recognizable as an earlier appearance of the concept developed in more detail by Cass Mastern in All the King's Men. Cass came to recognize the great evil that lurks in the human frailty to attempt to define oneself in another. Each must be himself, and each must be true to the nature of things he finds within himself. If one is not, then the danger illustrated by these characters who lose perspective on their ideals will trap him as well. I believe there is at least a similarity between these notions and one expressed by Eric Hoffer. "When our individual interests and prospects do not seem worth living for," he wrote in The True Believer, "we are in desperate need for something apart from us to live for. All forms of dedication, devotion, loyalty and self-surrender are in essence a desperate clinging to something which might give worth and meaning to our futile, spoiled lives. Hence the embracing of a substitute will necessarily be passionate and extreme."¹³ The danger in this is illustrated over and over again in the novels. Extreme dedication is a breaking of the golden mean for happiness and fulfillment, and it becomes a force for evil.

A second lapsarian religious character who illustrates Warren's concept of metaphysical evil is Percival Skrogg of World Enough and Time. Skrogg's life is a microcosm of Jeremiah Beaumont's efforts and of many of Warren's other idealists. Just as Beaumont had to learn about the relationship of his ideas to the real world, so Skrogg was placed in a similar set of circumstances. The principal difference between them is that Beaumont eventually does learn that he must return and be hanged for his ruthless murder of his father-figure, Casius Fort, acknowledging the crime he had done in darkness and deceit. Ironically, just as Jeremiah Beaumont was never to make it back to actually fulfill his realization, Percival Skrogg was to end his life violently because, "at some point he had discovered," the narrator tells us, "that he was part of the world, after all, and that the pitiful body he wore was part of himself and precious. More precious than any idea," and his efforts to save his body brought his death.

As a child Percival Skrogg was indoctrinated about a whimsical God identified in the narrative as the deity of the Presbyterianism. His father adopted the qualities of this deity for himself, and the father's outright contempt for his sickly son, forced Percival Skrogg into a life of alienation, internal darkness, and a denial of reality of the outside world. In concurrence with his father's desire that he be a preacher, Skrogg went to Transylvania University to prepare to be a minister. "We know little about the boy's years there," the narrator states, "except that despite his ill health he was a devoted student and a model of piety, famous for his dialectical skill and his nightly

vigils at prayer, his contempt for his own flesh and for the minds of other men." The crises which ended in his denial of "the faith" came during the middle of his last year; he left school, not waiting for expulsion, and began a miserable life which was reputed to be madness as he debated philosophic ideas and performed many noble acts of charity, despite his own poverty. After the War of 1812, Skrogg became editor of the Relief Party organ, Freeman's Advocate. While editing this very controversial paper which was gaining influence and causing havok in the Frankfort, Kentucky area, the intertwining of the action of the characters in the novel inevitably brought Skrogg in contact with Jeremiah Beaumont, the young idealist hero of the novel.

Political involvement, liberalism, Relief Party efforts, scandal of atheism, and the betrayal of friendship for an ideal which he himself was to betray are the characteristics of the life of Percival Skrogg. They are shown over and over again in the novels. Sometimes the person is a totally secular character such as Percy Munn in Night Rider, Gerald Calhoun or Slim Sarrett in At Heaven's Gate, Tobias Sears in Band of Angels, or Murray Guilfort in Meet Me in the Green Glen. The pattern of life is much the same: the noble intention becomes the occasion of evil; but even more, the power of evil in the character takes on an awesome, often fearsome, force of the demonic. It must be noted that while not all of the characters are equally despicable or hateful, most of them take on the qualities of the villain as hero. "A villain is a man who, for a selfish end willfully and deliberately violates standards of morality sanctioned by the audience or ordinary reader," Clarence Boyer has observed. "When such a character is given

a leading role, and when his deeds form the center of dramatic interest, the villain has become protagonist, and we have the type of play with the villain as hero."¹⁴ Ironically, the idealists of Warren's novels often have a similar impact. While endeavoring to bring about good ends, they do things that the moral standards of the readers are likely to find odious; nevertheless, they do them with the hope that the end will justify the means. However, their very attempt to be noble and to bring about good by the use of evil turns the good into forces of evil. They willfully do evil deeds while rationalizing them. They murder, they burn or steal. Sexual crimes are frequent, and violation of the humanity of another occurs often. Just as Percival Skrogg in World Enough and Time, Jason Sweetwater in At Heaven's Gate, or Isaac Sumpter in The Cave, they use others for their selfish gain doing apparently noble things, and they become forces of evil.

I believe Warren has portrayed in these novels the observation of Rinehold Niebuhr that modern culture has a tendency to assume that men are as good as the ideals of justice and love they entertain. "Nevertheless" Niebuhr says, "this confusion does not justify extravagant theories of total depravity, and such theories are not convincing refutations of the error in liberal moralism."¹⁵ There is, however, wide agreement among the critics of Warren's work that one of the points Warren is trying to make, in support of the notion he presents in "Knowledge and the Image of Man" and "Literature and Crises," is that the loss of a sense of sin and a failure to realize one's participation in it will cause one to become a force for the very evil he is attempting to irradicate. It is, as Longley noted, "the truth . . . that

tragedy grows as often out of our own inordinate idealism as from the grasping intentional evil of others" that is demonstrated in At Heaven's Gate by Sweetwater, Sarrett, Calhoun, Murdock, Blake and the others. Further, according to Elizabeth Kerr, it is the lack of balance between the idea and the action related to the idea which causes the evil to become a part of the real experience of the characters in All the King's Men.¹⁶ Even a superficial survey of the themes and actions of the characters in all of these novels would demonstrate the same thing. From Percy Munn to Murray Guilfort--that is, from Night Rider to Meet Me in the Green Glen, from 1939 to 1971--there is an overwhelming recurrence of the notion that the effort to bring any form of utopian idealism into reality will become a force, a personification of the ever-present metaphysical evil in reality, destructive to those ideals and to those who hold them. The characters like Willie Proudfit or Leroy Lancaster live out the acknowledgment of the reality of the evil force, and this causes the realization that the perfection desired is not totally or fully attainable. The novels seem to support what Niebuhr has suggested that utopian law of love or justice or world peace or eternal personal happiness must stand on the "edge of history and not in history, that [they] represent an ultimate and not an immediate possibility."¹⁷ Modern liberal man has not learned that lesson, and Warren's novels tell the story over and over again that they must learn it, if they are to live. It is the conflict of the ideal and the real and the development of the good as a force for evil that created Warren's double hero. "The incompleteness of man," Hardy has called it, "the struggle to reconcile the idea and the need of unity

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with the facts of multiplicity in human experience."¹⁸ In this, then, Warren is giving dramatic, fictional life to the platonic principle expressed by Paul Ricoeur that "evil is the consecration of multiplicity in ourselves," and failure to recognize it will make us a force for evil.¹⁹

The ideals held by the characters in the novels generally reflect an awareness of what ought to be. "Man does not know merely what is," Emil Brunner has said, "but [also] what ought to be." This sense of the "ought to be" in human experience is the essence of idealistic philosophy, which "since the days of Plato," Brunner continues, "has not ceased to inspire men and to move them to high things."²⁰ Certainly there are in Warren's works many characters who exercise a system of values based upon this platonic notion; however, I believe that it is significant that the overall impact of the novels is more Aristotelian than platonic. For example, while discussing Aristotle's ethical views, Copleston points out that Aristotle's chief objection to platonic idealism was its failure to bridge the gap between the sensible objects of ordinary experience and the ideal.²¹ Aristotle viewed the innate potentials of reality as the ideals which are then to be given form in actual experience. This seems to be what the novels are saying through those characters who are alive when the novels end. The so-called Calvinists reflect this. Willie Proudfit, Ashby Wyndham, Munn Short, MacCarland Sumpter, Ellis and Jack Burden, Monmorency Pugh, Lettice Poindexter Tolliver, and Leroy Lancaster, all demonstrate in one way or another that the gap between the ideal and the real must be bridged in order for one to remain alive.

Each to some degree has, and most have done so by simply acknowledging the mixed nature they have, and the reality of the evil that is at the core of their being. The more detailed treatment of that evil is developed below under the consideration of original sin; nevertheless, they all recognize some force as evil and learn to deal with it by not attempting to remove it from their total experience.

God and Evil

When consideration of God and evil is undertaken in Warren, it is mandatory to begin with the observation of Ellis Burden, the Scholarly Attorney, at the end of All the King's Men. He has been taken to Jack Burden's home; and there he will live, in the house that was once the home of Judge Montague Irwin, the biological father of Jack Burden, Ellis Burden's legal son. The old man is weak, so he must dictate his thoughts to Jack because of his frailty. "Separateness is identity and the only way for God to create, truly create, man," the Scholarly Attorney said, "was to make him separate from God Himself, and to be separate from God is to be sinful. The creation of evil is therefore the index of God's glory and His power." Placing God in the center of his thinking about evil, the Scholarly Attorney has touched upon the central concern in the problem of evil, the relation of God to evil. Clearly he affirms that God created evil, because evil by definition is separation from God; and creation by definition must be separate from God in order to have identity. Within the context of Warren's works as a whole, this observation is of great importance. It is the separation from God and the great quest for

self-knowledge or identity which symbolize Warren's principal concern. The thoughts which he expressed in "Knowledge and the Image of Man " stress that it is in God that this quest for self-knowledge takes place, because "each soul has value in God's sight. Or, with the secularization of things, we may say: every soul is valuable in man's sight."²²

In stating his belief that God created evil, the old man has expressed his agreement with the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah 45:7 states flatly, "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and I create evil: I the Lord do all these things," Amos 3:6 asks a rhetorical question, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" While it is not the purpose of this study to expose the concept of evil presented by the Hebrew prophets, their notion of evil is similar to that reflected by Ellis Burden. Clearly, as stated above, the prophets viewed God as the originator of evil; however, often the evil they have in mind, as implied by the word RA (רָעָה) is the normal word for badness, or to bring harm or sorrow.²³ It is more closely associated with moral and natural evil than with metaphysical evil. It is that evil which Adam and Eve learned as distinct from good when they partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is important that generally in Hebrew and Christian thinking, there is no actual concept of a metaphysical evil except as it is represented in the actions of Satan, the evil one. There is, however, in this concept a notion of practical dualism. That is, in so far as ordinary human experience is concerned, there are two forces--good and evil. The first is represented in God, the second in the power of Satan. Albion King has discussed this at length

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in his book, The Problem of Evil, which is essentially a commentary on the Book of Job. Also in the book, The Two Hands of God, Alan Watts discusses the myths of the forces of good and evil from several cultural backgrounds, one of which is the Judaeo-Christian.²⁴ It is generally conceded that the general conception of good and evil in the Judaeo-Christian heritage is not ultimately a dualism; however, there is a practical, daily confrontation with the powers of darkness, both within the individual and in the world around him. The Apostle Paul called this a power of the principalities of the air. There are those, however, who insist that the belief in an eternal hell for the punishment of the devil and his angels would in fact be an affirmation of a kind of dualistic force in the power of evil. This is relevant to our present study because several characters in the novels, such as Ellis Burden in All the King's Men and Nick Pappy in The Cave, express some belief in the power of evil in relationship to the power of God.

If evil is found in the essential nature of things, the state of being separate from God, then the very act of creation brings the nature of evil right to the heart of being itself. It is, however, argued by such theologians as Rinehold Niebuhr that the doctrine of creation instead of affirming duality, is actually an argument against it because God is, in fact, the source of evil, and He will ultimately dominate it. However, Warren does not attempt to create a theodicy in the novels; that is, he does not really attempt to reconcile the nature of God and the presence of evil. Instead, he presents statements like those of the Scholarly Attorney which tend to stress some of the orthodox forms of Calvinism. In Calvinism

there is no absolute dualism, even though man is subject to the power of original sin in him; but that evil is the creation of man, not of God, and evil is not eternal. Man created evil by his rebellion against the revealed will of God. At this point, it does not seem that the statement of Ellis Burden could qualify as a "Calvinistic" one. The form of metaphysical evil present in Warren's novels in this respect is found in evil being a quality of limitation proper to being itself rather than a dualistic force equal to the power of Good.

Because God had created evil in the separation of creation from Himself, the Scholarly Attorney goes on to say that the creation of good becomes the measure of man's glory. Actually, the discussion of the possibility of dualism in Warren's novels is difficult because there is no consistent evidence for a power for good as well as for a power for evil. For example, while Willie Stark is discussing Hugh Miller's desire for good with Adam Stanton, one of the secular idealists, and Jack Burden, Willie affirms that we must make what good we can out of badness, because badness is all there is for us to work with. Willie continued,

When your great-great-grandpappy climbed down out of the tree, he didn't have any more notion of good or bad, or right or wrong, than the hoot owl that stayed up in that tree. Well, he climbed down and he began to make Good up as he went along. He made up what he needed to do business, Doc. And what he made up and got everybody to mirate on as good and right was always just a couple of jumps behind what he needed to do business on. That's why things change, Doc. Because what folks claim is right is always just a couple of jumps behind what he needed to do business.²⁵

The remainder of Stark's discussion is a presentation of the utilitarian or pragmatic notion of the relativity of good and evil, with the evil being only that which does not help or that which frustrates one's own

purpose. The good is whatever allows business to be conducted; the evil is whatever does not allow business to be conducted. The Scholarly Attorney also affirms that the creation of good is the index to the glory of man, presumably because all that man has to work with is tainted by his separation from God in creation. In a world like that of Willie Stark and the Scholarly Attorney, there could be no metaphysical evil in the sense of dualism; but because evil (badness) is a final and ultimate characteristic of being itself, there is a metaphysical evil.

While reflecting upon some of the tracts that Ellis Burden had written, Jack Burden became introspective about the nature of God. According to the elder Burden, God is the "Fullness of Being." Parenthetically, the thoughts of Jack are presented: "For Life is Motion toward Knowledge. If God is Complete Knowledge then He is Complete Non-Motion, which is Non-Life, which is Death. Therefore, if there is such a God of Fullness of Being, we would worship Death, the Father." The old man attempts to argue the point, but it is futile. Jack then leads into some musings about the relationship of History, Knowledge, and Life, as he argues against the possibility of God as the Fullness of Being. The old man reprimands him for thinking in finite terms, promising to pray for his soul. "But even if I didn't believe in the old man's God," Jack continues in his mind, "that morning as I stood at the window of the Capitol and looked down on the crowd, I felt like God, because I had the knowledge of what was to come. I felt like God brooding on History. . . . But to me they looked like History, because

I knew the end of the event of which they were a part. Or thought I knew the end."

The relationship of God or a concept of God to History has been explored by several critics;²⁶ but for our purpose it is good to keep in mind that the past has a special interest to Warren; therefore, the metaphysical force of history is discussed below in a separate division, but now it is significant that Jack Burden comes to consider in the end that he does have a responsibility to bear the burden of time. Further, Ellis Burden's view of God influenced Jack. "I nodded my head and said yes," Jack said after Ellis Burden asked him if he knew that the statement about God were true. "(I did so to keep his mind untroubled, but later I was not certain but that in my own way I did believe what he had said.)" I believe this implies that he changed from the cynical view of God cited earlier to a view much more like that expressed by the Scholarly Attorney. Evil is a necessary, inevitable manifestation of present being, because it is separated from God; and the responsibility of man is to bring about fullness of being by acceptance of his limitations and responsibility for the evil manifested by himself in time. God's relationship to evil in human life is as the creator of that life, but it is man's responsibility for the particular manifestations of that evil in history.

Another example occurs in The Cave, as Jasper Harrick lies trapped in a cave. MacCarland Sumpter, a Baptist preacher, is exhorting the crowd, but the sermon comes to the reader through the consciousness of Nick Papadoupalous. In the message, Sumpter is stressing the omniscience of God by using the familiar Biblical image of the

fallen sparrow. In his mind, Nick begins to blame God for the things that are happening to himself and to Jasper and praise God because some men are able to endure the evil that is visited upon them. As Jack Harrick told his wife when she demanded that he pray that God would not let anything happen to Jasper in the ground, "He let the world happen, didn't he?" The implication is that we should not expect God to do anything. Further, neither Jack Harrick nor Mac Sumpter knew "what God will take in hand to do." None of the characters who continue to live presume to know; but like Lettice Poindexter in Flood, they seek to know "the nowness of God's will."

Resignation is the dominant mood of the religious with respect to the presence of evil in experience. Lucy Stark, near the end of All the King's Men, reflects on the type of resignation common among these religious characters when she accepts Willie for what he was, a good man who had made some bad mistakes, or a bad man who had done some good, but nevertheless, a great man. She demonstrates what Sontag has called the Kierkegaardian position in which "a naturally religious person may simply accept evil's presence without complaint."²⁷ Because the religious are usually absolutists to some degree, they also reflect the point which Stalnaker says is common to all absolutists: "Evil is inherent in the finite existence and thus shares the fate of all finite existence, that is, ultimate unreality."²⁸ However, they do not depend upon God to take the evil from them. In fact, as Cass Mastern learned, "man is never safe and damnation is ever at hand." The idea that man is ever threatened by evil and will never be delivered completely from that threat in this life by God is

developed further below in the consideration of the metaphysical implications of the doctrine of original sin as demonstrated in the novels.

God is presented as separate from human life, and man is presented as alienated from God. For example, in The Cave, Ikey Sumpter had come to believe in no God; therefore, he concluded, there was no self either. He is an example of a negative reinforcement to the principle Cass Mastern had learned in All the King's Men: it is essential to define the self "in God and in His great eye." Even though Cass did finally realize the error he had committed in attempting to define himself in some other self, apart from God, he dies in a hospital from a wound he sought in battle. God does not spare anyone, even those who through suffering learn the relationship of evil to themselves.

With respect to the problem of evil, no satisfactory solution is presented in terms of a justification of the existence of God as a moral being, in control of history. God and History are usually presented as morally neutral, and mankind is on its own to function as best it can under the burden of its own responsibility (Cf. All the King's Men, p. 418). Except in some negative cases, such as that of Percival Skrogg in World Enough and Time who rejects the stern, whimsical God of his Presbyterian parents in favor of the abstract notion of justice within his own head, an affirmation of a concept of an absolute, Dispotic, Sovereign God who totally controls destiny is virtually absent from the novels. In fact, the weight of the experiences of such characters as MacCarland Sumpter and Jack Harrick in The

Cave and other of the pious religious characters offer no explanations, only acceptance of evil as a real part of their experience, a permanent part of earthly reality and--in some unexplained, mysterious way--giving an opportunity to reflect upon the notion that suffering is really a favor from God. Nick is nearly overcome by anxiety because of Sumpter's use of the word Suffer, but as Mac Sumpter moved toward the conclusion of his sermon, he called out, "Oh, God, all pain will end in Glory! Oh, God, we thank Thee for Jasper Harrick." The relationship of suffering as such to the concept of evil in the novels is developed in Chapter Four below, but it is also of interest here because it reflects the idea that sometime suffering will be done away in the presence of God. This idea does not occur often in the novels because of the overall thrust of the works to deal with the present life and not the eternal life in a promised heaven; however, the testimonies of Willie Proudfit, Ashby Wyndham, Lucy Stark, Cass Mastern, Munn Short, the young Seth Parton, Uncle Rosenzweig, Brother Potts and Corinne Lancaster support the idea that suffering will find its end in God's fulness. God has created all things, including evil, but evil will come to an end in God because, as Mac Sumpter declared, he has to believe God to be a just and merciful God or else he could not bear to live. Further, Willie Proudfit in Night Rider held that God has a great plan by which He will manage all things for the good of His creatures, even the sparrow. In God's overall plan, Mac Sumpter further insisted in The Cave, that the justice of God is not shown in "the casualness of earthly consequences," but only in the great beyond. In these and similar instances, the religious

characters commonly say that they believe evil is not a metaphysical evil in the sense of its being an eternal principle of Ultimate Reality, because Being can find its fulfillment in God; but it could be considered a metaphysical principle in that evil is the finite limitation proper to the creatures. God's grace is credited by the pious for their having the opportunity to come to know Him and by knowing Him they know themselves, and this is basic Calvinism.²⁹

Those who learn of themselves and survive do, in fact, have some confrontation with the power outside themselves. It is in God that men know themselves and, therefore, are able to come to terms with the evil in themselves, to accept their responsibility for their own moral evil, and to endure the pain and suffering which living brings. However, if the character develops some notion of being "called of God" such as Willie Stark had in the beginning of All the King's Men, his tendency is to be out of "touch with the world," and in his own human extremity, is destroyed by the power of evil within him; his separateness.

History as Metaphysical Evil

Blanding Cottshill in Flood, informed Brad Tolliver, during the final church service in Fiddlersburg, that the Black preacher, Leon Pinckney, had "out-foxed Brother Potts," the White preacher, by not joining him and his congregation in his final effort "to pray with the colored for God to grant mercy and reconciliation and what-all might be necessary to undo the work of History." He went on to explain that Pinckney would not allow the Whites the easy way out of the burden of their responsibility for the racial problems of the South. In his

presentation of "the work of History," Warren presents the past as a dynamic source for evil, just as he has maintained Faulkner had done.³⁰ Just as Brother Potts was not able to undo the work of human history, mankind in general is caught in their situation, and they are unable to rid themselves of the evil done before them. Warren affirms in At Heaven's Gate that all men are like Bogen Murdock, as Slim Sarrett analyzed him, trapped and sick with the disease of his time, whatever it might be.

"History is always, in one perspective," Warren has stated, "the record of man's failure to realize his fine ideals, or the cynical use of ideals as masks for brutal and self-aggrandizing action, and at the very basis of the community created in the South, there was a primary violation of the 'truth'--the institution of chattel slavery."³¹ His observation of the moral force of history for evil in Faulkner is relevant to our investigation of his concept of evil. For example, the young Seth Parton, in Band of Angels, berates Manty Starr because her father has masked the evil of slavery by his very good treatment of them. "But he is good," Manty insisted. "'I am not concerned with your father as a person,' Seth Parton said. 'What is the small and foolish goodness of a person? May not the Adversary use best our small personal goodness for the greatness of Evil?'" It is significant that this illustration occurs in a discussion of slavery, the very evil Warren is discussing in the above criticism as the example of a dynamic source for evil from the past.

In a subsequent conversation with Parton about the problem of her father's goodness and the evil it hides, Manty "felt that he

could live out his own kind of goodness, and badness, and had nothing to do with the strangeness of the moment." However, the epigram Warren chose for Band of Angels registers Manty's plaintiff cry, "When shall I be dead and rid/ Of the wrong my father did?" This quotation from Housman captures the essence of the struggle of the characters in most of Warren's novels as they try to find a way to deal with the sins of their fathers. As Manty was to suffer because of her father's sin, her past became the dynamic source of evil in her life. Just as in ancient religions, Time is regarded as the source from which are produced the forces of good and evil.³² As Chronos is the primal force in Greek thought, Time is the "convulsion of the world" which Jack Burden characterizes in All the King's Men as "out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time."

Speaking about the past, Jack Burden voiced the view of human history which is consistently developed in the novels. He called it "the ash pile, the midden, the sublunary dung heap, which is the human past." Buried somewhere in every past there is that threat which is the power of evil. Further, the weight of the past as a force for evil is demonstrated by Charles Allen. "Band of Angels focuses sharply on Warren's central meaning. Acceptance of the parent symbolizes a realistic appraisal of the past; symbolizes an estimation of strength and fallibility, and an acceptance of them,"³³ In other words, an acceptance of evil which is central to one's survival often is demonstrated by the simple acceptance of one's parents. While it is not given the central place in Meet Me in the Green Glen that it is

in some of the earlier novels, the same notion is illustrated by Warren's development of Leroy Lancaster.

In the last novel, Leroy certainly is the "King" which his name implies. His beautiful wife and he demonstrate the ability to come to terms with the evil in them and in their past. The evil in their past is symbolized by Leroy's reflective walk during his crisis as he views his parent's house in its decay; he is able to find a measure of happiness and contentment only when he is able to answer his internal question "What is wrong with me?" by confronting his past as symbolized by his parent's influence upon him. He had returned from college to take up his father's law practice in Parkerton, and he felt himself to be the conscience of Parkerton. As long as he remained under the power of his father's influence, he could not establish himself as a being separate from his concept of what his father was. He was overwhelmed by guilt and unworthiness and was bowed by his own sense of dislocation. "The house was on the edge of town," the narrator says of Leroy's parent's house in which he now lived with his wife, "the last house with a sidewalk to it, disintegrating concrete with smartweed crawling in the cracks, and beyond this point, open country." A decaying house, set on the edge of town, is the only thing between him and the freedom symbolized by the "open country." It is an apt symbol of his past, which is a force for evil in his life.

The same principle is illustrated in The Cave. Jack and Celia Harrick are convinced that it is because of the father's wish for the death of their son that Jasper had been trapped in the cave.

Were Jack not a Medal of Honor winner, were he not the man his reputation made him to be, were he not the prize convert of MacCarland Sumpter, were he not what he was, his son, Jasper, would not be suffering in the cave. Likewise, were Isaac Sumpter not the son of the Baptist minister, he would not be the force of evil he is in the same novel. The influence of the past, represented by the relationship of the fathers and sons in the novels, is demonstrated as a force with transcendent power, a metaphysical force for evil in the lives of the characters.

The same principle may be demonstrated in each of the novels, by nearly all of the characters. While it may not be a biological father, it is at least a father figure. Cassius Fort is a father figure for Jeremiah Beaumont in World Enough and Time. Senator Tolliver and Bill Christian are father figures for Percy Munn in Night Rider. It has been suggested that Judge Irwin, the biological father of Jack Burden, had had more influence upon him than his legal father, the Scholarly Attorney had had. However, both of them represent the spiritual forces for evil in Jack Burden's life. In Wilderness and Flood, the force of the parent is illustrated. Adam Rosenzweig is forced to go to America, even as a cripple, because his father was a freedom fighter in Europe. Brad Tolliver and Calvin Fiddler are products of their parents and subject to their evil forces in their decaying hometown, Fiddlersburg, which is about to be drowned out by the forces of progress which built the dam. However, in every case mentioned above, the child is never really free of the evil his father has done; he can only accept it for what it is and begin to live under

the burden of time it represents. In some cases, mothers fill the same psychological function. For example, Lettice Tolliver and Rachel Jorden Beaumont are both subject to the force of evil represented by their mothers.

In addition to the relationship to the parents, the memory of the characters symbolizes the weight which the past has upon them. In the confusion of the present, past, and future which is frequently shown in the novels, the influence of the past for evil is shown. It represents that primal fecund darkness in the person out of which he must create his being. It is the recollection from which Plato felt all knowledge comes. According to Jung, it is in the memory of the race that the collective unconscious is informed. Similar notions are developed in Warren's novels. Lettice Poindexter Tolliver, the sensual lady from Flood who becomes the suffering servant in a Chicago home for the aged, is an example of a religious character who demonstrates the need to recall. Before her conversion, the following insight into her development is given.

She thought that this reliving was a penance she would have to go through. Alone, she would have to relive it all--

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The room on MacDougal Street--that was the place where her past was re-enacted. The re-living happened only when she came there. Coming into the dark vestibule she would stand before the door, the key in her hand, afraid to enter. But she always did. And there it would be the old, silver-jagged movie reel, something you had to endure without music, hearing only the pitiless whirring grinding of the projector in our head.³⁴

Just as Warren had done in the earlier novel All the King's Men with Jack Burden, memory here is symbolized by movies in the head.³⁵ Notice that it is in the room which she always entered, the darkness of her

head, that the penance of recollection was carried out. This is very typical. She must remember and confess the past. She is involved with herself in the burden of her history, the story of her self-definition for good or evil.

Brad Tolliver, the central character of Flood, upon whom the religious characters--Lettice Tolliver, Brother Potts, and Leon Pickney--have their influence and from whom they derive their narrative importance, gave a very significant parody of a passage of scripture: "Sufficient unto the day is the history thereof." It is important that for "history," the Bible says "evil." However, history is considered morally neutral by Jack Burden in All the King's Men; even though only a few pages later, after Jack had discovered that the "evil" Judge Irwin and not the pious Ellis Burden is his father, he says, "I could now accept the past which I had before felt was tainted and horrible. I could accept the past now because I could accept her [his mother and the sin to which his existence testifies] and be at peace with her and with myself." History itself may be morally neutral, but it can become a force for evil if responsibility is not personally accepted.

In contrast to Uncle Rosenzweig's dedication to the Jewish tradition and law, Aaron Blaustein in Wilderness challenges Adam Rosenzweig with the notion that History replaces God in man's life because History is the reason for things. "If you have stopped worshipping God," Aaron says to Adam, "all you can fall back on is History." Further, "only by learning it can you live," Aaron says to a nauseated Adam. "That is the only way I can live. Whatever comes out of History--out of this anguish even--will come only because everything is part of

everything else. . . . even the good." However, he defines history as "the agony people have to go through," Aaron Blaustein said, "so that things will turn out as they would have turned out anyway."

Later in the novel, Monmorency Pugh is a vital demonstration of this irony. His refusal to kill in the Civil War, out of obedience to Jesus, lead him to kill the conscripiter. His history is the agony he went through to do what would have happened anyway--killing.

It is in the irony of history, the Burden of Time, as John L. Stewart says in his book of the same title, which makes history a metaphysical force for metaphysical evil. "Time signifies the whole of reality as man apprehends it," Stewart says, "which is a series of events. Even 'things' and ideas or values are really process that change; that is history. The egotist tries to establish his dream against or outside Time, and one reason for his rejecting the father is that the father embodies the past and illustrates the inevitable mutability of human affairs."³⁶ For example, even though MacCarland Sumpter in The Cave admonished Celia Harrick to "Remember not the sins of [his] youth," she looked at her husband in the wheel chair; and she "suddenly saw that face, not as a staring, ruined, massive old face of the moment, but as a face yelling for joy and smeared with bear-blood. And she thought: it is his sin.

"She thought: He was young all those years before I was born, and he sinned. Oh, it's not fair, for I wasn't even born, and I have to suffer for the sins of his youth and--." These are examples of the burden of time as illustrated in the novels which indicate the metaphysical force of history for evil. But as Brad Tolliver realizes

at the end of Flood, the weight of the sins of the past will exceed the remembrance of the generations who gave them form, as symbolized by the unremembered generations who will not be moved from the old cemetery of Fiddlersburg. The weight of sin is greater than the remembrance of it.

The force of the memory is demonstrated in the novels by the importance Warren gives to the flashback and the confession. In Night Rider, it is Willie Proudfit's remembrance of things past which is the key to his narrative importance and his influence upon Munn. The entire statement of Ashby Wyndham in At Heaven's Gate is a recollection in the form of a confession of his guilt. Even Jason Sweetwater recalls his confrontations with the mulatto whore in Galveston as he says to Sue, "Forget it. . . . Do something and it'll be all right. You'll forget it then. And then it won't matter if you do remember it." He says this because he thinks Sue picks the scabs of her memory too much, and she has not yet been able to "boil the pus out" that is in everybody. Memory is the key to understanding the self.

In contrast to the self-understanding Willie Proudfit has which is shown by his ability to remember his tale, Percy Munn has had difficulty dealing with his memory. "The things you remembered, they were what you were. But every time you remembered them you were different. For a long time you would not notice any difference, as you noticed no difference in the spring when, day after day in the warm nights, the leaves thickened on the boughs, or in the fall slowly dropped away; until the time comes when, all at once, there was the

difference." It is during this time that Munn is having the greatest difficulty sorting out the evil in his actions to bring form to his ideal in the association of tobacco growers. The burden of the memory is his unaccepted evil.

Perhaps the idea, which is expressed in all the novels, is best said in All the King's Men. "I tried to tell her," Jack Burden had said to his mother, "how if you could not accept the past and its burden there was no future, for without one there cannot be the other, and how if you could accept the past you might hope for the future, for only out of the past can you make the future." And she responded, "I believe that, for if I had not come to believe it I could not have lived." In his last novel, Leroy Lancaster came to a similar conclusion and Cy Grinder is approaching it as Meet Me in the Green Glen comes to a close. Acceptance of one's past is an affirmation of one's future. It is, as Paul Ricoeur has noted, that realization that evil is the past of being itself, as old as the oldest beings--parents, Adam, ancestors, whatever but God is the future of being.³⁷ "Meaning is never in the event, but in the motion through the event," Jack Burden said. "The present moment is the point of time in which the past is made manifest and the future determined," Bohner has said concerning Jack's previous remark. "Life is motion, a process, not of being, but of becoming. Thus a matured and chastened Jack Burden can enter, with Anne Stanton, 'the convulsion of the world, out of history into history, and the awful responsibility of Time.'"³⁸

According to Niebuhr, the view of history as a dynamic is associated with the Renaissance; however, the modern tendency is to

deny that this dynamic is a two-fold force both for good and for evil. Warren's novels demonstrate agreement with Niebuhr in that they show that role of history in the definition of a soul is for good or evil. Warren also rejects the modern conception that the end is only in fulfillment.³⁹ The end can be devastating and destructive of human potentials in judgment. Further, Warren holds that a writer has the responsibility "to reason himself into the appropriate relation to the past."⁴⁰ A proper relationship with the past, one which reflects the burden of the responsibility of time which his works demonstrate, is one which recognizes the endless potentials of history for good and evil. If one is to live, Warren's novels say over and over again, he must recognize what Niebuhr calls the tragic aspect of history; that is, "that every new human potency may be an instrument of chaos as well as of order; and that history . . . has no solution of its own problem."⁴¹ Ultimately then, in time there is no removal of the final corruptions of history (the weight of the past, the burden of time). In short, one must realize as the younger Willie Stark had in All the King's Men, when he said of the past, "I bet things were just like they are now. A lot of folks wrassling around."

Necessity and Evil

The previous section which treated the possibility of history or time having the role of a force for metaphysical evil suggests the next area of consideration: the part played by necessity in the presentation of the concept of evil in the novels. The concept of necessity is related to the notions of cause and effect, and it is associated

with various doctrines of determinism. As indicated in Van A. Harvey's Handbook of Theological Terms, it is possible for any system of thought which rests upon the notions of cause and effect to be considered a form of determinism.⁴² Even though there are, in philosophy and theology, various approaches to the relationship of events (actions) to some cause and the effects which follow them, essentially, necessity indicates that inevitable or required relationship between cause and effect, while chance relates to the uncaused, arbitrary, or gratuitous relationship between events or actions to any other event or being. Often there is a metaphysical basis upon which a given view of determinism is based as in materialism or naturalism in which a necessary relationship between causes and their effects usually is believed to pertain. The tension between cause and effect and the free or independent action is an important one in Warren.

The concern over the relationship of necessity and chance is evident from the first of the novels through the last. Percy Munn is the product of many forces throughout the course of Night Rider. The determinism implied in the very opening of the novel is important. After his arrival by train, Munn is forced along with the crowd in Bardsville. The train and the people are symbols of two of these forces: mechanized, modern society and public opinion. In the end, when Munn is in hiding at Proudfit's farm, he is the product, the determined end, of those forces. The rise of the industrial complex which makes the efforts of the independent farmers more and more subject to the will of the big money interests is the precipitating force for the action of the novel. Further, Munn continually is the victim

of the pressure of public opinion, or the opinion of others. Throughout the novel he is forced to act, such as his giving the speech at the organizational rally for the association of tobacco growers, not because he freely wants to act, but because he is subject to the influence of the position and wishes of others.

Just as Jeremiah Beaumont began to feel himself to be a chip tossed to and fro on the sea as the pressure of the trial was building, Warren consistently shows that many of his characters are not free of the influence of the determining actions of others. Virtually every character is the subject of the determinism around him. These forces are often symbolized in economic and political terms. The central characters of the novels are "inevitably" the product of some force or other. Munn in Night Rider was mentioned above as the product of the will of others and of the forces of economic interest around him. In At Heaven's Gate Jerry Calhoun is determined by his paternity and the social, economic and political forces symbolized by Bogan Murdock's materialism. Caught between the forces, Jerry is nearly destroyed; but in the end there is some kind of promise as he returns home, while released from jail on bond as he awaits his trial for his "fooling around at the bank, for fooling with folk's money." The tension between Jerry's past as shown by his father and the house full of old relatives and the promise of the future as represented by Murdock's immoral materialism is ambiguously demonstrated by the determinism apparent in Jerry's life. He really does not decide anything, other than the initial decision to work for Murdock. But after the decision is made, the forces begin to work.

Much like the forces which have been discussed previously in the relationship of the ideal and the real and the force of the past, each of the novels is a massive demonstration of the causal relationship of things. What Elizabeth Kerr has said about Jack Burden could be said about any one of the characters in the novels. "The inexorable working of cause and effect," she has noted, "forces Jack to alter his basic attitudes and to recognize his own share of responsibility in what has happened."⁴³ There are in All the King's Men two basic symbols of determinism which are centrally important to Warren's novels and by themselves will illustrate the type of determinism present in all of the novels.

The first is the so-called "Great Twitch" which Jack Burden came to believe in during part of his intellectual and emotional maturation. After the events of the novel built to the confrontation between Anne Stanton and Jack Burden over her father's role in the evil done by Judge Irwin, she is in a position which demonstrates that after the discovery of her father's sin she had no reason not to sin, too. She became Willie Stark's mistress. After learning about this, Jack is forced to find a way of escape. In a very Warrenesque fashion, he heads West. While in California, Jack is forced again to take a good long look at the interrelated nature of things. If his supposed father, the Scholarly Attorney, had not done what he had done, regardless of what it was, then these things would not be happening to Jack now. The Great Twitch represents a naturalistic determinism.

Jack was struck by the twitch on the face of an old man to whom he had given a ride while returning from his flight west. His great insight was that twitch in the left cheek.

The twitch was simply an independent phenomenon, unrelated to the face or to what was behind the face or to anything in the whole tissue of phenomena which is the world we are lost in. It was remarkable, in that face, the twitch which lifted that little life all its own. I squatted by his side, where he sat on a bundle of rags from which the handle of a tin skillet protruded, and listened to him talk. But the words were not alive. What was alive was the twitch, of which he was no longer aware.⁴⁴

It is this Great Twitch which Cleanth Brooks referred to as the "automatic response" in mechanism.⁴⁵ At this stage of his development, Jack Burden concluded that "the twitch was all." The event is emphasized by the narrative structure in that immediately after his mystical vision of the Great Twitch, Jack is with Adam Stanton, and they discuss the prefrontal lobectomy. "Well, you forgot to baptize him," Jack said to Adam after the operation was over.

"Baptize him?" Adam asked, sliding out of the white nightshirt. "Yeah," I said, "for he is born again and not of woman. I baptize thee in the name of the Big Twitch, the Little Twitch, and the Holy Ghost. Who, no doubt, is a Twitch, too."⁴⁶

Later, while watching a young couple playing tennis, Jack again refers to the Great Twitch. He said that the young people did not understand that things would change, that things would not remain the same, they would not be this way forever: "they did not know the wisdom of the Great Twitch."

As the conclusion of the novel is being reached, Jack summarizes the impact of the Willie Stark story upon himself:

This has been the story of Willie Stark, but it is my story too. For I have a story. It is the story of a man who lived in the world and to him the world looked one way for a long time and then it looked another and very different way. The change did not happen all at once. Many things happened, and that man did not know when he had any responsibility for them and when he did not. There was, in fact, a time when he came to believe that nobody had any responsibility for anything and there was no god but the Great Twitch.⁴⁷

The Twitch for Burden became a way to escape personal guilt or responsibility for his actions. The narrative continues:

But later, much later, he woke up one morning to discover that he did not believe in the Great Twitch any more. He did not believe in it because he had seen too many people live and die. He had seen Lucy Stark and Sugar-Boy and the Scholarly Attorney and Sadie Burke and Anne Stanton live and the ways of their living had nothing to do with the Great Twitch. He had seen his father die. He had seen Willie Stark die, and had heard him say with his last breath, "It might have been all different, Jack. You got to believe that."⁴⁸

The conflict between Willie Stark and Adam Stanton could not be resolved by belief in absolute necessity as indicated by the automatic response of the twitch. Even though the old man had not been aware of the Twitch, Jack had once thought, it would inevitably be there and necessarily bring things to be, but his overall experience spoke against it. He could not escape his responsibility by belief in natural necessity.

The twitch, as a natural response, is frequently used in the novels. Even though it is seldom used with reference to the religious characters, it is an important image. For example, the image of twitching frog legs is used with reference to Jack Harrick as he felt

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terror while holding his wife's hand in the darkness. Significantly, in The Cave, another reference to twitching is the hair of dancing artist, Giselle Fontaine, whose real name was Sarah Pumfret, the wife of Nick Papadoupalous. In both cases, the twitch is used in contexts in which the character aware of the twitch is confused by the dream-reality dichotomy. The twitch is only an illusion of life, and not life itself. The frying or electrically stimulated frog's legs are not alive; the hair of the dancer receives life only from the head and the bodily movement around it; it has no life itself.

Senator Tolliver's lips twitch as he is confronted by Percy Munn at the end of Night Rider, and Sugar-Boy twitches as Jack Burden discusses the death of Willie Stark with him in All the King's Men. In such cases, the twitch is simply a symbol of nervous action and reaction, the unconscious action that happens and for which there is no direct responsibility. Similarly, Amantha Starr in Band of Angels is described in a twitching frog's leg metaphor: "It was as though a strong galvanic current had been passed through my being to jerk me out of my terror, to jerk me scrambling up, not in fear, in some deeper necessity, uttering the unplanned words that burst out of me. . . . 'I am not a nigger, I'm not a nigger.'"

Twitching of Sunderland Spottwood and of Angelo's father in Meet Me in the Green Glen are symbolic of the disease which they bore, the paralysis and the inability to act on their own will. The natural response, the twitch, is a symbol of the necessity with which an organism must respond to the stimulus. In addition, the paralysis of spirit which Jack Burden experienced is symbolized by the twitch as well. While comparing Lois Seager, his first wife, with Anne Stanton, his first love who will be his wife in the end, Jack contemplates a poem by Blake:

The adversary who is Prince of This World . . . could not change Kate into Nan, [but] the mad poet was quite wrong, for anybody could change Kate into Nan, or if indeed the Prince couldn't change Kate into Nan it was only because Kate and Nan were exactly alike to begin with and were, in fact, the same with only the illusuary difference of name, which meant nothing and there was only the pulse in the blood and the twitch of the nerve, like a dead frog's leg in the experiment when the electric current goes through. So when I lay there on the bed in Long Beach, and shut my eyes, I saw in the inward darkness as in mire the fast heave and contortion of numberless bodies, and limbs detached from bodies, sweating and perhaps bleeding from inexhaustible wounds.⁴⁹

Is the twitch itself real or illusory? The apparent determinism represented by the twitch is only an illusion to help cover the true responsibility one should bear.

A second image or metaphor out of All the King's Men which illustrates a form of determinism is introduced during the Cass Mastern story. It is the dominant metaphor of the lesson which Cass has learned:

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Cass Mastern lived for a few years and in that time he learned that the world is all of one piece. He learned that the world is like an enormous spider web and if you touch it, however lightly, at any point, the vibration ripples of the remotest perimeter and the drowsy spider feels the tingle and is drowsy no more but springs out to fling the gossamer coils about you who have touched the web and then inject the black, numbing poison under your hide. It does not matter whether or not you meant to brush the web of things. Your happy foot or your gay wing may have brushed it ever so lightly, but what happens always happens and there is the spider, bearded black and with his great faceted eyes glittering like mirrors in the sun, or like God's eye, and the fangs dripping.⁵⁰

This concluding observation is closely related to one given a few pages earlier in the story. After his adultery with Mrs. Trice and the suicide of Duncan Trice, Phoebe, an innocent slave, is sold down river because she had become aware of the sin of Mrs. Trice and Cass Mastern. The love thought to exist between Anabelle Trice and Cass Mastern is shown to be nothing. "All had come," Cass observes, "from my single act of sin and perfidy. . . . It was as though the vibration set up in the whole fabric of the world by my act had spread infinitely and with ever increasing power and no man could know the end. I did not put it into words in such fashion, but I stood there shaken by a tempest of feeling."

The dominant implication of the metaphor is that things are interrelated, and a person cannot know the consequences of an act he may perform. According to Casper, during the composition of All the King's Men, Warren "was doing research for his textual analysis of Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Its theme, the sacramental vision, became accessory to his own developing 'life web' philosophy of human interaction."⁵¹ The notion of the interrelatedness of things is present throughout the novels. However, the manifestations of it

in the works are usually in the context of suffering which the actions cause, just as Cass Mastern is aware that his actions of evil have caused others to suffer greatly. Therefore, the concept is discussed most completely in the chapter on Nonmoral Evil. For the purpose of this chapter, it is essential to note that it is necessarily so, by the nature of things, that others should suffer for evil actions not their own.

Marden J. Clark is right when he indicates that Warren stresses responsibility too strongly for there to be a simple answer of complete determinism.⁵² Of particular interest to this study is the role of characters like Isaac Sumpter in The Cave. Convincing himself "all I need to do is just be rational," Ikey Sumpter comes to believe that he is not responsible for his own actions. Having such a belief, he is representative of a form of determinism which would allow him to deny his own responsibility in the events growing out of his involvement with Jasper Harrick in the cave. For example, "Well, it is not my fault," Isaac declared to his father, Mac, when he was confronted about the truth concerning Jasper's condition and location in the cave. Isaac insisted that because Jasper would have died anyway, his falsehood and deception demonstrated while exploiting other people were justified. Similarly, he refuses to acknowledge his responsibility for the events which caused Rachel Goldstein, his Jewish girlfriend, to reject him after his sexual involvement with one of her friends in Rachel's car, because "he hadn't caused any of that." Isaac goes through his life as the product of his own desires and victim of circumstances, but he never is able to recognize the

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responsibility he should bear for the evil that resulted. In his view, necessity was a way of rejecting the burden of time that was his. Consequently, the last picture given of Ikey Sumpter in the novel is as a lonely, misled man. He wants to be himself, but he is unable to do so because of his own actions. The sleeping pills, the whiskey, and the girls available to him in New York will not give him the opportunity to know himself.

The development of Jack Harrick in The Cave also contributes to the above conclusion about Isaac. Jack had thought that he was not responsible for the things he had done. He had gotten Mary Tillyard pregnant in his youth, but he would not marry her. Mac took the girl as his wife, to spare her the shame of Jack's immoral actions. But a subsequent miscarriage brought Mac one of the several startling realizations in the novels: ". . . MacCarland Sumpter shook with his first knowledge of the dark deviousness of that God who knows how to wait. The terror of God is that God conforms His will to man's will. The terror of God is that He bends ear to man's prayer. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. And when it is opened, who can withstand the horror of that vision of prayer fulfilled." The terror that things work out often as men will them, that the determination of God's will is the expression of man's will, is overwhelming. Mac learned the lesson which his son does not learn at any point in the novel: men are responsible for the consequences which follow from their actions. It is this type of determinism which is present in the novels.

Another example from among the selected religious characters is found in Flood in the letter sent by Lettice Poindexter Tolliver to Brad Tolliver's sister, Maggie. She speaks of the necessity which circumstances place upon us. What she does as a Catholic laborer in the old folks home is not a necessity of penance, but a necessity which is the joy to fulfill. Later in the letter, she cites her failure to fulfill the necessity placed upon her by Brad's vulnerability. Brad's temporary refusal to accept her observation is part of the climactic experience of the novel. Brad was not yet able to accept himself for what he is: he was not able to accept the necessity his condition places upon him. Therefore, he was not ready to accept his share of the responsibility for his failure to fulfill Lettice Poindexter Tolliver's possibility in their marriage.

The necessity to find the possibility of joy in human circumstances is similar to the possibility of joy to which Seth Parton referred in the earlier novel, Band of Angels. "'It is,' he said, 'the voice of God in the heart. Let not the world, nor the world's racket confound! Let not the sluggishness of blood, nor the horror of darkness, deceive! God were not God to deny possibility. And I affirm the possibility of the last joy. Who has not felt the possibility? For all joy is of God. Look in your heart, look in your heart--.'" I believe that what Lettice Poindexter Tolliver and Seth Parton are speaking of is the same thing that Slim Sarrett referred to in At Heaven's Gate when he made reference to the people who do not fulfill the possibility of their own nature as the individuals who really need sympathy.

There is in Warren's narratives a type of determinism, but it is a determinism which seems to be more like the law of karma than like the whimsical actions of an arbitrary Sovereignty such as those that Percival Skrogg attributed to God because of the brand of Presbyterian theology his oppressive father attempted to force upon him. The causal relationship which the characters in the novels must be aware of is that cited by Mac Sumpter: God's will is made to fit man's will. In the long run man will get what he wants. There is an inextricable law of the universe, that as a man sows, so shall he reap. But as Mac Sumpter has also indicated in The Cave, God does not judge by the casualness of earthly consequences.

The human necessity for which Brad Tolliver sought in Flood--"I cannot find the connection between what I was and what I am. I have not found the human necessity"--is an identity which is true to his own nature: that definition of himself that is himself. The nature of the necessity in Warren's novels is a necessity which grows out of the inward nature of man. In this regard, Warren's approach seems as much like that of Plato and Aristotle as necessarily like the Calvinist so many claim him to be. "For Plato and Aristotle, each man necessarily does what his own character prompts. His character is the result of his natural gifts as developed by his moral education."⁵³ Except as shown below, man does not have the natural goodness in himself that the Greeks would demand. However, the nature of man in Warren determines the nature that man will manifest.

The basic view of the nature of man in Warren is illustrated when Jack Burden was asked to do some research on the life of Judge

Monteque Irwin, and he was sure he could not find anything evil that Willie Stark could use for his political purposes. He told Willie that he would not frame Irwin. ". . . It ain't ever necessary," Willie told Jack. "You don't ever have to frame anybody, because the truth is always sufficient." The truth is that all have sinned, and man is born in sin. The religious training of Stark's youth gave him some Presbyterian theology which determined his view of human nature. The key to the necessity of evil is found in the nature of man: he is conceived in sin. Therefore, original sin accounts for the nature of man and the necessity of his evil. The very act of being true to one's own nature will assure that he is a sinner.

Not only is the very nature of man evil (this is explored in more detail in the next section, Original Sin: The Nature of Man), but the nature of human experience in this world will make evil consequences of evil actions a necessity with which we must learn to live. During the trial of Angelo Passetto in Meet Me in the Green Glen, Warren presented the latest incidents which are recognized as common in his novels. While one of the religious characters, Leroy Lancaster, was interrogating Cassie Spottwood, Prosecutor Farhill objected to his line of questioning; and the judge ordered the testimony struck from the record. This caused Murray Guilfort to come to the realization "nothing is ever off the record, he thought and suddenly everything he himself had ever done, said, thought, or even have not dared to think was standing at his back, presences silently crowding, numberless presences, waiting. . . . Nothing was ever off the record." This notion is a repetition of one which appeared in the other novels as well. For

example, the ill Dr. Burnham of World Enough and Time longed for "the fruit of his meditation in the faint hope that some men might profit, for 'nothing human is ever lost, though burdened with error.'"

One of the clearest and best presentations is in All the King's Men. An example appears as Jack Burden and Anne Stanton are beginning to lose the basis for their relationship. After their correspondence had once stopped, "[Jack] held out for two weeks, and then began to apologize. So the letters began again, and far off somewhere in the great bookkeeping system of the universe somebody punched some red buttons every day on the posting machine and some red figures went on the ledger sheet." Even though there is the record and nothing is lost, "it was not the way it had been." Nothing is ever lost. Circumstances may change, but the influence of the past and the record of the actions of the past are never lost. There is no striking from the eternal record.

So I had it after all the months [Jack Burden confesses after bringing his research on Judge Irwin to a close]. For nothing is lost, nothing is ever lost. There is always the clue, the canceled check, the smear of lipstick, the footprint in the canna bed, the condom on the park path, the twitch in the old wound, the baby shoes dipped in bronze, the taint in the blood stream. And all times are one time, and all those dead in the past never lived before our definition gives them life, and out of the shadow their eyes implore us.

That is what all of us historical researchers believe.
And we love truth.⁵⁴

With the stress that people might forget, but history does not, Jack Burden bears out the truth in Willie Stark's statement that there is always something. The truth is always sufficient to condemn each and all.

"The World is a great big snow ball rolling down hill," Jack Burden observed, "and it never rolls up hill to unwind itself back to nothing at all and non-happening." When an act is done, it cannot be undone. It must be carried out to its conclusion. Some of the characters, such as Ikey Sumpter, and his secular counterpart, Slim Sarrett, try to deny their past, their nature, and their time, but they cannot and find any measure of fulfillment and contentment.

Among all the apparent necessity of cause and effect and the centrality of causation in Warren's concern, apparent chance plays a significant part in the narratives of the religious characters. A typical example occurs in Munn Short's story in World Enough and Time which he narrates to Jeremiah Beaumont while Jerry is awaiting execution in the dungeon of Frankfort, Kentucky. During Munn's youthful affair with Mrs. Perk, Mr. Perk had come out into the woods to locate and kill Munn. Before Perk could find him, a band of Indians attacked. Ironically, Munn was as good as dead at the hands of the Indian, but Perk "happened" by and shot the Indian, saving Munn's life, and carrying him to safety, nursed him back to health. Apparent coincidences such as these are relatively common in the lives of the religious characters; however, they eventually turn out to be understood by them to be some form of Providential Will for their lives. In the case of Munn Short in World Enough and Time, Perk preserved Munn for the time when he could turn to Jesus and find life because he had learned that dying in the spirit was more painful than dying in the body. Munn is used in the narrative to stress that if it is God's will, Jeremiah will not hang, and he introduces the thoughts which climax in one of

Beaumont's meditations upon death as he thinks of death for the first time as a thing in itself, elevating it to a metaphysical force.

Incidents in the tales of Proudfit and Wyndham are similar in their impact in the narratives in which they occur. Apparently chance encounters are construed to be Providence at work. In dreams and visions of faith, Warren presents a view of causality very much like that spoken of by Paul Ricoeur. "Melange of contingency in encounters and of necessity in the results," he says in Falibility of Man, "is precisely the fate of birth."⁵⁵ The mixtures of seemingly chance encounters eventually find their necessary conclusions in the lives of the characters.

In a more secular context in At Heaven's Gate, the "chance" appearance of the Greek homosexual partner of Slim Sarrett's, Mr. Constantidopeles, leads to Jason Sweetwater's remark to Sue Murdock. "Cheer up, kid," he said. "It was all in the cards." And the collapse of the world Slim had created is inevitable in spite of or perhaps because of the careful creation of the fictional world he had manipulated. Also, a similar mixture of chance and Providence appears in Night Rider when Willie Proudfit says that he is going to do something if the crops fail, but he does not know what. He could not name it, but it would come. Munn thought it chance, Willie believed it was Providence.

Life may be approached casually, as Lettice Poindexter Tolliver did in her pre-Christian days in Flood, but eventually the narrative will bring the necessary conclusions of the events so initiated. For example, among her affairs is numbered a Spanish

Medievalist, Dr. Echegaray. He just happens to be at a party she happens to attend while Brad happens to be in Spain fighting for Spanish liberty. "For one thing," her psychiatrist, Dr. Sutton said, "her lover had fought in Spain, and she had spent months of anguish yearning to protect him; if Dr. Echegaray had not been Spanish and had not seemed to need her pity, nothing would have happened. For another thing, she was now on the verge of marriage, and in her desperate desire to prove her worthiness her capacity for fidelity after her past history of confused and compulsive adventures, she had, as it were, submitted herself to a test." The psychiatrist continues to say, "you acted out what it was necessary for you to act out to know what you now know," and goes on to affirm his conviction that she is really a Puritan who must prove her devotion. But her nature in the melange of contingency had to work out its necessity.

Further, in Band of Angels, the seemingly far-fetched chances of Seth Parton, Miss Idell, Lieutenant Jones and Manty Starr remaking their acquaintances under the conditions in the story illustrate again how the "melange of contingency" and the "necessity of the results" are carried out in the novels. For example, Manty contemplates the impact of Seth, Miss Idell, and Lieutenant Jones upon her and her realization of her own waiting and yearning to know herself. "It was as though your life had a shape," she says to herself, "already totally designed standing not in Time, but in Space, already fulfilled, and you were waiting for it, in all its necessity, to be revealed to you, and all your living was merely the process whereby this already existing fulfilled shape in Space would become an event

in Time." Even in the coincidences there is an overwhelming movement forcing each moment to its crisis: Manty's need to know who she is, the necessity of finding a definition of herself, for good or evil.

The same kind of perpetual contingency, which has appeared since Night Rider in the story of Willie Proudfit, appears in the last novel, Meet Me in the Green Glen. Angelo Passetto happened to come into Spottwood Valley. Cy Grinder happened to be out hunting. Angelo happened to stay on at the Spottwood plantation. Eventually, Cassie Killigrew Spottwood happened to confess the murder of Sunderland Spottwood in the courtroom immediately after the verdict of guilty was returned for Angelo. Things just happen in this last novel, but they all point to the inevitable conclusion that gives the tale an aura of tragedy in the sense Paul Ricoeur speaks of. He says in The Symbolism of Evil that it is in the combination of causality and choice with the absolute force of the past and the uncertainty of the future that makes for tragedy.⁵⁶

The tragic possibility of the narratives Warren has created is heightened by an ever present hope that the dying words of Willie Stark are in fact true:

"It might have been all different, Jack."
 "You got to believe that. . . ."

He looked at me, and for a moment it was the old strong, probing demanding glance. But when the words came this time, they were very weak. "And it might even been different yet," he whispered. "If it hadn't happened, it might--have been different--even yet."⁵⁷

What had happened was the inevitable, necessary elimination of each other by Willie Stark and Adam Stanton. The Irresistible force meeting

the classical Immovable object. However, the stress in this work upon the responsibility each has for all that "happens" to him is too great to allow an easy escape in simple determinism. The testimony of those who live and those who are not allowed to live is clear. Like it or not, each has his responsibility for his own actions, even though he bears the terrible burden of time: "the awful responsibility of Time"; therefore, things could have been different, but they were not because people are people.

Original Sin: The Nature of Man

The idea that the essential nature of man is found in the concept of sin is commonly present in Warren's work. As noted in the first chapter, Warren's consistent interest in the problem of evil has been recognized for years among his critics. The nature of man which Warren demonstrates in his fiction is centrally related to his concern for evil. Frequently, investigations of the view of man presented in the novels begin by considering the statements of Willie Stark in All the King's Men, and well they might because certainly his direct statements are relevant to the total view of man presented in all the novels. In at least four separate places in the novel, the notion that man is conceived in sin is stated.

The first is at the end of the first chapter when Willie charges Jack Burden with the responsibility of finding some politically useful "dirt" on Judge Irwin. As it happens, Irwin is Burden's boyhood idol; and, though unknown to Jack Burden, he is, in reality, Jack's father. Jack does not believe he can find anything on Irwin,

but Stark insists that there is always something. "And [Willie] said, 'Man is conceived in sin and born in corruption and he passeth from the stink of the didie to the stench of the shroud. There is always something.'" It is, in fact, from this point that the story begins to digress in flashbacks and the unfolding of Jack Burden's story as he serves at the pleasure of Boss Stark and learns his lesson of the burden of the awful responsibility of Time.

The second mention, at the beginning of Chapter Four, occurs as Jack Burden recalls the words of Willie Stark. In the context, Jack continues to describe what he dug out on the Judge in the metaphor of a dead, partially decaying cat which had been buried in an ash pile, "the midden, the sublunary dung heap, which is the human past," The fourth chapter contains the Cass Mastern story which is an embedded tale of one of Jack's ancestors who had to learn the horrible lesson of the essentially evil nature of man and of the human tendency toward evil. Jack himself was in the process of learning the same lesson. He had not yet learned it, but by the end of the story he has. Jack recalls his abortive effort to use Cass Mastern's journals as a basis for his doctoral dissertation. In an important passage near the end of the chapter, Jack asks how the Jack Burden who lived then, during that first excursion into his family history, could have understood the lesson which Cass had to teach. Simply, he could not; therefore, the dissertation went unfinished. It is significant, however, that at the end of the novel, Jack has returned to the old journals, and he is going to write a book about Cass Mastern. From the profits he hopes to take Anne Stanton away from Burden's Landing, so they will not have

to live in the house which Judge Irwin had owned, the house purchased by his own great act of dishonesty and political sin.

The third occurrence of the "conceived in sin" speech of Willie Stark is given at the beginning of Chapter Five; again, Jack is recalling his charge from Willie to dig up something on the Judge, that something that is always there. Following this appearance of the dictum, Jack challenges Willie's explanation as to why Jack works for him; and Willie's answer is relevant to the dictum itself: "'Boy,' he said, 'you work for me because I'm the way I am and you're the way you are. It is arrangement founded on the nature of things.'

'That's a hell of a fine explanation.'

'It's not an explanation,' he said, and laughed again.

'There ain't any explanations. Not of anything. All you can do is point at the nature of things. If you are smart enough to see 'em,'" The remainder of the chapter is a reflective record of Jack's search for the dirt on the Judge which ends in success, and with Jack's significant observations that "nothing is ever lost" and those who love the truth will find it.

The fourth return to Willie's stated view of the nature of man is near the end of Chapter Eight, and it immediately preceeds the section in which Jack Burden confronts the Judge with the information concerning the old political bribe. In this instance, the dictum, "conceived in sin" does not occur, but the allusion to it is obvious in that the context again emphasized that there is always something to be found, and Jack has found what will stick on the Judge. What is a significant addition to the overall notion of the sinful nature

of man is Willie's affirmation that "You don't ever have to frame anybody, because the truth is always sufficient." And Jack immediately counters with, "You sure take a high view of human nature." To which, Willie replies, "'Boy,' he said, 'I went to a Presbyterian Sunday School back in the days when they still had some theology, and that much of it stuck. And--' he grinned suddenly '--I have found it very valuable.'" Because of the information that Jack had found, Judge Irwin committed suicide; however, the Judge first had made it clear that he could have stopped Jack from using the information against him, but he did not. The way Irwin would have done it was to have told Jack that he was really his son, not the son of Ellis Burden, the Scholarly Attorney. As it is, Jack only learns the truth from his hysterical mother after Irwin has killed himself. The chapter ends upon an ironic note. Jack feels better claiming Irwin as his father than he had about accepting Burden as his father.

There was a kind of relief in knowing that that man was not my father, [Jack commented to himself]. I had always felt some curse of his weakness upon me, or what I had felt to be that. He had had a beautiful and eager young wife and another man had taken her away from him and had fathered his child, and all he had done was to walk away, leaving her in possession of everything he owned, and crawl into a hole in the slums and lie there like a wounded animal and let his intellect bleed away into pious drivel and his strength bleed away into weakness. And he had been good. But his goodness had told me nothing except that I could not live by it.⁵⁸

To this point, Jack is affirming what Gilbert Mastern, the worldly brother of the more saintly Cass Mastern, had declared. The goodness of man did not do any good because, in Gilbert's view, the South did not need good men: it needed military leadership, not moralists.

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In the Mastern Story, Cass also came to question the meaning of man's goodness, because it was not lived out into actual experience. "My new father, however," Jack continues his thoughts started above, "had not been good. He had cockolded a friend, betrayed a wife, taken a bribe, driven a man, though unwittingly, to death. But he had done good. He had been a just judge. And he had carried his head high. That last afternoon of his life he had done that. He hadn't said, 'Look here, Jack, you can't do it--you can't--you see, you see--I am your father.'" "

These four key passages furnish the principle structure for the ideas leading up to the climactic observation of the Scholarly Attorney near the end of the novel, that man, in his identity as separate from God, is by nature evil, and that the index to the glory of man is his ability to make good out of the bad he has to work with. In these thoughts dictated to Jack by Ellis Burden, the thematic structure of the novel comes full circle, beginning with Willie Stark's Calvinistic dictum about man being conceived in sin. Further, Ellis Burden's remarks underscore a point made previously in this chapter-- man has only evil with which to work, and any good he has he must make himself, as Willie had told Jack Burden and Adam Stanton earlier when they were discussing that nature of Stark's political activities in the light of Hugh Miller's idealism. "You know Good," Willie had said at that time, "because you make it up as you go along."

In the embedded story in All the King's Men, in the opening lines of Cass Mastern's journal, the key to understanding the nature

of man as illustrated by the actions of the characters is stated.

Jack Burden narrates it as follows:

"I was born," the first page of the first volume of the journal said, "in a log cabin in north Georgia, in circumstances of poverty, and if in later years I have lain soft and have supped from silver, may the Lord not let die in my heart the knowledge of frost and of coarse diet. For all men come naked into the world, and in prosperity 'man is prone to evil as the sparks fly upward.'" The lines were written when Cass was a student at Transylvania College, up in Kentucky, after what he called his "darkness and trouble" had given place to the peace of God. For the journal began with an account of the "darkness and trouble"--which was perfectly real trouble, with a dead man and a live woman and long nail scratches down Cass Mastern's bony face. "I write this down," he said in the journal, "with what truthfulness a sinner may attain unto, that if ever pride is in me, of flesh or spirit, I can peruse these pages and know with shame what evil has been in me, and may be in me, for who knows what breeze may blow upon the carred log and fan up flame again?"⁵⁹

The weakness of man is found in the sin that is in him, which he never takes out of himself regardless of the good he may do. He does not know when or by what it might be revived, for, as he said later in the journal "man is never safe and damnation is ever at hand." Further, Cass believed that it is in the suffering of sin that the brotherhood of all men is really demonstrated. Evil is the mark of man's identity, even as Ellis Burden said to Jack; but Jack had read it first in the Cass Mastern story: "Though the boil has come to a head and has burst, yet must the pus flow. Men shall come together yet and die in the common guilt of man and in the guilt that sent them hither from far places and distant firesides. But God in His Mercy has spared me the end. Blessed be His Name." But Jack had told the listener to his tale earlier, Cass Mastern was not at home in the world.

Like Willie Stark, Cass Mastern had studied Presbyterian theology. Also, Percival Skrogg in World Enough and Time had been taught the same theology, but he rejected it. All three die at the hand of a gunman, but only Cass Mastern returned to a peace of mind in terms of his acceptance of the doctrine. Willie Stark had used it, Skrogg had denied it, only to have the evil that lurks in the inward man kill them. Cass had sought death in war because he could not kill himself, but Jack's real father killed himself in a stoic, Roman style. As an intellectual, Jack found more to admire in Irwin than he did in Mastern or the old man Burden; but at the end of the novel, Jack is beginning to see his responsibility to them all clearly enough that he can return to the Mastern story and begin to understand it. Also, old Ellis Burden is living with him. He had to learn the real nature of man: Sin.

According to Tsanoff, in the questions mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, such a view of the nature of man as necessarily evil is a metaphysical concept of evil. In addition, the view of man's flawed nature is not restricted to Warren's most popular novel. In the first one, Night Rider, Willie Proudfit's insight into the nature of man as well as that of Professor Ball and Senator Tolliver picture the essential evil nature of man as the power of meanness that is in him. A similar power of meanness is referred to by Ashby Wyndham in At Heaven's Gate, and by Munn Short in World Enough and Time. Both insist that there is no innocent man, as does Mr. Budd, the prison warden, in Flood.

The earliest significant attempt to have a religious character give a specific definition of the nature of man appears in At Heaven's Gate, as the opening of Ashby Wyndham's statement:

The pore human man, he ain't nuthin but a handful of dust, but the light of God's face on him and he shines like a diamint, and blinds the eye of the un-uprightius congregation. Dust, it lays on the floor, under the goin forth and the comin in, and ain't nuthin, and gits stirred up under the trompin, but a sunbeam come in the dark room and in that light it will dance and shine for heart joy. I laid on the floor, and it was dark I wasn't nuthin. I was under the trompin, which was cruel hard. But a man don't know, for he is ignorant. There ain't nuthin in him but meanness and a hog hollerness and emptiness for the world's slop. A man don't think of nuthin but sloppin, and dodgen, when the kick comes. I laid on the floor, and didn't know, and the trompin. But the light come in the dark room, like a finger apointin at me through the hole, and it was hard trompin had stirred me. I shined in the light.⁶⁰

Whether it is a statement of Wyndham, Proudfit, Short, Corinthian McClardy or any other of the religious characters, the essential message is the same, over and over again.

In the later novels the observations concerning the flawed nature of man come from increasingly better educated and more sophisticated personages. For example, in the last novel, Meet Me in the Green Glen, Leroy Lancaster, college educated lawyer who become Prosecutor of Parkerton, came to a realization that, while he could not believe that the other people in the world were wicked, they were people like himself. He had already conceded that he was a sinner, a blasphemer again his own life, and he had asked God's forgiveness. He was driven to ask "What is wrong with me?" In a passage replete with dark images of his inner self during which he is filled with chest pains, he wrestles with the power of darkness that is in him. It is similar to the "filth" that MacCarland Sumpter affirmed men to

be in The Cave, and the "dark spirit" Tobias Sears came to believe in in Band of Angels. The two best educated men in Fiddlersburg, Blanding Cottshill and Leon Pickney, while discussing life in the doomed town, made reference to the flawed human nature in the form of cracks: "There are always cracks. Even in a loving family. The question is just how much humanness you can get over the cracks. To hold things together."

The irony of the human condition is demonstrated in each of the novels in that it is the humanness, i.e., the creating of good out of the bad, which often leads men to more evil. In the first section of this chapter the treatment of the relationship of the ideal to the fact as an example of metaphysical evil illustrates this point, when men become obsessive of their humanness, and it in turn leads them to greater evils. It is the human weakness; but in human weakness, human strength is found. This point is made directly by Cecila Harrick about her husband Jack in The Cave. He found his cracking point, and eventually, his weakness was turned to his strength so at the end of the novel he has learned that learning how to die will help him live. He has learned how to deal with the weakness that is in his own nature. He is one who has learned how to live with the burden living has placed upon him.

One of the most graphic symbols of the human condition of original sin is demonstrated through the consciousness of Sweetwater in At Heaven's Gate. He lay with his hand on Sue Murdock's stomach. He had made her pregnant, and what he sensed in her eventually caused Slim Sarrett to murder her following her abortion:

He seemed to see, as it would be there under his hand, the little hunched-up creature, blind, unbreathing, the tiny hands and feet formed like delicate carving--or would they be really formed yet? How long did it take before the nails appeared, he wondered. He wondered when it got a face, a real face which you could call human. He remembered fetuses in jars, the wizened, little, simianwise faces, intent and, for all their wisdom, contorted in profound puzzlement. He remembered the Indian mummies he had once seen at Salt Lake City, how they were hunched, and the eyelids squinting because there was nothing under them any more, and the intent contorted faces. Those faces were like the faces of the fetuses, the same look, intent, contorted, the same invincible, painful abstraction. Before and after taking,⁶¹

From birth to death, and the return to the primal fecund darkness that is within each being. Death before birth shown in the fetus, I believe, is the symbol of the original sin on which All the King's Men focused so magnificently.

Even in Wilderness, which does not present the ordinary emphasis upon the "Christian" characters normally expected in Warren's novels, the presence of Monmorency Pugh stresses the evil that is at the very base of the nature of man. Pugh had sought to obey Jesus and not kill. His effort to follow Jesus led him to resist conscription into the Confederate army. As Ashby Wyndham had done years before him, Pugh's sinful pride in Jesus led him to commit another crime--murder. Unlike Wyndham, however, Pugh did not confess and turn to God for forgiving Grace. Instead, he became a naturalist, in the sense that he would do what came naturally. In his terms, if he had an itch, he would scratch it. He became an immoral man, whose only reason for not killing Adam Rosenzweig was "a man gits tahrdr."

The limitations of human nature are real and immensely important to the notion of evil in Warren's novels. As previously indicated, the inability of an individual to consistently live up to

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his own high ideals is closely related to the structure of human nature. The limitation of being is a threat, always present, regardless of the task the character faces. Therefore, there are in many cases the threat of impotence which hovers over every activity; however, in some cases it is more clearly related to the concept of original sin than it is in others. As mentioned in an earlier section, often the burden of history is symbolized by the son's relationship to his father. One of the more obvious examples is in Wilderness. Adam Rosenzweig was born with a club foot and the burden of his father's ideals for freedom. The two heritages conspire against him, and he is able only after much suffering to come to terms with both his birthmark and his role in fighting for freedom. In a religious experience, very much like that of Leroy Lancaster in Meet Me in the Green Glen, Adam comes to recognize his common bond to all people, even the Rebel he shot. In the horror of his realization, he is aware that he shot the man, not for freedom, but because his foot was different from his own. Of his heritages from his father, the one most closely associated with biological inheritance, the club foot, became the dominant influence upon him and the symbol for the burden of that inheritance. Just as Amantha Starr had to struggle to be rid of the evil her father had done in Band of Angels, Adam has to struggle with the evil symbolized by his foot: the inherited limitation of being via original sin.

The Mixed Nature of Man

Even though Warren's characters generally reflect a view of human nature consistent with the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin,

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this should not be understood to mean that man is totally evil. As mentioned above, Willie Stark clearly thought of man as totally depraved and possessed of no good at all except that good which he is able to make. It must not be forgotten that he did believe that good could be made out of that badness. Further, the survival of Ellis Burden and Hugh Miller implies that not everyone is destroyed by the good they attempt. It is true that Willie Stark is destroyed by the inevitable consequences of actions which he initiated, but he was apparently free to have chosen or not to have chosen them. Even those characters who do not live, such as Judge Irwin, are capable of good deeds. For example, when Anne Stanton learned of her father's role in the cover-up of Irwin's having taken the bribe, Jack Burden tried to soften the blow by stressing that the act was actually an expression of loyalty to a life-long friend: it was "not that bad."

Man might not be "that bad," but a very significant part of Warren's view of the essential nature of man is that that nature is mixed. If not "that bad," it certainly is not "as good" as some advocates of the inevitability of progress would have us believe. The conflicts in which the characters are engaged demonstrate the risk to which those human efforts to bring about "good" are subject. For example, the risk of imbalance is caused by the human tendency to think of people as being as good as the ideas they hold. Percival Skrogg in World Enough and Time is an example of one who came to believe in justice and the dignity of man, but his own efforts were frustrated and eventually defeated because he had not learned to accept the mixed nature of man. Skrogg was not just a mind capable of an Idea, he was

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also a body which demanded preservation. His lesson, however, when it came, was accompanied by an equally damaging, destructive over-reaction. He began to value the body over the idea, and his transformation brought his death.

The symbolizing of the mixed nature of man in the body and soul or mind dichotomy is frequent in the novels. Some of the more notable among the religious characters are Lettice Poindexter Tolliver and Seth Parton. With respect to the view represented in Flood by Lettice, it is significant that in the beginning she is pictured simply as a very beautiful sex object for Brad Tolliver. As he drives back home to Fiddlersburg, early in the novel, he is moved by memories of making love with her. Later, Brad's recollections of her emphasize her mixed nature--her body and her soul--as he thinks about her adventures with Frog-eye and himself and her sun bathing or lying in bed nude: so soft, juicy, red and warm. In this context, Brad recalls that she even went to church in the winter time; but more importantly, he recalls her former hatred of her body, then her narcissistic love for it, and then her own awareness that her body was not herself. "Then she said: 'You feel you can live when one thing finally comes to you. . . . When you can feel that your body is not you.'" In this episode, Warren has prefigured the awareness revealed indirectly via the letter Lettice sent to Maggie in which she discusses her conversion. In part, she says the following:

Well, if you see what can really happen to human bodies and human souls, it changes you. It changes you to realize that a body has a soul living in it--even if the word soul still sounds strange and empty to you. It changes you because that fact makes you realize that bodies are precious. Precious in a way you never even thought.

But I don't mean in a way to make you make a lot of fuss about your own body. Remember, Maggie, what a silly fuss I used to make about the one I had. . . . Oh, what a fool I was, Maggie, about that silly old me! And don't think I don't know now that nobody can just keep his wicked foolishness private, and I flung mine around something awful.⁶²

She explains that now her body is "gone." She simply does not care for it as she used to. She is heavy and unkept. The thought made Brad sick, and his contemplation of her mixed nature as both body and soul made his world rock: he was not ready to think upon her new self. He was not ready to accept her beautiful body as evil, even though it had kept him from seeing her as something other than a sex object.

Warren is accustomed to presenting the sensual nature of mankind in the form of sensual women. Lucille Christian in Night Rider, Sue Murdock in At Heaven's Gate, Lois Burden in All the King's Men, Rachel Jordan Beaumont in World Enough and Time, Miss Idell in Band of Angels, Jo-Lea Bingham in The Cave, Maran Goetz Meyerholf in Wilderness, Lettice in Flood, and even Cassie Spottwood and Corinne Lancaster in Meet Me in the Green Glen are all in the narrative in order to stress the sensual nature of man. In varying degrees, all are sex objects. It is interesting to note, however, that the women from the later novels are increasingly capable of spiritual development and this indicates an increasing awareness of the spiritual side of human nature in addition to the bodily side.

Further, a few of these women are capable of awareness of the mixed nature of mankind as body and soul. Even though a flat character, Corinne Lancaster, the daughter of an Episcopal Bishop,

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best represents the spiritual power latent in a sensual body. Leroy was overcome by sexual fantasies before their marriage, and their marriage had not fulfilled them, as symbolized by their lack of children. She was not willing to accept her body; she was a pious soul full of good works, which represents the other side of the body-soul dichotomy portrayed earlier by Lettice in Flood. However, after Leroy had his experience in which he recognized himself for what he was in the common guilt of man, she, too, is able to accept her body as a part of her true self. I believe this is symbolized by the eagerness with which Leroy goes home--she eventually has a son, and they find happiness.

In the last novel, Meet Me in the Green Glen, the possibility of the assimilation of body and soul seen in the heavenly vision by Seth Parton in Band of Angels is achieved by the balance between the vanity of the hypersensual and the austerity of the spiritually oriented in Corinne and Leroy Lancaster. The earlier novels also indicate that the balance may be achieved. Lucy Stark, in her resignation, accepts Willie's greatness and his evil. Amantha Starr finds the balance by the happiness implied by the anticipation her rediscovered love for Tobias might bring. Of the characters developed well enough to be able to give a basis for judgment, it is only in Meet Me in the Green Glen that the balance of the body and the soul in the women is shown as a genuine possibility for human happiness. Otherwise, it is a positive threat for evil and damnation, inherent in human experience, as shown in the section on Sensuality in the next chapter.

The body-soul or the physical-spiritual dichotomy of the mixed nature of man is also seen in Flood in Brad Tolliver's conversation with Blanding Cottshill and Leon Pinckney. Cottshill leads the discussion, but Pinckney meekly concurs. Potts is a good man, but he has failed to acknowledge the doubleness of life: the irony of history and man's nature which creates places and times like Fiddlersburg and the present. But of them all, Cottshill says, "So I do not know which of us lives in the more perilous balance." It is, however, only in balance between the elements in the mixed nature of man that one is able to learn how to live. Whether as an idealist, realist, naturalist, or pragmatist, a character who is to survive in Warren's world must come to terms with the apparent contradictions in the mixed nature of man. As Jack Burden observed in All the King's Men, while telling Anne Stanton of Irwin's perfidy, "The human being is a very complicated contraption and they are not good or bad but are good and bad and the good comes out of bad and the bad out of good, and the devil take the hindmost." When he made this statement, he was not aware of the implication of his conversation with Anne or of the concept he was uttering; however, by the end of the novel, Jack has learned to accept this mixed nature, so he can live "out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time."

The Quality of Being: The Self

"You talk like you were blaming me," he said. "For being what I am."

Thus Jack Harrick in The Cave registers his version of one of the familiar concerns found in Warren's novels: Who or What am I? The concern was first voiced in Night Rider; and, in one example, it is indicative of the disintegration of the interpersonal relationship between Percy and May Munn when he attacked her for "being the way you are." The fifth novel, Band of Angels, begins with the penetrating question, "Oh, Who Am I? The ninth one (Meet Me in the Green Glen) ends with Murray Guilfort's apparently very slow death by suicide during which the end of his life is characterized as a fading terror "as he sank deeper, sinking into truth, into the truth that was himself, whatever his self was, as into joy, sinking there at last," and a final encounter with Cy Grinder as he is undergoing the terrible realization of the nature of his own suffering and the reality of his own being in relationship with other beings. According to Warren, each story is the story of the definition of a self, a search for identity based upon the quality of being, for good or evil.⁶³ Consequently, it is not surprising that each novel is, in fact, a quest for self-definition by the characters involved. However, the purpose of this section is not to discuss that process of self-definition as such, but rather to deal with the essential qualities related to the osmosis of being, from which the new self and the new identity come.

According to Warren, the process of the osmosis of being is the finding of one's identity by affirming one's alienation, while realizing that this fragmentation of being is a common tragic pathos of life as seen in the universality of suffering. In the novels, only the characters who go through this osmosis are allowed to develop any

degree of apparent happiness or fullness of being and achieve the realization of the nature of being. In previous sections, reference was made to the dictated statement of Ellis Burden in All the King's Men which, after having lain three days in his breast, he resurrected to share with his wife's son: man's separateness is the quality of his own identity as a being separate from God, and the creation of good is the index to his glory. It is this fragmentation which is demonstrated over and over again in the novels by the alienation that is the root for the metaphysical limitation or finitude which lies at the core of man's being; therefore, the nature of the self is the basis for metaphysical evil as presented in the novels.

The characters are virtually all either lonely, isolated, solitary individuals, or people who have come through the isolation to affirm the common guilt of man, in the manner of Cass Mastern.

Remember me, but without grief [he dictated from his hospital bed]. If one of us is lucky, it is I. I shall have rest and I hope in the mercy of the Everlasting and in His blessed election. But you, my dear brother, are condemned to eat bread in bitterness and build on the place where the charred embers and ashes are and to make bricks without straw and to suffer in the ruin and guilt of our dear Land and in the common guilt of man. In the next bed to me there is a young man from Ohio. He is dying. His moans and curses and prayers are not different from any others to be heard in this tabernacle of pain. He marched hither in his guilt as I in mine. And in the guilt of his Land. May a common Salvation lift us both from the dust. And, dear brother, I pray God to give you strength for what is to come.⁶⁴

Cass's separateness from his brother Gilbert is heightened by his death, alone in a strange place, from a wound sought in a war in which he was an abolitionist who was in the Rebel army. The irony and paradox in such a situation is great. But time after time the

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characters of the novels have similar experiences. For example, Willie Proudfit in Night Rider, taken by the fever while in his mountain hide-away, has to come close to death to find the awareness of his identity in the universal suffering of mankind. By the grace of God, he is allowed to return to the land of striving and begetting. He does so in a remote place, subject to all the suffering around him. He does so happily in the love of his wife, the literal fulfillment of his dreams. He had found love in separateness; he had found the secret of living in the separation of man. His serenity and acceptance of his condition during the threat of loss of his farm because of draught is a vivid point of contrast to the inner turmoil of Percy Munn. Munn, while in the city, in the activities of civilization and materialistic society, is lost and alienated even though he is increasingly unaware of what is happening to him. Eventually, after time with the Proudfits, Munn does come to some closure within himself; however, his experience is not a successful one. He must strike out, and he attempts to find and to kill his rejected father-figure, Senator Tolliver. He does eventually find him, a betrayer who is not to be betrayed. Tolliver is alone, ill and unable to defend himself, but Munn cannot bring himself to kill him. His impotence to act is oppressive; he gives Tolliver some water and leaves as he hears the troops coming. In his flight, he resigns himself to his fate, and he is shot down without returning any meaningful or intentional shots. "Lying there, while the solid ground lurched and heaved beneath him in a long swell, he drowsily heard the voices down the slope calling emptily, like the voices of boys at a game in the dark."

1. The first step is to identify the problem. In this case, the problem is that the company is not meeting its sales targets.

In the second novel (At Heaven's Gate), Ashby Wyndham's statement is written while he is in prison which heightens his isolation and alienation. He has been arrested following a disturbance during one of his preaching rallies, because one of his flock, Pearle, had shot and killed a policeman who had chased some of the group back to the river boat. His story emphasizes the wicked, depraved nature of man, as already indicated earlier in this chapter; however, it is essential to see him as a man in the crisis of isolation. He even has lost the ability to pray, a rather common recurring symbol for man's separation from God. One incident he relates is about his telling Jasper Littlefoot that he might be "a pore sinful man in God's sight, but I ain't no son of a bitch." He then went on to tell Jasper that he, too, had lain in a dark prison--his sinful self--until he was let out by the grace of God.

The prison of the self is stated or implied in nearly every novel. The self is a form of solitary confinement, which each person makes for himself. As each man acts and thereby creates his self, he begins to build a pattern; however, "by the time we understand the pattern we are in, the definition we are making for ourselves," Jack Burden has observed in All the King's Men, "it is too late to break out of the box. We can only live in terms of the definition, like a prisoner in the cage. . . . Yet the definition we have made of ourselves is ourselves. To break out of it, we must make a new self. But how can the self make a new self when the selfness which it is, is the only substance from which the new self can be made? At least that was the way I argued the case back then." The creation of a new self

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is the problem of being, but the quality of being itself is isolation, alienation and estrangement.

In World Enough and Time and The Cave, for example, the cave is a symbol of the inner space in which we may become trapped. The prison cell for Jeremiah Beaumont is a cavern type of dungeon in which Munn Short says all kinds have slept, "the wicket and the pure in heart." But this prison cell is only one of the symbols of the isolation lived by the characters. The remoteness of the farm, the darkness in which they travel, the flight to the west and the land of Gran Bosse are all indications of the depth of the inner estrangement experienced by Jeremiah Beaumont. During his prison experience, the depth of his alienation is highlighted in part by the story told by Munn Short in which he relates the death he had experienced years before, and his experience of finding Jesus and the release of his guilt for his adultery with Lottie Perk.

Among the religious characters, upon whom this study is primarily based, Isaac Sumpter in The Cave, is the one upon whom a study of alienation could well concentrate. As a preacher's son who rejects the heritage of the father's faith, he is actually a representative secular character. He is a "user," one of the many exploiters found in the novels. As such, he is able only to treat other people as objects and not as other suffering individuals. He has been expelled from the university by the time the event which triggers the story takes place. He has returned home, having concealed the truth from his father. His alienation from his father is heightened by the initial appearance of MacCarland and Isaac Sumpter through the

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contemplations of Mac, a Baptist preacher. His study is like a box, and it has the qualities of the cave around which the story finds its focus. Mac is in agony over the memory of his wife who died giving Isaac life. Isaac is reading romantic poetry, and he envisions himself as the immortal bird of Keat's poem. As Mac interrupts his reading, their alienation is demonstrated. Ikey, as he was called, did not believe in God, and he had lost any concept of self. His estrangement is total.

Isaac demonstrates this alienation and isolation of being. He has few, if any, friends. His love affair with Rachel Goldstein was brought to an end by his own senseless immorality and failure to accept responsibility. He could not establish meaningful relationships with anyone. In addition to his journeys into the cave in his fraudulent efforts to save Jasper Harrick who was trapped there, his flight from town in the old Studebaker is a symbol of his separateness. In fact, the car is a common symbol of the alienation of modern, mechanized man in the novels: one person moving in isolation through the environment, detached and surrounded by blurred perception. As he drove to escape his responsibility in the death of Jasper Harrick, he fantasizes his sexual relationship with Goldie. While at the airport he saw an old man, a derelict, dirty and poor. The old man's presence heightens the alienation of Isaac as he is reminded of an old enemy, Jim Haworth, from the newspaper for which he used to work. With the purpose of antagonizing Haworth, Isaac telephoned him; but to his own dismay and further alienation, Haworth succeeded in antagonizing him by telling him of the marriage of Goldie that very day to a rich

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Jewish broker from New York city. The news was a terrible blow to Ikey. "He was standing there, holding the dead phone," after Haworth had hung up on him, "feeling sick and deprived, knowing that all his striving had been in vain, for a man suffered for his success only to find, in the end, that it was ashes, and that others, the shining ones, moved serenely off into their glory. He was standing there when the flight to New York was announced. He went out, numbly, and like a condemned man mounted the scaffold, climbed the steps into the body of the plane."

The episode ends in the midst of Isaac Sumpter's fantasy which reflects the future into which he is flying: revenge sought for the old rejections, false fame founded on his exploitation, covered by his father's lie; alone. But how different the story of Isaac Sumpter is from that of Adam Rosenzweig in Wilderness. Adam also is alone when the novel ends, but he is not alienated as Ikey was. Adam Rosenzweig had experienced a "mystic shame for being himself" which gripped him after he was exposed as a cripple trying to get to America, but he finds strength to overcome that shame by the humble recognition that "he was not so different from other men." He felt at the beginning of the book that if he could only keep the vision that other men were like him, he "might find a way to live." "With that, however," the narrative continues, "he seemed to see his uncle staring sadly at him saying: 'You would pray to God to give you the delusion of the glory of Man, and that is the last foolishness.'" His story is his definition, which allows him to accept others, and himself, not for their glory, but in their error. He changes from shame and guilt, not

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to pride and glory, but to humility and acceptance. However, the important thing is that he finds his truth, and he lives.

At the very point that Adam Rosenzweig had succeeded, Isaac Sumpter failed. Whereas Adam had attempted to define himself in his father's ideals, Isaac had tried to deny his father's ideals. Whereas Adam was humble and learned the importance of acceptance, the end of the novel comes before Isaac has learned that one cannot find a definition of himself in any other. In other words, Isaac is exercising the common human fault of attempting to define himself in another, as expressed by Cass Mastern, but he will not recognize it. Whereas Adam comes to accept himself as the same as others, Isaac refuses to identify himself with the common guilt of mankind. Whereas Adam is willing to be totally himself, Isaac only wishes to be totally himself, but he is not willing or able to take those necessary, painful steps for self-realization which will allow him to fulfill that wish. Whereas Adam's story closes with his affirmation of the truth and the realization that "only the betrayer is ever betrayed, and then only by his own betraying," Isaac's ends with his rejection of his father, because he feels that he has been betrayed by his father, and he is not willing to acknowledge that he in reality has betrayed himself, failing to his own self to be true.

Also in Adam Rosenzweig, Warren demonstrated that the death of the father brings the birth of the son through the son's obligation to fulfill the dream of the father. Adam was only partially, if at all, able to fulfill his father's dreams, but he did make an attempt to do so. In his failure, he found himself. There is a sense in which

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this Jewish cripple becomes the model of all of Warren's successful characters, in that he deals directly with his problem of self-definition with the minimal distraction into the moral evils so commonly indulged in by the people of Warren's fictional world. It is not that Adam is without sin, but he completely came to terms with his inherited limitations, his paternal obligations, and his own separateness.

In contrast to those who deal with themselves, Warren represents the crowd of thrill and curiosity seekers in The Cave who gathered at the cave, as a multitude that "with all their heart" had come to Johntown and "had striven to break through that mystery which was themselves." An awareness of oneself is not an easy task. For example, Jack Burden was not yet ready for self-knowledge when he first approached the journals of Cass Mastern. "Perhaps he laid aside the journal of Cass Mastern not because he could not understand, but because he was afraid to understand," the narrative says, "for what might be understood there was a reproach to himself." Self-knowledge can be psychologically intolerable, without adequate preparation. As Jack Burden was prepared by his story to accept his self-knowledge, Brad Tolliver in Flood had come back to Fiddlersburg and began to experience an inward awareness described as "discovering a buried self. It was the true self that would live forever." However, that self was not discovered completely by the end of the novel. His awareness that there is no country but the heart gives hope that he will learn to "trust the secret and irrational life of man, which

might be the truth of man." It was in himself he would find the human necessity.

Another example of how Warren demonstrates the alienation of his characters is shown in Brad Tolliver's perception of Brother Potts in Flood. Potts is actually a compassionate man who has come to love Fiddlersburg very much because of his ability to identify with the people, but he is a lonely man, cancerous and dying. He accepted a call to the ministry because he came to believe that a man could not insure himself against either himself or God. The insurance against oneself or God is impossible because of the nature of both. To Potts, God is Sovereign; "We have got to remember," he told Brad and Yasha, "the life we had was the life God wanted us to have." But the self is a finite, limited, frail, depraved being, weak and alienated.

The narrative demonstration of his loneliness comes as Brad and Yasha discuss Brother Potts while strolling toward the cemetery. In a pathetic potential scene for the movie, Brad's perception of Potts' loneliness is given: "He stands there and takes a grim delight in what he has done." That is, has given "a great, slow, rumbling, deliberately uncontrolled fart. No correct that to belch," while eating cold beans out of the can in his dark, inadequate kitchen. "Nobody sees him. Nobody hears him. Nobody cares. He is alone. In his aloneness he feels, suddenly, mysteriously, strong. He feels heavy, dangerous, merciless, like a beast." Yasha then identifies this much of the story as "mutatis mutandis, the story of us all." Brad then continued the plot line by having Potts fall into a

passionate prayer "to rouse God from His lethargy." He raises blue welts on his head from pressing it into the bottom of the chair. However, he would have to lie about how the marks got there, so he would not be convicted of spiritual pride. The widower preacher, dying of cancer, is the epitome of estranged loneliness, estranged by his compassion.

The self certainly is a basis for evil in human experience. While it is the source for potential fulfillment, more often than not it is a prison, a trap, breathing black beast within, as Brad experienced when going to visit Cal Fiddler in prison after recuperating from the gunshot wound which ironically Cal had inflicted upon him and then, subsequently, Calvin saved Brad from death. However, the self can also of itself be expressive of a crime: the crime of being the self one has made. As Jack Burden was waiting while Willie was thinking about what to do about Tom Stark's affair with Miss Frey, he wanted to do something for Lucy, but he felt especially inadequate for the visit. However, he realistically grasped and understood his own situation, and he realized he did not owe her anything. He only wanted to help. "My only crime," he thought to himself as he rejected the idea of the necessity to apologize to her, "was being man and living in the world of men, and you don't have to do a special penance for that. The crime and the penance . . . are identical."

An expression similar to the above is given by Jeremiah Beaumont near the end of World Enough and Time, as he became aware that his crime was the crime of being himself: "That crime for which I seek expiation is never lost. It is always there. It is unpardonable.

It is the crime of self, the crime of life. The crime is I." In this climactic realization, Jeremiah acknowledges his own perfidy, and his own crime had its basis in his own abuse of his ideals. He had estranged himself from mankind. By this acceptance, his loneliness became communion. His concluding paragraph in his statement before he heads back for Frankfort is important at this point: He says,

"There must be a way I have missed," he says, and looks mournfully back on his story. "There must be a way whereby the word becomes flesh. There must be a way whereby the flesh becomes word. Whereby loneliness becomes communion without contamination. Whereby contamination becomes purity without exile. There must be a way, but I may not have it now. All I can have now is knowledge. But if we can have knowledge, if we can know the terrible logic of life, if we can only know! But at least I know now that life tells no lies in the end, for all the lies, single and particular, will at last speak together in a great chorus of truth in many voices. Thus all the lies and false witness against me told truth, but in my anger and betrayal I did not guess that this is all we need: knowledge. That is not redemption, but is almost better than redemption. I go home through the wilderness now and know that I may not have redemption. I no longer seek to justify. I seek only to suffer. I will shake the hangman's hand, and will call him my brother, at last."⁶⁵

He did not make it, but in his inward self he had obtained the reconciliation with himself that is essential to fulfill human necessity. He acknowledged his crime and his responsibility for the self he had made, but he could not stop the inevitable fate that would come at the hand of One-eye Sam Jenkins who brought his head in for the reward.

One of the powerful insights into the racial problem seen in Flood occurs when Pretty Boy, a Black prisoner waiting to be executed, spits on Brother Potts who has come to him to try to minister to him in his time of need. It is powerfully relevant that in an

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earlier passage Brad Tolliver has given a discourse to Yasha Jones on the racial problem. The heart of the race problem, Brad says, is not guilt. "It is," he says, "simply that your Southerner is deeply and ambiguously disturbed to have folks around him who are not as lonesome as he is. Especially if they are Black folks." This is part of the high lonesomeness to which Brad refers in Flood. The characters all demonstrate this lonesomeness. The alienation of one being from another is a demonstration of that internal loneliness all experience as a part of their being.

Another presentation of the existential loneliness which pervades most of the novels occurs in Meet Me in the Green Glen when the narrator records the mood of the town which was wrapped in silence concerning the trial. "Guilty or innocent, the thing was uncomfortable to talk about in another way. It was lonesome. It was lonely. It was lonely to think of yourself paralyzed, trapped in yourself that way like you were your own coffin, and somebody picking you up carefully and setting a knife to go into your back. It was lonelier than getting stabbed, face forward, of a sudden." How could anyone be more isolated than Sunderland Spottwood, the paralyzed stroke victim who lay in the dark prison-like room for twelve years. The entrapment of the victim in this murder is symbolic of the condition of each of the characters in the novels who is, indeed, trapped in himself, in his own coffin. It is such a pervasive condition that it gains a metaphysical quality by virtue of that very pervasiveness. Further, however, the loneliness and separation in love is shown, as the narration continues: "it was lonely to think of that young fellow--the dago--and that old woman

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lying up there together at night, in that fallen-in house, and that paralyzed man in the next room. It was lonely to think of that woman, even if she was crazy--but was she crazy then?--driving to Nashville and trying to see the Governor and not seeing him." In her isolation, no one really willing to help could, and no one who could would. The totally oppressive loneliness that is found throughout this last novel makes it essential that it be recognized that the very fiber of being itself is saturated with essential solitude and existential loneliness.

The total impact, however, of this loneliness is shown next. To those familiar with the novels, the paragraph given below, in its entirety, demonstrates the alienation and its role within the world of Warren's novels:

It was, then the loneliness that made people uncomfortable when they talked about the trail. But it was the loneliness, strangely enough, that made people keep on remembering even if they did not talk. You thought of it at night just before going to sleep. Or woke up just before day and started thinking about it. You might be walking home from the store or office and suddenly think that your wife was getting old and shapeless and when you came in the door she would look at you as though she didn't know you. Or you might realize that you yourself were old, and you might suddenly wonder what was in her head. Or if you were a woman, you might be sitting in a room shuttered shadowy against the heat on a summer afternoon, and wonder what that crazy Spottwood woman had got out of life that you never got, and the loneliness would suddenly overcome you like lostness and too-lateness, and a grief you had no name for.⁶⁷

It is significant that in such passages, there is a mixture of time and the dark color of shadow and the oppression of heat, all indicative of evil. Also, there is a mention of the nameless pain or dread that is at the core of life. Notice also the left-out, outsider feeling of which the women are said to be aware. Virtually every line of this

typical passage is filled with the threat of evil at the very base of being itself.

Another symbol of this loneliness which is in nearly all of the novels is the light in a window which is seen in the dark from a distance. As Jack Burden explained to Anne Stanton at one point in All the King's Men, "I felt as you do when you pass down a dark street and look up to see a lighted window and in the bright room people talking and singing and laughing with the firelight splashing and undulating over them and the sound of music drifts out of the street while you watch; and then a hand, you will never know whose hand, pulls down the shade. And there you are, outside." Since Percy Munn was made to feel left out of the Proudfit circle at the farm and he became so vitally aware of his alienation of others, Warren has continued to picture people outside of the center of activity in this way. In each novel there are several such instances. Throughout Warren's novels someone is always on the outside looking in, out of the darkness into the light.

Near the end of The Cave, the gravely ill Jack Harrich is recalling his youthful conquests, among them Mary Tillyard who was the late Mrs. Sumpter and Celia Hornby, who was to be his own wife. "Yes, he hadn't cared what even [Celia] had wanted or needed, what emptiness she had to fill to be herself. All that had mattered was his own terror when, not knowing for a second whose hand he held in the dark, he had been caught in the vertigo of his own non-being." The threat of falling into non-being, as Jack was caught in here, is frequently encountered in various metaphors; but its point is that the alienated

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self, which is empty and striving to be filled, is an ever present part of the life each character leads.

A few pages earlier in The Cave another example of confronting loneliness is shown. After Jack Harrick contemplated the sermon of MacCarland Sumpter from the thirty-eighth Psalm on inherited sin from the father's point of view, Jack considers whether or not all men are like him. As he contemplates his sons, Monty and Jasper, he concludes that Monty is not like him. Monty has gone into the cave to hold his dead brother's hand. Jack feels better realizing that the younger son is not going to have to be like him. Monty will continue to make his own song and build his own life, presumably with Jo-Lea Bingham. Jack takes his pill and begins to play the guitar; he has learned how to die, now he can live until he does die, and he will fight to live.

Consequently, Jack Harrick has overcome the finitude of his being, or at least the fear of the finitude in his being. He has changed from the desperate man who will not take his medicine that sat with MacCarland Sumpter under the single light which hung from the ceiling while insects hit against the screen on the door. As Mac and Jack talked of the people being more willing to believe a lie than the truth, the moths and the light with the screen interposed become a symbol of the finitude of being which is everywhere present around this Baptist preacher and his prize convert.

Quality of Being: Reality

The problem of identity for an individual is not the only type of being with which Warren is concerned. It is true that self-knowledge is the central theme of Warren's novels; however, the world which is created in those novels reflected a world in which truth, reality, dream and illusion are so mixed that the very nature of all existence is perceived as a source for evil. In none of the novels is this concern demonstrated any more clearly than in the last. Meet Me in the Green Glen begins with the mixture of real and imagined experiences seen through the eyes of Mrs. Cassie Spottwood. In her own mind, she is confused as to what is happening within and what is going on outside of her own mind. The dark colors and the dreary rain and mud all add to the illusory, dream-like quality of the world around her. As the story develops, Murray Guilfort, who was influenced very much by a friend he met at a convention, has difficulty separating the true from the false, the real from the illusion, the dream from the real possibility.

In many respects all of the novels do have this reality-illusion quality about them. Scenes set in the twilight and in the dark often so dominate the mood of the stories that the pessimism they contain gives total reinforcement of the metaphysical notions already discussed in this chapter. In a crude pun, Alfred Milbank, the convention friend of Guilfort, stated the concept concisely: "'Yes, Guilfort,' he went on, 'art is all, and a good lie is worth a million facts in any court. Or in any bed. Illusion, Guilfort, is the only truth.'" As

one might expect in Warren, even a Philistine conventioneer cites art as the reality, and illusion as the truth. "A thing ain't ne'er what you think it is!" Mrs. Pugh told Adam Rosenzweig in Wilderness. This is precisely the type of illusion very often presented,

Among the religious characters in the novels, Jason Sweetwater's recollections of his father's stories which were really lies represent the illusion creation similar to that which appears in the novels. In the mind of Sweetwater, his father was not a malicious man; therefore, Sweetwater did not consider his father as dangerous as the other illusions around him. He made specific reference to Sue Murdock about the illusion created by Slim Sarrett which was the world in which he lived. Sweetwater had not lived with Sue until Slim Sarrett's world was turned from his created illusion to the truth by the Greek homosexual. Another forceful representation of the same problem is the concluding scene with Isaac Sumpter in The Cave already alluded to in the previous section. When his fraudulent effort to build a reputation of fame and honor and to make a fortune from the cave on his property failed because of his father's discovery of his lie, he fled into another lie, an illusory world. Ironically, his father had to create a lie in order to save his son from a lie. But he did it. Jack Harrick tried to encourage Mac by telling him that the people would believe him anyway, because they would want to; they would believe what they needed to believe.

Further, Jack Harrick himself was not a reality; that is, the Jack Harrick in the minds of all the people in the valley was not the Jack Harrick who loves his wife and his sons. But the clear impact of

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Celia Harrick's concern for her lost son in that Jasper felt the pressure to live up to the dream version, the imaginative version of Jack, not the actual one. ". . . Jack Harrick, he knew then, was nothing but a dream," Jack himself thought during his crisis. "He was a dream dreamed up from the weakness of people. Since people were weak, they dreamed up a dream out of their need for violence, for strength, for freedom. Sitting there, he hated them for their weakness, or all their praise and envy, for the hands clawing at him for his strength, or in supplication of it." But in the next paragraph, the narrative continues, "He hated them for their weakness, which made him what he was."

Another important aspect of the nature of reality and illusion in the novels is that dreams, like that given above about Jack Harrick, have a way of coming true. This reinforces what MacCarland Sumpter had learned earlier in The Cave, that the will of God is formed by the will of man. Men have the terror of getting what they want.

In an earlier novel, At Heaven's Gate, Duckfoot Blake, one of Murdock's employees and a part of Slim Sarrett's manipulated group, comments to Gerald Calhoun upon learning that Bogan Murdock has been apprehended. "'No,' he repeated, 'it wouldn't mean much. Because Bogan Murdock ain't real. Bogan is a solar myth, he is a pixy, he is a poltergeist. Son,' he said, 'you can't put ectoplasm in jail. But Bogan ain't even ectoplasm. He is just something you and I thought up one night. When Bogan Murdock looks in the mirror he don't see a thing.'" Then a few lines later, "Bogan Murdock is just a dream Bogan Murdock had, a great big wonderful dream. And you can't put a dream

in jail, son. Bogan Murdock is just a wonderful idea Bogan Murdock had. And that,' Duckfoot said sadly, 'is why Bogan Murdock is a great man.'"

With respect to human greatness, Uncle Rosenzweig called the delusion of human greatness the last foolishness. The old Jew's remark brings the famous concern of Jack Burden over the greatness of Willie Stark to mind. In All the King's Men, Jack agreed with Lucy Stark that one must believe that Willie was a great man either despite of or because of the mixture of good and evil so evident in his rise to and maintenance of power. However, there is in the novels an overall impact that does cause me to join with Cass Mastern and wonder about the meaning of goodness of men, if we judge the nature of the influence of the good men in history. Such things as the Justice for which Jeremiah Beaumont or Percival Skrogg strove was turned to wickedness, as was the good Percy Munn had wanted before him in World Enough and Time and Night Rider, respectively. In the many instances in which the ideals of people are turned into evil ends, good is the delusion and, therefore, the evil that follows is more real than the good that spawned it. Even in the last novel, the friendship and the charity shown by Murray Guilfort to Cassie and Sunderland Spottwood were masks for his own deep seated resentment for Sunderland and his desire for Cassie. His act of suppressing evidence out of a concern for Cassie became an act of selfish pride which caused the execution of the innocent Angelo. In Warren, there is nearly as large a problem with the nature of human goodness as there is with the problem of evil.

The difficulty of distinguishing the real and the unreal is also demonstrated by the ambiguity of the plots and the situations in which these characters function. Motives are never clear and the mixture of the right and wrong, the true and the false, the illusion and the reality is so complete that Jack Burden becomes a very typical example of Warren's characters engaged in the problem of separating them. "But I had to know," Jack said while investigating Irwin for Stark.

Even as the thought of going away without knowing came through my head, I knew that I had to know the truth. For the truth is a terrible thing. You dabble your foot in it and it is nothing. But you walk a little further and you feel it pull you like an undertow or a whirlpool. First there is a slow pull so steady and gradual you scarcely notice it, then the acceleration, then the dizzy whirl and plunge to blackness. For there is a blackness of truth, too. They say it is a terrible thing to fall into the Grace of God. I am prepared to believe that. 68

In other words, the very nature of truth as perceived by the characters contributes to the ambiguous base from which good and evil come, and this ambiguity touches them all. All of the stories could carry with them the admonition of Aaron Bleustein to Adam Rosenzweig, "The hardest thing to remember is that other men are men." Just about every character who is touched by the notion of evil in Warren's novels fails to keep this advice in mind. To be a person is to have a mixed, ambiguous nature.

Leroy Lancaster of Meet Me in the Green Glen has the same ambiguity. He had the existential dread that is common to men, especially in Warren's world. He was aware that life was passing him by, and he was a failure. He even questioned his wife's love for him.

During his walk at the time of crisis and realization, he came to their house, but he would not go in or even approach very closely.

He stood there, staring at the distant light as though he could spy on her loneliness. He had the impulse to enter the yard and creep toward the window. He would have to be careful. The old acorns that strewed the ground would crackle underfoot in the dark. He imagined himself secretly peering into the window where she stood, alone in the pale light.

What would he see there?

His breath came short.

Then, all at once, he felt old and dry. He wondered where life had gone.

He thought: When will I be done with illusion?⁶⁹

Later during that same walk, Leroy had a fantasy [unreal] that Angelo was making love to his very sensual wife. This dream brought him the idea [true or false] that he, too, down deep, had wanted Angelo dead. It forced him to see his identity with other men, and brought him to the climactic realization [real and true] of his own blasphemy of his own life. The illusion had brought him truth.

The problem of understanding life is complex. Even Senator Tolliver in Night Rider said that life was too complex for simple answers to its problems. Because of this, many different approaches are necessary in order to find the truth that there is. Most of them presented in the novels are in one way or another presented in some of the selected religious characters, but there is one passage particularly of interest here which relates to one of the other characters. "Yes, reality was the uncapturable. That is why we need illusion. Truth through lie [Yasha Jones] thought. Only in the mirror, over your shoulder, he thought, does the ghost appear." The threat of emptiness, alienation and despair are all a part of the stuff of reality that is only grasped or seen through the illusion of the art,

especially the created story. But God also participates in the illusion of reality. While discussing the complexity of life and the causes of his Great Sleep, Jack Burden said, "I would lie there and know I didn't have to get up, and feel the holy emptiness and blessed fatigue of a saint after the dark night of the soul. For God and Nothing have a lot in common. You look either one of Them straight in the eye for a second and the immediate effect on the human constitution is the same."

Sometimes the complexity of reality is too much for the mind to grasp so the mind makes its own reality. This is what happened to Cassie Spottwood. She had killed her husband, and finally, she confessed it in open court. Because no one in authority would believe it, Angelo was executed. Cassie was placed in a sanatorium, and there she became happy and knew joy, because she created her own reality, the delusion of love and her own innocence. Angelo had gone away, and he was happy.

Nevertheless, the true nature of reality is the "spooky interpretation of things" symbolized in the spider web analogy of Cass Mastern in All the King's Men, and illustrated by all the novels. In Warren's view of the nature of being, as Calvin Fiddler in Flood had learned the truth, "In solitary you decide, well, I'll just shut my eyes, for only what you can think can truly exist. But then you shut your eyes and that thing that was unthinkable--it really does come true. It blazes up around you like a brush fire. It blazes up like spilled gasoline. It blazes in the dark inside your head. You realize in that flash that there is no you except in relation to all

that unthinkableness that the world is. And you yourself are. So you begin to cry." Calvin goes on to describe how he grew beyond that despair to see life as a beautiful possibility for all existence. "Anyway," he went on, "now it was just like seeing life like in a mirror--but nothing there before the mirror to be reflected. You might say the only thing reflected was just the possibility of something."

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CHAPTER II

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER III

MORAL EVIL

Lived lak a man will, and labored fer bread. I seen the belt tight and I seen the gut full to plenish, in the change of time and the seasons, how they come. I taken what come and ne'er give thanks, fer hit was my strength I laid trust in. And I taken my pleasure. I drunk likker and laid on the ground lak a hog. I fit with folks fer no cause, and cut men to let the blood come out. I stole, and I grieve to say hit. A man layin drunk, and I taken what he had. I laid out with women in the bresh. I done all the meanness of man. But a man comes along and he falls in the world and the mud lak a man will. Ain't nuthin to tell him, if he don't harken soft, fer the world, hit is a quagmire and don't hang out no sign.¹

Given the nature of man and the nature of the world as indicated in the previous chapter, the way men live in such a place with such people is summarized in Munn Short's statement of his life to Jeremiah Beaumont as they waited for Jeremiah's execution. When finite men are placed in a world of finite creatures, actions and interactions bring harm, displeasure and death. Such human actions are often called "evil." Because they are actions which originate in the will and are the responsibility of the ones who perform them, they are called moral evil. In the previous chapter, consideration was given to the nature of the evil which rests at the base of reality as demonstrated in the novels of Robert Penn Warren. The purpose of the inquiry now is to consider the nature of the evils men inflict upon each other that bring harm, pain, suffering, or frustration to others and themselves.

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In many respects, Munn Short's brief account of his life to Jeremiah Beaumont given in part above is typical of the lives of many of the characters in the novels. Having lived the way other people lived, the laboring Munn Short had experienced times of want and times of surplus. Also, he pridefully trusted in his own strength and did not feel any obligation to anyone because he felt he had earned it himself. Having then demonstrated the human quality of pride, he also is guilty of sensuality. He had his pleasure and had lived human meanness. The meanness refers to lowness, or the inferior quality of action or behavior: those vile, immoral things which are expressive of moral evil. Several kinds of action are named by Short which qualify: drinking likker and living like a hog, aggression, viciousness, violence, stealing, and fornication. As such, these activities are representative of the "mean" actions many of the characters engage in.

Finally, Munn Short makes an astute, yet homey observation concerning the nature of the world in which we live; it is, he says, a quagmire. The implications of the quagmire are significant. Not only is it a muddy bog which will not bear the weight of anyone trying to walk over it, but it also is a situation from which extrication is extremely difficult. Certainly one of the things the novels of Robert Penn Warren say is that the world is so much with us that we cannot be easily taken from it, and we will sink in it. The quagmire image indicates the interrelationship of the three kinds of evil; the finite, flawed man who will walk on it; the mud, dirt, and filth that is in it; and the ever-present continuing threat of it.

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As indicated in Chapter I, the classifications of moral evil developed by Rinehold Neibuhr are used for this study. The first type of moral evil is self-ambition, sometimes called pride, and in classical literary vocabulary, hubris. The second type of moral evil is self-love which expresses itself in sensuality. Hubris is sometimes called an insolent pride, in that it expresses disregard for human limitation or finitude in the face of deity. According to Niebuhr, pride expresses itself in four specific ways: (1) pride of power, (2) pride of knowledge, (3) pride of virtue, and (4) spiritual pride. These categories are developed below with examples from the novels and relevant discussion. Next, sensuality is discussed in terms of its principal manifestations: (1) self-defeating sensuality, (2) escape into externals, and (3) inner escape to deny the outside world. Finally, there is a discussion of responsibility as it relates to moral evil in the forms of irresponsible use of power in moral or ethical imperialism and moral irresponsibility in the form of moral isolationism.

Pride of Power

When a person begins to trust too much in himself and in his own abilities, he is likely to develop an exaggerated sense of self-sufficiency. As we might expect, the pride of power will express this self-sufficiency in many forms of ambition and greed. Further, the pride of power is associated with the rejection of dependency and limitation. As demonstrated in the second chapter, Warren clearly shows the view of man as limited and dependent. To willfully disregard or to

deny the reality of such a natural condition is to be guilty of the moral evil, the pride of power.

The pride of power is associated with the human tendency to give too much trust to an idea and the amount of effort they can give to them and the amount of the human ability to bring the idea of actuality by the trust put in the idea. However, this particular evil is also associated with the other sins of pride as well. With respect to the pride of power, "the human ego," Niebuhr says, "assumes its self-sufficiency and self-mastery and imagines itself secure against all visissitudes."² One of the principal examples of this attitude in the novels is Isaac Sumpter in The Cave. Because he had such an exaggerated view of his own abilities, he exploited others by his fraudulent attempt to save Jasper Harrick. His clear motive is power and glory. He wanted money, he was ambitious and his greed was self-evident as he encouraged Nich Papadoupalous to cooperate in the concessions outside the cave to capitalize upon the tragedy. The greatest expression of this pride of power perhaps is at the very end of his appearance in the novel as he is projecting into the future and he sees himself as the center of attention in the New York party circuit because of his "heroic" efforts to save Jasper.

The emptiness of his claim for pride is highlighted by basing his claim upon the lies which made it possible. His believing that he could actually get away with such a perposterous thing is demonstrative of this gross evil. The worst thing is that there were those outside of the cave who could, and apparently would, have gone into the cave to save Jasper, but Isaac prevented them. Further, he lacks any sign of

contrition or repentance when his father, the Baptist preacher, MacCarland Sumpter, discovered his lie and in turn lied to cover the sin of his son.

The human condition is by nature insecure. In attempts to find a security beyond that to which his condition entitles him, a person will commit the sin of pride of power. In At Heaven's Gate, Jason Sweetwater's efforts as a labor leader can be understood as this type of pride of power. His efforts to bring improved working conditions, in and of themselves, may not be evil; in fact, he is doing what he can to bring some justice into the world in the terms of its great injustice. Nevertheless, there is the threat that his effort to find security for them is subject to this moral tension. It was Jason who initiated the sequence of events that eventually cost Ashby Wyndham his job and sent him on the road that led him to Jesus. This appears to be a good; however, after a short time, Ashby's sinful pride in the Lord cost him his own confidence and his relationship to God. Further, the pride of power in Jason's own abilities eventuated in the murder of Sue Murdock.

To adequately consider the pride of power in the novels of Robert Penn Warren, it is necessary to refer to the career of Willie Stark in All the King's Men. A great deal has been said about this pragmatic politician who caused his own destruction. For example, it is his interest in building a great hospital for the people of the state that causes him to enter into the series of events that actually end in his murder at the hands of Adam Stanton. The pride that is involved in the project is demonstrated by his desire to name the

hospital the Willie Stark Memorial Hospital. Even though he does want later to change the name to honor his son who was killed by a football injury, the motive of pride and the self-glorification implicit in naming the effort after his own son is obvious.

Further, Willie believes that he can go against his own doctrine or belief and build a hospital that is "clean" and absent of all political corruption. He is forced into this project not only by his own pride, but also by the insistence of Dr. Stanton; however, his inability to do so is also indicative of the inherent limitation in a human to go against the weight of the events he starts. Willie had gotten where he was because of his astute exercise of his will to power. In the end, that exercise brought not only his own destruction, but the death of Adam Stanton as well. While Willie had learned his Presbyterian theology well enough to use the doctrine of the depravity of man to his advantage, he had not learned it well enough to keep himself from becoming the victim of the pride of power. In terms of power, Willie had it all, and he abused it all. His manipulation of others in order to achieve his own ends is demonstrative of his total pragmatic approach to life. The end for which one strives does not justify the means when those means are the exercise of the pride of power.

Willie's pride of power had caused him to deny his father in all but a practical political way. The return to the farm for publicity pictures, and his reaction to the old dog in the opening chapter indicate that his interest in home was not out of a genuine loyalty to his past or his father. He also exploited his relationship to the people

of Mason City as much as possible in order to build his own political advantage.

Ironically, Adam Stanton cites Willie's intention to do good for the people as a bribe. "I will do those things," Willie declared in a speech, "So help me God. I shall live in your will and your right. And if any man tries to stop me in the fulfilling of that right and that will I'll break him. I'll break him like that!" He continues to say that he will literally do anything to achieve his ends. And he does. This expression of a will to power is not unique to Willie Stark. Certainly, the efforts of Percy Munn, which in the beginning were apparently sincere efforts to work the will of the people of the association, were eventually nothing less than an expression of the will to power in which he became totally unaware of his own contingency. By the end of the novel, however, he was reminded of it again, and he found it necessary to strike out at the one he thought was responsible.

In another of the novels, Percival Skrogg is expressive of the will to power. His use of Jeremiah Beaumont and even Wilkie Barron, although in that case it is not clear who used whom, is a typical example of the driving need to have power. The cause of the Replevin Party was greater than that of universal justice. His concept of justice was more important than his own life and body. His willingness to have others suffer in order for his cause to prosper is certainly an example of the will to power. He is an example of the Willie Stark type of political worker in an era before our own; nevertheless, the evil he does eventually brings his own destruction.

Examples could also be drawn from the prideful kindness of Hamish Bond or the vanity of Thingism idealistically opposed by Tobias Sears as presented in Band of Angels, or the exploitation by the sutlers or the greed of Monmorency Pugh in Wilderness. The ambition of Judge Irwin caused him to take the bribe and caused the death of Mr. Littlepaugh in All the King's Men. In Flood the exploitation of others for personal power is represented by Brother Potts and Rev. Leon Pinckney's attempts to bring Pretty Boy to his praying knees before his execution. Murray Guilfort's desire for political influence in his home state is an example of pride of power in Meet Me in the Green Glen. In this last case, Murray got what he wanted, just as many others did in the novels; but he found the price paid was too great. He committed suicide to end the torment and the terror of the great injustice done for personal glory and power. In each of the novels, there are many examples of the exercise of the pride of power to gain riches, power or glory. Greed and ambition are powerfully present. On every hand, on nearly every page, characters are trapped because they ignore their human limitation and strive to make themselves sufficient to the end they plan.

Sometimes Warren addresses the problem of pride very directly, as he did in the case of Jack Harrick in The Cave as he is recalling his baptism at the hands of MacCarland Sumpter.

Later, he felt a little ashamed of having suspected that Ole Mac was trying to drown him. Then the shame turned into a wry, secret joke. He reckoned that Ole Mac, knowing all he did about him, had to give him a little deeper dunking than the ordinary sinner needed. Once, meeting Ole Mac on the street, he even had the impulse to tell him the joke. . . . He reckoned it was a sort of pride, just plain ornery human man-pride in sinfulness, that

made him want to tell the joke in the first place. So he made another joke to himself. He reckoned since even if he was saved he still had such a bait on sjn-pride, he might take longer than most to build up saint-pride.³

While referring in the last sentence to what is discussed below as pride of virtue, i.e., saint-pride, Jack is also exhibiting a type of pride which could be read as a pride for glory or a pride of power over another in his effort to make a joke with Mac Sumpter over what he knew was an intensely serious thing for MacCarland.

Certainly, the novels are replete with examples of the type of greedy pride of power that Willie Proudfit identified in Night Rider when he said, "We got our'n and didn't reckon on no end, hit looked lak. But a man's that a-way. He sees sumthen, and don't reckon on no end, no way, and don't see hit a-come-en. They's a hoggishness in man, and a hog-blindness." He goes on to describe the exploitation of the buffalo and the Indians in which he participated while out West with Mingo. "But I seen 'em lay, skinned and stinken, black-en the ground fer what a man could ride half a day. A man couldn't breathe fresh fer the stinken. And before you knowed hit, they wasn't no buffalo in Kansas." The suffering he helped cause the Indians is an interesting and ironic event because it is a group of compassionate Indians that administered the care that helped him live through a terrible fever.

A final example of the role of pride of power is furnished by Ashby Wyndham in At Heaven's Gate. "I stopped down at the foot of Massey whar a man could git him a bottle of moonshine whiskey from Buck Barkus what made it and sold it and stirred up abomination and taken silver for it, for it looks lak ain't nuthin pore man won't do

for money, and what he won't do for money he up and does for lust of his flesh and sinful pride, and it for pride the angels fell out of heaven and God's sight." Such actions of pride are very common in the novels and clearly the pride of power is what is meant. Incidences like this one reflect the desire for glory, power, ambition and greed which Niebuhr used as the basis for his considerations of moral evil.

Pride of Knowledge

The concept of intellectual pride or the pride of knowledge is a more spiritual and less material form of the elevation of human ability and knowledge and the denial of man's essential finite nature. "All human knowledge," Niebuhr maintained, "is tainted with an 'ideological' taint. It pretends to be more true than it is. It is finite knowledge, gained from a particular perspective; but it pretends to be final and ultimate knowledge. Exactly analogous to the cruder pride of power, the pride of intellect is derived on the one hand from ignorance of the finiteness of the human mind and on the other hand, from an attempt to obscure the known conditioned character of human knowledge and the taint of self-interest in human truth."⁴ In his development of this notion, Niebuhr cites fanaticism as one of the aspects of intellectual pride. A fanatic sees his answer and only his answer as the acceptable alternative to a given problem. According to Bonhoeffer, the fanatic is doomed to defeat because he charges in and is blind to the totality of evil in human experience; therefore, the very means by which some attempt to counter a given evil becomes a means by which evil is perpetuated.⁵ The purity of the motive of such a person is

rarely questioned, but the validity of his dedication to a finite principle is. Similarly, in Warren, the fanatics usually do not perceive their principles or causes as finite, and this becomes the basis for their intellectual pride.

Among the religious characters, Seth Parton from Band of Angels is one of the best examples of intellectual pride. In his early meetings with Amantha Starr, before it is discovered that she is a slave of Starrwood plantation, he confronts her with the demands of truth. He is among those of the abolitionists at Oberlin who chastise Miss Starr for her father's slave holdings. While Seth adopts the morally superior role, which qualifies him as an example of pride of virtue as well as of knowledge, his appeal to her is based upon his perception of truth and not his superior virtue; therefore, I have considered this incident as an example of intellectual pride. Speaking of Aaron Starr's goodness to his slaves as a mask for a greater evil, Seth says, "I am not concerned with your father as a person. . . . What is the small and foolish goodness of a person? May not the Adversary use best our small personal goodness for the greatness of Evil?" Here Parton is clearly adopting the position of an intellectually superior person; further, he perceives the truth which he has received as an absolute because it is revealed from God. So, when he says, "No, we must not be concerned with persons. Only the Truth!" he judged the knowledge or the truth of another, and he was unable to see the limitations of his own position.

Also, Seth really wants to be an absolutist in ethic and in his view of truth; however, his own view of things is not able to

endure the test of the War Between the States. After the War's end and the assassination of Lincoln, he had come to Manty's home and said that he did not know what he would do other than stay in the army with his commission and do the duty of the day. "He did not know," he said, "that he could return to the ministry. Did not know that in the violence, even in the combating of evil one did not assume contamination, and he might have to wait long to purge his own soul before he could speak again of the peace which passeth understanding." Certainly his pride which is demonstrated in the narrative is a pride of knowledge.

Similar to Seth Parton's position of intellectual pride was that of Tobias Sears in the same novel. Even though this Emersonian philosopher is not one of the religious characters upon whom this study concentrates, his demonstration of intellectual pride and his fall from it are too central to this point to totally pass by. After the war, Tobias had written a book, The Great Betrayal, in which he exposed the notion that the war for ideals and ideas had been turned into a sacrifice for the great god Thingism. He was repulsed by the repudiation of ideals demonstrated by the post-war era. However, he, himself, betrays his own ideals by an affair which caused him to have to move his family West. Even though he eventually is able to approach a meaningful relationship with Amantha by the end of the novel, he never again is able to place his false confidence in his intellectual notions.

Of all the instances of pride presented in the novels, those who possess the pride of knowledge more consistently than those who are guilty of other forms of pride are brought low, and the finitude

of human knowledge is demonstrated. Not many of the so-called intellectuals really turn out very well. Few of them are closely associated with the religious characters we are using here; but whether it is Slim Sarrett in At Heaven's Gate, Adam Stanton from All the King's Men, Jeremiah Beaumont in World Enough and Time, or other of the potential idealists in the novels, their exaggerated confidence in their intellectual abilities bring them misery and cause misfortune for others.

An appropriate example is the labor work of Jason Sweetwater. He was also guilty to a degree of the pride of power, but his response to the attempt of Murdock's men to bribe him is the response of one guilty of the pride of knowledge. "Well, it's me your old man's offering the dough to now," the self-styled Marxist told Sue Murdock. "If I am a good boy. A guy took me to a beer joint. . . . Even if I didn't do anything but just clear out of town, he had some dough for me. When he got to the point, I have a mouthful of brew, so I just let him have it in the eye. I let him have a mouthful for eye-wash. Gee some folks think money can buy anything." Jason's intellectual pride rests upon his belief in his economic and intellectual views. What he wants to say to the Bogan Murdocks of the world is that they cannot weaken his economic position by the bribe. His pride is in his position, not in himself; but it is pride nonetheless.

Willie Proudfit spoke of the maltreatment of the Indians in Night Rider. Such mistreatment is an example of racial pride which Niebuhr considers a form of intellectual or cultural pride. In effect, what the maltreatment of a racial group says is that they are

not capable of enjoying the profits of civilization.⁶ Proudfit told of the Indians being herded into corrals and their being fed chunks of raw meat thrown to them as if they were animals. Also, he told of the confrontation between rival Indian leaders. Kicken Bird is presented as a betrayer of his people because he made peaceful concessions to the White men. Lone Wolf and Maman-ti opposed him, and consequently, they are taken from their people in Oklahoma to Florida as punishment for their resistance. Kicken Bird is cursed by them as they leave. Subsequently, Kicken Bird does not survive because of his sense of betraying his people. He died in a short time, alone and unnoticed. Proudfit tried to show that the Indians were sensitive people who had capable, self-sacrificing leaders as well as self-seeking betrayers, and that the Whites had no basis for racial pride.

According to Niebuhr all such examples of racial or cultural pride are types of intellectual pride. Therefore, the confrontations between the Blacks and the Whites in the novels qualify as this type of pride if the incident makes one of the groups superior to the other. For example, Rev. Leon Pinckney's refusal to join the White memorial service for Fiddlersburg in Flood is properly interpreted by Blanding Cottshill as an example of racial pride. It brings hurt to Brother Potts, who only longs to know that the lives they have lived in that place could be blessed. It also contributes to the prolonged tension in history; however, it is a good demonstration of the very real tensions caused by such pride of knowledge. A similar incident occurs earlier in Flood when Jingle Bells, that is Mortimer Sparlin, the service station operator at the motel, knocked Brad Tolliver down

in the driveway after Brad had slept with the blind Leontine Purtle at the motel in the afternoon. It is simply an attempt on the part of the Black man to establish his racial pride before the upstart newcomer he believes is from California. He is wrong, and the pride which gives rise to the action is intellectual pride.

The final example is found in Wilderness. After Adam Rosenzweig finally had killed a man, the Rebel who was attempting to steal his boot from his club foot, he was overtaken by emotion.

Yes, he had come. Everything in the world had tried to stop him, temptations, disillusion, fear, the blankness of the world and time, all the betrayals of his dream. But he had come. By God, he had come here.

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Nothing had been able to stop him, he thought. He felt a surge of pride in that, a manliness.⁷

He had been cautioned at the beginning of his journey by his old Jewish Uncle not to fall victim of the last and great delusion of human goodness. Also, he had left his homeland with the words of his father's poem on his mind, "If man could only be worthy of what he loves." Further, the Uncle cautioned him about the anti-Semitism his father had endured from those with whom he had fought for freedom. In his intellectual pride, in the tradition of his father who had died in Bavaria fighting for freedom, Adam had come to America to fight for freedom. Now, at this climactic moment, he seems to have found the fulfillment of his deepest desire; but then he realizes that he shot the rebel not for freedom, but because his shoeless foot was different from his own twisted, crippled foot. He had done only what he had to do, not what he had wanted to do. Therefore, like so many of the

idealists before him, Adam Rosenzweig ends his story with the discovery of the reality of his sinful pride of knowledge; he had to learn to place himself in prospective as a finite being; he had to learn his lesson and go forward with a new heart.

The novels bear the message over and over again that man should not lean upon his own understanding without taking into full account that that understanding is limited, because too much trust in it will lead to his downfall. He will learn with Isaac Sumpter in The Cave that there is a great price to pay for a little ego satisfaction.

Pride of Virtue

When an individual begins to treat his own "good" as an unconditioned moral value, moral pride or pride of virtue is revealed in the "self-righteous" judgments and actions which follow. As Niebuhr discussed this aspect of pride he made reference to the Pharisees in Biblical literature.⁸ In the terms of the religious characters in the novels, Seth Parton in Band of Angels is a principal example of pride of virtue. Along with the entire religious community at the Oberlin school which Manty Starr attended, Seth represents the pharisaical heteronomy that is implied by this form of Christian moralism. He has centered his spiritual life on the rules of the community, so that Seth and the others are examples of the juridical behavior. Further, there is the ritualized behavior of the worship and devotional instruction with times of prayer which are associated with pharisaical morality. The sentimentalization of the rules of the past is also present in that

there is a definite tradition associated with the behavior of this separatist community of ardent abolitionists. Each of these attributes--legalism, ritualism, traditionalism, and separation--is given by Ricoeur in The Symbolism of Evil as a characteristic of Phariseeism.⁹

The scrupulous moral conscience associated with such attitudes is often admirable, or would be admirable, if it were not associated with an additional trait which is difficult to keep from developing in a pharisaic environment: viz., hypocrisy. Seth Parton demonstrates these traits as he takes Manty, who is young, beautiful and ambivalently attractive to him, to the place in the country where Horace Norton had been tricked to appear by the fraudulent lure of a young female. Seth sought to redeem the place from its association with evil by bringing Manty and not committing sin. "Listen," he had said to Manty. "This is the test. I said to myself I will discover that spot the lustful boy defiled. That is it. I said to myself, if I can conduct her there, if there I can put behind me the promptings of evil and the tale of lubricity, if there she will pray--then I can know that there can be sanctification, and know that with it we may enter upon our joy." Forthwith, he commanded her to pray. The context clearly shows that Seth is wanting to establish a meaningful relationship with Manty, and she with him. However, the overall impact of the event brought total disaster to Manty. It destroyed her prayer life and confused her emotionally.

Shortly after the scene in the woods mentioned above, Manty's father died in Cincinnati. It is Seth who broke the news to her. She was shocked by his attack against her father: "Listen," he said, "you

have been deceived. I know it to be true, for Miles Jebb cannot lie. Your father was in Cincinnati for lust. He has consorted in adultery with a woman named Muller, whose husband yet lives and--."

He stood in cold and harsh judgment of her and her father. Ironically, Seth eventually married the same woman with whom Mr. Starr had committed adultery after the Civil War, and they established a profitable business in Chicago. But even more damaging to the pride of virtue demonstrated by the young Seth Parton is the confession he made to Manty years after the original rebuke in Manty Starr Sear's home.

"For what is done in the heart," he told her at that time, "'is done already,' he was saying, with the air of careful instruction, 'and if the deed is done in the heart it should be done in the flesh that the vileness of the heart may be confirmed. For only in vileness is the beginning, and therefore--.'" He fell to his knees and asked for her to spit on him and abuse him, because as it is now made clear, he had in fact lusted for her. "I will explain to you," he cried in anguish.

"Once I sought immortal perfection in moral life, for the Book says it is possible, and I told you that we two should seek it together for our final joy, but I did not know what I know now, that only in vileness may man begin to seek, and now to seek we must confirm what vileness has been enacted in my heart." At this point, the pride of virtue which had been Seth's has gone, and he is aware of the internal vileness which is his nature. In moral pride there is a denial in one's self of the moral weakness that is at the base of every finite person's being. The demonstration in Band of Angels of the sin found in the pride of virtue is strong.

Other examples from the same novel support this observation. As Manty recalled her days at Oberlin, she had occasion to think of Miss Hopewell, who she thought was mean. Then she corrects herself and says, "No, you had to say she failed by an excess of spiritual pride, and you would remember her in your prayers." This is a reference to the pride of virtue, which Niebuhr spoke of as the judgmental, pharisaic, moral self-righteousness. The pride of virtue is shown as characteristic of the Oberlin community. They believed that morality could be established and maintained by laws for behavior; however, the very acts of enforcing the laws became immoral. The incident revealing the fall of Mr. Taylor, the postmaster who had tricked Horace Nelson into the lubricious meeting with the female mentioned earlier, reinforces Warren's condemnation of the pride of virtue. Taylor had lectured on the cupidity of the flesh and had expelled Nelson from school, but later he himself was guilty of embezzling from a magazine and "wound up snugly in [a] young female's garret bed." Manty's narrative says the following about the incident:

It must have been an unsettling time at Oberlin. If anyone had been sanctified, it was Mr. Taylor, and if sanctification meant anything it meant that you might reach Christian perfection in this life, not, indeed, by freedom from temptation but by a sensibility so charged in favor of holiness that temptation might not prevail. How much Mr. Taylor's fate had to do with the falling away at Oberlin of the doctrine of sanctification, I do not know, but by my time the emphasis was on constant vigilance against sin rather than a yearning toward perfection in this life.¹⁰

However, the narrative identifies Seth Parton as wanting to return to the doctrine of sanctification in his sermon given upon his admission to the School of Theology. "It is," he said as he approached the

conclusion of that sermon, "the voice of God in the heart. Let not the world, nor the world's racket confound! Let not the sluggishness of blood, nor the horror of darkness, deceive! God were not God to deny possibility. And I affirm the possibility of the last joy." For Warren, such examples of moral pride are doomed to failure, because Seth Parton and the others such as Ashby Wyndham and Cass Mastern all come to the awareness that moral perfection is not a possibility. As Cass had said in All the King's Men, "man is never saved and damnation is ever at hand, O God and my Redeemer!" Certainly, moral pride is empty and vain, just as these religious characters and others had found. Everyone needs to be reminded, as Cass Mastern had written in his journal to remind himself "if pride is in me, of flesh or spirit, I may peruse these papers and know with shame what evil has been in me, for who knows what breeze may blow up the charred log and fan up flame again?"

The religious characters are not the only ones who are guilty of equating their value systems with those of God. Anne Stanton, for example, indicated in All the King's Men that Adam Stanton is proud of his views and puts his pride before the doing of good in the Medical Center. Given the nature of his conflict with the pragmatic politics of Willie Stark, I read her statement as an indictment of Adam for pride of virtue. Adam was overlooking the finitude of man and making his value system supreme and mistaking his standards for God's; therefore, whether the pride of virtue is like Ashby Wyndhams' "sinful pride in the Lord" or like Adam's, it is a serious moral evil present in virtually all of the novels in some form or another.

Murray Guilfort's dedication to the law and order during the trial of Angelo Passetto in Meet Me in the Green Glen is also an example of moral pride. It becomes clear when he is placed in the self-contradictory position of destroying or at least hiding evidence which could implicate Cassie Spottwood. His moral judgment was that she did not do it, so he imposed his judgment on the evidence and made his scruples law to the death of Angelo and ultimately his own suicide. Also, Leon Pinckney's refusal to cooperate with Brother Potts in Flood for the memorial service for the town could be read as an example of moral pride. Uncle Rosenzweig's pride in the law is a type of pride of virtue in Wilderness, as is Adam Rosenzweig's pride in freedom and his fighting for freedom. Though it may be pride of knowledge, Ikey Sumpter's pride, which did not allow him to see his identity with those around him in The Cave as a person who has paid a great price for his "ego satisfaction," is an example of moral pride as well, especially because of his failure to see his own weakness that he projected on others. Certainly Jeremiah Beaumont in World Enough and Time is guilty of moral pride when his own standards of justice are allowed to replace all common sense and legal definitions as he seeks to avenge Rachel's honor for his own "ego satisfaction," as Ikey Sumpter might call it. Finally, in Night Rider, Percy Munn's actions on behalf of the association and the entire association itself is guilty of the pride of virtue when they allow the good of the cause to replace all notions of justice under law as the standard for obtaining justice. Pride of virtue is a continual threat to the moral

well-being of mankind throughout the novels, for the religious and the nonreligious alike.

Spiritual Pride

"The third type, the pride of righteousness," Neibuhr said, "rises to a form of spiritual pride, which is at once a fourth type and yet not a specific form of pride at all but pride and self-glorification in its inclusive and quintessential form."¹¹ Spiritual pride is the ultimate form of moral pride in that it claims divine sanction for its partial standards. This level of pride might be indicated by the presence of the minister to offer prayer at the meeting of the association at the beginning of Night Rider; however, the evidence that the pride had raised to that level that early in the novel is very slight. "Brother Morgan, a Methodist preacher, had opened the rally with a prayer that this great occasion might serve in the end to glorify the goodness of God as well as to increase the prosperity of His children upon earth." Certainly the actions which gave life to the idea of the association, as indicated earlier in this study, indicate the threat of spiritual pride as man has a tendency to claim divine sanction for his actions.

It also is clear that Ashby Wyndham in At Heaven's Gate claimed divine sanction for his evangelistic preaching mission which claimed such victories as Pearle from the Bible sin of lust. But Ashby came to recognize that it was his own pride which led to the circumstances which culminated in Pearle changing one Bible sin for another: she killed the policeman. Ashby did what he did under the conviction

of the sanction of God; however, he came to recognize his pride for what it was, and he is repentant in jail at the end of the statement when he meets with Private Milton Porsum. Perhaps closely related to Ashby's pride is that of Slim Sarrett in the same novel, who possesses a pride, secular in nature, which raised itself to the level of the divine. He was the creator of a small band of unusual people which he controlled in a god-like way. He is an artist who created a fictitious autobiography to make his own life story reflect the inner nature he felt he possessed. He theorized about the nature of tragedy and talked of the need to be true to the self that is within, true to one's own nature. But he, too, is brought low. He represents the hypocrisy of the Pharisee, but without the external law. He claimed that one should be true to one's self; but as Jason Sweetwater affirmed, "He just didn't lie when he had to. For some purpose. He was a lie."

Also in At Heaven's Gate, spiritual pride is found in Jason Sweetwater's father. The Episcopal Bishop, according to his son, was not a liar, but he did tell stories that were not true. "He's got everything so mixed up, he thinks Jesus Christ was killed in Pickett's charge. He thinks the Virgin Mary was a Confederate spy in Washington and carried documents through the Federal lines done up in her petticoats." It is important that the Bishop himself does not claim divine sanction for the Confederacy; but in this indirect report, his son indicates that he did. Certainly, in Warren's novels, the institutions of the South are often presented as if they had divine sanction. The claiming of divine sanction for the perpetuation of the aristocracy, slavery and war represent this type of pride.

Jack Burden, as he recalls his earlier days with Willie Stark, has a parenthetical aside with Ellis Burden concerning the nature of God as the Fullness of Being. On either side of that introspection, Jack says, "I felt like God brooding on History." Jack has assumed the perspective of Willie Stark and came to believe that he could live outside of history, transcend it, observe it, know it and be untouched by it. The story of Jack Burden is the discovery that such pride, feeling oneself to be God, is erroneous and will bring nothing but misery. Jack was able to move "out the house and go into the convulsion of the world, out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time." Many attempts have been made to interpret this last observation. In connection with Niebuhr's understanding of pride, it might simply mean that what the Burdens have learned, at the price of their complacency, is to accept their finitude, their humanity, and the responsibility it implies. Earlier in the story, for example, in the incident of feeling like God referred to above, Jack had felt himself to be a transcendent observer of things, one to whom nothing ever happened; "But nothing happened to Jack Burden, for nothing ever happened to Jack Burden, who was invulnerable. Perhaps that was the curse of Jack Burden: he was invulnerable."

What Jack had to learn was the lesson his legal father eventually articulated for him, and he learned it also from Cass Mastern. Human limitation is always his, and he cannot transcend it and give his own actions the divine sanction implied by invulnerability. Essentially, it is the same lesson that Jeremiah Beaumont learned in World Enough and Time. There is an interesting parallel between Old Ellis Burden, who

really was not Jack's father, and Dr. Burnham, who was Jeremiah's mentor, but not his father. Burnham was aware of the mixed nature of man, just as Ellis Burden was. The sons eventually learn this from them, but only after a great deal of misery. I believe there is also a parallel between the Kingdom of God syndrome in the Replevin Party position for justice which exploited Jeremiah's idealism and the Willie Stark version of his mission, for Willie had once believed he was called of God. Early in his career he was not in touch with the world, but after he had been tricked by the politicians, he became his own sanction. Willie's hardbound pragmatism became a law unto itself, but it also became the source of the corruption in government which eventually contributed to his assassination.

Another aspect, referred to briefly above, is the notion that law itself is able to control or restrain evil. One of the implications given throughout the novels is that this is not true. The corruption in government, the involvement of men in the formulation of the law, will make it automatic that limitation and finitude are also a quality of their laws. "The freedom of man," Niebuhr maintains, "is such that he can make the keeping of the law the instrument of evil. He can screen motives by outward conformity to the law. . . . He can also use observance of the law as the vehicle of sinful pride."¹² This is precisely what happens in Meet Me in the Green Glen when Murray Guilfort uses the machinery of the law to wrongly convict Angelo Passetto and to place Cassie Killigrew Spottwood in a mental sanatorium. The operations are consciously legal, conforming to the letter of the law. Even the American Civil Liberties Union will not take up Angelo's

case after contacted by his attorney, Leroy Lancaster. Also, the trial of Jeremiah Beaumont in World Enough and Time has the same overall effect when it is viewed from the awareness that the witnesses who testified to the guilt of Jeremiah did so with lies. The truth was discovered by the lies. There are in this novel several discussions of the ironic fulfillment of truth by the use of falsehood. There are in the novels two types of falsehood that are discussed. One is the artistic falsehood. Through characters like Slim Sarrett and Yasha Jones, the idea of using art to arrive at truth is explored. There is a hint of pride in this when the truths so discovered are elevated to the position of the divine as it was in Sarrett's or Reverend Sweetwater's case in At Heaven's Gate. The other is the legal use of the lie as it is in the trials mentioned above. Human law is not a replacement for the Divine Law. The overall impact of Wilderness can be understood as exactly this. Uncle Rosenzweig's warnings about the delusion of the glory of men and the need to hold to the sanctity of the Law of God are implied very strongly in the climactic realization of Adam Rosenzweig.

In conclusion, it may be said that the novels of Robert Penn Warren do indeed present pride as a very real part of the structure of moral evil. The threat of pride is found in the very tendency of mankind to overestimate its place in the world and to forget its inherent limitations of contingency in the nature of the human being. Prides of power, knowledge, virtue and spirit are realities of human experience, and if one will realize it, he can be allowed to find the true meaning of his self as a being separate from God, but capable of love.

Sensuality: Self-Love

In addition to the human tendency to overestimate his ability or his importance in the forms of selfishness shown in his prides of power, knowledge, virtue, and spirit, people also have the tendency to indulge themselves in sensuality. Reinhold Niebuhr's definition of sensuality is significant for our understanding of Warren's concept of moral evil. "A provisional distinction must certainly be made," Niebuhr has said. "If selfishness is the destruction of life's harmony by the self's attempt to center life around itself, sensuality would seem to be the destruction of harmony within the self, by the self's undue identification of harmony and devotion to particular impulses within itself. The sins of sensuality, as expressed for instance in sexual license, gluttony, extravagance, drunkenness and abandonment to various forms of physical desire, have always been subject to a sharper and readier special disapproval than the more basic sin of self-love."¹³

The distinction between Pride and Self-love may be confusing to a degree because Niebuhr is not consistent in his use of the terms selfishness, self-ambition, self-love, and sensuality. For him, the basic human sin is pride, which is an expression of the freedom of man to make himself his Lord. It is precisely in this possibility that sin finds its root and its most fundamental expression. For him pride finds its expression in two general forms, selfishness and sensuality. The overlapping of these categories is apparent because they all rest in hubris. Pride and sensuality are both forms of self-love and are egoistical in nature. Man's fundamental sin then is what Ikey Sumpter

called "ego satisfaction," as cited in the previous section of this chapter; however, what we call sensuality is the more overt demonstrations of selfishness in the forms of self-indulgence. As indicated above, it is our tendency to be more judgmental of the outward and visible forms of moral evil. The outward actions of people that are obvious to us as self-indulgence are not as tolerable and are less admirable because of the ego-centricity they express. However, it should be understood that such actions as sexual license, extravagance, drunkenness and other forms of indulgent physical desire are not moral evil only because they are self-satisfying or even expressions of self-love. They are moral evil because these actions of self-indulgence are also the vehicle for abdication of human responsibility to oneself and others and are the source of pain and suffering for all concerned.

To return to the citation from the story of Munn Short given at the beginning of this chapter, his pride of power expressed in his ungrateful disposition and his sinful indulgence in sensuality in the forms of drunkenness, violence, robbery, and sexual license are recognized as morally evil not only because they are self-indulgent, but also because of their consequences of pain and suffering. Human meanness is more than just self-love, it is self-love that causes pain in others. Specifically, Short's self-love caused the death of Lottie Perk, the alienation and impotency of Mr. Perk in hatred and suffering. It also caused his own suffering, death of his body and, the worst of all, the death of his soul, his inner self. Frequently moral evil or sin rests in the relationship of a given action to three parties. To

the self who acts, it is the inner violence which abandons the inner man to the self-defeating fulfillment of his desire. It is, secondly, the outward violence of exploiting other people for the purpose of satisfying these selfish desires. Frequently, this is also the abandonment of the inner man to externals which these other parties represent. Finally, sin is rebellion against God and, therefore, is the violence of the self, for itself, against God's purposes. Often, sin is an expression of inner escape in which the actor tries to deny the existence of the claims God has on him. Short manifests all of these things in his brief autobiography to Jeremiah in the dungeon. His indulgence brought sub-human behavior which he described as "hog-gishness." This violence to himself and his potential was a part of his self-defeating moral evil. His exploitation of Lottie for his own lustful purposes and his pride at having done Perk a favor by fathering Lottie's child (unborn at her death) are examples of his violence toward others that is inherent in moral evil. Self-indulgence is usually at the expense of others. Short stole from others when they were drunk and defenseless. He fought for no reason other than the thrill of the violence. The third aspect, the rebellion against God and violence toward Him, is the reason for his alienation from God demonstrated in his guilt and inner death which were reconciled only upon his acknowledgement of God's claim upon him. Body dying was easy, Munn Short had said. But the hard part was carrying the burden that his evil brought him. It was, he says, Jesus who took the burden of that evil away. It was this last aspect of his evil that Short came to recognize, but it was the part he had to see before he could be freed from it to live the rest of his life in God's eyes.

The pattern developed in the tale of his life by Munn Short is typical of the pattern the moral evil demonstrated in the novels. On the basis of his prideful self-concept, Munn indulges himself in his physical desires and painful consequences follow. Further, Munn is brought to the point at which he recognizes his own responsibility for his moral evil. "Body-dyin was easy when I laid on the ground, but dyin every day when you walk in the sun, hit it hard, and I cried out fer the mercy," he said to Jeremiah. The mercy he found was in Jesus, and the mark of the curse that old Perk had put on him was washed away. "I found the way and the promise, and Jesus come in my heart," he continued. "He is hung on my heart lak a cow-bell and a cow-bell caint keep no secret. I move and I got to tell about Jesus, how he come. I know you ain't no believer, but" The movement from the sin to the confession of it and profession of faith in Jesus is the scheme followed by virtually all of the religious characters who learn how to live with their evil doings.

If there is a change in the way Warren treats this subject, it is that in the later novels he spends less time dealing with the less sophisticated Willie Proudfit, Ashby Wyndham, Munn Short type of country-simple, fundamental faithfuls. In Meet Me in the Green Glen, the hillbilly revival received only one paragraph or so in the unfolding story of Corinne and Leroy Lancaster. We know it still exists in the territory, but Warren does not concentrate on it as he did earlier. Likewise, Flood has no examples at all of the totally unsophisticated faithful. Wilderness has only Monmorency Pugh as an example, and he is a lapsarian. The Meyerhoffs might be Cabalists, but they are not

adequately developed to make this conclusion definite. Other than the Harricks and Mac Sumpter in The Cave and a few very minor characters, there are no characters who fit the type created in these simple men of faith. Moreover, even Mac Sumpter seems too well educated to be considered one of them. Certainly, the Scholarly Attorney and Cass Mastern in All the King's Men are not uneducated. Old man Stark, Willie's father, is perhaps close to them in education and culture, but he has not developed in the fulness nor in the pattern of these other men. Therefore, in Night Rider, At Heaven's Gate, and World Enough and Time Warren has most completely developed that pious convert from the hills. But it is abundantly significant that the other, more sophisticated religious characters follow the same general pattern. Even Adam Rosenzweig in Wilderness, follows it by his affirmation of his limitation in God, and he is a Jew. Leroy Lancaster follows it, and, like Jack Burden, he is a more secular character. Warren seems to be developing a psychological pattern of sin, guilt, and acknowledgment of responsibility which is uniform regardless of the faith of the character. As indicated in "Knowledge and the Image of Man," human life is understood to be "the individual's right to exist as himself, the right to the hazards and glories of trying to develop most fully as himself." His novels develop those hazards as the evil within and around him whether as metaphysical force or the evils he commits in pride and sensuality. Increasingly, this process of self-determination and self-knowledge is secularized in the novels. However, every soul is valuable, either in the sight of God or man, and the

story of every soul is the story of "its self-definition for good or evil, salvation or damnation."¹⁴

Sexual License

The evil in the sensuality expressed by the characters is found in the exploitation, the violence, and the withdrawal from responsibility which accompanies the inordinately turning to the mutable and the harmful. As Niebuhr suggests in his discussion of sensuality, sexual license is one of the primary symbols of sensuality to which Christians have responded since the time of the Apostles.¹⁵ Anyone with even a passing acquaintance with Warren's novels is aware of the central role sexual activity plays in the action. As one might expect, the relationship between a male and a female character is illustrated by the nature of their sexual activities.

The value of sexual intercourse as a symbol of interpersonal relationship is perhaps self-evident. It has been understood as a symbol of union and love which is deeply a part of the collective unconsciousness in the Western and Eastern worlds alike. However, in the West, there is a tendency to associate any form of intercourse with its abuses; normally in Warren, sexual intercourse is associated more with the difficulty of establishing meaningful relationships than it is with their success.

One of the principal examples among the religious characters is the adultery of Cass Mastern and Anabelle Trice in the embedded story in All the King's Men. The key event in Cass's discovery of the evil nature of man and his always being in danger of damnation is the

temptation and sin he experienced with the lovely Mrs. Duncan Trice. It is a massive symbol of the betrayal and perfidy to which a man may sink if he thoughtlessly seeks fulfillment of his desires. Because of this one act of sin, Cass learned that many innocent people suffered for his act. Duncan killed himself, and a totally innocent slave, Phoebe, was sold down the river into a dreadful life of misery. In this act, Warren demonstrates the self-defeat, externalization, and the escape from reality which all sinful acts of sensuality include. Ultimately, his sin led Cass to go to war and to seek the bullet that would kill him; but his sin is self-defeating in that instead of the pleasure he had sought, it brought pain and suffering to him and those around him. Cass himself confesses that in the act, he had fallen victim of the human flaw of attempting to define himself in another, rather than in God and His great Eye.

The third consequence which Cass experienced was his escape into his meditative existence for two years after he left Mrs. Trice at Lexington and returned to the plantation. He had been seriously injured trying to recover the slave sold down river. His condition is described as follows:

A couple of days later his wound infected, and for some time he lay in delirium between life and death. His recovery was slow, presumably retarded by what he termed in the journal his "will toward darkness." But his constitution was stronger than his will, and he recovered, to know himself as the "chief of sinners and a plague spot on the body of the human world." He would have committed suicide except for the fear of damnation for that act, for though "hopeless of Grace I yet clung to the hope of Grace." But sometimes the very fact of damnation because of suicide seemed to be the very reason for suicide: he had brought his friend, by that act, was eternally damned; therefore he, Cass Mastern, should, in justice insure his own damnation by the same act. "But the

Lord preserved me from self-slaughter for ends which are His and beyond my knowledge."¹⁶

After his recuperation and the two years of willess struggle to make it right, he escaped into the conscious efforts to be killed in war. All three of the existential problems of the sin as sensuality as presented by Niebuhr are present.

Freely and willfully Cass led the life which brought the temptation of the "sweetness of the flesh" to him. Cass tells of his succumbing to the temptation to taste the "sweetness." We have his record only after being convicted of his sin. "Thereupon," he says in climax of his recollection of the motives leading up to the event, "in the blindness of our mortal blood and in the appetite of our heart we performed the act." Repeatedly, in images of darkness and inevitability, they met and sinned repeatedly, often with others in the house who might discover them. This process became the escape from the prison of themselves into an ultimate, lustful concern outside of themselves.

In these sexual acts and those similarly demonstrated in all the other novels, the dehumanizing of the sexual partners is very evident. After the funeral of Duncan Trice, and Cass's paroxysm fear that it was a hoax to catch him in his sin, he, in an unarranged and inevitable meeting in the summerhouse in the garden, recorded, "I was perfectly cold, as of a mortal chill. And the coldness was the final horror of the act which we performed, as though two dolls should parody the shame and filth of man to make it doubly shameful." However, she told him that the event was a sign they should continue. But she told

him of the manner of Duncan's revelation of his awareness of their sin as Cass put on her wedding band which Duncan had removed from her hand the evening that he went to the study and shot himself. Impersonal sex is an escape into the mutable good of sexual intercourse. Whether it is Miss Christian and Mr. Munn in Night Rider or Sue Murdock and Jerry Calhoun (and others) in At Heaven's Gate, sexual intercourse is over and over again shown as a dehumanizing escape into human finitude which is uniformly self-defeating. None of these relationships, unless accompanied by a general spiritual conversion and renewal, is redeemable into meaningful human experience.

Ashby Wyndham in At Heaven's Gate had committed fornication with Marie. He had stopped drinking liquor, he succumbs to Bible lust. "It was my fault," he said, "she taken spot and had blemish laid on to her. It was pore human mans love, but love ain't nuthin if it ain't in God's eye. Ashby confesses freely that it was in selfishness and in lust that he sought his own satisfaction, but his lust led him to other sin. The child born from the sinful union eventually died, and he betrayed his brotherly obligation. The human love of which he speaks is described in terms of self-love: betrayal of others in selfishness, lust and greed. The homey religious character whose story is alternately told in a confession of guilt and responsibility is a perfect counterpoint to the other characters in the novel who are in a purgatory of lust at heaven's gate, exactly as Dante presented the lustful in the purgatory of the Divine Comedy. Some of them are purged, others are not; but the skillful treatment of the alienation,

finitude and perversion of the human condition in lust is redundant and final.

Another example, Isaac Sumpter in The Cave, became very involved with a beautiful, long-legged Jewess, Rachel Godstein. In the beginning, their love seemed to have some possibility. From their first meeting, he was "sick with desire." She was a former Radcliffe student home because of her father's health. Two months after their meeting, they were in the middle of a hot affair which is replete with copulation on nearly every page of its telling. However, the necessity of his past is demonstrated as the affair grew more definitive in its possibility for love. "The son of MacCarland Sumpter, by whose side night after night, he, a little boy and then a big boy, had knelt in prayer, he could not think of doing to the body of Goldie Goldstein those things which he was accustomed to do, without thinking of marriage. Not that he put it that way to himself," the narrative continues. "He thought of those things which he did to that body. Then he thought of marriage. There was a blankness between the thoughts, but something was in the blankness, not discernable but it was there."

As the relationship between Ikey and Goldie grew, she began to speak of it in terms of her own self-definition. In other words, she began to express the human flaw to define herself in another. Ikey, on the other hand, was filled with despair because he felt that he could not give this rich girl anything; he did not understand that she could want him simply because he was himself. "'Ikey, you gave me the only thing I want,' she paused, then: 'You gave me, me, Ikey. I

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wasn't ever myself before. You give myself to me, Ikey.'" Later in the same episode, she said, "I just want to try to think what loving you is, Ikey." By and large, Isaac Sumpter's life is one gross episode of sensuality after another. He is unable to be loved and unable to accept love. Even his father is plagued by the problem of how to love his son. In the episode which last presents Isaac in the novel, he is torn by the question of love, as he begins to feel the "terrible self-betrayal which love is." In his lostness within self-love expressed in sensuality, he is not able to view love in any way except betrayal.

He lost the love of Goldie because of a betrayal for which he refused to accept responsibility. One evening after a party at Goldie's studio, he drove Eustacia Pinckney Johnson home in the rain. In a passage of very impersonal sexual relationships, he takes her (perhaps more exactly, she takes him) in Goldie's small foreign car. He has a terrible night afterwards; but his inner argument is lost because he tells himself, "No, he hadn't caused any of that, and why-- for God's sake why?--had Goldie pushed him off that afternoon. . .?" The betrayal he felt was experienced when he sought intercourse that afternoon, but she refused. She did not want to be used as "some kind of Grade-A masturbation." From his impersonal lust with Goldie and the one-time indulgence with Eustacia, he was plunged into a numbing despair of drinking and carousing. He demonstrates again the self-destroying aspects of sensuality. He is selfish, crude and cruel.

Unable to reestablish a meaningful relationship with anyone Isaac returned to Johntown. He had been expelled from the university because of his immoral behavior. His efforts to escape were destroying

him. He stayed in Nashville until commencement to deceive his father, but he returned home an alienated, ego-centric young man, incapable of meaningful interpersonal relationships. And while Jo-Lea Bingham was running to tell the news of Jasper Harrick's accident in the cave, he saw her, and he "went sick with longing and deprivation."

While involved in the identity crises which he is experiencing living in his father's house, feeling his dislocation and isolation because no one else in the family has ever been named Isaac, he is called upon to enter the cave and search for Jasper. On the way to the cave, a significant introspection is given which relates to the role of sexual license in Warren's concept of moral evil.

Was it his fault that he had to be born in Johntown, (He thought to himself), got by a Bible-thumper out of some woman who, no doubt, was the kind would marry a Bible-thumper, and the Bible-thumper, no doubt, had had to work his way past eight or nine yards of the dry goods such a woman would swathe herself in and call a nightgown, and when he got there, he and his partner in the crime of begetting Little Ikey Sumpter had, no doubt, pretended they were doing something quite different from what they were doing, even pretending they were sound asleep so that everything were merely a guiltless and pleasureless somnambulism and--

No, he brought himself up, not somnambulism, for they hadn't been ambulating when they were working on Little Ikey. I would have to be somni--somni-what? Somnifornicating, you might say, and so Little Ikey, Little Ikey the Jew Boy, prize product of somniconception, was sort of first cousin to an Immaculate Conception, first cousin being probably as good as the Baptists could do in a place like Johntown.¹⁷

The only way Isaac was capable of understanding sexual relationships was in an impersonal and unmeaningful way. Earlier in the novel, through a stream of consciousness presentation of MacCarland Sumpter, it was revealed that Mac Sumpter loved his son very much. He wanted

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his son to redeem the circumstances of his marriage to Mary Tillyard, who died when Ikey was born.

MacCarland Sumpter had married Mary Tillyard because she was pregnant by Jack Harrick, and Jack would not marry her. They had lived together for eighteen years before she "ejected from her body the burden that was to be known as Isaac Sumpter." Her first pregnancy had been terminated by a miscarriage which was understood by Mac as an act of God fulfilling his prayers to spare Mary the shame of that "love child." Mac had lived for years with the sweet moan of her orgasm in his mind, but it was an orgasm brought about by Jack Harrick. "Yes," the narrative says, "he had heard that moan a million times. But he had never heard it uttered for him." Certainly in The Cave, the imagery of sexual license is vividly portrayed to symbolize the moral evil in sensuality. Over and over again it conveys the notions of human finitude and limitation, isolation and loneliness.

Jack Harrick, a devout layman of The Cave and Mac's prize convert, had been a wild sensualist in his youth. MacCarland Sumpter had taken upon himself to cover one of his sins of fornication by marrying Mary Tillyard in his place. His messianic role for Jack is highlighted when he declared over her weeping, "We can at least be what we are. We can offer our filth on the alter in God's name and the name of Truth." Jack had continued in his sensualist ways, until after Jasper had been born. In a life familiar with "dirty whores" and debauchery, the love of Cecila Hornby Harrick and the preaching of MacCarland Sumpter brought him to Jesus and the beginning of the human possibility he demonstrates at the end of the novel. The indirect

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reports of his sexual license are highlighted by the "clapp swapping amongst the nonintroduced" and the sexual connotations among the crowd that waited for the news of Jack's son's death or salvation. In the anxiety of the drama of Jasper's pain and destruction, the people wept, prayed, boozed, sung, fought and fornicated, because when Mac told them of Jasper's death, they had to prove they were alive.

The last example of sexual license is taken from Flood. Lettice Poindexter Tolliver had been married to Brad and had left him before she was converted to Catholicism. I believe she is the only practicing Catholic in the novels, and she is one of the most sensuous of the lot. I do not, however, believe that her becoming a worker in a Catholic old folks home is particularly significant beyond her finding a way that she could continue to live, after what she called the "wicked foolishness" with Brad. She had had a series of affairs and was a person well accustomed to the practices of sexual license. Her psychiatrist had called her a Puritan idealist. "Unfortunately," he told her, "your Puritan idealism does not square with your compulsive sexual rivalry with your mother."

In many instances, Lettice is portrayed as a young socialite, from a prominent family with a mother whose sexual conquests are infamous. As her name implies, her "shape" was conducive to sexual excitement and activity. Further, her name is related to the Latin word for Joy.¹⁸ Brad engages his memory in a play on her name, "One thing led to another. Lettuce to Lettice to Let's," He goes on to recall, "'Let's' she would say, and it would be all she would need to say, for he knew exactly--oh, precisely, precisely, as she used to be in the

habit of saying--what she meant." Returning briefly to the psychiatrist's reference to her mother, and she managed very well, and she confessed it often. Brad remembered as he thought of Fiddlersburg, a town in which all one could do on Sunday afternoon was "screw your wife." He remembered "her muted voice" as she "told about herself, about her heart, about her body, about her life, in her aphrodisiac of expiation and surrender." She had attempted to find meaning in her sexual license, but she had failed. Ironically, as her bitterness and resentment for her mother were once demonstrated, she said her mother was "a bitch in heat, forty-six years old and you sit there and hear her pant. It's enough to make you want to be a nun." It took many years of attempts to find meaning through sexual license to bring her to the fulfillment of that foreshadowed event. While she did not become a nun, she did become a worker in a Catholic home and foreswore the "wicked foolishness."

It is an understatement to say that Lettice and Brad had had an active sex life. It also is an understatement to say that their life together had not been particularly fulfilling. They had known each other physically, but that relationship had not brought them identity and self-knowledge. In the statements developed in All the King's Men by Ellis Burden and lived by Cass Mastern, Warren has demonstrated years before the impossibility of finding one's definition in someone else, and Warren demonstrates it again in Flood. Once when he awakened in the apartment and she was gone, Brad remembered rejecting her idea that they go to Mexico for a vacation so he could clear his mind to work better.

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Look here, I can read your mind, and the answer is no. For I'm not going to screw you, my pet, in any place I don't pay the rent on. Or the railroad fare to get there.

He wished to God she was here now. If she hadn't left so damned early to paint that picture, they could knock off a piece. Then he could forget things.

For at least as long as it took [sic].¹⁹

He tried to use sex as a way of escape from himself and his present. Brad also uses sex as an escape from the past when he took Leontine Pertle to the motel where he and Lettice had stayed a long time before, in order to "lay him a ghost." For Brad, his ritual of love and redemption in sexual intercourse with Lettice had not been successful, even though she had been "forgiving . . . in total indulgence, because she loved him."

The entire sexual life of Lettice Tolliver is presented indirectly through the memory of Brad. It is significant that there was love there, and he remembered it. Once while he had looked out of the window of the old house toward the penitentiary where Calvin Fiddler was to be an inmate, he saw the image of Lettice on a window pane and he recalls her love, and he is filled with sweetness. In the experienced calmness, he thought he was "discovering a buried self. It was the true self that would live forever." He was moved to write Lettice a love letter in which he spoke of her goodness, beauty, and love. Ironically, it was this letter composed just before they married that prompted her telling him of her love affairs in her past, especially the one with the Spanish Medievalist while Brad was fighting in the war. One of the many significant passages which convey the

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attitudes toward sexual license is a part of his reaction to that confession:

Bradwell Tolliver stood there and heard the words and felt like a man being tumbled and torn in surf too heavy for him. One feeling after another struck him and whirled him. There was the pure animal rage. There was the hurt vanity. There was the savage mirth that even as he stood there he should see on the table the letter telling of his new awareness of love and of human life in Time. There was the black desolation. There was the savage mirth that said that fucking is only fucking, rip off a piece right here and now and to hell with it. There was the anguished sense of some secret justice in the world, or at least a punishing logic, that said that this was all that could ever happen if you began with that leaf-hung peep show in Central Park. There was the impulse to knock her teeth out, anything to make her stop talking. There was the anger at her for being honest. There was the savage mirth that Brad Tolliver--bright old Brad--had been getting him a pair of round heels for a wife. There was the self-contempt in the fear that even now she held some power over him, even now in the gray unbeauty of that lifted face. There was the panic fear at the beauty of her suffering. There was the impulse to run out into the snow.

There was so much. And at the same time, there was so little, only a dreary diminishment, like age, like flannel-gray water draining slowly, with no sound, down the clogged drain of a bathtub. There was, finally, nothing.

For in one dimension of his being he was merely an observer of a charade. He saw the two figures fixed in that harsh light, the man standing in his overcoat with snow melting on his hat, the woman in the chair lifting that gray face. Nothing seemed real. He was not sure what might be the inner reality. Was there ever an inner reality.²⁰

He felt rage, hurt vanity, black desolation, anguish, anger, fear, self-contempt, impulses to violence, and to fight, and savage mirth (irony). In this one passage, I believe the typical Warrenesque hero is capsuled; and significantly, it is in a context of impersonal indulgence in sexual license, shown by the word fucking. Brad is the victim of her affair with someone else, she is the round heeled wife any man could lay. But it led him to a final nothingness and to the

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overwhelming question as to whether or not there is, in fact, an inner reality. At the end of the novel, he is still in the process of discovery, but he has found "There is no country but the heart"; there is, in other words, an inner reality. Further, his confrontations with sexual license with Lettice and others had led him to that conclusion. At the end, he is at the church service and Brother Potts is preaching; he is watching Leontine Purtle, the "stacked up" blind girl he took to the motel to help him lay a ghost; and he is reading Lettice's letter. He has responded very negatively to her letter up to the very end when the weight of the circumstances began to come through.

He had been forced to remember how things were, and among them was his parting intercourse with Lettice as he was taking her to the train in Nashville so she could go to Reno for the divorce.

Lettice asked him to stop on the way and make love just once more so she could remember how things had been before the bad began. In a sardonic trance, he got a blanket out of the trunk and went back into a grassy glade by a stream, under a cedar bluff. It was very confused and numb and strange, but in the end like a plunging into the black center of things, where nothing equaled nothing.

Whether the episode was a victory or a defeat, he was not quite sure."²¹

Impersonal sex is never a clear symbol of victory or defeat to those who engage in it, especially, those in the novels who have not achieved an osmosis of being. However, as in the case with Brad Tolliver, it may become a means for finding one's self. In the "revelen and carryen on" and the "foolishness and foulness" referred to by the other religious from Night Rider through Flood, sexual license is a dominate symbol for the inability of people to find a proper definition

of themselves, and their attempts to do so outside of themselves. Cass Mastern, Isaac Sumpter, and Lettice Poindexter Tolliver are only a few of the several examples of those in the novels who made the effort to define themselves in another, and that effort is symbolized by their intercourse. In Meet Me in the Green Glen the same symbolism is perpetuated by Angelo Passetto and Cassie Spottwood's frantic search for meaning in the nothingness and mutability of sex. In the end, it is doomed to failure, just as Sunderland was not able to find meaning in his sensuous life, and he ends up a paralyzed invalid. Certainly, as a form of sensuality, sexual license is (1) self-destroying, (2) an effort to escape the prison of the self in externals, and (3) in fantasy from, a subconscious form of inner escape.

Love

Jack Burden in All the King's Men had identified love as one of the reasons for man to sin. We have seen several instances of this already in the treatment of sexual license as an expression of moral evil. However, love not necessarily expressed in sexual intercourse may also be a source for evil. Some of the aspects of evil associated with love are treated as nonmoral evil or suffering, but there are also sources of pain and harm caused by love. It is often a motive to seek other forms of indulgence.

As mentioned above, Lettice loved Brad, but the relationship could not stand the strain of the other sensual actions associated with their relationship. The escape from self in the drinking and

indulgence were only a part of the total weakness of their relationship. Their love itself was a "ferocious flash into blackness," and it was a shield to reality. According to Seth Parton in Band of Angels, while kindness is seductive, love must scourge, in the name of Truth, and that scourge will produce pain. The pain he caused Manty was to come with his rebuke and condemnation of her father in the power of his spiritual pride. In addition, it was also to come when he came into her life again with the demonstration of lust that was a reflection of the weakness inherent in his prideful self-ambition. Even though the book does not detail any sexual license between Idell and Seth, it is implied.

Sweetwater and Sue Murdock in At Heaven's Gate were guilty of sexual license. She was pregnant by him, but he would not divorce his first wife to marry Sue because he would not betray his principles to the prostitution he felt marriage to be. "It was worse because in the other kind of prostitution, a body was sold for something, and he believed that marriage was a system by which love was sold for something. And he believed in love." Their sexual license had caused or contributed to the pain and suffering they were to experience because of Jason Sweetwater's pride. Sue thought his love was a betrayal, and her attitude is much like that of Isaac Sumpter's mentioned above.

Finally, it is in the words of Ashby Wyndham that we are given our concluding observation on love and lust. Recalling the incident cited earlier that he had to marry Marie because he had made her pregnant, it is significant to note the degree to which their love

had grown, and it is unsurpassed in all of the novels, and equalled only by that of Corinne and Leroy Lancaster, or Lucy Stark's love for Willie. "A man don't love no woman true," he say, "but in his pore man way may be it can learn him to love the Lord. It is lak a school and the young un goes to school and they learns him to spell and if he studies on it he gits so he can read the Lords blessed word. Oh, Marie, I said to her you learned me to spell, and I see it clear." The only problem is that Ashby did not say these words until Marie was dead and near to smelling.

Money

A third cause for moral evil cited by Jack Burden while preparing to do his research on Judge Irwin was money. When he addressed his inquiry to the old Scholarly Attorney, he cried that he did not want to remember about Judge Irwin in All the King's Men and those dead days of the past. "The sinful man I was," he told his legal son, "who reached for vanity and corruption is dead. If I sin now it is in weakness and not in will. I have put away foulness." In the discussion associated with Burden's enquiry, the old man used the terms sin, vanity, corruption, foolishness and foulness frequently. He touches the pride and sensuality and the motives which bring them forth. Finally, however, Jack had to go elsewhere for his information. Ellis Burden would not give it to him. But he found it eventually, and it was money that had made Irwin bend his standards. Jack has properly deduced that ambition, love, money or fear would get him something on Irwin, and it did.

Money, in the form of the prices for their tobacco, was the motive behind the formation of the association for which Percy Munn became a night rider, but money was not a major factor in his own actions in Night Rider. His actions are more accounted for under ambition, as indicated earlier. Money, however, does play an interesting counterpoint in the story. Munn had a two-thousand dollar reward on his head while he stayed at Proudfit's place. Willie was hard put for funds, but he did not turn in Munn. Willie and Sylvestus with the women worked very hard for very little, but Willie would not turn in Munn for mere money. As the story he told to Munn had revealed, he had seen his time of greed and "a-gitten and a-begettin, and not knowen the marrow." He had seen the evils done under the influence of likker and the sensual indulgences associated with immorality while he was living down on the plains. But it is Proudfit's loyalty to Munn that is counterpointed against the greed of those who sold out, such as Senator Tolliver had done. Ironically, Proudfit's loyalty is the final cause for Munn to leave and find Tolliver who was a bad man, among bad men.

Among the religious characters in At Heaven's Gate, Private Milt Porsum had sold out to the money interests of the Bogan Murdock financial empire. In the end, he confessed the evil he had done, with the realization that he could not undo that evil. He admitted being the puppet of the big money interests as Jason Sweetwater had charged that he was while Jason organized the workers for the strike which cost Ashby his job. In Porsum the two worlds of the exploited hill people and the big money interests were combined. He was the victim of the

best symbol in the novel for the affect of money--Mr. Murdock himself and his family as they corrupted all they touched. The lust and the vanity and the appeals to pride were great; and the evil associated with the money interest was considerable. Porsum's contact with Ashby Wyndham reminded him of his debt to the common people, and he kept it by confessing just as Ashby had done. In these two hill men, the two stories and the two worlds combine, and evil rising out of greed and lust are at the very basis of it because Porsum learned Ashby's story from the attempt of a Mr. Tucker to bribe him.

Isaac Sumpter of The Cave also has significant connection with money and the greed and violence associated with it. His effort to exploit the cave and the tragedy of Jasper's accident were horrible evils. However, the appeal of money as such is much more an appeal to the pride of self-ambition than to the self-love of sensuality. Ikey wanted fame and fortune, but fame meant more to him than fortune. However, his consciousness of money is demonstrated by the problem of working with the wealth associated with the Goldstein family. He was jealous, and envy motivated some of his hatreds. He is the most materialistically minded of all the religious characters, but throughout Warren's novels, the greed we see is more often associated with pride than with sensuality.

It is among the nonreligious characters that money, as such, really becomes a motive. In World Enough and Time, there is a wholesale betrayal of truth for the sake of bribes and possible financial gain from the trial. Tobias Sears' stand against Thingism in Band of Angels is another frontal attack on the evils associated with money;

but in the end, Tobias is ready to join the materialists. Aaron Blaustein in Wilderness was grateful to be persecuted as a rich man rather than as a Jew. In Wilderness also, Adam Rosenzweig found that the sutlers would exploit the fortunes of war for profit, but he went along to get to the places of battle. He also confronted grave robbers who would not leave the sanctity of the dead for money. Negroes for whose freedom the war was being fought were humiliated for money in cheap games to entertain the other soldiers. Adam Rosenzweig saw the prostitution of Molly the Mutton, for money and lust. Other than perhaps At Heaven's Gate, Wilderness is developed around the themes of greed and its misery more than any of the other novels, even though greed has its portion of influence in each of them.

Conclusion

Robert Penn Warren consistently presents the nature of moral evil in the terms easily associated with pride and sensuality. In pride the concept of ambition is easily understood in terms of the pride of power, knowledge, morality and spirit. Sensuality is chiefly associated with sexual imagery, specifically impersonal sexual intercourse and the efforts of the characters to find self-knowledge or definition by identification with some other person. The abuses of love indicated by these improper sexual relationships are analogous to Dante's purgatory in which lust and pride are the extremes of the abuses of love: inordinate love on one hand and bad love on the other. Consistent with Warren's interest in self and self-knowledge and building upon his concept of metaphysical evil, it is possible to understand Warren's concept of evil in these terms.

Moral Evil and Responsibility

As was indicated in the first chapter, moral evil implies the presence of a basis for responsibility before blame or accountability may justly be demanded. There is among the critics of Warren's novels a general tendency to insist that the overall implications of the novels indicate an affirmation of a high degree of responsibility for moral actions on the part of the characters in the novels. One such critic, Clark, in the article on the religious implications of some of Warren's novels, declares that Warren would not allow anyone to escape his responsibility for his actions by laying claim to an easy determinism.²² Of course, the real possibility of a genuine responsibility is, I believe, totally dependent upon there being genuine freedom.

In Wilderness, after Adam Rosenzweig escaped from the Elmyra, his flight was unopposed. He was totally unnoticed. "Nobody, not anybody, had tried to stop him. Nobody even yelled after him. He had escaped, he was free, and in that moment freedom felt completely devalued. Nobody, nobody in the world, cared what he did. He could go or come, like a leaf in the eddy of a stream, like a mote of dust in the wind. This was America." An unopposed freedom is a devalued freedom; I believe that the novels consistently present this type of concept of freedom. When our actions are resisted, when we are under restraint, be it of the law, history, or necessity, we really have a kind of appreciated freedom because it has value when we are allowed to function. As indicated in the first chapter, we have a responsibility in the sense of obligation and accountability, as implied by

the notion of liability. By our position in life, we have responsibility to perform in accordance with that place, and secondly we have a responsibility to honestly stand by the actions and face the consequences which necessarily follow from them.

I find no consistent evidence in the novels to support a notion of complete freedom in the sense that Adam Rosenzweig spoke of. In fact, the story in that novel is a tale showing that he is not free in that sense. He is limited, he is finite, he has a position, he has a place, he has responsibility. Hugh Miller and Jack Burden are discussing the nature of things near the end of All the King's Men, and Mr. Miller, the former Attorney General under Willie Stark, observed, "History is blind, but man is not," with respect to the moral neutrality of history. Man has responsibility of time and place. This excludes a totally gratuitous act as a justifiable means for defining ourselves. Even though the nature of things does not leave us the luxury of being arbitrary, we do have a range of choices open to us, and we are able to select from them which way we should go. For example, Isaac Sumpter did not have to have intercourse with Eustacia Johnson in Rachel's car on that rainy night. He could have said no, but he refused to take his responsibility seriously, and he did not behave properly with respect to either his position, as Rachel's lover, nor according to his nature for he allowed the circumstances to dominate him.

An example of the abdication of responsibility even when claiming to accept it is demonstrated by Bogan Murdock at the end of At Heaven's Gate. He attempts to explain his compromising position to

the television audience by explaining that he is a victim of untrustworthy associates and friends instead of the victimizer the novel has shown him to be. He claims to have been betrayed instead of betraying. Perhaps no other of Warren's novels demonstrates any better the notion that the moral consequences of our actions are not judged with the easiness of earthy consequences, as MacCarland Sumpter acknowledged as the nature of God's judgment in The Cave.

Human responsibility in the face of the threat of hubris is to acknowledge the limitations of finitude and accept the role which man is to have as a partial and inadequate judge. Perhaps this is what Cass Mastern in All the King's Men meant when he said that his brother Gilbert was the only type of man who could survive in this world because he was able by keeping flexible and contingent, to do a little justice in the face of the great injustice which is so much a part of the world, because such a stance will allow him to maintain a degree of innocence in an attitude of strength.

With respect to the threat of self-definition in the self-destroying externals or the false internals of sensuality, a similar need for responsible action is called for. One cannot deny the claims that the flesh has upon him. Seth Parton, Ashby Wyndham, Munn Short, and virtually all of the others together demonstrate that man is body and spirit, not just spirit. It is the sensual aspect of man which is to keep him in touch with the world. By living a life of sensible moderation, one can avoid the efforts of definition in the externals, so that definition of the self, in the terms of the qualities of the self, is possible. Distortion of the self is to destroy the self,

which is inner death. Depending upon one's philosophical orientation, Warren declared each soul valuable in either God's or man's eyes, but valuable nonetheless. Moral evil makes it abundantly clear that the threat of the loss of self is ever at hand, and one must be prepared to deal with it responsibly.

CHAPTER III

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Warren, World Enough and Time, p. 420.
- ²Niebuhr, I, 188.
- ³Warren, The Cave, p. 140.
- ⁴Niebuhr, I, 194, 195.
- ⁵Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics (New York, 1965), p. 66.
- ⁶Niebuhr, I, 198.
- ⁷Robert Penn Warren, Wilderness (New York, 1961), pp. 299, 300.
- ⁸Niebuhr, I, 199.
- ⁹Ricoeur, Symbolism of Evil, p. 138.
- ¹⁰Robert Penn Warren, Band of Angels (New York, 1955), p. 46.
- ¹¹Niebuhr, I, 188.
- ¹²Niebuhr, II, 40.
- ¹³Niebuhr, I, 228.
- ¹⁴Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," pp. 237, 238.
- ¹⁵Niebuhr, I, 228, passim.
- ¹⁶Warren, All the King's Men, p. 193.
- ¹⁷Warren, The Cave, p. 191.
- ¹⁸Basil Cottle, The Penguin Dictionary of Surnames (Baltimore, 1967), s.v.
- ¹⁹Warren, Flood, p. 134.

²⁰Warren, Flood, p. 204. Italics supplied.

²¹Warren, Flood, p. 335.

²²Clark, p. 76.

CHAPTER IV

NONMORAL EVIL

When the knock came at the front door--the knock of Nick Pappy-- Brother Sumpter had already risen from his chair, about to go. He had done the things he could do. He had asked Jack Harrick how he was today, he had told how they were broadening the highway over toward Athens, he had told how Mr. Broadus had sold the hundred head of shorthorns he had brought in to feed for Chicago, he had read a chapter in the Bible, he had prayed. He had sat in his chair in the silence that sometimes, in its sense of communion, had nourished his soul by the thought that even through pain and sorrow, life drew to its glory.¹

The glory of God is indexed in the creation of evil, the Scholarly Attorney had said in All the King's Men; and further, the index of man's glory is creating some good out of the stuff he had to work with, providing he has God's help and sacred wisdom. A few years later, Robert Penn Warren has MacCarland Sumpter indicate while attempting to minister to a man who is dying of cancer that there is a communion of silence, through pain and sorrow, and that life was heading toward a glorious climax. However, the context for the above quotation reveals that Brother Sumpter could not be in communion with Jack that day because he was distracted by his own pain of isolation. As Mac confesses his distress to Jack, he does not seem to understand this intrusion into his own private world of pain. As he acknowledges his own sin of questioning God's will, Mac wants to trade places with Jack because his distress is so great. He pleads with Jack to pray for him, because he believes that in Jack's pain God might listen to his prayer.

Jack was about ready to consent when a new pain is thrust upon him:
Your Son is Lost In the Cave.

What is the purpose of pain and suffering? Why must men endure so much in a world like this? What has God got in mind for men, that he should have made this a place of woe? Throughout the nine novels of this study, we are confronted page after page with a world in which pain and suffering are part of real experience. Every attempt to avoid it or to eradicate it from human experience is doomed to failure and a reduplication of pain for the efforts. As noted in the first chapter, Warren's concentrated creative effort has been given to the presentation of this very real problem for mankind. We have at this point surveyed metaphysical evil, or its possibility in a world such as Warren's, and have concluded that it does exist, if nowhere else, in the limitation of human nature in contingent finitude and in the force of history upon us. Then we noticed briefly the moral evil which grows from this nature in the forms of pride and sensuality. Now it is time to inquire into the nature and power of the pain and suffering which is thrust upon men from outside of themselves, for which they often have no direct personal responsibility, but must accept and endure.

There is a communion of suffering in the novels. All men suffer, and eventually, those who suffer the most are those who deny that they suffer at all. After refusing Private Porsum's charitable offer for assistance to get out of jail, Ashby Wyndham said, "It is the world. . . . I put out my hand and laid hold on the world one time, but it ain't nuthin. Lord put pore man in this world and give it him

and said, it is yoren, take it and eat and know your emptiness. I knowed it. And I know it now." All men share in this world of sin and pain, feeding on its slop. Not everyone in the novels is totally aware of the way things are in Warren's world, but if they are to survive, they have to learn, and share in the suffering. It is, Mac Sumpter says in The Cave, the Christians' lot to suffer together. Sumpter's friends, Celia and Jack Harrick, are among the best, if not the very best, examples of this principle demonstrated in the novels. They love each other dearly and they are bound together by the pain of disease, the reality of death in their son, and the hope of the future in their younger son, Monty, and his girlfriend Jo-Lea Bingham. They all struggle together to find the meaning of their suffering.

While preaching at the opening of the cave as the crowd of curiosity seekers gathers, Mac Sumpter tries to make some Bible sense out of the tragedy. Jasper is suffering to remind us of the burden of our sin, which is taken away by the death of another. He is suffering to show that it is not evil for a man to love his son. He is suffering because someone has to go into the ground, to find the inner meaning of things. These thoughts and others are exchanged by the characters as they act out the drama that is their own definition. At times, it is even hoped that nothing had happened, because "If nothing had happened, then there would be no suffering and terror under the stone." And at another point, contempt is expressed for what might be "the ignorance that set value on pain and pleasure." However, I believe the last page contains the answer. The overwhelming question of the novels has to do with finding a reason for living, and in The Cave, Jack

Harrick says, "I reckon living is just learning how to do. . . . And dying . . . --It's just learning how to live." This is Jack's way of creating good--by learning how to live and how to die.

Learning to deal with evil is essential because the world is the way it is. However, it is not easy, and those who believe in God, in particular, have trouble with the notion of evil. Brother Potts, in Flood, said, "I know the world is God's will, but I can't get used to some things." Mrs. Pugh in Wilderness, who may still be a believer, even though her husband is not, told Adam Rosenzweig, "Ain't everything in the world a man kin help." At the death of their two-year-old son, Monmorencey Pugh could not pray, because the world was no place for praying; however, he could not cry either, because the world was no place for crying. Finite men just does not know. Pugh had tried to do the will of Jesus and not kill in war, but he had to kill to stay out of the war. He just couldn't help it. Further, in World Enough and Time, Rachel Jordan Beaumont told Munn Short that she was not a religious woman because she had not seen any working of God's will in this world, and she grieved for it. Further, she denied the Lord by saying, "Where was the Lawd to let the world be so?" Moreover, man not only cannot help the way the world is, but he also cannot know the time for things to happen, either. As Ashby noted in At Heaven's Gate when their son was born prematurely, "pore man never knows the time." But regardless of the attempts to answer these questions, acceptance of the world as it is, is the key to survival in the novels. Seth Parton had to abandon his ideals, and Percival Skrogg, Willie

Stark and Adam Stanton were all killed because their notions did not conform to the reality of the world.

The nature of man lends itself to our suffering. Even love is a source of pain for people. For example, Leroy Lancaster in Meet Me in the Green Glen suffers from the thought that his wife loves him because he is a failure and she is able to foretell the disaster that has become the hallmark of his life. He is flooded by despair and pain at the thought of returning home to her sweet tenderness. He even thinks that her love for him might be an expression of pity, and the thought emasculated him. The ability to remember the beauty and love of the former Lettice Poindexter is a source of pain for Brad Tolliver in Flood. In addition, while staying with the Proudfits in Night Rider, Percy Munn clings desperately to the recollections of happiness with the pain of current emptiness, which gave him a pervasive numbness, a kind of paralysis. The impending destruction of Fiddlersburg and his own cancer made Brother Potts appear preoccupied and distracted in pain. The comment about Jeremiah Beaumont and the pretrail, public attention given him is applicable to them in principle. "But if Jeremiah Beaumont was a chip on the tide," the narrator says, "he was a thinking and suffering chip, and his dearest thought was that he was not a chip at all but a mariner who had made calculations of tides and a decision for his course. His calculation was that in the very confusion of the currents lay his hope, for once he had struck the right one he might ride it through and thread past all dangers to his peace." Of course, we know that he did not calculate correctly and the last notation he made in his journal was, "Was all for nought?" Man's

impotency causes him pain. Therefore, there are things that go on that he cannot help, such as Leroy Lancaster being overwhelmed with an internal pain that was too deep for him to find relief by anything he had done.

In the following consideration of nonmoral evil, the discussion takes the form of a topical presentation of death, disease, failure, madness, and the interpenetration of things. These items have been selected because they are the categories of suffering experienced by the religious characters in the novels, and they are also representative of the types of suffering confronted by all of the characters so that this study may be considered representative of all the characters of the novels.

Death: The Law of Nature

So one of the men dies on the ground. His death is a natural event. Under the given circumstances the heart stops beating. Then the chemistry in that certain mass of flesh alters. Underground in the dark, the hair and nails and beard grow a little longer. Then that growth stops, and the disintegrating chemistry proceeds according to its natural law. That death, which we regard as perfectly silly and unnecessary, is the most real content of the event.²

Thus it is that Jeremiah Beaumont viewed death, early in the book, before he had been convicted of the murder of Cassius Fort. To him at this point, death was merely the absence of life, a negative, no reality in itself. The negative quality of suffering or evil is often used to say that it has no reality in itself, but Jeremiah came to believe differently. After Munn Short had told his tale of double death to Jeremiah, "death became real to him." He began to view death

as a thing in itself and something that is with everyone in the midst of life. "It is horrible to think," he says, "that the poor body of man is so blind that it does not know life from death or light from dark, or love from hate, and spends and spills itself always in such ignorant spasm. . . . I lay there and shuddered that all man's life should be but the twisting and contortion of a cat hung up strangling in a string for sport of boys." He has heard that a hanged man will erect his male part and spill his seed, and he sees it in images of shadow and darkness mixed with flashes of light. The dread of death and the threat it holds for man is clear.

By and large, Warren's symbols for death are traditional and few are surprising. One of the more remarkable, used at least twice, is the act of digging up the dead. In Wilderness the act of exhumation of the war dead is a graphic portrayal of the irreverence of war and the greed of the camp followers. In a nearly comic scene, reminiscent of the grave yard scene in Hamlet, Dr. Sulgrave and his group of non-descript men rearrange the dead; they claim to be embalmers and patriots as they portray the death, gore and dehumanizing motive behind the battle scene. Again, Adan Rosenzweig is given insight into how to fight for freedom--rob graves. Moreover, exhumation is used for another purpose in Flood. While waiting for the entire town to be destroyed and relocated as much as possible, one of the priority items is the moving of the cemetery. As he sits in the cemetery during the final church service, Brad points out that many of the great, great grandparents are being thought of for the first time by their successful relatives who forsook Fiddlersburg a long time ago. Brad has had his

parents moved, but he as yet has not been able to locate the apparently unmarked grave of Issie Goldfarb, the Jewish friend of his youth. In the cemetery, appropriately, the last of the great memories of Brad are raised by the sermon of Brother Potts and the letter from Lettice Poindexter. Amidst the images of flood and dreams, vulnerability and foolishness, the mind cannot be kept from acknowledging the very real presence of human finitude. The lonesomeness of the cemetery, the solitary observer who is isolated from the crowd, illustrates perfectly the limitation Brad must experience if he is to find the human necessity.

In contrast to those at the church service in Fiddlersburg, the morticians in All the King's Men who prepared Judge Irwin for burial attempted to make it appear as though nothing had happened. "I left the dead man under the grass of the mortician's fancy," Jack Burden declared, "which spared all tender sensibilities the sight of raw earth and proclaimed that nothing whatsoever had happened and veiled, as it were, all significance of life and death." In other words, try as we might we cannot hide death, if we want to know the significance of life. In Night Rider, Percy Munn's consciousness of death is very typical of the Warren central characters. "Death grew in you like the leaves on the trees in spring, gentle and tender and unobtrusive, and then, in the moment of knowledge, was already luxuriant, full-blown, blotting out the familiar objects. If not the small pain in the side, some word you spoke, some careless gesture, some momentary concession to vanity, some burst of pity, or some trivial decision--that was the

bud, the leaf swelling toward recognition." Dying is a part of life, part of the process of being.

In addition, there is more than one type of death. The body-dying and the dying when one walks in the sun mentioned by Munn Short in World Enough and Time as he told the Beaumonts of his conversion, first demonstrates the awareness of the death of the soul during life, which is worse than just body-dying. In the eighth novel, Flood, Warren again used the concept of two kinds of dying: spiritual and physical. The destruction of Fiddlersburg has placed Mother Fiddler in a race with the two kinds of death. In harmony with the notions considered under the mixed nature of man, there are two types of death. The whole man stands under the threat of dying.

With burial grounds in disrepair and fathers wishing sons deep, deep-seated psychological aspects of death are dealt with in some of the novels. In The Cave, both MacCarland Sumpter and Jack Harrick confess that they want their sons to die. Mac also confesses that he wanted Jasper dead because he was Jack's son, because of an inner twinge of vengeance for the spoiling of Mary Tillyard's virginity which forty years before had caused Mac to marry her and take Jack's shame to himself. His human limitations as a "man of God" are graphically portrayed in his fear of death, his alienation from God and his frenzied prayer life. Further, Jack Harrick is aware, by the end of the novel, that his whole life, the myth that had been created by the community concerning him, did not prove anything about the quality of his death. Before the novel is over, only Jack and Celia Harrick have come to terms with the life-in-death, death-in-life dichotomy.

Even the young die and few are allowed to live. In fact, young children are conspicuously absent from Warren's novels to any significant degree. The young suffer from the sin of their elders, and they are a source of suffering for the elders. The only genuinely youthful character is the brief attention paid to the young Amantha Starr during most of the first chapter of Band of Angels. However, the story is being told by the older Amantha Starr Sears as she sorts through her youth for the key to her identity. Other than that, all the children of the novels are late adolescent or young adult. Usually, the infants do not live, or have not lived; and when the stories are told, the children are already dead. For example, Ashby and Marie Wyndham in At Heaven's Gate have a young boy who does not live long; because he was a premature and sickly child, his death is understood by Ashby as a judgment upon their sin. Similarly, Mr. and Mrs. Monmorency Pugh in Wilderness had a son who was two years old when he died. However, he was dead before they entered the narrative. The child's death is understood in some way to be related to the father's inability to pray or cry. It is significant that Jack Harrick in The Cave is unable to pray for Jasper, and MacCarland Sumpter has difficulty praying for his son as well. The death of the children or, as in Ikey Sumpter's case, the alienation of the child is closely related to events which could be understood as punishment for sin. From the other side, the children typically have difficulty relating to their parents, and the parents are usually quite elderly or nearly retired. Warren writes normally about the middle aged group of characters who are

between childhood and old age. He is in nearly every sense of the world an adult writer.

Related to the death of children is the problem of the still-born child or the miscarriage. Lettice Poindexter in Flood and Rachel Beaumont in World Enough and Time are two of the women who are not able to bear children. Rachel even steals a child that its mother would gladly let her have, but the child's presence in the story is so brief that beyond the function of demonstrating Rachel's insanity, and the depravity of the GranBosse, it serves no real purpose. Also, in Flood, a minor character, Miss Pettifew had buried the premature fetus in a jar in her yard. She is discovered digging it up to move it before the impending flooding of Fiddlersburg. The natural abortion had taken her baby from her, and her unknown lover. The death of Fiddlersburg was causing the digging up of all kinds of ghosts in the people's pasts. In Meet Me in the Green Glen, the Black woman, Arlita, says that she wishes Angelo were born dead rather than to get mixed up with her daughter. Sue Murdock in At Heaven's Gate also says that she would rather be dead than be like her mother. Generally, I believe that the symbol of the stillborn child is saying that the child is better off having been born dead. It is now saved the pain and suffering of this world. There is, however, one baby born who is alive and well at the end of the novel--the son of Corinne and Leroy Lancaster in Meet Me in the Green Glen. They are the only couple in all of Warren's novels to both come to the end of the novel with an optimistic frame of reference, each other, and a child. Perhaps an elder Warren is getting more optimistic for the children of the land.

Death is also the end of change and the perpetuation of loneliness. While contemplating the "wisdom which is resignation" and contemplating the inner self, "he thought of night coming on," the narrative says of Adam Rosenzweig, in Wilderness. "He thought of the loneliness of tonight, this first night on the ground. This, he thought was the moment when the dead must first feel truly alone. This, he thought, was the moment when the dead must first feel truly alone. This was the moment when the dead, in loneliness, feel the first stirrings of the long penance of decay. This was the moment when the dead realize the truth: This is it, it will never be different." This is compared to the safety Ashby Wyndham feels in At Heaven's Gate for his parents because they have died in bed and his mother is safe in Jesus, but his father was lost. The death bed is a finality. However, before death things could be different. On his death bed, Willie Stark in All the King's Men said that he had to believe that things could have been different from what they were. Man does control his destiny to a degree, within his natural limitations, until death; but after death, he has no control. "Warren's Osmosis requires acceptance of one's annihilation. . . ," Stranberg has said. "But if the price of osmosis is high, meaning death for the conscious ego, the rewards are also high, meaning a kind of immortality through the ministration of that shadow self."³ Further, I must say that I have found nothing in Warren's novels to require the changing of this statement, except that the characters who have the fundamental faith--Willie Proudfit, and the others--will look to a time of reward or condemnation in Jesus.

The fear of death includes the fear of the possibility of judgment or discovery of evil, and neither the universality of death nor the likelihood of annihilation removes that fear.⁴ "Death has a positive significance," Berdyaev has said, "but at the same time it is the most terrible and the only evil. Every kind of evil in the last resort means death. Murder, hatred, malice, depravity, vengeance, are death and seeds of death. Death is at the bottom of every evil passion. Pride, greed, ambition are deadly in their results. There is no other evil in the world except death and killing. Death is the evil result of sin. . . . Death is a denial of eternity and therein lies its ontological evil, its hostility to existence, its striving to reduce creation to non-being."⁵ This threat of non-being in annihilation for all is evident in the death scenes in the novels. I have selected only one which I consider very typical. When Murray Guilfort in Meet Me in the Green Glen is dying at his own hand from an overdose of pills, his last flashes of consciousness are "the terror of discovery: they would know, they would find out" about the things of Cassie Spottwood's he had put in the safe which could implicate her in the murder of her husband. However, as he is slipping further and further into death, the terror is fading too, "as he sank deeper, sinking into truth, into truth that was himself, whatever his self was, as into joy, sinking there at last." The novel is not clear as to whether this is the joy of annihilation or some other.

One of the characters upon whom this study has concentrated sought death at the hand of another because he did not have the courage or the irreverence to take his own life. Cass Mastern joined the army

and would not kill in order to find the bullet that would kill him. He sought this form of justice because he had been responsible for the death of his best friend. Mr. Duncan Trice had shot himself after the discovern of the adulterous affair between Mastern and Mrs. Trice. In All the King's Men, Cass Mastern laments his being unable to commit suicide in order to guarantee his condemnation. So he sought vicarious suicide, and threw himself upon the grace of God. "'I shall die,' he wrote in the journal, 'and shall be spared the end and last bitterness of war. I have lived to do no man good, and have seen others suffer for my sin. I do not question the Justice of God, that others have suffered for my sin, for it may be that only by the suffering of the innocent does God affirm that men are brothers, and brothers in His Holy Name.'" We will have to judge whether he is dying in the Lord, in harmony with the view of a Munn Short, who says in World Enough and Time "anguish and moan is of living time, not dyin." Whether Cass is in moan or in rejoicing is a judgment I will make in favor of the rejoicing. To his death he has done nothing for the glory of man, he humbly claims. That remains to be seen in the judgment, a Munn Short or a Willie Proudfit might say. But he does have trust in both the justice and the grace of God, and that is no small thing to have for the rejoicing, if the testimony of these characters has any coherent message at all.

Perhaps the mourning of Cass Mastern, because he asks to be remembered without grief, is like that of Ashby Wyndham for his dear wife Marie, before he succumbs completely to his sinful pride in the Lord. True mourning is only in God, as Ashby has said in At Heaven's

Gate, "To mourn in God and of His Will is a kind of sweetness. It is gittin closter to them as is dead than ever you was them livin and drawin breath. It is a gift God give, and I give praise." I believe that Ashby and Mastern are saying substantially the same thing. By the grace and mercy of God there is a union in the common guilt of man, which we share in by the suffering of the innocent and the mercy of the Everlasting. Ironically, perhaps, I believe this harmonizes with the concluding thoughts of Adam Rosenzweig as he contemplated the dead in the ground in the chapter of the exhumation in Wilderness. He sat there and "thought of the living, who did not have peace." There is a peace for the dead in Warren's novels, whether it is a peace in God or in Annihilation, and remember, according to Jack Burden in All the King's Men, God and Nothingness have a lot in common if you look them straight in the face.

Finally, death is frequently symbolized in terms of corruption and decay. The dark colors of the scenes, the relative infrequency of bright daylight scenes, and similar effects all support the general tone of death and gloom in the novels. By and large, the novels are not optimistic, and the atmosphere of the stories helps to develop the concentration on the dark side of life. One example of decay I believe, is sufficient because they are so common and so much alike in the novels. When Marie Wyndham died it was in the heat of August. As they floated down river, they were going through the bog country that lay low around the river, and there was not a decent place to bury Mrs. Wyndham. Therefore, they moved slowly down river in the oppressive heat, and the pestulence. Two days later they purchased some cheap

lumber for a coffin, and "we put her in the ground where there was a church and Christian folks was standing there."

Disease and Deformity

The suffering of illness has long been associated with the concept of nonmoral evil.

"There's a hell of a lot of sick people," [Adam] said glumly, "but I don't see--"
 "Pain is evil," [Jack] said, cheerfully.
 "Pain is an evil," [Adam] said, "but it is not evil--it is not evil in itself," and took a step toward me, looking at me, like an enemy.
 "That's the kind of question I don't debate when I've got the toothache," [Jack] retorted, "but the fact remains that you are the way you are. And the Boss--" [Jack] delicately emphasized the word Boss--"knows it. He knows what you want. He knows your weakness, pal. You want to do good, and he is going to let you do good in wholesale lots."⁶

There are philosophical positions which argue against the reality of physical and emotional pain caused by disease and deformity, but Robert Penn Warren does not present them in his novels. In harmony with his general position of insisting upon the taking of evil seriously, his novels are populated with many characters who suffer from illness and paralysis or crippling disease of some kind.

The first disease of interest is the fever which Willie Proudfit confronted during his escape to the mountain hideaway with the Indians in Night Rider. He had left the reveling and prowling of the plains to go to the mountains where he found peace and a time to think through his life. After five years of having his ease and not having to do and strive as he had used to, he took sick. "The fever come. Hit taken me, and I said, 'Willie Proudfit, you gonna die.'

That's what I said, and the words was in my head lak a bell. Then hit come to me, how other men was dead, and they taken hit the best they could and the bitterness, and I said, 'Willie Proudfit, what air man kin do, you kin do.' But the fever come again, and I said, 'You gonna die, and in a fer country!'" Willie reports that the Indians did what they could administering black and bitter herbs and so forth to him and finally placing him in the medicine house to take out the evil. During his time of fever he was in delirious dreams, and his experience is interpreted by him to mean two specific things. First, it taught him more about the will of the Lord. "Ain't no man knows," Willie said, "what the Lord's done marked out fer him. And many's the pore weakid man done looked on the face of blessedness, bare-eyed, and ne'er knowed hit by name. Lak a blind man a-liften his face to the sun, and not knowen." Second, he saw the dream which called him back home, to Kentuck, where he found his wife of his dream, just as it was given to him in his sleep. In this instance, the fever furnished the crisis situation which took Willie out of a place he probably would not have left had he not "had" to. He was able to function as the ministering angel to Percy, because he had had the fever. Adelle was his young and loving wife, because he had had the fever. Good came out of the evil.

The second disease of concern here is cancer. Two of the religious characters are inflicted with it. Jack Harrick in The Cave and Brother Potts in Flood are victims of this universal symbol for extremely dangerous and very bad evil. This outside infection or this inner growth, whatever it might be, feeds on the very thing it is

consuming, the bodies of these two Christian men. Jack Harrick's story is an encounter with evil through his having such a terrible disease, because his task is to adjust to his condition and learn how to live and how to die. After the turmoil of his circumstances, he does learn to take his pills, and he returns to the guitar to begin to make his own song. His pain is bearable because he has learned how to live by drawing on his resources. Among these resources is his belief in God, which he blasphemously has suggested should change as the truth of the situation changes. He is not as alone and isolated as some of the characters in the novel(s), but he is not an open person either except with his very small group of friends. He bears and endures the physical and emotional pain inflicted upon him by his condition.

Brother Potts is in a similar situation. His greatest desire is to send the people away from Fiddlersburg knowing that their lives have been blessed, that they have come to some good end. He is a pathetic person--alienated both by his profession and by his disease. He has already lost one arm, and he is dying. Brad Tolliver concentrates upon him as a central symbol for the lonesomeness he wants to present in his movie. Potts is always preoccupied with the pain and distraction which his spiritual and physical burdens place upon him. He demonstrates the finitude of being, and he generally succeeds in avoiding condemnations for moral evil. His relationship to Pretty Boy in prison, when he tried to get the Black murderer to pray, might be interpreted as an example of spiritual pride, but I do not think it may be properly so read. The farewell service represents a genuine climax in his life. He has had three operations and is not believed

by the community to have much time to live before cancer of the bone kills him.

Another illness or diseased condition which is perhaps related to cancer or fever or both is the pus and boils. It is used in the Cass Mastern story in All the King's Men as a metaphor; "Though the boil has come to a head and has burst, yet must the pus flow." Symbol of the inner infection which must be taken out before the healing is completed, the boil and its pus represent the moral and spiritual decay caused by war and other evils. As a physical condition, the pus appears in Wilderness in the chapter at the military cemetery. Young Sull, one of the group of exhumers, was once saved from a swollen throat because Doc had sucked out the pus with a tube, at the risk of his own life.

Old age is another symbol of disease and deformity, even though there are not very many aged people in the novels. To Anne Stanton the Scholarly Attorney looks ill, and at the end he is feeble and aged. His eyes are bad, and he cannot do his own writing. He can talk only for short periods at a time. The deformity he suffers from is merely old age, crippled by sacrificial living. In a sense he is an unusual character merely because he gets old. Like Dr. Burnham in World Enough and Time, he is suffering from years of work and strain. Not many of Warren's people are brought to old age. Mrs. Jordan in World Enough and Time also succumbs to old age and a generally ornery disposition. Rachel is not sad when she dies; in fact, she is glad to be rid of her. In Night Rider, Senator Tolliver is ill and bedridden. Being immobile and helpless, his "son" Percy is not able to kill him,

and Munn ministers to his need before leaving. The role of the deformity of old age emphasizes Senator Tolliver's view that all life is a compromise with the ideal. The last scene demonstrates this, as Percy compromises and does not kill him. Also, Tsanoff in the Nature of Evil has stressed that the problem of evil essentially arises from conflicts between the ideal and the real.⁷ Tolliver's miserable life demonstrates it well. He betrays the cause for personal gain and makes the notion of compromise seem more like selling out.

In addition, there are emotional cripples such as Jerry Calhoun and physical cripples like Rosemary Murphy in At Heaven's Gate. Jerry's Uncle Lew has a clubfoot, and Duckfoot Blake suffers from bad feet. At one point in the story, Milt Porsum stares like a paralytic whose desperate plea cannot be articulated. These characters foreshadow the condition of Sunderland Spottwood in Meet Me in the Green Glen whose stroke has him bedridden and paralyzed for twelve years. Now unable to move, he cannot speak. Sunderland was a wild, wicked young man who was an exploiter extraordinary. He drank and fornicated in a way to rival Jack Harrick in The Cave, but he did not become a Christian. He remains vulgar and offensive to the very end. Ironically, as a cripple, he is not any more alienated or isolated from his fellows than he had been before. He is a graphic illustration of moral paralysis. Further, the other exploiters may be read as emotional cripples, because they are not able to effectively relate to other people or new environments.

A major character who has a birth defect, Adam Rosenzweig in Wilderness, is born with a clubfoot for which he has to wear a special

boot. The boot itself becomes a "red badge of courage" for him, in that it was because of the boot that he eventually does kill a Rebel soldier and participate in the war for freedom. He has been ridiculed and alienated because of the mark of his birth, the heritage that his father left him; however, he is no more handicapped by it than he was by his father's ideological heritage in his fighting for freedom. In other words, the physical defect is a symbol of the spiritual defect or limitation he received from Leopold the liberator.

In Flood we have several important disabilities. Most of them are related to Brad Tolliver. He has a war wounded knee which gives him difficulty from time to time, and he is shot by Calvin Fiddler after Cal broke out of prison while Yasha Jones was in town. But at the end of the novel, we are told that his recovery from that temporary injury should be complete. Also, Lettice is an emotional cripple. She is seeing a psychiatrist, but she is not afraid to discuss it in public. Once when Brad was obviously uncomfortable about it, she said, "Afraid somebody will spot you out with a leper, huh?" The crippling and deformity of the human form is carried to its height in this novel in old sheriff Purtle, the father of Leontine Purtle, Brad's motel mate during his return to lay ghosts in Fiddlersburg. She is beautifully built, and she was born blind. At the Church service at the end, she pushes her father to the service in a wheel chair because of his paralysis. They become symbols of the dislocation approaching the citizens of Fiddlersburg. While she can find her way around her home town, she will be literally lost in a strange place,

and she will not be able to care for her father because of the burden of her own handicap.

One more item, in addition to Sunderland Spottwood from Meet Me in the Green Glen, is the bifocal eye glasses of Leroy Lancaster and Murray Guilfort. Because of the emphasis upon illusion, truth, dream and vision, the need to aid the natural organ of vision is significant. Bifocals not only help the wearer to see, they also shield the wearer from observation by outsiders; they are genuine symbols of private vision. For example, because of Leroy's bifocals, Corrine cannot see that Leroy is unable to keep his eyes off her very generous breasts while they are courting. He remains hidden because of his glasses, and he is able to see things more clearly because he has them. The ambiguous use of the glasses symbolizes the ambiguity of our own knowledge.

It is ironic that the quotation beginning this section appears in the middle of Jack Burden's offer to Adam from Willie for the position of director for the Medical Center. It is the very doing of good represented by that medical center which is the evil which undoes the two principles in the offer. Men suffer greatly by disease and deformity, but even the human efforts to do away with nonmoral evil can become sources for suffering. It is as if twisted, deformed efforts to achieve good will be diseased or deformed to some degree: often fatally.

Failure and Fear

One of the very important aspects of nonmoral evil is associated with failure. Failure in turn is related to frustrations and fear. These are internal and psychological forms of suffering which one may experience and no one else may be aware that the pain is present. "There is nothing in us more deeply rooted and less perceptible than the feeling of some essential failure," Cioran has noted. "It is everyone's secret. . . . The remarkable thing is that most people don't even suspect that they experience this feeling. . . . The strength of a being resides in his inability to know how alone he is. A blessed ignorance, thanks to which he can bustle about and act."⁸ Frustration is a result of the failure to reach an aim or an intention, and in many systems of ethics this in itself constitutes a major type of evil. If we behave so as to avoid pain, then the avoidance of frustration is paramount. In many respects it is an individual's ability to rebound from a failure that is the genuine measure of his stability as an individual.

In All the King's Men, Cass Mastern states the Warren ideal to avoid the human flaw of attempting to define oneself in another. Significantly, Jack Burden was the first one to confront it consciously, and he was the first to fail. He had to lay aside the journal of Cass Mastern. Internally, Jack speculates as to the reasons why that Jack Burden, back then, could not understand the journal. He had not seen the world in a piece the way Cass had; to him, it was fragmented and an accumulation of items. He did not, perhaps, see anything in

relationship to anything else. Also, "he was afraid to understand for what might be understood there was a reproach to him." Typically, failure in the novels is shown in the threat of failure of self-knowledge. If there is a character in Warren's novels who has the potential for failure in self-knowledge it is Jack Burden. The failure is shown in alienation and fragmentation. As Jack is described in the novel, he is a divided and alienated, isolated individual, suffering from the principal disease of his time, all time: personal fragmentation. In this state of frustration and fragmentation, he had to fail.

In one of the important metaphors in the "modern time" novels, the car, Jack is described as follows:

There is nothing more alone than being in a car at night in the rain. I was in the car. And I was glad of it. Between one point on the map and another point on the map, there was the being alone in the car in the rain. They say you are not you except in terms of relation to other people. If there aren't any other people there wouldn't be any you because what you do, which is what you are, only has meaning in relation to other people. That is a very comforting thought when you are in the car in the rain at night alone, for then you aren't you, and not being you or anything, you can really lie back and get some rest. It is a vacation from being you. There is only the flow of the motor under your foot spinning that frail thread of sound out of its metal gut like a spider, that filament, that nexus, which isn't really there, between the you which you have just left in one place and the you which you will be when you get to the other place.

You ought to invite those two you's to the same party, some time. Or you might have a family reunion for all the you's with barbeque under the trees. It would be amusing to know what they would say to each other.⁹

It is the failure to achieve genuine self-knowledge which marks many of Warren's people. It is such a failure that makes it a crime to have been yourself, as Jeremiah Beaumont found in World Enough and Time. It is also the nature of the indictment that Brad Tolliver

makes of the whole city of Fiddlersburg: the crime of having existed. It is the frustration of life and the fear of failure that is characteristic of all life in the novels.

The failure which Ashby Wyndham experiences is the failure to be true to the Christian humility and unworldliness. In At Heaven's Gate, his spiritual pride has caused him extreme pain and the suffering of separation from God without identifying himself in the creation of good. Instead, his pride in the Lord is sinful. There is a terror of failure in every enterprise, and the risks are genuine and frightful. It is the terror that Jack Harrick spoke of in The Cave when he woke in the dark not knowing who he was.

Seth Parton fails to achieve his possibility of sanctified joy. He sought it with Manty during their Oberlin school days. His failure is highlighted by his inability to identify his goals after the civil war is over and his terror of a position contradictory to his earlier Christian ethics. Band of Angels has several similar failures. Hamish Bond and Tobias Sears are both caught in the circular terror ascribed to Tobias when he described the overrun of Blacks into an area as they are escaping from terror into terror, like an inorganic mass, moving over one another.

A special brand of failure is realized by Leroy Lancaster before he has an opportunity to complete his process of self-knowledge. In Meet Me in the Green Glen, he has the fearful sense of Corinne's being clairvoyant because he feels she can tell when he comes home that he has failed to obtain freedom for Angelo Passetto. To make matters worse, their sexual relationship has broken down because he

fears that she is awarding herself in her sweetness to him as a reward for his failure. Feeling that he is followed by an odor of failure that emanates from him, Leroy did not want to go home. This sense of failure brings Leroy to the crisis moment that culminates in his realization that he has been blaspheming against himself. It is only by this experience that he is able to feel that he can, and in fact, must go home again. The evil of failure is made very real in this one, remarkable character in this latest novel; and he is able to overcome the threat of the destiny he had perceived for himself.

At one point in Flood, the central character, Brad Tolliver, is having a genuine crisis in which

Brad Tolliver saw Brother Pinckney [the Black minister] stand at the top of the wide steps, staring into distance, and then descend the stairs. His heart was, suddenly, filled with a dry, angry envy of that man. He wanted to be Leon Pinckney. He wanted to be Pretty Boy [a Black prisoner]. He wanted to be any nigger. For he yearned for the simplicity of purpose, the integrity of life, the purity of heart, even if the purity was the purity of hate, that a nigger must have.

That would be, at least, something.¹⁰

Knowing what we know about Warren's novels, we can tell that Brad is heading for a heteronomous failure if he maintains this feeling. He will repeat the error of Cass Mastern expressed earlier in this section. What Brad eventually learns because of the influence of the religious characters--Lettice Poindexter, Brother Potts, and Leon Pinckney--is that he has to learn to trust the inner necessity that is the human necessity in order to discover that inner country of the heart which is every individual, himself. It is that which every man owes himself, the being true to himself, which is his own definition. As Private

Porsum told Mr. Murdock in At Heaven's Gate, "A man owes himself something, Bogan." Specifically, it is being true to himself and his heritage that Private Porsum has in mind when he gives Murdock a copy of his statement of his involvement with the corporation's illegal financial dealings. He owes himself his being true to himself.

We also know that when Ikey Sumpter declares that all he has to do was to be rational, as he did in The Cave, he is heading for the failure he experienced. The attempt to be totally rational is doomed to frustration in Warren's quest for self-knowledge. Ikey's suffering is predictable and necessary, given the nature of man and the nature of the world. Ikey's associate in the exploitation of the cave disaster, Nick Pappy, declares that "a man ought to have something." What he forgets is that he is headed for failure as long as he wants something external to himself, such as his nice yellow, Cadillac convertible.

Another man who is taken in the terror of his impending failure is Adam Rosenzweig in Wilderness. In typical Warren style, Adam is wrapped in internal monolog:

He thought how short his own life had been. He thought of the swift emptiness of his time. It was, he thought, like wind. He thought suddenly, with a strange unspecified despair, of all he had not had.

He had never had his arms around a woman. He had never had a friend to talk with about the way life was. He had never had money in his pocket to buy the respect of the world. He had never, he thought sadly, been sure that he had found Truth. With a sweet yearning that seemed ready to break his heart, he thought how a man has to have something in order to be ready to die.¹¹

At the end of the novel, Adam has obtained a new heart and is ready to come out of the wilderness. He achieves the inward namelessness which is required for self-fulfillment. It is very important to note that the things Adam has not had are the things the people who have had them must give up before they can achieve the self-knowledge. He has no possessions to forswear before he can journey inward to the country of the heart to discover himself there. He is right, a man has to have something in order to be ready to die. Now he has it, but he does not have those things for which he was yearning.

The last example of the suffering related to terror and failure is George, the paralyzed aerialist adopted by Ellis Burden in All the King's Men. In Chapter Five, we see an example of the Christian charity of the Scholarly Attorney who gave the insight into the nature of God, man and evil. This aerialist was the man who got hanged. One day, with the rope around his neck, he froze, he could not jump.

"He was completely paralyzed," [the older Burden] repeated, ignoring my wit. "Through no physical cause--if--" he paused--"anything ever comes to pass from a physical cause. For the physical world, though it exists and its existence cannot be denied without blasphemy, is never cause, it is only result, only symptom, it is the clay under the thumb of the potter and we--" He stopped, the gleam which had started up fitfully in the pale eyes flickered out, the hands which had lifted to gesticulate sank. He leaned above the gas plate and stirred the soup. He resumed, "The trouble was here," and he laid a finger to his own forehead. "It was his spirit. Spirit is always cause--I tell you--" He stopped, shook his head, and peered at me before he said sadly, "But you do not understand."¹²

George is partially recuperated now, but he is still a young boy, an infant, mentally. The suffering of her terror is complete. His fear

of something that might happen is so great that it drove his sanity completely from him. The incident is significant not only because it tells us about the old man, but also because it shows the spiritual causes of suffering. George is completely disoriented, dislocated as a person solely from spiritual or psychological causes, if the old man is right. It is the spirit in Warren's novels which is generally the cause of the fears, frustrations, failures and terrors so frequently shown. The terror of what might be, or what could have been, is real in the novels.

Madness

Madness is very closely related to failure and fear. Arising from the improper mental or sensational awareness of the individuals with respect to their own experience and/or their relationship to others, madness is an explicit form of suffering relatively common in the novels. As H. D. Herring suggests,

Warren has portrayed characters facing the dissolution of order and sense and reality, the components upon which the sane world is based. However, because his writing has emphasized always the individual's need of a secure knowledge of himself in his world, madness, the radical disorientation of the person that destroys the reality and the meaning of his existence, poses the most corrosive threat to the establishment of the self in Warren's novels and short stories. Conceived as one of the important metaphors of the failure of the individual to clap together the diverse components of himself into a unified being, madness illuminates the interpretation of individual novels and allows insight into the meaning of the fiction as a whole.¹³

In this present study, madness is considered through some examples of withdrawal, dreams and hallucinations, persecution, and numbing of perceptions as they relate to the religious characters. These

categories were adopted from Simmon's article on "Adam's Lobectomy Operation and the meaning of All the King's Men." ¹⁴

There certainly are instances of severe madness in the novels, as Herring's adequate and up-to-date article cited above has demonstrated. The purpose here is to indicate that there is a correlation between the characteristics of schizophrenia and the behavior of Warren's characters. However, other than Percival Skrogg and Isaac Sumpter, the religious characters do not adequately demonstrate the qualities of madness to allow a generalization other than that the religious characters do not generally demonstrate schizophrenic behavior. Warren's religious characters are among the more normal ones of the entire group. This is not to say that they do not have emotional problems. For example, Lettice Poindexter was under treatment by a psychiatrist until her conversion, but the total disregard she speaks of for her body causes some to question the sanity implied by her becoming a Catholic, literally slaving away in an old folks home in Chicago, and allowing that beautiful, well cared for sex machine body to go up to 170 pounds. However, her one dream would not really qualify as hallucinations, and she is a better integrated person at the end of the book than at any time during it.

According to direct statements in World Enough and Time, Percival Skrogg developed a reputation for madness which the people understood to be a good and wise madness. He became a curiosity piece for the intellectuals of Lexington. In his withdrawal, he is an alienated and increasingly isolated individual. While he apparently remained active in the political activities of his party, he withdrew more and

more and became more alienated from others. Second, the dreams and hallucinations which he experienced have more reality than the external world. Only the ideas in his head were real to him. His political involvement caused persecution; for example, the first time that Jeremiah met him was at an election day event in which he forced the fight by his own activities. His numbing misery is illustrated in his hiding away in his hot stuffy office listening for the people who were, he thought, coming after him. Certainly he fits the pattern for madness.

Whether or not Ikey Sumpter is understood to be mad depends upon the reading of his last episode of The Cave. He is in flight; his withdrawal to New York is clearly an attempt to escape his home and the ties with his past. He is in isolation, and he certainly is alienated. There are certain dream-like qualities about the descriptions of his leaving for New York. He is numb and his perceptions are blurred, and he is in misery. He does apparently have dream fantasies, if not hallucinations, about Goldie Goldstein. He also feels persecuted as a Jew because of his name, even though he is not. Madness would explain his immoral or amoral exploitation of the life of Jasper Harrick and the emotions of those close to him. From his first appearance, there is no question about his alienation from his father. His ability to identify with the bird of Keat's ode is indicative of his desire for escape. Even his loss of himself in sensual license is indicative of his isolation and alienation. He simply is not able to integrate his experiences within himself. His suffering is the suffering of madness.

The withdrawal stage of madness is reflected in the development of increased isolation and alienation. Willie Proudfit could be said to have such a withdrawal when he went for five years into the mountains and lived a quite peaceful life removed from all the cares of the outside world. This characteristic is symptomatic of madness only when accompanied with other characteristics. In a fever Willie has the hallucination or dream in which he saw the image of Adelle whom he was to marry. Willie does not meet the criteria for madness; however, Percy Munn, who comes to stay with him, does. He is withdrawn, even further than he has to be, into isolation and keeps in hiding because he is pursued for a murder he did not commit. However, it is not until the end of his stay with Proudfits, when he is caught in a pervasive numbness, that he is moved to go out and seek to kill Senator Tolliver. At the end, his perceptions are numbed; he is alienated and persecuted; in addition, he has very unusual dreams in which it appears that his separation from his family causes him to lose any touch with order, sense and reality. He has lost a sense of the future. The disintegration of his perceptions in mixed images and blurred visions of emptiness indicate that he is losing touch with reality. Mr. Munn is going mad, and his trust to kill Tolliver is the act of a mad man.

In the last novel, the religious characters do not experience these qualities of madness; however, Mrs. Cassie Spottwood does. She has been in and out of the sanatorium much of her adult life. For example, she is taken out of the sanatorium in order to care for her husband after his stroke. Her withdrawal is demonstrated in her life

style on the old farm. She has lived alone for twelve years with a paralyzed, invalid, in an old, decaying, increasingly less livable place. Her difficulties of perception are demonstrated from the beginning of the novel. She is unable to tell the real from the imaginery. As she and Angelo begin to lose themselves in their sexual fantasies, she becomes more and more out of touch with reality. When Angelo begins to show interest in Charlene, Sunderland Spottwood's illegitimate daughter by the Black woman, Arlita, she cannot mentally bear it.

Her escape into hallucinations is typical of her withdrawal from reality. There certainly is no question at the end of the novel when Leroy Lancaster, Cy Grinder, and Murray Guilfort visit her that she has created an illusion of love and happiness that has no basis in fact and is a cover for her actually having murdered Sunderland. By the time she has Cy take her to the governor and the prison in unsuccessful attempts to stop Angelo's execution, she is well within the grips of madness. The world she has created gives her comfort and protection of the horror she did not want to remember. Such examples of illusion as escapes from reality and the suffering related to it are frequent in the novels.

Interpenetration of Things

Cass Mastern lived for a few years and in that time he learned that the world is all of one piece. He learned that the world is like an enormous spider web and if you touch it, however lightly, at any point, the vibration ripples to the remotest perimeter and the drowsy spider feels the tingle and is drowsy no more but springs out to fling the gossamer coils about you who have touched the web and then inject the black, numbing poison under your hide. It does not matter whether or not you meant to brush the web of things. Your happy foot or your gay

wing may have brushed it ever so lightly, but what happens always happens and there is the spider, bearded black and with his great faceted eyes glittering like mirrors in the sun, or like God's eye, and the fangs dripping.¹⁵

Even though there are only three of the novels which make specific mention of the spider web metaphor, it is quite generally understood that Warren's world view rests upon the notion that all things are ultimately related. As the image suggests, if one aspect of life is disturbed by anyone, tremors are set up which will affect everyone else to some degree. The risk of experience in this life is that the spider, the symbol for the threat of evil in the world, with its poison dripping fangs will come forth and eventually will get whoever is responsible for the tremor, and several who are not.

Another interesting aspect of the metaphor is that the offense does not have to be great, only a light touch will do it; further, the touch can be given during one of the lighter moments; he would have us believe that one is never safe, damnation is always at hand. Once is all that is necessary. ". . . All of these things-- the death of my friend, the betrayal of Pheobe, the suffering and rage and great change of the woman I had loved--all had come from my single act of sin and perfidy, as the boughs from the bole and the leaves from the bough. Or to figure the matter differently, it was as though the vibration set up in the whole fabric of the world by my act had spread infinitely and with ever-increasing power and no man could know the end. I did not put it into words in such fashion, but I stood there shaken by a tempest of feeling." Certainly this statement affirms the belief in the interpenetration of things: the fabric of

the world, the spider web, or what Maggie Tolliver Fiddler in Flood called "the crazy tied-togetherness of things." Maggie had purchased a marriage manual and had a copy of Fanny Hill. Her husband had seen them and had hastily concluded that some infidelity was going on between his wife and some man. In response to this development, after the trial, she says "I sat there and thought that there was something worse even than being that gosling on the pond and feeling that first sudden illogical grab of that snapping turtle under the black water. The thing worse was to feel what I felt sitting there on the floor--not the blankness, the illogicality, no--the crazy tied-togetherness of things." Earlier she had said, "I began to get the feeling that everybody was caught in some sort of web, you might say."

The essential thing to keep in mind with respect to this metaphor is that the touching of the web does not have to be close to the spider in order to bring him out, and the one who gets bitten is not necessarily the one who touched the web. Cass had seen others suffer for his sin, and he did not question the wisdom and justice of God for it. However, he did attempt to redeem the situation with the notion that the suffering of the innocent created a community of sufferers in God's Name. While Cass holds to the possibility of there being some innocent parties, the general tendency of Warren's work is more in agreement with Mr. Budd, the warden at the Fiddlersburg Penitentiary in Flood, "There are no innocent men." Cass does mention a common guilt: "Men shall come together, yet," he said, "and die in the common guilt of man and in the guilt that sent them hither from

far places and distant firesides." The fact of the stories is that people do suffer for the actions of others.

Being born is a risk, the crime of existence has been discussed in this study already, but there is more to the problem of suffering than just being born. Each action that the person takes in life sets off a certain amount of force, apparently very much like the Karmic force of Hinduism. These forces together create the environment for pain in which we live. The act of killing the buffalo was not an action which touched only Willie Proudfit, the buffalo and the people who bought their hides. The Indians who were dependent upon the herd for their lives were put to extensive suffering because of the exploitation of the herd. The Indians had not touched the web, but they were bitten by the poison fangs of the spider of suffering. The risk is increased because "Nothing is ever lost," according to Cass Mastern. The nothing here is absolute, because as Duckfoot Blake mentions in At Heaven's Gate, "Everything matters, and don't you say it don't! Everything--."

If a time comes when it doesn't matter any more what happens, then the person is in spiritual trouble. It is only the highly selfish, self-loving person like a Monmorency Pugh in Wilderness who will say that "nuthin don't make much diff'runce." The indifference of moral fatigue is to fail to fulfill the responsibility one has toward his time, toward his own. The construction of impersonal relationships is to doom oneself to a life without sharing in the common brotherhood of suffering. Those who try are the Isaac Sumpters, the Slim Sarretts, the

Bogan Murdocks, the Wilkie Barrons, the Percy Munns, the Murray Guilforts, or the Hamish Bonds of the world.

At a time when people have a tendency to hide the individual responsibility for the actions of nations or of cities or of families within the framework of the group, of the whole, Warren is asking us to take a good look at personal, individual responsibility for the vibrations that are being set off around us. The fabric of the world is such that each touches all in his every action. The ardent Jeremiah Beaumont in World Enough and Time sets out to avenge the honor of a young girl. However, he did more than take justice into his own hands. He may have taken from the state the one man who had worked out the solution to the pressing civil problem of his day. When Jeremiah stabbed Cassius Fort in the dark, in cowardice and perfidy, he did more than just fulfill his personal will. He determined that his wife would be driven insane and that he would die in the wilderness. Further, when Munn Short started pinching Lottie Perk, he did not intend to kill her; but an Indian arrow found its mark after the Indian had watched them having their relish in the brush. One thing leads to another, and the vibrations do not stop until the requirements of the force have been fulfilled.

I believe that the comment of Warren's novels is that given the nature of man and the nature of the world, if someone touches the web of life, the vibrations will work themselves out, but you can be careful; nevertheless, damnation is close at hand, beware. However, if we will go "into the convulsion of the world," as Jack Burden suggests, "out of history into history and the awful responsibility of

Time," we shall survive and be able to obtain some degree of self-knowledge. The reason that it is possible to go into that vibrating world and find one's identity amidst the common suffering is the same as that which Blanding Cottshill told Brad Tolliver to explain why things happened the way they did in Fiddlersburg. "Things are tied together different. There's some spooky interpenetration of things, a mystic osmosis of being, you might say."

CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Warren, The Cave, p. 177.
- ²Warren, World Enough and Time, p. 128.
- ³Victor Strandberg, "Warren's Osmosis," Criticism, X (1968), 33.
- ⁴Niebuhr, II, 10.
- ⁵Nicolas Berdyaev, The Destiny of Man (New York, 1960), p. 252.
- ⁶Warren, All the King's Men, p. 252.
- ⁷Tsanof, p. 4.
- ⁸E. M. Cioran, "Evil Demiurge," Hudson Review, XX (1967), 198.
- ⁹Warren, All the King's Men, pp. 136, 137.
- ¹⁰Warren, Flood, p. 290.
- ¹¹Warren, Wilderness, pp. 264, 265.
- ¹²Warren, All the King's Men, p. 211.
- ¹³H. D. Herring, "Madness in At Heaven's Gate: A Metaphor of the Self in Warren's Fiction," Four Quarters, XXI (1972), 56.
- ¹⁴J. C. Simmons, "Adam's Lobectomy Operation and the Meaning of All the King's Men," PMLA, LXXXVI (1971), 84-89.
- ¹⁵Warren, All the King's Men, p. 200.

CHAPTER V

EVIL AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

"Know Thyself" and "Nothing Too Much," the two-fold inscription on the Delphic Oracle, would be appropriate epigrams for each and all of the novels of Robert Penn Warren. Significantly, also found within these two insights is the essential nature of the tragic implications of the novels. The requirement of self-knowledge and the admonition against the human tendency to express itself in the destructive force of immoderate behavior indicated in the oracle are bound together, psychologically, in a third classic admonition: "To Thine Own Self Be True." Importantly, Slim Sarrett's analysis of the nature of Shakespearean tragedy in At Heaven's Gate is summarized by these epigrams also, because he claimed that tragedy demonstrates the necessity of self-knowledge and that the tragic flaw of the hero is defective self-knowledge. In characteristic Warrenesque irony, Sarrett himself suffers from the delusion of inadequate self-knowledge and attempts to present a fraudulent self-image to the people he attempts to manipulate and exploit. He deceives them and himself as he constructs a fictional self. This fictional self is a lie he lived before everyone and is reflective of the great division within himself that caused the pathetic unfolding of his demonic being. The depth of self-deception portrayed in the dissolution of his unreal, created manipulated world is a pathetic unfolding of the fact that the one who needs and

frequently gets our sympathy is the one who fails to live out the self that is within him. However, Sarrett is demonic insofar as he represents the intentional deception of others and the ultimate vanity when he murdered Sue Murdock, escaped to New York and appears to be getting away with murder. However, the imagery of his closing poem, in which the beast within is tormenting him and his guilt makes him suspect that the noise in the hall is someone coming for him, demonstrates that his torment will not allow the legally unpunished murder to go unpunished.

Knowledge and understanding of the self are central to the entire development of values and are the key to interpersonal relationships. The disintegration of interpersonal relationships, as shown throughout the novels, relates the problem of self-knowledge of the demonstration of evil. "This places a big moral strain upon the individual," Ralph Ellison said in an interview with Warren, "and it requires self-confidence, self-consciousness, self-mastery, insight, and compassion. In a broader sense, it requires an alertness to human complexity. Nevertheless, isn't this what civilization is all about? and isn't this what tragedy has always sought to teach us?"¹ It is Slim Sarrett's intellectual grasp of the nature and importance of self-knowledge and his failure to live it out in experience which cause the rise of the tragic emotions of pity and fear. There often is and can be pity for Slim because of the possibility his life held. He is bright, athletic and creative, a man whom many could admire; however, his cruel intentionality moves that pity from him to those he abuses, and it fills us with the fear that similar failures of

self-knowledge and susceptibility to manipulation and exploitation could fall upon us.

"What ever you live is Life," Jack Burden concluded following a consideration of Adam Stanton's idealism in All the King's Men. Often in Warren's development of character, the conflict between egoism and altruism is shown. The conflict between the selfishness of being and the sense of what "ought to be" which are inherited from our time and place of being is the center of the dialectic of fate and freedom which is at the core of tragic possibility.² What we do live is what Slim Sarrett identified as the process of life as a temporal art, the art of creating a self. However, the self which is made cannot be a fictitious self. Slim Sarrett and Hamish Bond are two examples of attempts to create fictitious biographies as efforts at deceptive self-definition. The self must be a true self, which comes from a correct understanding of the self which is within ourselves.

A growing awareness of selfhood is essential for knowledge of the tragic possibility of man. This is particularly true of modern or recent tragedy with its emphasis upon the psychological struggle with human destiny. However, even in a classical sense, the emotions of pity and fear as demanded by an Aristotelian concept of tragedy are impossible unless there is sufficient self-knowledge to make sympathy with another's suffering genuine and the awareness of the threat to oneself real. Even though evil is the subject matter of tragedy, it must be recognized that it is an evil of a very special type: egoism. The tragic hero, in a classical sense, must not be totally depraved,

but possessed of a flaw which is expressed in his hubris.³ Pride by definition rests in a concept of human worth, which in turn is related to our understanding of evil. "The characteristic worth of man is . . . essentially bound up with . . . the tragic enterprise," Tsanoff insists, "and upon the adequate conception of the nature of evil hangs the whole philosophy of value."⁴ As noted by Frederick Brantley, "Warren shares a task with Joyce, Hardy, Faulkner, Melville, and Conrad in striving 'to illuminate the tragic experience by presenting it imaginatively in the light of the conflict of self, the private struggle in a world of public action to achieve self-definition.'"⁵

Because of the value of each person, Warren insists it is the right of each individual to know himself and to develop a personality true to his own nature. Further, self-knowledge is essential to one's existence as a human being. He deplores the so-called saviors of men who offer cheap and easy solutions to the critical problems of mankind at the expense of the individual self-awareness and acknowledged responsibility for one's actions. The fundamental nature of things as presented in Chapter Two of this study, particularly the basic human nature, requires that man must come to terms with reality by knowing himself. His self-knowledge is achieved by participation in and an awareness of the "interpenetration of things" which is the key to man's ability to find himself and to define himself, from himself. Every soul, Warren said, is valuable in the sight of God or man; however, an adequate understanding of evil is necessary to understand that value and to make the definition of the self, for good or evil, a real possibility.⁶

The Osmosis of Being

"Only by knowledge does man achieve his identity," Warren maintains, "because it gives him the image of himself."⁷ By this developing self-image, Warren continues to say in the speech, "The Knowledge and Image of Man," man begins to see that

he is . . . in the world with continual and intimate interpenetration, an inevitable osmosis of being, which in the end does not deny, but affirms, his identity. It affirms it, for out of a progressive understanding of this interpenetration, this texture of relations, man creates new perspectives, discovers new values--that is, a new self--and so the identity is continually emerging, an unfolding, a self-affirming, and we hope, a self-corrective creation.

Despite this osmosis of being to which I have referred, man's process of self-definition means that he distinguishes himself from the world and from other men. He disintegrates his primal instinctive sense of unity, he discovers separateness. In this process he discovers the pain of self-criticism and the pain of isolation. But the pain may, if he is fortunate, develop its own worth, work its own homeopathic cure. In the pain of self-criticism he may develop an ideal of excellence, and an ideal of excellence, once established implies a depersonalized communion in that ideal. In the pain of isolation he may achieve the courage and clarity of mind to envisage the tragic pathos of life, and once he realizes that the tragic experience is universal and a corollary of man's place in nature, he may return to a communion with man and nature.⁸

It is this process of absorption and diffusion which the characters in the novels are to seek. It is the ideal to which they are to aspire. It is the process which Victor Strandberg has described as the "relating themselves to the totality of time and nature and society, whereas they characteristically are observed bent towards opposite ends, narrowing their identity to a bias of fame, sexual prowess, success in business, or membership in a philosophical, religious, or political sect."⁹

The pain, isolation and separation--ideas associated with the concept of evil--are all essential parts of human experience, if one is to achieve the goal of full knowledge of himself, his humanity and true unity with his fellows. Warren speaks of the results of such an osmosis of being as "growth of moral awareness. The return to nature and man is the discovery of love, and law. But love through separateness, and law through rebellion." The entire process is metaphorically described by Warren as follows: "Man eats of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and falls. But if he takes another bite, he may get at least a sort of redemption. . . . The unity of the lover with the beloved, a unity presupposing separateness. . . . Not . . . the unity of a . . . tribal horde . . . ; his unity will be that of a member of sweet society."¹⁰ It is in this possibility of man to find unity that the tragic possibility of man is found. Not only does he have the high promise of fulfillment, he has the deep threat of failure.

The failure is frequent and often final. "I suppose," Warren said in the speech, "that the ultimate unity of knowledge is in the image of himself that man creates through knowledge, the image of his destiny, the mask he stares at. This would mean the manipulative knowledge. . . . The knowledge of make, that of do, that of see, that of be . . . [which] ultimately interfuse in our life process."¹¹ However, man's ability to see, to do, to make, and ultimately to be are all contingent upon his ability to perceive and to perform in accordance with his finitude. This knowledge will change the nature of our being because knowledge itself in the growth of moral awareness, which in turn changes "the quality of making, doing, seeing" and being.

However, not all knowledge is good. Many kinds of knowledge and self-images which modern men have formed will not contribute to genuine self-knowledge and self-fulfillment. Consequently, many efforts, particularly those expressed in the great "isms" of the day, have added to the misery of life.

We should not, however, blame knowledge itself for the misery which comes with the abuse of it. "We should," he said, "blame incompleteness of knowledge--the fact that knowledge of human nature, human needs, human values, has not kept pace with knowledge of fruit flies and atoms, that fact that we have not achieved balance and responsibility in the ever-unfolding process of self-defining."¹² The risk implied in the very nature of man, his mixed, ambiguous nature, is that the horrible side which expresses the needs of the perverted will win. It is in this, the impending defeat of the good in human experience, which also holds tragic possibility for man.

Citing Lord Jim, Warren commented upon the "human need for moral vindication," and Jim and Brown's "dark dialog of communion and complicity." Just as Marlowe said of them, Warren also concluded "each of us longs for full balance and responsibility in self-knowledge, in a recognition and harmonious acceptance of our destiny."¹³ What we want is to see the "form" or "structure" of our being, so we can see its meaning. Again, it is the notion that life is itself an art. The notion expressed, but not fulfilled by Slim Sarrett and other of the characters. We want to see the form to perceive the meaning. Life must have artistic shape. "The form" Warren says, "is a vision of experience, but of experience fulfilled and redeemed by knowledge."¹⁴

He says that the osmosis of being is a developing of the rhythm of life; a process which is self-fulfilling. "How does the knowledge of form give man an image of himself?" he asks.

It does so insofar as it gives the image of experience being brought to order the harmony, the image of a dance on the high wire over an abyss. The rhythm is, as it were, a myth of order, or fulfillment, an affirmation that our being may move in its totality toward meaning. The soul faces some potentiality of experience, drawn from actuality, and the form is the flowing vibration of the soul, the abstraction of experience by imagination. The form gives man an image of himself, for it gives him his mode of experiencing, a paradigm of his inner life, his rhythm of destiny, his tonality of fate. And this evocation, confrontation, and definition of our deepest life gives us, is new self-awareness, a yet deeper life to live.

But not merely the life of contemplation . . . gazing prepares for the moment of action, of creation, in our world of contingency. It is, as Yeats puts it,

" . . . our secret discipline
Wherein the gazing soul doubles her might."

The might is there for the moment when the soul lifts her head.¹⁵

Warren's use of the metaphors of the balance of the dance on the high wire over the abyss, the vibration of the soul, and the abstraction of experience indicate the threat and risk involved in the individual demand for self-knowledge if one is to find fulfillment by the osmosis of being. In it one can find the wisdom necessary to live. The wisdom necessary for a meaningful life.

Life is an art, as Slim Sarrett affirmed, in the light of this concept of the interpenetration of being. While discussing the nature of tragedy, as mentioned above, Slim also mentions that the interpretation of the process could not be done by isolation of elements in the characters, situation, and plot, statement, or language; rather, the theme "is defined only by an investigation of the dynamic

interpenetration of all the metaphors of the one discourse, and a comparison among the several discourses."¹⁶ If he had done so, he would have discovered the wisdom which allows the osmosis of being to find fulfillment.

Wisdom, then, [Warren said in "The Great Mirage,"] is the recognition of man's condition, the condition of the creature made without gills or fins but dropped into the sea, the necessity of living with the ever renewing dilemma of idea as opposed to nature, morality to action, "utopianism" to "secular logic" . . . Justice to material interests. Man must take his life somehow in the dialectical process of these terms, and in so far as he is to achieve redemption he must do so through an awareness of his condition that identifies him with the general human communion, not in abstraction, not in mere doctrine, but immediately. The victory is never won, the redemption must be continually re-earned.¹⁷

The self-criticism then that the process of osmosis demands is potentially dangerous. There is great risk in discovering isolation and the threat of non-being that is at the core of being-itself, as the second chapter of this study demonstrated Warren's view of being to be. In fact, Warren's literary criticism, as expressed by John Hicks, is an "exploration of value." It is a process of the discovery of form and meaning in that form. It has to do with immediate and intuitive grasping of the significance of works of art.

The act of criticism, [Hicks declares,] does not lie in "stating discursively" what an imaginative work means; the successful imaginative work is massive in its implications, and too condensed for discursive summary without violating the richness of the imaginative object as experienced. Mere allegorical "interpretation" "does little to carry us toward the 'kernel' or 'concept' or root-attitude of the poem, which, it is true, we can never wholly frame in words but which it is the business of criticism to carry us toward." Carry us toward, he says: for however complex is the exploratory process, Warren always believes that he is leading a reader by criticism toward the work itself, which finally, and after however much preparation, he can only experience immediately and intuitively for himself.¹⁸

Therefore, this process of self-criticism for the finding of the osmosis of being is, in fact, analogous to the process of literary criticism. There can be no objective, discursive explanation of a being; that is, one cannot find meaning in someone or something outside of oneself. This is why Cass Mastern in All the King's Men found that the common human flaw was to try to find meaning for the self in someone else. This is why Jason Sweetwater in At Heaven's Gate experienced identity problems, because for him "life had become an objective problem, complicated in its detail, but susceptible to solution in terms of a single principle. It was a tough problem, no denying, but nobody had crooked the deck; it was straight goods"; however, the novel illustrates that the principle Jason had learned from his minister father was not valid. One cannot approach life as an objective problem. Jason could not, no one can. Because of this approach to life, he missed the possibility of osmosis of being. He had attempted to find definition in the labor actions and the principles of love which excluded marriage. It brought only misery in the death of Sue Murdock and his own alienation. He could not find the key which would allow him to return to the community of guilt in all men. In this, there is tragedy.

Implications of the Osmosis of Being

As was indicated at the end of the previous section, Warren uses the principle of the osmosis of being to develop his characters in the novels. Such a view forces the characters back upon themselves as the source for the possibility of salvation and/or the

responsibility for damnation. It also means that his presentation of the process is rhetorical and freely developed by association rather than in discursive presentations of values. Certainly it must be kept in mind that this quest for identity is not an easy one. In fact, the implications are quite the opposite. The view grew out of Warren's awareness that modern man has the tendency to make his existential problems of identity too easy by associating them with the external causes or ideas for which people easily die, and from which they will accept their definition and fulfillment. In fact, ease is to be avoided. Not many can endure the pain of self-criticism, and not many can follow the destiny self-knowledge gives them. "Only the strong," Warren has said, "can afford the luxury of radical self-criticism."¹⁹ This is why so few of Warren's characters are able to experience the osmosis and face the destiny they find in it.

One of the implications of the osmosis, which is very important here, is the relationship between evil and self-knowledge. "Studies of the individuation process," Frey-Rohn has pointed out in Evil, "corroborate the fact that there can be no self-realization without the experience of evil. Recognition of the reality of evil seems actually to be the first step in establishing a relationship with a centralizing factor in the psyche."²⁰ As the old Scholarly Attorney declared at the end of All the King's Men, one's identity is found in his separation of God, but that very separation is to exist in a state of evil. Unless one takes the threats of one's being seriously, he stands under the threat of being destroyed.

In terms of contemporary psychology, Warren's concept of self-knowledge by the process of the osmosis of being is related to the view of the Jungian school.

The more we become conscious of ourselves through self-knowledge, and act accordingly, [Philip has observed in Jung and the Problem of Evil,] the more the layer of the personal unconscious that is superimposed on the collective unconscious will be diminished. In this way there arises a consciousness which is no longer imprisoned in the petty, oversensitive, personal world of the ego, but participates freely in the wider world of objective interests. This widened consciousness is no longer that touchy, egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes, and ambitions which always has to be compensated or corrected by unconscious countertendencies; instead, it is a function of relationship to the world of objects, bringing the individual into absolute, binding, and indissoluble communion with the world at large.²¹

It seems to me that Philip has described the characters in Warren's novels who are able to make that long journey of the soul which ends in self-knowledge. The difficulty of this journey might be inferred from the relatively small number of characters who emerge from the novels with self-knowledge. Willie Proudfit in Night Rider has seen the face of God and is now a part of the universal suffering of man. There is no character in At Heaven's Gate who has it at the end of the novel; however, Ashby Wyndham, Milt Porsum, and possibly Jerry Calhoun are shown to be heading in the direction of possible fulfillment. At least they have begun the process of self-criticism which is preliminary to the osmosis.

Jack Burden's awareness of his responsibility, reflected in the closing of All the King's Men, certainly is an example of Jack's new self. Unlike the catatonic schizophrenic who would get a new personality, but not new values; Jack's experience of osmosis is more like the conversion Adam Stanton mentioned. "When you get converted," he

said, "you still have the same personality. You merely exercise it in terms of a different set of values." Certainly one of the implications of the osmosis is that one gets a new set of values, therefore, a new self. As Warren has said, the new relations, new perspective, new values, understood in the interpenetration of things will yield a new self.²²

The tragic implications of self-knowledge are definitely portrayed in World Enough and Time. Jeremiah Beaumont has lived a very dedicated life. He had given it to the great purpose of revenge for Rachel, upon Casius Fort. He had used her, and he had lost sight of the relationship of the ideal to the real world. He became a dangerous man who had attempted to find truth by lies, but instead the truth was found by the lies at his trial. He was guilty, but he was improperly found so by the trial. He escaped from jail and attempted to find himself in the flight west to the evil hideaway of La Grand¹ Bosse. He was a total failure until he came to himself that he should return to Frankfort for execution. However, irony again arises and, as the last entry in his journal indicated, he was not sure, but what all was for naught. He is killed before he can act out his new insight into his guilt. This too late factor in human experience designates another of the tragic possibilities implied in the osmosis. Some may find it too late to be able to reverse the fate they have already unleashed.

After a life of anguish in which she finally learned that only she could set herself free, Amantha Starr and her husband, Tobias Sears seem to have found the possibility in the anticipation of human

love. However, neither she nor Tobias are the same individuals who began the series of moves which brought them to the Western plains of Kansas to find, finally, the release from their past, so they could find hope in tomorrow. After stopping to look inside, instead of outside themselves, they found a measure of fulfillment not before possible.

In The Cave, only Jack and Celia Harrick seem to be heading toward the fulfilling osmosis of being. It might be that Mr. Bingham or Dorothy Cutlick or Nick Pappy could find it, if they can bear the risk of self-criticism. They are headed in the right direction. However, Jack and Celia definitely have found it as Jack takes his pill, picks up the guitar, and begins to play his own song. Because Jack finds it, recognizing both his identity with others and yet his son Monty's difference from himself, Monty Harrick and Jo-Lea Bingham, if they have love, might be able to escape the trap of the inauthentic life of buried existence seen in the painful distractions of those around them. But it is here. Even MacCarland Sumpter might be able to find it, if the people have faith in him, if he has faith in himself and God, he might make it. However, Ikey Sumpter will not find it. The Seconal, the whiskey, the women of the New York studio, and his desire to find fame by his betrayal of Jasper will conspire against his finding any self-knowledge and fulfillment. Further, he could not see the commonality he had with Jebb Holloway, "How am I different from that turd?" Ikey thought. However, he felt that he had to be different from him. "A man could not live if he were like Jebb Holloway."

The irony is that he is just like him. He will pay any price for some ego-satisfaction.

In a story which demonstrates, as Uncle Rosenzweig had declared, that if it were not for the wicked there could be no virtue, Wilderness ends with Adam Rosenzweig finding a new heart, a new inner man from which to view the world. He accepts himself for what he is and those around him for what they are. He has seen Blacks mobbed; he has seen them mistreated and killed. He himself has insulted Moses and, he feels, caused the death of Jed, but now he can go on, hoping to be true to the cause of the unnamed dead who have taught him to develop his own self-knowledge. As one of the most complete examples of the osmosis, I believe it is significant that Adam is not a Christian. He does not have the weight of the Christian hypocrisy to overcome. Americans are prepared to accept a suffering Jew who has to learn that he is separate from his father, but part of mankind. In figures of gore and blackness, the sexual license of Molly the Mutton and the immorality of war, he learns that he can kill, not for freedom, but because a Rebel took his boot, which was made for his clubfoot; Adam shot him because his foot was different from his own.

Blanding Cottshill spoke directly of the "spooky interpenetration of things" in Flood; he felt that was why the things that happened there had happened. Also, it is because of this interpenetration of things, that the things could have happened anywhere. In this large book, Brad Tolliver finally looks to the country of the heart, the inner territory of the self, and there he finds what might be the key to the human necessity for which he is looking.

In the last novel, Meet Me in the Green Glen, two men have experiences which indicate the beginning of the osmosis, and the implication is that Leroy Lancaster and Cy Grinder are now, like Jack Burden of years before, able to go out into the convulsion of the world and accept the responsibility which time places upon them: the responsibility to their own selves to be true.

As this survey of the Osmosis experiences in the novels indicates, there is a similarity to an observation Plato made in the Charmides. He indicated that in self-knowledge we have the command of our appetites and passions in a proper relationship to our parents and official superiors, "in balance and sanity amid the ups and downs of fortune."²³ Of course, it cannot be forgotten that in Plato generally the learning of virtue was accomplished by the stimulation of the mind by sense-experiences to remember what it once knew, but has forgotten. The implication of this for Warren is significant especially in the light of Lyle Glazier's "Reconstructed Platonism: Robert Penn Warren's The Cave." He says Platonic themes symbolized by the cave drawn from Plato's analogy of the cave in the Republic are "transformed by pragmatic relativism so that the novel denies the existence of absolutes and affirms the values of secular humanism."²⁴ However, I believe if Glazier's observations were made with a greater awareness of the consequences of genuine osmosis of being, he would have been more aware of the unity of mankind and the shared nature of our responsibility for what happens to each and all. Warren's people in The Cave go through the usual pattern of development in which each must gain an insight into his true image, if he is to live; it is this unity of mankind

in this condition which is the absolute governing the novel's development. Just as Plato believed that the inhabitants of the cave could not perceive reality, Warren also believes that the inhabitants of the world who live lives buried in their passions were not able to see themselves as they really are until Jasper Harrick's journey into the interior of the earth brought them the occasion for their search into the interiors of themselves. It is, I believe, Warren's pervasive irony which caused him to stress that this occasion for self-knowledge was a journey into a cave rather than a journey out of a cave as per Plato. Nevertheless, I believe Warren does, throughout his works, affirm the essentially Platonic notion that the appearances of things can, and usually do, keep us from comprehending the reality of things--especially of ourselves.

I believe this is clarified by Warren in "Why Do We Read Fiction?" In this essay he says, "role-taking leads us . . . to an awareness of ourselves; it leads us, in fact, to the creation of the self. For the individual is not born with a self. He is born as a mysterious bundle of possibilities which, bit by bit, in a long process of trial and error, he sorts out until he gets some sort of unifying self, the ring-master self, the official self."²⁵ Surrounded by illusions and pretense, we must make ourselves out of that which is in us. The potentialities of which he speaks remind me of Aristotle's view of life as a process of actualization of the potentials which are within us; but the realization of the shadows around us in the cave in which we live is the result of the courage to be, the courage to accept one's self, as accepted, even though we feel unaccepted and unacceptable.²⁶

Warren says because we make ourselves, we must accept ourselves as we are, and acknowledge our responsibility for our entire process of becoming: all of the trials and errors involved in the process and our debt to the past which established the theater in which we create the role that is ourselves. Warren's consistent urging is for each person to be himself, rather than to attempt to pass as someone else. The denial of the responsibility to be one's self and the failure to accept one's self are an ever-present threat to us as a part of the world of illusions which hinder that realization--the absolute of self-realization in spite of the illusions which distract us.

The ideals which give form to the illusions must be tested by the seeker within the framework of action in the world. As Everett Carter points out in "The 'Little Myth' of Robert Penn Warren," Warren writes "Romantic Novels [which] announce an attempted fusion between two forms of poetic fiction, one that has been associated with the idea and the ideal--the romance, and the other which has been associated with the world of social appearances--the novel."²⁷ Certainly for Warren, the world is both ideal and action. It is precisely that which causes the problem of the illusion of reality--the whole world is a cave. As Tsanoff indicated in Nature of Evil, it is often the conflict between the ideal and the real which give rise to the problem of evil.²⁸

It is in such a world that the pattern of the search for self recurs in Warren's fiction. Hoffman gives the pattern as follows:

1. The beginnings are in innocence, in the form of immaturity or an incompleteness.

2. The world is next in the sequence, and the person facing the world. The world is a place of particulars, and man must find a 'path of action' that will test his principles, whatever they may be.
3. Man, entering the world, can commit one of two kinds of sin (or both of them): he can violate the particulars of the world in order to achieve power, or he commits acts of violence on the assumption that they are 'principled' acts.²⁹

But, I believe we cannot forget that those who commit these sins either come to terms with them through genuine self-knowledge or fail to experience the osmosis of being which Warren believes is the solution for the disease of our condition: the division of the age against the divided self, which finds identity only by recognition of its separateness and, then by the pain of that separateness, is brought into conscious unity with the community of the human condition.

However, Warren's osmosis cannot be understood as an excuse for gratuitous action in the name of an existential freedom or any other form of absolute autonomy. "Self-discovery [in Warren,]" according to Heilman, "is not an autonomous process, with the material yielding up its own definitions; rather, it is the application to the self of the best available categories of meaning and value."³⁰ As Jack Burden came to realize, it is an awful responsibility of Time. In other words, a person must develop enough self-knowledge to know how to exist as himself; but he must know where he came from, why he is where he is, and have some sense of the destiny into which he is going. "The acquiring of that knowledge necessary for self-fulfillment," according to Shephard, "entails the attempt to grasp or perhaps even to resolve the contradictions or polarities which seem to define man's experience of the world. It is usually a character's perception of these polarities, and the resulting sense of shock and imbalance that leads or

drives him to a redefinition of his experiences which will comprehend apparent contradictions."³¹ As Warren himself has said, "the important thing . . . is the presence of the concept of truth--that covers all things which touch the heart and define the effort of man to rise above the mechanical process of life."³²

While his characters engage in the struggle to know themselves, I believe Warren is emphasizing that they have to come to the place that they can choose to recognize their responsibility for what has and will happen. If this indeed is the case, then they will make the movement toward self-realization which J. P. Cole has identified as the movement from a state determined by need to a state of choice, freely taken.³³ A single example may illustrate this point adequately. Lettice Poindexter in Flood lived the life of sensual license that she did out of psychological need to fulfill a rivalry with her very sexually active mother; however, when she chose to renounce that form of life began to serve the needs of others in the old folks home, she freely determined the identity she would have. Brad thought she was crazy, but by taking the journey into the country of the heart, she found her own human necessity and embraced it freely.

In a book-length study on violence in Southern literature, Louise Gossett gave extensive consideration to the role of violence in Warren's novels. She concentrated upon the violence which causes pain and suffering in the world of illusion and appearances created in the novels. With respect to the osmosis she has said, "The man of self-knowledge is characterized by a mature acceptance of the strengths and weaknesses of his father, and consequently, of the past. He is prepared

to act free from the most serious errors of ignorance, delusion, and immaturity. He and his action will not be faultless, for the nature of man contains the unfathomable, but the integrated, responsible self is unlikely to abuse others or to be gratuitously violent."³⁴

However, in addition to the recognition of the past, full self-knowledge requires a recognition of personal guilt and responsibility, which will lead to what Warren has had R.P.W. describe in Brother to Dragons, as

The recognition of complicity is the beginning of innocence.
The recognition of necessity is the beginning of freedom.
The recognition of the direction of fulfillment is the death
of the self,
And the death of the self is the beginning of selfhood. ³⁵
All else is surrogate of hope and destitution of spirit.

With reference to the role of freedom in guilt, Cole observed that self-knowledge is to choose to be guilty and to choose to be guilty is to recognize our responsibility for what we are. This is part of the process which produces the authentic self: the recognition of the past as the source of our potentiality and of our responsibility for what we have made out of it; therefore, "the price of selfhood is guilt."³⁶

The significance of the acceptance of guilt is clear. "Among the most important results of increased consciousness and growing self-realization" according to Frey-Rohn, "is the ability of the individual to accept his own guilt. There is no acceptance of the shadow, no possibility of allowing the shadow to live, without the simultaneous acceptance of guilt [sic.]. Life which is truly lived always involves becoming guilty. Man can no more rid himself of the fact of his guiltiness than he can cast off his relationship to the community or to the

self."³⁷ The acceptance of one's past and personal guilt and responsibility for what he has become are given greater emphasis in that "only he who confesses that he is the author of evil," Ricoeur affirms, "discovers the reverse of that confession; namely, the nonposited in the positing of evil, the always already there of evil, the other of temptation, and finally the incomprehensibility of God, who tests me and who can appear to be as my enemy."³⁸

The act of confession, as the acknowledgment of evil, is important in Warren's fiction. One of the dominate images is the necessity to tell or to say something, and its companion image is the character's inability to communicate. For example, Cassie Spottwood tries to confess in Meet Me in the Green Glen, but she is not believed and she goes mad. James H. Justus in "The Mariner and Robert Penn Warren" points out that many of Warren's central figures are driven by the same compulsion of confession which required the Ancient Mariner to tell his tale. Further, he points out concerning Munn in Night Rider: "His murky idea of self is reflected in his compulsion to explain himself to others," but he does so in rationalization not in acceptance of his evil.³⁹ However, Angelo Passetto, in Meet Me in the Green Glen, ". . . never explained more than he had to. If he did not explain, he protected something. He protected the fact that he was himself." In other words, his identity was his, if he did not have to explain it.

On the other hand, those like Angelo who do not explain or confess are not successful in the self-realization. For example, as of the end of At Heaven's Gate, Slim Sarrett was not close to confession

of his murder of Sue Murdock, and the implication is clear that Anse, the Black hired hand on the Murdock ranch, will be executed for her murder. Bogan Murdock denies his responsibility for the evil that has happened in an interestingly contemporary act of denying responsibility by appearing to accept it. Also, Jeremiah Beaumont in World Enough and Time had to learn that it was his own desire to murder Fort in the dark in deception, and he could not blame Rachel for it; his realization required that he write and tell all, just as Munn Short had to tell his tale.

Similarly, Brad Tolliver, in Flood, did not know that "every man yearns for his story. He did not yet know that the true shame is in yearning for a false, not the true story." It is absolutely essential that the story told be true. This is indicated by the outcome of two individuals who created very complicated false autobiographies. Comment has already been made upon the story making of Slim Sarrett. He created a very moving fictionalized autobiography in which his mother was a prostitute and his father a no good. He told of participation in crimes in order to show his separateness from society and his refusal to share in the loot to show his separateness from his friends. But he was exposed by his homosexual Greek friend for what he was. Hamish Bond also created a false story in order to maintain the sympathy of Amantha Starr. Such falsehood is doomed, as the fate of Bond shows, when Rau-Ru turned on him and executed him by hanging. His kindness was a disease which brought him death, because he did so in the context of a false story. He was not true to himself.

The confession is the form which acknowledgment of one's responsibility frequently takes. The simple story of Willie Proudfit in Night Rider, Ashby Wyndham's confession which comprises a parallel story to that of the Calhouns and Murdocks in At Heaven's Gate, Cass Mastern's journal in All the King's Men, and Jeremiah Beaumont's journal and Munn Short's tale in World Enough and Time are the form given in the early novels. In these cases, the confession is a part of the overall tale and integral to it, but in Band of Angels the entire story is Amantha Starr's painful recollections in her quest for self-knowledge. In the four most recent novels, confessions as such do not play the central role they did before. While Lettice Poindexter Tolliver's letter and Calvin Fiddler's discourse with Brad are close to the confessional stories of the earlier novels, Warren's treatment is much less direct than in earlier novels. I believe the significance of this change is that the osmosis can occur within the person, and he can acknowledge his responsibility and accept his guilt without having to purge himself in open and frequent confession. In fact, Cassie Spottwood's confession which is very short is not believed. The story itself is not built around this confession as extensively as some of the early novels used the confessions. Nevertheless, Cassie, Leroy Lancaster, and Cy Grinder are in the process of acknowledging their responsibility and their unity with other people.

Speaking of the means by which self-knowledge is obtained, J. M. Spier gives a key insight in Christianity and Existentialism, "self-knowledge is the key to philosophical understanding and the knowledge we have of ourselves cannot be the result of rational analysis,

because rational analysis is itself a function of the self." He had said earlier "self-knowledge rests upon a commitment which we must necessarily make on faith. It is not possible for reason to determine what man is."⁴⁰ I believe that the acceptance of one's self and the evil which is a part of that self of which Warren speaks is this type of faith. Further, the experiences of self-realization recorded by Warren have a Gnostic quality of salvation by inner knowledge which Michael Grant describes as the "secrets of the universe acquired through piety and inner vision."⁴¹ Intuition is an ultimate form of awareness of meaning and truth, itself not analyzable, but having an analogy with visual perception. A study of the novels indicates that visions, dreams, and other forms of eye imagery and illumination are very common. For example, Willie Proudfit's dream of delirium in Night Rider is presented as his having "looked on the face of blessedness, bare-eyed." Also, Ashby Wyndham in At Heaven's Gate had a vision of his dead son which brought him onto his knees by his bed, convicted that he needed to find his brother whom he had betrayed.

Another example of the visual aspect of the grasping of spiritual knowledge is shown by Adam Rosenzweig in Wilderness.

He shut his eyes, and strained to catch the cry. To shut the eyes--that was a mistake. For immediately the darkness of his head rang with a thousand cries. The cries that the strange, clear, beautiful, vaulted and vaulting hollowness of a cry uttered in the deep woods. Cry after cry rang in his head, with that soaring purity. Hands reached out in the darkness of his. The red reflection of the flame glowed on the faces from which the eyes distended maniacally, and in which the mouth made the perfectly round O of the scream, the scream he could not, in fact hear.

Then he was on his knees in the ferns, eyes shut. He was saying the words: "What dost Thou? O Thou who speakest and doest, of Thy grace deal kindly with us, and for the sake of him who was bound like a lamb. O hearken and do--".⁴²

Other such reaching hands and screaming faces are seen in dreams and truths are apprehended in visions in many of the novels. Lettice Poindexter Tolliver reminds Brad of an old dream which she came to understand only after her conversion experience in Flood. Finally, Leroy Lancaster's dream-like walk in the night around Parkerton in Meet Me in the Green Glen has strong visual perceptions as the means for the communication of deep truths for his spectacled eyes. He is an interesting contrast to Murray Guilfort who saw the suppressed evidence in his safe in a vision. With palms sweating,

He again saw those objects, but as they were not, in the safe in his study at Durwood, as though his eyes had, suddenly, the power to see all that distance, to see through steel and see those objects glowing in that enclosed darkness. And at that moment, the crazy fear struck him that another eye than his might even now pierce all the miles of distance, and pierce the steel, to see those objects glowing like live coals in the enclosed darkness of the safe.⁴³

For a person like Murray Guilfort who is not looking into himself for the truths at the core of his own being, the spiritual insight into his guilt only fills him with fear. Eventually, Guilfort commits suicide; but Leroy Lancaster, coming from the realization of his blasphemy of his own life, rises to walk in a new life of fulfillment and realization. Because of his experience, he is changed; and when Guilfort offered him a position in his firm, Leroy told him, "I just don't want your fucking job."

The disclosure of the self-knowledge is an intuitive, non-rational experience: nearly a conversion experience of insight into one's self, which the character and his/her associates do not completely understand because there is no rational explanation of it. From this, it seems to me that the ethic developed by Warren's characters who successfully have the experience of osmosis of being is the intuitionists ethic of "self-evident" truths verified by direct personal experience in the form of some special "insight" into his nature and the nature of reality around him.

Consequences of Self-Knowledge

Everett Carter has observed, "All [of Robert Penn Warren's] fiction deals with the struggle, the dialectic between the little myths men make and the great myth that Americans live, with tragedies that ensue when these are kept separate, and with the comedy that is possible when a synthesis is reached."⁴⁴ As demonstrated above, the process by which the desired synthesis is achieved is the osmosis of being which results in self-knowledge. It is the failures to obtain this synthesis which occupied most of the effort of the novels; however, there are some instances which demonstrate the possibilities life may hold for some happiness or comedy. The comedy implied here, of course, is nothing other than the possible happiness which follows from the satisfaction of self-fulfillment. Generally, the critics agree that there are some special consequences which follow self-knowledge which I believe are particularly relevant to this study of evil in the novels. The first is an awareness of the community of all

men. The second is the increased ability to forgive the offenses of others. The third consequence is the realization of the possibility of love. The fourth is the emergence of the character as a genuine moral force.

Earlier in this study reference was made to Cass Mastern's having learned of the community of common guilt for mankind. He had to learn that all have sinned, and that none is righteous in and of himself. He also had to know that he could not stand in any moral pride because of himself. He had tasted of the sweetness of his friend's wife's flesh and many people had suffered from it. In the images of the spider web and of the fabric of the world, he demonstrated that all people suffer from the evil actions of others. He began to see the dying young soldier as the victim of the guilt of others.

Also, after Jack Harrick in The Cave considered the question "Are all men like Me?" by recalling Mac Sumpter's sermon on Psalm Thirty-Eight, he accepted Jo-Lea, even though she had lied about having been made pregnant by Jasper--the baby is Manty Harrick's. He is open to the needs of everyone. When the narrative returns to him after an aside to Mr. Bingham as he progresses toward some sense of the unity of all men, the question is again in his mind. He also considers the opposite side of the question. If all are like him, he reasons, he would feel better; but if all are not like him, he would feel worse. However, after some inner struggle, he concludes that his son, Monty, is not like him, because he could go into the ground and hold Jasper's hand. "My son is not like me. All men are not like me,"

he thought; but he did not feel worse, he felt better." I do not believe that this contradicts the generalization that the consequence of self-knowledge is an awareness of the community of all men. Jack had been alienated and alone; but after the insight that he is not like every one else, he feels a new closeness to his surviving son and his wife. He can take the old guitar and play his song. It brings him, ironically, a new sense of the community of men in sin. All sin, but all are not alike, absolutely. He was himself, a unique being with a unique song. Other instances of the sense of community occur in the novels. From Willie Proudfit to Cy Grinder, those who confront their own alienation and separation and endure the pain of self-criticism will find that self-knowledge reunites them with the body of mankind.

This awareness of the community of men manifests itself in a new responsibility to all men. It is what has been mentioned so many times in this study, the "awful responsibility of Time" which Jack Burden realized in All the King's Men. He could not find the isolation from action which the Scholarly Attorney sought in order to avoid the foulness and foolishness of political action. There is a responsibility to act in this life, and only by action one can fulfill that responsibility, but he cannot use the action as a coverup for inadequate self-knowledge. Cass Mastern's brother, Gilbert, was able to move from one world (pre-Civil War) to another (post-Civil War) because he could change as the times demanded; but even though he died rich and successful, he did not really maintain his responsibility to others.

Further, Lettice Poindexter demonstrated the responsibility to the whole of mankind by willingly accepting the responsibility of labor in the old folks home; she no longer lived for herself, she gave herself for others. Brother Potts demonstrates this as well, even though he was filled with pain and alienation. He is perhaps the only one of the characters in Flood who did not face the need for the osmosis of being during the course of the narrative, because he had already accepted his burden and responsibility before Brad returned to Fiddlersburg. Willie Proudfit also was taken from the mountain top haven to the drought plagued valley of Kentucky because he saw that he was not to spend his life there. The Lord had something else for him to do. His responsibility was to return to his father's home and there to make do with what the Lord provided. He is the perfect contrast to Percy Munn throughout Night Rider. The abuse of the sense of community of mankind, in the name of improving the lot of mankind is the grossest sin. And Munn had committed it.

In this sense of community of mankind, Warren demonstrates a view very similar to the Jungian view indicated by Frey-Rohn. "Consciousness of the archetypal shadow," he said, "is essential not only for individual self-realization, but also for the transformation of creative impulses within the collective upon which depends the preservation of both individual and collective life. The individual cannot detach himself from his connection with society: responsibility toward oneself always includes responsibility toward the whole [sic.]. One can perhaps risk the statement: Whatever consciousness the individual struggles for and is able to transmit benefits the collective. By

coming to terms with the archetypal adversary he is able to sense collective moral problems and anticipate emerging values."⁴⁵ I submit that this is precisely what Leroy Lancaster of Meet Me in the Green Glen does. He had once accused himself of being the conscience of Parkerton, and this was why he was working so hard to try to get Angelo Passetto acquitted. However, he failed to achieve that goal, but he came to recognize that he had wanted Angelo dead himself, subconsciously. He accepted his guilt, and then continued to work to get Angelo free. He continued to fail, but this time he could accept his own failure, as his own. He attempted to find justice for the community. He accepted his wife's love without further inner conflict. He became a public officer in the community and, in fact, did become the conscience of Parkerton, but this time, freely and with a new heart.

The achievement of the ability to forgive others is another aspect of the community of men, but I believe it deserves special emphasis in this study. We have several negative examples in the novels of those who are not able to forgive others. Lew Calhoun in At Heaven's Gate is an old, angry man who is not able to rise above the hatred he feels for old man Murdock. It causes him to have a miserable and unfulfilled life. Slim Sarrett and Jason Sweetwater are not forgiving men; therefore, those around them suffer greatly. Ikey Sumpter in The Cave is not able to accept others; therefore, he cannot accept himself. The relationship of the forgiveness of others and one's own forgiveness is a common notion in the Christian faith. Anyone who has learned the Lord's Prayer knows about "forgive us our

debts/ As we forgive our debtors." The acceptance one receives is commensurate to the acceptance one gives. The ability to accept is dependent upon receiving adequate self-knowledge. "Without consciousness of their own need of forgiveness," Niebuhr has noted, "good people never show mercy towards bad people."⁴⁶ One of the principal examples of this is the way Willie Proudfit and Munn Short demonstrated their acceptance of Percy Munn and Jeremiah Beaumont, respectively, in Night Rider and World Enough and Time. Because Willie and Munn had accepted themselves, they accepted Percy and Jerry for what they were; however, there is some circularity in the relationship because their ability to accept themselves depended upon their ability to see themselves in the "bad" men.

As is often the case, the ability to see the "bad" and accept that all men share the same condemnation is risky. "An evil imperceived cannot threaten us," Coser has commented in his very valuable article, "Visibility of Evil"; therefore, "it cannot upset the complacency of our quolibetic lives."⁴⁷ Each of the people who finds the "burden" of "the responsibility of Time" will find that an easy relationship with mankind is not possible. The achievement of a perspective from which to view and to appreciate the bad in others and in oneself is not a comfortable one. The taking of the conscience of the whole community upon oneself is a difficult task, but it is one which can and should be taken with joy. Another risk is demonstrated in the novels, which Tsanoff has identified. "There is . . . no coming to terms with evil not ever," he said. "Only he who straight forwardly accepts the universe, who accepts it unreservedly as a battleground of

achievement, only he who is thus accepting it is clearly aware of evils to be resisted and overcome."⁴⁸ Without the risk of self-criticism and self-knowledge, we will waste our energy in counter-productive efforts. One must see to forgive, to be forgiven, to accept, to choose to be guilty, to resist what one can.

The third consequence is that acceptance of self in accordance with the osmosis of being makes love possible. "Because there is love," Casper has noted, "the law itself requires something more difficult than resignation: will, action and responsibility."⁴⁹ Lucy Stark in All the King's Men demonstrates this when she tells Jack Burden after the death of Willie that she is resigned to the kind of man that Willie was. She has to believe that he was a great man, if not a good one. She shows Jack the baby which has been born to Miss Frey, by her late son, Tom Stark. She has taken him, adopted him, and named him Willie Stark. She sums it up this way, "Then after I was resigned, God gave me something so I could live." She has the will, action and responsibility to love.

The separation of the true love from the false is as difficult as separating the illusion from the reality. In Meet Me in the Green Glen this is very difficult indeed. In fact, one of the points made in the novel through Cassie Spottwood and Murray Guilfort is that love is, or can be a dream, an illusion in which the dreaming is true, but the dream is a lie. While being reprimanded by Miss Edwina about his abuse of his wife's love, Murray Guildort had this thought. "Love . . . so that is love. To dream a fool dream like that fool Bessie Guilfort, to dream a fool lie like that fool Cassie Spottwood, to dream

a lie and call it truth. And he thought of all the power people moving over the land, moving in streets, standing in doorways, lying in the darkness of houses, all in their monstrous delusion, and so he swept the picture from the mantel." There is a love which is illusion. Alfred Milbank, Murray Guilfort's convention buddy, proved it. "'Yes, Guilfort,' he went on, 'art is all, and a good lie is worth a million facts in any court. Or in any bed. Illusion, Guildort, is the only truth. And as for me, I solemnly affirm that, within the hour, I shall lay out one hundred dollars for a big juicy chunk of Illusion.'" The illusion of sensuality is a lie. Just as when Brad and Lettice, in Flood, could not find love, really, in their sensuality, she eventually called it "wicked foolishness."

Further, love, as Warren well knows, is the source of the seven deadly sins as developed by Virgil's exposition to Dante in the Divine Comedy. The three types of love--bad love, inadequate love and immoderate love--account for all the mortal sins. The sins of pride, envy and wrath are caused by bad love, the love of the wrong things. It is essentially a self-love in the form of self-ambition as analyzed in Chapter Three in the four kinds of pride. Inadequate love causes inaction which is sloth, and immoderate love causes the sins of sensuality treated in Chapter Three as self-love. According to Sigfried Wenzel, the notion of the deadly sins being inordinate love was developed from St. Augustine.⁵⁰ In addition, Warren demonstrated the same difficulty of man's loving well on the basis of his own nature, as Augustine taught; but he does believe that love is possible. Because, if man will undergo the osmosis of being, he will be able to return to

nature and man in the discovery of love and law. And, according to Warren, every awakening is an opportunity for self-definition for good or for evil.⁵¹

The fourth consequence of self-knowledge is the emergence of the self as a genuine moral force. Normally called conscience, this makes its appearance in the willingness of the characters to do what they perceive God wants them to do. This is particularly true of the religious characters. If there is a failure at self-knowledge or a betrayal of earlier conviction in the Lord, there is a turning from the ministry as shown by Seth Parton in Band of Angels. It is possible that outside of Manty's awareness in the novel, Seth also received the osmosis of being as implied by the nonworldly description of Miss Idell whom he had married. Their marital success is implied in the news story of his death and the founding of the Parton School of Theology in Chicago. His conscience would not allow him to return to the ministry after the war, but he would give of himself to see that others would have the opportunity. The impact of the event upon Manty is such that it is likely that she understood their happiness to have been real and genuine. It made her jealous, but it did eventually help her to her own realization that she had to set herself free.

The final example in this section is taken from the discussion between Hugh Miller and Jack Burden in All the King's Men. Miller insisted that while history is blind, men are not; therefore there is a moral force in man which can have an ultimate authority. Those who know themselves can and often do use their conscience as the supreme authority, "[The awareness of evil] is a distinct mark in the long

development of self-consciousness," Weisinger has observed, "the slow process which culminated in the emergency of the individual as a moral force, an individual appealing to conscience as an ultimate authority."⁵²

Failure of Self-Knowledge

In addition to the successful self-realization and the learning how to live successfully in this world of sin and pain, as Ashby Wyndham called it, there is the threat of failure. In the chapter on Nonmoral Evil, the notion of failure as a part of suffering was treated; however, here it is necessary to make some concluding observations upon the role of evil in the failure to achieve self-knowledge. There are five general observations which need to be made. First, those who fail to achieve self-knowledge will not realize their fullest potentials. Second, they have a tendency to turn even the good intention to evil. Third, the unfulfilled participate in the dehumanization which follows from their evil deeds. Fourth, they will project their own faults upon others which will heighten their own alienation. And fifth, they will create some single principle as a pseudo-ultimate concern.

"The man who fails in self-knowledge," Hendry has concluded, "fails to act rightly or even to act at all; he lives in doubt, confusion, error and sin; he fails to realize his fullest potentials as a man."⁵³ Beginning with Percy Munn, Warren has consistently demonstrated the kind of characters Hendry has described in this quotation. It might be an Ikey Sumpter, who simply refuses to acknowledge his responsibility for the evil he has done or Murray Guilfort who does

not put aside his self-ambition long enough to genuinely serve the truth, even for an old friend. His inauthentic behavior with respect to Sunderland and Cassie Spottwood renders this ambitious man unable to fulfill the confidence placed in him by his public office. He has to escape it by self-destruction.

Nor is this fault restricted to the male population of Warren's fictional world. Lucille Christian in Night Rider, Sue Murdock in At Heaven's Gate, Rachel Jordan in World Enough and Time, and Cassie Spottwood in Meet Me in the Green Glen all fail to develop their human potentials by true self-knowledge. Their attempts to find definition fail completely and leave them only lives of misery and sin. This judgment might be too harsh for Lucille who came to Munn at the Proudfit's to say that she could now marry him because she had found the way to live with her guilt. But the coldness of the scene and Munn's inability to get a divorce would prevent their marriage unless they just disregarded his previous marriage and went away; but it was too late for that. The next day Munn left to kill Tolliver and to meet his doom. Her attempts to lose herself in sensuality were counter productive and destructive of the human potentials she had.

Virtually the same thing could be said of most of the women in Warren's novels. Their attempts to find themselves are buried in their sexuality. Sue Murdock is involved in one debauchery after another. From Jerry Calhoun to Slim Sarrett to Jason Sweetwater to death, her experience was one massive flight from herself. She is aware that something is wrong with her, and she on occasion asks Slim or Jason what is wrong with her, but neither of them is able to

sympathetically respond to her need and help her find definition. Her own individual resources are not adequate; therefore, an innocent Black man will die for her murder, while the other men who made such a mess of her life go free. Certainly there is in Sue Murdock's characterization a total illustration of Hendry's observation.

Third, Rachel Jordan Beaumont of World Enough and Time commits suicide in the filthy camp of La Grand' Bosse in the west. She has lost her mind, and she is unable to construct even the vaguest shadow of reality. She was beautiful and bright, but her sin with Fort, her marriage to Jeremiah, her hatred of her mother, her miscarriages, all conspired to keep her from coming to terms with herself. Both Jeremiah and Rachel had attempted to lose themselves in the sensuality of the cave dungeon, but it did not work. They found no true knowledge. She could not define herself. In some ways she is the female Isaac Sumpter. Neither believed in God, and neither found any concept of self. Sin and error, betrayal and denial of the self are all interrelated in her.

Finally, Cassie Spottwood of Meet Me in the Green Glen is an example of one who tried desperately to find herself, but her confession after her disappointment in love came too late. By the time she did confess to the murder of Sunderland, Angello was already found guilty and no one would believe her. She told the truth, but then she had to change the truth to a lie, so she could live. Just as was the case with Rachel, the symbol of Cassie Killigrew Spottwood's failure was her insanity. Old Pearl, who killed the policeman and was responsible for Ashby Wyndham's being in jail, in At Heaven's Gate had become

lonely in jail. She had forsaken one Bible sin, fornication via prostitution, for another, murder. Ashby had brought her from the house of abomination to the jailhouse via the gospel of God's love. When he held her after she shot the policeman she had cursed him hysterically. Madness is the ultimate isolation of failure to obtain self-knowledge.

The person who has not successfully found fulfillment will turn his good to evil. Many cite Ashby Wyndham as an example of one who has done this by his sinful pride in the Lord. He is aware of it at the end; but he is still not able to pray. He is alone and isolated in his misery, but the pain of self-criticism is going on. He recognizes that he did bring the good to evil, and he acknowledges his sin in his pride. There is a sense in which he is an exploiter of those around him for his own ego satisfaction. However, he is taking his punishment. He is a good example too because he illustrates the principle that Cass Mastern articulated later in All the King's Men, that man is never saved, damnation is ever at hand. He cannot rest in his good, it will become evil. Percy Munn found this, Jeremiah Beaumont also found it out. Even Adam Rosenzweig found that the threat of evil coming from the good motive is ever at hand.

Many examples were given above in the previous chapters, but evil and self-knowledge are related precisely by the good being made evil. MacCarland Sumpter tried to love his son. He even lied to cover up for him, but it alienated the son. His love for his son could not cover the rejection Ikey had felt for years. Just as the good that Willie Stark did could not cover the evil that was in his nature or created by him, Irwin was not spared the consequences of his taking

the bribe. He had spared Jack Burden the news that he was really Jack's father, but Jack then took the information and went to give it to Stark, and Irwin committed suicide.

The third result of failure to achieve self-knowledge is the dehumanization of others. If self-knowledge brings a feeling of community, failure causes the loss of the awareness of the community of common guilt. The dehumanization of the Indians as told by Willie Proudfit is a cruel reality of the consequences of the loss of brotherhood in man. Jerry Calhoun in At Heaven's Gate dehumanized his relatives. His aunt, uncle and father are hardly human to him, even after he is taken from jail by his father to return to the old farm place. They somehow are not fully people. Certainly the Blacks in the school in which Manty followed her Godly occupation in Band of Angels after the War were dehumanized by mass handling and condescending treatment. Even Brad Tolliver could not picture Lettice Poindexter as real at first while he was reading her letter at the end of Flood. Warren describes it as follows:

"Goosed to Glory," Bradwell Tolliver said, and thrust the sheets of paper, crumpled, into his side pocket, and again found himself in the grip of wild laughter.

Then he stopped laughing. He slowly began to realize, as you realize the first dull beginnings of a headache, that now, for the first time in all the years, even in the years of the contact and the clutching, of the blending of hopes and the mixing of breaths, Lettice Poindexter was real to him. She had really existed. Somewhere, in her way, she existed now. He marveled, slowly, at that fact. And he wondered, in a slow, powerful, painful way, why he had not, at some time in all the years, realized that fact. And why, at some time, he had not even had the thought of going across whatever thousands of miles necessary, to tell her: to tell her that he knew, at last, that she was real.⁵⁴

Within the next two or three pages of the novel, Brad has come to know that he could not or should not have trusted anything, but the "secret and irrational life of man, which might be the truth of man."

Self-knowledge would not allow the dehumanization of the victims of impersonal acts, even done without the intention of harm. The implications of this for racism in the novels is real. For example, Angelo Passetto is the victim in Meet Me in the Green Glen. He is frequently called "dago," because he is a foreigner. At one time, he is beaten up because he attempts to pass himself off as a Black man even though the people in town know he is not. Further, the role of the other Blacks in the novel, Arlita and Charlene, Sunderland Spottwood's Black mistress and his illegitimate daughter, are placed away and are treated in a dehumanizing fashion. Warren and Ellison maintained that racial resistance, which is very evident in the Negroes in the novels, is "an impulse to maintain identity" in the face of dehumanization.⁵⁵ Coser has also indicated that the role of things such as mental hospitals is to protect the population from the visibility of evil by dehumanizing the inmates, via the "out of sight, out of mind" kind of treatment.⁵⁶ It is significant that Cassie Spottwood, for example, is in and out and into sanatoria as the story of Meet Me in the Green Glen unfolds.

The acts of violence of Jeremiah Beaumont, or Percy Munn among others in the novels are dehumanizing and impersonal. Killing in Wilderness is impersonal. The only way that man can endure the violence he inflicts upon other people is to not see them as people. According to Louise Gossett, dehumanization of others is also

responsible for the actions of exploitation of others.⁵⁷ It is interesting that after Jack Burden comes to view both Tiny Duffy and Sugar Boy as people, suffering beings, capable of hurt and pain in All the King's Men, he is not able to give Sugar Boy the information which would surely lead to the killing of Tiny Duffy. Humanization causes him to spare Duffy. The same principle applies to his treatment of Sadie Burke after he directly and cruelly confronts her with her role in telling Adam Stanton about Stark and Anne Stanton, which led to the murder and the killing. After Jack sees them as people his response to their suffering changes him.

The projection upon others of one's own faults is the fourth consequence of failure of self-knowledge. As indicated earlier in the study, Isaac Sumpter in The Cave totally unaware of his similarity to the people he has condemned for paying the price they have for some ego-satisfaction. He can not see that he has sacrificed his self-respect and his future, in a sense, for a cheaper form of satisfaction than they have. He is just as big a falsifier as Jed Halloway; therefore, he is also a turd. Jeremiah Beaumont was guilty of this because he sought revenge upon Casius Fort because he used Rachel for his self-satisfaction; but certainly, it is clear, from the story itself, that Jeremiah also had used Rachel for his ego-satisfaction, but he forced her to marry him first. Amantha Starr blamed her father and Hamish Bond for her troubles in Band of Angels; but in doing so, she projected to them the denial of freedom, the evil, which she really had in herself. They were both "kind," they both had caused her great pain by their kindness. In the first place, she was not told of her slave status or

not given manumission papers because her father was kind. Second, she initially could not accept the papers from Bond because he was too kind for her to be able to leave. She was betrayed by their kindness. However, she projected her own animosity and judged them harshly because of her projection to them of her own attributes.

Finally, another consequence of the failure of self-knowledge is the giving of oneself to some single mutable principle as an ultimate. Warren has shown this in character after character, and naming them now becomes almost futile. An individual who does not know himself will be tempted to and usually does do things too much, totally ignoring the Delphic inscription with which this chapter began. They fail to obey the second, nothing too much, because they do not do the first, "know thyself." Therefore, they fail to account for their limited, finite, human condition and become laws unto themselves. Throwing any realization of human community to the wind, they furiously attempt to find definition in their belief in something, some justice in a cause, something outside themselves in which they can find meaning. The pride of an individual will cause him to place himself and his own concerns in the position of false ultimates. He will try to become his own god.

CHAPTER V

FOOTNOTES

¹Robert Penn Warren, "Robert Penn Warren and Ralph Ellison: A Dialogue," Reporter, XXXII (1965), 48.

²Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 220.

³Philip Leon, The Ethics of Power: or The Problem of Evil (London, 1935), p. 223.

⁴Tsanoff, p. viii.

⁵Cited by Stanley J. Kunitz and Vineta Colby, eds. Twentieth Century Authors, First Supplement (New York, 1955), p. 1051.

⁶Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 237.

⁷Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 241.

⁸Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 241.

⁹Strandberg, p. 24.

¹⁰Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 242.

¹¹Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 242.

¹²Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 243.

¹³Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 244.

¹⁴Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 245.

¹⁵Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 246.

¹⁶Warren, At Heaven's Gate, p. 196.

¹⁷Warren, Selected Essays, p. 54.

¹⁸John Hicks, "Exploration of Value: Warren's Criticism," South Atlantic Quarterly, LXII (1963), 515.

¹⁹Robert Penn Warren, "A Lesson Read in American Books," New York Times Book Review, LX (December 11, 1955), 33.

²⁰Liliane Frey-Rohn, "Evil from the Psychological Point of View," in Evil, The curatorium of the C. G. Jung Institute, eds. (Evanston, Ill., 1967), p. 185.

²¹H. L. Philp, Jung and the Problem of Evil (London, 1958) pp. 182, 183, citing C. G. Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology (London, 1953), p. 176.

²²Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," p. 241.

²³Alfred Edward Taylor, "Plato," Encyclopaedia Britannica (1962), XVIII, 52.

²⁴Glazier, p. 16.

²⁵Robert Penn Warren, "Why Do We Read Fiction?" Saturday Evening Post, CCXXXV (October 20, 1962), 82.

²⁶Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven, 1952), passim.

²⁷Everett Carter, "The 'Little Myth' of Robert Penn Warren," Modern Fiction Studies, VI (1960), 10.

²⁸Tsanoff, p. 4.

²⁹Hoffman, p. 32.

³⁰Robert B. Heilman, "Tangled Web," in Robert Penn Warren: A Collection of Critical Essays, John Lewis Longley, Jr., ed. (New York, 1965), p. 99.

³¹Shepherd, "Robert Penn Warren as Philosophical Novelist," p. 160.

³²Warren, "William Faulkner," in Selected Essays, p. 67.

³³J. Preston Cole, "Function of Choice in Human Existence," Journal of Religion, XLV (1965), p. 202.

³⁴Louise Y. Gossett, Violence in Recent Southern Fiction (Durham, 1965), p. 62.

³⁵Robert Penn Warren, Brother to Dragons (New York, 1953), pp. 214, 215.

³⁶Cole, p. 200.

³⁷Frey-Rohn, p. 198.

- ³⁸Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 324.
- ³⁹James H. Justus, "The Mariner and Robert Penn Warren," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, VIII (1966), 120.
- ⁴⁰J. M. Spier, Christianity and Existentialism, David Hugh Freeman, Trans. (Philadelphia, 1953), p. ix.
- ⁴¹Grant, p. 27.
- ⁴²Warren, Wilderness, p. 308.
- ⁴³Warren, Meet Me in the Green Glen, p. 251.
- ⁴⁴Carter, p. 4.
- ⁴⁵Frey-Rohn, p. 196.
- ⁴⁶Niebuhr, II, 201.
- ⁴⁷Lewis A. Coser, "Visibility of Evil," Journal of Social Issues, XXV (1969), 106.
- ⁴⁸Tsanoff, p. 400.
- ⁴⁹Leonard Casper, "Trial by Wilderness: Warren's Exemplum," in Robert Penn Warren: A Collection of Critical Essays, John Lewis Longley, ed. (New York, 1965), p. 165.
- ⁵⁰Siegfried Wenzel, "Seven Deadly Sins: Some Problems of Research," Speculum, XLIII (1968), 7, 8.
- ⁵¹Warren, "Knowledge and the Image of Man," pp. 242, 237.
- ⁵²Herbert Weisinger, Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall (East Lansing, 1953), p. 92.
- ⁵³Irene Hendry, "The Regional Novel: The Example of Robert Penn Warren," Sewanee Review, LIII (1945), 89.
- ⁵⁴Warren, Flood, pp. 436, 437.
- ⁵⁵Warren, "Robert Penn Warren and Ralph Ellison," p. 44.
- ⁵⁶Coser, pp. 106, 107.
- ⁵⁷Gossett, pp. 59, 60.

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