CHAPTER V

BAPE AND CORRUPTION OF THE SOUTH
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Faulkner published Sanctuary in 1931. At once this book topped the list of best-sellers in America. College girls and boys found in this sensational story of a coed and her degenerate associates an authentic rendering of some of their own experiences. Critics reviewed the book and praised it for its deft handling of the lurid situations. But, on the whole the public response to the novel was neither wholly laudatory nor completely derogatory. However, the book made Faulkner newsworthy. The problem to-day is whether to treat this novel as a pot-boiler or to include it among the serious works of William Faulkner.

In his preface to the Modern Library Edition of the novel he writes:

This book was written three years ago.
To me it is a cheap idea, because it was deliberately conceived to make money.¹

Strangely, scholars take this light remark of Faulkner seriously and refuse to place Sanctuary beside his major

achieved. Leslie Fiedler maintains:

This book is not the darkest of all
Faulkner's books but dirtiest of all
the dirty jokes exchanged among men
only at the expense of the abdicating
Anglo-Saxon. 2

Undoubtedly, critics have valid reasons for branding this
novel an obscene tale of horror and suffering without any
meaning or significance. But any one who is familiar with
Faulkner's basic pre-occupations finds it extremely difficult
to toe the line of these prejudiced readers of Sanctuary.
Reed says:

What began as a cheap idea did not emerge
as a cheap book. Sanctuary cannot be
dismissed as a pot-boiler. 3

Albert J. Guerard puts the case more emphatically:

Sanctuary is what Dostoevsky would have
called, I think, a poem. Narrowness and
evil and depravity, seen as such and with
precision, but seen also with compassion,
constitute a work of beauty. 4

2 Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in American Fiction,

3 Joseph W. Reed Jr., Faulkner's Narrative, (New Haven

4 Albert J. Guerard, The Triumph of the Novel, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 120.
This novel has certain peculiar features which one does not discover elsewhere in Faulkner's works. The world of *Sanctuary* is essentially the world of the white man. In this novel alone the negro does not figure in any meaningful way. And this is the only novel in which all imaginable crimes of his mythical kingdom, like Gothic rape, murder and lynching take place, and the man who is condemned to death is a white man. In order to intensify its effect of horror Faulkner introduces in this novel the Old Frenchman Place, a decayed house and its anti-social inmates, specially the old man whose eyes look like two slots of phlegm. About the house Faulkner writes:

The house came into sight; above the cedar grove beyond whose black interstices an apple orchard flaunted in the sunny afternoon. It was set in a ruined lawn, surrounded by abandoned grounds and fallen out-buildings. But nowhere was any sign of husbandry - plough or tool; in no direction was a planted field in sight - only a gaunt weather-stained ruin in a sombre grove through which breeze drew with a sad, murmurous sound.

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5 *Sanctuary* (Penguin Modern Classics, 1965), pp.34-35. (All references hereafter to the text will be to this edition)
To this dismal world of cramps, sponges and feels for whom Ruby Goodwin, the common law wife of Lee Goodwin cooks, Faulkner brings a graduate from Virginia who knows to drink like a gentleman and who leaves behind a seventeen-year-old flapper from Oxford to meet her doom and destiny, and later, whose perjured testimony violates all the civilized norms of the ante-bellum Southern society, and finally throws an innocent man to the fury of an irate mob.

Again, this is the only novel in which Faulkner introduces all classes and all shades of characters from his mythical county — aristocrats, gangsters, legislators, lawyers, judges and the keeper of a whore house and her entourage. And these agents directly or indirectly involve the entire machinery of the state, church and law. If the scene of the corn-cob rape is a remote ruined house the trial takes place in the old court-house and the lynching takes place very near the heart of the town. In this dark world where death is standing behind every incurable patient, Horace Benbow, an aristocrat desperately fights to right a wrong, and ultimately discovers the basic pattern of evil and quietly accepts his fate in a
world where justice has become a pure abstraction and a meaningless concept.

If Faulkner's intention was to write only a horrific tale to make money, certainly, the story of Temple Drake and her impotent ravisher and his anti-social past was enough to serve his purpose. The corn-cob rape by an invalid sadist gangster was startling enough to attract the attention of the reader of the 'depression era' in America. But the subsequent development and the end of the novel clearly demand a more serious perusal of this grim tale. More than Temple's total degeneration and Popeye's desire to submit to death, Horace Benbow's defeat troubles the reader. And certainly, these two centres of the novel clearly indicate that Faulkner conceived the novel at a deeper level to communicate to his reader his sense of evil and corruption.

A brooding sensitive young man, familiar with the decline of his region, its economic plight and cultural degradation, Faulkner at this stage of his life was fully competent to examine the decaying moral structure of his society. Temple Drake, daughter of a judge from Jackson
symbolizes this degradation of the South. Therefore, it is not difficult to admit that the idea of the rape may be cheap but the image which dominates Faulkner's unconscious was not simple. The title of the novel and the name of the girl clearly suggest that Faulkner was possessed by a very powerful image which ultimately produced not only a Southern archetype but a modern archetype too.

In a sanctuary where Faulkner expected purity and innocence, and in a temple where he wanted to discover a deity, he discovered evil in its purest form and corruption of a deep nature. Once we recognize the nature and value of images used by Faulkner in Sanctuary, we realize that in writing the book he was not writing about a flapper but about his region. He was deeply involved not only in the regional tragedy but was writing about the 'gloomy wrongs', which he discovered in the irrational scheme of the universe.

In the beginning Faulkner introduces the two major characters of the novel - Horace Benbow, an intellectual, a refined classicist and an aristocrat, a lawyer by profession who leaves his wife and step-daughter in sheer
disgust to spend his time quietly in Jefferson. He is thirsty and comes to a stream to drink water where he encounters Popeye, a typical character of Faulkner's imaginary kingdom. Faulkner uses either metallic or mechanical images to describe this creature of guilt and filth. Richard P. Adams writes:

Popeye like Pluto, is associated with death, with darkness, with the colour black, with money, and especially with shadows. 

Popeye is rich and buys illicit liquor from Lee Goodwin for the Memphis market. His face gives the impression of emptiness or of stamped tin. He does not speak but acts on the slightest provocation. Benbow's encounter with Popeye in the beginning of the novel is significant. Popeye suspects Benbow and asks one or two awkward questions. Once he is convinced that Benbow is harmless, he promises to help him and brings him to his place. Horace spends some time in the company of Ruby Lamar who cooks for her husband and his men. She finds Benbow simple and innocent.

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Finally, in a truck owned by Popeye, Benbow returns to Jefferson. In Jefferson he meets his sister Haroissa, now living with her son and an old lady.

Horace Benbow discovers his sister's preference for Gowan Stevens, a young graduate from Virginia but 'vaguely a collegiate' who apes the aristocracy of Virginia and knows how to handle a beaker full of wine. This he considers a very great accomplishment and thinks it qualifies him to take his place among gentlemen. About such men John Arthos writes:

Temple Drake and her college friends were the spoiled children of a class of people with pretensions to superiority, a class that had become morally bankrupt through accepting the superficial standard of a suburban civilization.

This young man finally takes Temple Drake whose name was written on the lavatory walls, to the Old Frenchman Place, where ordinary social and state laws do not prevail.

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When Conan is about to reach his destination, he dashes his car against a tree and comes to Goodwin's place to buy more liquor. Here, he fights with the driver, sustains injuries and in an unconscious state spends the night in the house of Lee Goodwin. The next day he leaves the house without a word for Temple. Temple, now alone and helpless seeks shelter with Ruby Goodwin. Ruby in her own way first tries to protect her husband from this attractive girl from Oxford. Later, she advises Temple to leave the place before sunset. But curiously, Temple ignores Ruby's practical advice and clings to the place. She warns her again and tells her in simple words that she is too young to know the ways of men. But Temple simply does not take her seriously. This behaviour of Temple is quite puzzling. Critics try to analyse her motives, her fantasies, her fears and her desires to know and avoid the sexual act. Perhaps, Temple feels that she is safe here and this world is also governed by the same social laws which govern the polite society of Oxford. Consequently, she ignores Ruby's advice which is sincere and practical and acts in a very queer fashion just to attract the attention of the inmates of the blighted house. Finally, she provokes
Popeye to rape her with a corn-cob. Popeye, not only rapes Temple, but shoots Tommy, a simpleton who tries to protect this slim fascinating girl from a University town. The next day, Popeye takes Temple to a sporting house in Memphis, 'a town of frontier commerce, tough, unkempt, sin-ridden, the murder capital of the United States'. Here Miss Reba looks after her establishment with dignity and authority. Miss Reba first of all calls a doctor to help Temple who is bleeding profusely. Temple, who happens to be the daughter of a judge, after a little hesitation accepts the place as her retreat from the 'loud' world. She never makes any serious efforts to escape from this sporting house. On the contrary when Popeye brings to her a young man to satisfy her sexual need, she readily accepts this man. In this house Temple uses Popeye’s money and Red’s sexual energy. One inmate of the house later reports that Temple and Red lived in the room like two naked snakes. Popeye watched their sex game from a hole.

The macabre corn-cob rape takes place in the Old Frenchman place and Temple gracelessly accepts Red’s sexual aggression in Miss Reba’s sporting house. Strangely, Faulkner does not give any useful information nor does he drop any
meaningful hints to explain her queer behaviour in this situation. Even ordinary girls would rebel in such a humiliating condition. But Temple with very little protest adjusts herself to this unprecedented degeneration and degradation. On the contrary whenever it suits her purpose she cajoles her impotent revisher whom she addresses as "Daddy" and gets money from him. She shamelessly uses Red to gratify her sexual desire.

Faulkner's strategy in not entering into the mind of the victim is not a simple one. He is not interested in Temple's thinking or her jerky reactions to the situation; his folk-imagination works on an altogether different plane. Like a Greek tragedian he is not concerned with the subtleties of the human consciousness or of an individual. He is concerned with the total pattern of evil which he discovers in the cosmic scheme. This becomes clear when Temple appears in the court-room to give her testimony in the murder case of Tommy in which the innocent Lee Goodwin is involved.

Horace Benbow, brother of Narcissa, who knows the background of the case is the only man in the novel who is interested in justice and Lee's safety. In his attempt
to save Lee from the clutches of death, he approaches Temple in Miss Roba’s establishment to ascertain in detail the real happenings on the day of the murder. Temple narrates the entire story without the least embarrassment and perhaps this encounter with Horace provides her with an opportunity to talk about an experience which not only initiates her into the ways of evil but which fully corrupts her. Temple’s bizarre narration, her tone, her odd gestures offend Horace, but he listens to her lurid tale very patiently. From her he gathers that for the corn-cob rape Popoye was responsible and that, when he discovers that Tomy was lurking in the background he simply uses his pistol to shoot him. With this piece of authentic information and Ruby’s deposition before the court, Horace was sure to win the case.

On the other hand Narcissa’s role in the novel is sinister in the sense that she works against her brother’s plan. First she shows a lack of faith in her brother’s legal competence and openly tells him that there are better lawyers in Jefferson who could handle this dirty case with a greater tact and force. She promises to meet the expenses herself. For Narcissa, the case merely implies crime and punishment. She is very much against Benbow’s
taking up the case and tells him curtly that a well-known family of the region should not involve itself in a case in which the culprit is a confirmed outcast and his woman is a 'dope-fiend-whore'. But Horace views the whole situation in a different light. His fight is not against a formidable enemy whose money controls all the agencies and human institutions in which justice is enshrined, but he is fighting desperately to convince himself that ultimately the whole cosmic scheme is rational and that in this dark world justice finally prevails. But slowly he realizes that the world of his vision and the real world, are not the same. Here Miss Reba proudly owns her whore-house, here legislator Clarence Snopes works for his personal gain, here the district attorney's ultimate concern is not to see that justice should prevail and here a Jew lawyer from Memphis with his sinister presence vitiates the atmosphere of the court room, and finally here the symbol of justice, the old court house of the Yoknapatawpha county itself is not at all concerned with upholding the human factors which the case implies. Even then, he has not lost all hope. He has full faith in Ruby's correct deposition and its authenticity. Ruby,
certainly presents the case with lucidity before the court. This inspires Horace to work for Lee Goodwin's acquittal. But finally, when Temple appears in the court room as an innocent victim and the district attorney presents her to the jury once again, Horace becomes sceptical about the outcome of the trial.

The district attorney faces the judge and says:

"I offer as an evidence this object which was found at the scene of the crime." 8

A little later he cross-examines Temple. First of all he asks her name but Temple does not open her mouth. Again he repeats:

"What's your name?"...
"Temple Drake", Temple said.
"Your age?"
"Eighteen".
"Where is your home?"
"Memphis", she said. 9

8 Sanctuary, p. 226.
9 Ibid., p. 227.
The district attorney only asks such questions which help Temple and he wins sympathy for her. Thus he distorts the entire process of justice. And finally she says that it was Lee who raped her and killed Tommy.

In this way without the slightest show of consternation she testifies before the elders against Lee Goodwin. After the testimony the district attorney turns towards the judge and says:

"... your honour ... you have listened to this horrible, this unbelievable, story which this young girl has told; you have seen the evidence and heard the doctor's testimony; I shall no longer subject this ruined, defenseless child to the agony of..."

Immediately after the testimony, her father appears on the scene and she simply disappears after giving the most perjured testimony which involves the life of an innocent man and his three dependents. The same night justice-seekers of Jefferson lynch Goodwin in the most unjust manner.

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Sanctuary, p. 229.
The question which troubles critics is, why Temple gives a false testimony when she fully knows that the murderer of her protector Sonny is Popeye. Prof. Brooks explains:

It is a gangster novel of a sort. The brilliance of the writing cannot conceal that fact. In a gangster story, it is almost impossible to get the witness, including the gangster’s victims, to testify against him. The gangster leads a charmed life for the lethargic community, the corrupt public official, and ordinary citizen, paralyzed with fear, allow him to escape punishment. 11

Others believe that in order to save the family honour, Temple testifies against Lee Goodwin. But Prof. Brooks does not agree with this contention. He maintains that if we study the novel in a chronological order, we discover that before the trial Temple was not in touch with her family. Consequently, Prof. Brooks holds that family honour was not the problem with Temple. And Temple’s

behaviour also supports his contention. She is certainly not Miss Rosa to condemn power and glory. Perhaps she grew completely indifferent to all moral concerns. Once she lost the values of her class, she failed to discover her own set of positive values in her society. This lack of moral principle we discover in Narcissa also. But the problem with Narcissa was totally different. She was fully governed by the ethos of her class which had lost a real operative thrust in a modern context. On the contrary, Miss Reba, the keeper of the whore-house clings to certain healthy, human values and even retains a real core of values which sustains the family.

Again, the trial scene which Faulkner handles with great precision and accuracy suggests that Temple was completely helpless in the presence of the Jew lawyer from Memphis. Popeye managed the whole thing to his advantage and his plan worked with the corrupt world of Jefferson. The power of money proved too strong and before it a motherless Southern girl could not take a firm moral stand. It is also said that the evil in Popeye and Temple worked in complete unison and Temple
was hardly aware of the nature of the moral crisis. But it is equally certain that Temple's corruption was so complete that to expect anything normal from her was out of question. Thirty years later, she makes it clear that Popeye compelled her to make false statements before the court of law.

Those who are familiar with the psychology of the depression era, find nothing abnormal in Temple's behaviour, her choice of willed evil. Here is a girl who is in search of real sensation. The way she clings to the old Frenchman Place, clearly indicates that she was actually waiting to be raped. It is clearly evident from the narrative that Ruby was ready to help her. But she rejects her help and acts in a manner which finally entices an impotent voyeurist to rape her. No wonder, this girl goes against the normal course of law to defy all social conventions to assert herself. Her perjured testimony in a sense takes the form of rebellion against the social and moral constraints of her time.

Dr. L.S. Rubie who analysed the behaviour pattern of Temple Drake writes:

But the subtle and confusing thing is
that she destroys first not those who
have hurt her, but those who have helped
her. She kills the lover that Popeye
procures for her. She kills Goodwin,
the bootlegger, by giving false testimony
against him. She crushes the lawyer who
tries to help. It is only indirectly
and in the very end that her taunts
help to drive Popeye himself into a
virtual suicide.\footnote{12}

If we read Eubie's essay carefully we come to the conclusion
that Temple hated 'men'. She hated her father and her four
strong brothers. Naturally, she hated Lee Goodwin, 'a man'.

Forty years later, critics are better equipped to
analyse the Faulknerian mode of apprehension of reality.
And it is not difficult to explain the abnormal behaviour
of Temple Drake. In portraying her, Faulkner's energy
worked on many levels. On a primary level Temple is a
simple girl who is not fully familiar with the chivalric
tradition of the South and becomes an innocent prey to a
group of people who are not at all worried about the
status of a virgin in the Southern society. In this group

\footnote{12 Lawrence S. Eubie, William Faulkner's 'Sanctuary', in
Faulkner: A Collection of Critical Essays (ed.)
pp. 141-142.}
one can include even Gowan Stevens who was finally responsible for leaving her to the world of criminals and feebees. To be fair, even the very well-informed critics of Faulkner ignore the significance of the scene of crime, the Old Frenchman Place. In Faulkner's moral pattern this house is not simply one of the abandoned houses occupied by only those who carry on a profitable trade to spend colourful nights either in Memphis or in the nearby town. It is a place which stands for certain moral aberrations. In Faulkner's private kingdom every place has its historical context and more than that some moral significance. The Old Frenchman Place originally stands for the older order of the South which was butted by inhuman exploitation and sustained by the superhuman pride of the old planters. After the Civil War this place was reduced to a grand ruined edifice. Now, anyone who comes to this place is bound to be contaminated. It seems the place itself is under a curse. Only moral degenerates like Snopes and his cohorts can manage this part of the country where the ruined house stands.

Unfortunately Temple comes to this place and suffers more than a human disgrace. It appears that Faulkner intentionally
selects this place in his mythical county for the most revolting sexual orgy. Olga Vickery writes:

The men at the Old Frenchman Place, however, do not know the rules of her game and have no intention of permitting her to establish them. For then, the only relationship between a man and a woman is sexual; and crude and violent though it may be, it still possesses a vitality and forcefulness which at once repels and attracts Temple. 13

Again, one very important point which critics overlook is Temple's repetition of the sentence, 'My father is a judge'. Even at the moment of an intense spiritual crisis she fails to remember God and spontaneously utters, 'My father is a judge'. This obsession with a father figure is not without meaning. It is amply evident that Temple comes from a professional class where the father's position is still important but in Temple's family the old presbyterian tradition is no longer operative. Indirectly, Faulkner suggests that the professional class has deviated from the traditional society of the old South. Temple's degradation is complete because she

comes from a home where the traditional norms of the plantation aristocracy are no longer in vogue. Faulkner was fully conscious of this fact and nowhere in the novel, not even indirectly does he suggest that the Drakes belong to the class of the Sartorisces or the Compsons. Consequently, when Temple betrays Horace she has no qualms about her immoral act, no misgivings. Perhaps she feels very little about her unjust act and learns nothing from her meaningless suffering and its effect on the people around her.

William Van O'Connor looks at the whole thing in a very different light. He is neither worried about Temple's motive nor about Popeye's fear of his sexual inadequacies. He lifts up the whole problem to a different plane. He writes:

Popeye is sometimes said to represent amoral modernism. He is impotent, but with the aid of natural lust (Red), he corrupts Southern womanhood (Temple), and she becomes his ally. Formalized Tradition (Horace Benbow, the lawyer) tries to defend Goodwin who is accused of the murder of Tommy, but the amoral modernist (the politicians, the townspeople, and Eustace Graham, the district attorney) acc to it that Goodwin is
lychd. Faulkner himself said that Poppyo was "all allegory". Oddly,

near the end of the story, Faulkner attempts to account for his psycholo-
geally and naturally, by recounting Poppyo's childhood, thereby
destroying some of his effectiveness as a symbol of social modernism.14

This neat schematic reduction of the central problem of the novel no doubt has its own merit. At least it explains vividly Faulkner's hatred for finance capitalism and its power to corrupt anything that is precious and rare. Poppyo, son of a professional strike-breaker and the grandson of a pyromaniac, invalid saint, suffering from syphilis, almost rootless and without connection, manages to become rich. And once he discovers the power of money he is ready to go to any length to misuse his power to destroy the conventional values which society tries to preserve at any cost. O'Connor's analysis to a very great extent brings to light this aspect of the novel. But this analysis does not fully explain the other important elements of the novel. The total meaning

of the narrative is neither present in Repaye's temporary triumph nor in Bebo's moral defect. Certainly these two threads contribute to the meaning of the novel. But one becomes conscious that Repaye is not presenting a fable which ultimately ends with the virtual suicide of a powerful antagonist. He is presenting a situation - a modern situation, - a sanctuary and a temple where we discover things we are not supposed to discover - corruption, moral aberration and complete disintegration of social norms. Conrad comments:

Interaction with the general depauperity, the picture of the time and place, is Paulimer's deeper vision of evil embedded in the impotent Repaye and the sacred Temple in law nervous animal lust. Sheims in a more than ordinary, "normal" corruption. Repaye reaches us in part through traditional symbolism. Evil as blindness, as holiness, as melancholy. 13

On the other hand in the minor characters of the novel like Ruby Goodwin, who once prostituted herself, we find a woman who is ready to compromise her honour to save her man once again from the tyranny of law. Even Miss Bela the owner of the "Sporting House", emerges as a better

As soon as the ladies of Jefferson, who compelled Ruby Goodman to leave the cheap house. Faulkner's intention in *Sanctuary* was to find out those perennial sources of values which food and nourish humanity. O'Connor's allegorical interpretation overlooks this very important aspect of the novel.

Obviously, in *Sanctuary*, Faulkner makes a serious attempt to present the new way of life in the South. The agrarian South is no longer the case and apex the industrially advanced North, a North which never takes very kindly to the Southern way of life. Once a region known for its moral pretensions and chivalric tradition, it is no more governed by its old aristocratic families. Govan Stevens, a new Southerner, whose culture is purely superficial, attracts the daughter of a judge from Jackson because he owns a car. This attraction for outward glamour finally ruins Temple Brooks. If any one is responsible for throwing Temple into the hands of degenerates, it is Govan himself. Later, in *Requiem for a Nun* he expiates his guilt, but perhaps it was too late to redeem a sinner who had established an enduring and deep connection with the forces of evil.
Horace Bonbow, the ineffective idealist of the novel, not only fails in his mission, but narrowly escapes the fate of Lee Goodman. The irate mob in a bid to restore justice does not question it even for a minute when the court imposes it on an innocent, Horace returns to his world, the world which shows complete indifference to the serious concerns of life. Faulkner's tale which is full of horror and grotesque situations does not communicate to many critics anything serious about the universe in which man is planted and condemned to stick to a tardy existence. But in this inferno of the tortured souls the journey of this laureate of peace and benevolence is not entirely meaningless. Like a true romantic, Horace not only fails to discover June, but finds the vapour festering and sickening. Little Bello's affair and his ten years with his wife and his sister Narcissa point ultimately to the same unpalatable truth. Even Ruby Goodman who wins the sympathy of Horace Bonbow finally offers her body for some sort of compensation. In Ruby's case it is not unnatural because the only relationship she understands is one which involves sex, and offers what she thinks
most acceptable to a kind lawyer. But Benbow very
sharply reacts to her offer:

O tempora! O nores! O bell! Can
you stupid normals never believe that
any man, every man - you thought that
was what I was coming for? You thought
that if I had intended to, I'd have
waited this long.\(^1\)

And after a minute's confusion he again says:

but can't you see that perhaps a man
might do something just because he
knew it was right, necessary to the
harmony of things that it be done.\(^2\)

Through this painful spiritual journey Horace
ultimately realises that absolute justice does not exist
in the moral scheme of a woman. On the contrary it
seems as if she has an affinity with evil. At least
Sanctuary shows that the Good which Benbow seeks through
'sanctuary' and 'temple' is certainly not the native of
this blighted planet. Horace's disillusionment is all

\(^1\) *Sanctuary*, p. 219.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 219.
the more poignant because through justice he is in search of good and thus too in human institutions. Finally, he comes to the conclusion that these human institutions are not only imperfect but are utterly corrupt and could be easily manoeuvred. The world of Sanctuary is the post-war world in which money is not only potent enough to rape a symphony orchestra, but it is strong enough to defile the holy sources of the civilized world itself. To complete this cycle of violence and corruption Roper, a sybarite quietly accepts hanging for a crime which he never even contemplated. Whether the last chapter of the novel realises the impact of the narrative or deepens it, remains a controversial issue, but it certainly presents a world in which a man with a very shady background can influence the course of justice and can unsettle the entire social structure.

Now, after a close reading of the text and an analysis of the total context in which Faulkner allows his 'cheap idea' to grow and mature and his image to dominate the structure, one is in a position to see Sanctuary in the right perspective. Prof. Brooks warns the reader of Faulkner that it is misleading to read his work as a symbolic presentation of a human fact or
as a regional tale of horror and violence. One finds his
wrongly timed and useful. First of all Temple is not
the symbol of 'deflowered virginity'. She does not
embode Faulkner's anti-virgin stance. Temple is very
such a living person. Her close association with Popoye
is not a mechanical contrivance of Faulkner, but as
Joseph Motzner testifies, has its basis in real life. In
this way characters and situations used in the novel are
certainly not the figments of a neurotic imagination.
Faulkner handles this regional story with utmost care and
transforms it into a gripping tale of permanent
significance.

Sanctuary is truly Faulkner's new South. In this
sanctuary we often meet with anti-social characters or
such characters as are ineffective in this world,
dominated as it is by the money-hoards. Most of them
either come from the professional class or subscribe to
a system of values which go against the higher principles
of life. Corn Stevens, who in the later novel of
Faulkner, tries to make excuses for his sin is not strong
enough to change the life-style of Temple Drake. She
remains a fallen woman. Only Nancy's supreme sacrifice
saves her soul and puts her on the road of redemption.
Malcolm Cowley maintains that the novel is about the rape and corruption of the South. He writes:

Sanctuary is not a connected allegory, as one critic explained it, but neither is it a mere accumulation of pointless horrors. It is an example of the Freudian method turned backward being full of sexual nightmares that are in reality social symbols. It is somehow connected in the author's mind with what he regards as the rape and corruption of the South.

Cowley's interpretation is more comprehensive. The only problem which this approach poses is that though this Southern tale is rooted in a locality, it ultimately transcends the geographical boundary and speaks for the human condition. The three major characters of the novel stand for three different social scales. And no one doubts even for a minute that Faulkner shows any sympathy for Popeye or Temple. These two agents of evil—'foster-children of decayed lust' work together in a world where the values of the ante-bellum South do not operate.

Horace Benbow becomes conscious of his destiny and the

destiny of his region which once produced Lee and Forrest and now is governed by the Savages - aerial nomadists, ruthless competitors and the builders of the finance empire. About the total impact of the novel Guerard says:

There is no redemption in Sanctuary other than the redemption of art. The vision is at best one of stoic defeat, but concludes in despair and a recognition of the void: horses returning to the horror of life with Delic; Popoyo refusing to appeal his absurd sentence; Temple yowling in the Luxembourg gardens; in the season of rain and death. 19

Harry Lidean Campbell and Ruel B. Foutter also see the novel in the same light:

... in Sanctuary, the male protagonist Popoyo, impotent from birth, struggles in a futile and masochistic fashion to fulfill his sex craving and, becoming deadly tired of its constant thwarting, submits without struggle, with relief even, to a death, he could easily have escaped. The female protagonist, Temple Drake, portrayed as a dabber in collegiate sex, endures two rapes, the second of which leaves her a seeming

19 Albert J. Guerard, The Triumph of the Novel, p. 120.
sympathetic. Middle-aged Horace
Bonho leaves his wife, who had left
a former husband for him, and passes
ineffectually through the story
troubled by fantasies and of incestuous
love for his step-daughter, Della.
The minor characters display other
variations on these sexual themes.23

From the above account it is evident why even today
critics hesitate to place Sanctuary with Faulkner's major
achievement. Here Faulkner does seem to fail to
integrate violence and horror to his total vision of
evil and this happens only because in Sanctuary, Faulkner
seems to exploit unduly the social context of the South
and its present moral disintegration. Again, he is
not always in a position to link the ophomoral with the
permanent source of moral degradation. Consequently,
Sanctuary takes the curve but falls to achieve the full
circle of a modern tragedy. Even then, without any
strong hesitation however, for all its appearance to
the contrary, one could state that Sanctuary is not
merely a local tale but a tale with a deeper meaning.

23 Harry Hedden Campbell and Ruel B. Porter, William
Faulkner: A Critical Appraisal, (Norman:
Mosley Williams sums up:

...the true and ultimate check of the novel is not to be found in the single grotesque episode in which a girl is raped with a corn-cob. It is to be found in the larger pattern of evil and injustice of which this episode is one rare instance. It is a pattern of evil and a vision of the world which is hardly comparable with anything else Faulkner has written, though it does have important unexplored connections with the rest of his work. In this novel at least, Faulkner presents us with a bleak assertion that the human body is not a temple of holy spirit; and with an equally bleak assertion that, for men, there is no sanctuary.

The conclusion is not far to seek. The novel belongs to the same tragic realm. The only difference is theirs in his major works Faulkner has remained faithful to his personal vision and exploits the immediate social context against the background of the larger historical process, he seems to miss his usual depth in Sanctuary. But one can hardly ignore its power to move those who are interested in the psychic turmoil of a great tragic artist who uses course raw material to fashion the images of eternity.

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