CHAPTER TWO

FUSION OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

The context of an utterance, then is best thought of as its grace external or physical setting, but rather as the total set of conditions that has in fact determined its recurrence and form. . . 31

I want my ideas to be expressed so precisely the very minimum of room for interpretation is left. Indeed I would go further and say that to the extent that a reader can impose his own imagination on my works, then the piece of writing is a failure, I want to see my [vision]. . . 32

The oeuvres of William Faulkner, Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren project their sense of the past and how it shaped their mind and art. Their consciousness of the past concerns itself with the loss of intersubjectivity in the present owing to the greatest accent placed on materiality. Furthermore all the three fictionalists place the stress on the face of life that without intersubjectivity the concept of love reduces itself into a myth. It is necessary then to study the views of these three American greats on the level of bilateral perspective.

It is an established fact that William Faulkner, Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren are outstanding Southern fictionalists. Their principal interest lies in

their deep rootedness to South. It is their region that has fired their imagination. And therefore there is that actual awareness of moment, milieu and race. All the three creative artists have something in general and that is their Southern consciousness. They believed in the singularity of the South and project its rich heritage. Being period and place artists William Faulkner, Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren have traced the colourful patterns of the South in their oeuvres. It is their regionalism that lends strength and reality and charm to their fictions. This is quite explicit in their achievements.

Faulkner observes:

I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it and that by sublimating the actual into the apocryphal I would have complete liberty to use whatever talent I might have to its absolute top. I opened up a gold mine of other people, so I created a cosmos of my own...  

One can therefore safely argue that the fictions of William Faulkner, Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren are Southern to the core.

William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren demand comparison for they concern themselves with the South of America, its past, its present and future.

The textuality of their oeuvres lies in the Southern culture of the past qualified by glory, innocence, purity and faith. The present decadence anticipates the

33 Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery eds., William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, p.82.
extinction of the great virtues of the South. Yet again both the writers extend their notion on the same subject matter. But in their regional focus one could trace marginal at times striking differences concerning Southern myth.

William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren disclose vividly the three essential phases of culture: the past of glory, the present decadence and the future that forebodes the extinction of Southern values. Moreover, they educate the reader to realise that one cannot lead an isolated life. Man’s existence depends on his healthy relationship with others.

Faulkner argues:

... the mind fuses past, present and future. Because we think beyond clock measured time and because what we do today is shaped by what happened yesterday. yesterday today and tomorrow as is : Indivisible one . . .  

Faulkner fuses the past and the present and thereby evaluates and interprets the present. Robert Penn Warren has also accepted this viewpoint of Faulkner in one of his interviews. Thus intersubjectivity is emphasised in the works of Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren. Richard Sale makes a pointed observation:

... the sense of the past and the sense of the present are somehow intertwined constantly. . . .

Being ardent admirers of the Southern community of the past, William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren imbibed the values of the past by giving extraordinary

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34 Edmond L. Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, p.31
values to the Southerners and general importance to others. Both the writers favour male perspectives which get balanced against the female perspective of Eudora Welty. It ought to be noted that intersubjectivity relates to themes and ideas and operates on both the comparative and contrastive.

As stated earlier William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren suffuse their works with Southern myth. As faithful Southerners myth fascinated Faulkner and Penn Warren. Love for the region and the longing for the Southern myth projected in their fictions. Yet again one detects a contrast in their treatment of myth. Incidentally they admirably relate myths to real life situations. In other words the patterns of life are made meaningful and relevant through the myths.

For William Faulkner,

Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi with Jefferson as the country seat, is both a mythical and an actual region. Reality and myth are difficult to separate because Faulkner has transcribed the geography, the history and the people of northern Mississippi and he has also transmuted them...

Similarly Kentucky serves as a principal background for the works of Robert Penn Warren who affirms that myths serve as the medium to expose the hidden truths of the Promised Land that he adored.

Eudora Welty gets identified as a Southern fictionalist because of the sense of place. And Zeitgeist sense of time serves as an important element in her novels. She insists that a writer needs to keep an eye upon the ages. She

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emphatically said that life fully lived involves time and place and complex relationship with other human beings. Despite her love for travels far and wide abroad, her home has won a privileged place in her fictions. Her stories are set in the South and her characters are interesting, lively and talkative. Her characters are types as one would come across in Jackson. She asserts that there is a close link between fiction and the real world. Her open confession runs thus:

What I'm trying to do is write about life as I see it, and I have to define it. I set a stage within the frame-work as I see it around me, which I think I would do wherever I lived, whether it was Norway or Tokyo, because I feel there is a close connection between the fiction and the real world. . . .

But then Eudora Welty favours comparison with William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren.

The South provides her with ample subject matter. In fact the sense of place is deeply embedded in the fictions of the three Southern artists. "They never fail to bring out the salient features of the South." They made valuable use of the Southern materials. The three fictionalists experienced a deep sense of belongingness to the South. Eudora Welty lives in the midst of the people she writes about for she is part of it. The Southern element embellished in the fiction is broadly the intersubjectivity that binds the three writers. Thematically they get linked together. William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren are mainly

concerned with human relationships as between man and man, woman and man, brother and sister and other kinds of filial relationship. They very minutely and very specifically examine the human relationship giving due importance to their South.

The Sound and the Fury, Faulkner's favourite among his novels won him the Nobel prize. The novel examines the strange human relationship that was prevalent in a decadent aristocratic society. This novel has won a privileged place in the heart of the creator. He once said that he has "written his guts" into The Sound and the Fury. Many of his admirers believe that it is a brilliant work with exceptional technical skill and one of the greatest novels written in the twentieth century. William van O'cannor aptly says that The Sound and the Fury is a modern novel in the impressionistic tradition of James, Conrad, Crane, Ford Madox Ford and Joyce. 

The novel is wholly Southern bringing out the gradual decline of the Compson household in all respects. It is also based on the history of a family living in the past. Compson the head of the family is witty but often succumbs to alcohol. His wife Caroline Compson is a complaining woman who is quite inefficient to maintain the family traditions of the past. Edmond Volpe records:

> The adults of the family are lost souls, weak, ineffectual relics of a vanished society.

Mr. Compson appears as a helpless father who can do nothing to improve the standard of living. He places his trust entirely on Quentin that after his

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39 Ibid., p.129
education he will uplift the declining family honour and status. It was a rude shock for him when Quentin commits suicide. His wife is portrayed as a woman devoid of love and affection. She is proud of her high morals and religious feelings. She is a neurotic absorbed in her own world of faded honour and glories. She is invariably found lying in her bedroom with psychosomatic headaches. She can never be in the company of her children. As she shuns reality she gets alienated from her children. Her children long for the maternal love, especially Quentin. He recollects a scene from a child's book that has a bearing on his parents:

When I was little there was a picture in one of our books, a dark place into which a single weak ray of light came slanting upon two faces lifted out of the shadow. You know what I'd do if I were king? she never was a queen or a fairy she was always a king or giant or a general I'd break that place open and drag them out and I'd whip them good. It was torn out, jagged out. I was glad. I'd have to turn back to it until the dungeon was mother herself she and father upward into weak light holding hands and us lost somewhere below even then without even a ray of light. . . .

Quentin gives a vivid account of the indifferent attitude of the adults.

The fiction The Sound and the Fury projects Quentin as a dominant schizophrenic character. Though an intellectual, he is emotionally frail. He is a

weak eyed bat who cannot face the harsh realities of life. To avoid reality Quentin secludes himself from the rude noisy world. Quentin's life is an utter failure. Edmond Volpe observes:

His [Quentin's] emotional difficulties drive him to defy time and his physical and intellectual development by remaining a child. . . .

The major cause for Quentin's tragedy are his father and mother. They are his principal enemies.

For Mrs. Compson the one and only who commands her devotion is Jason. Quentin is partly influenced by his maternal abandonment, which he feels acutely, to intensify his attachment to Caddy into fixation. . . .

His constant tussle with reality reaches its climax when his sister Caddy soils the honour of his family by losing her virginity. The relationship between the brother and the sister is stronger and more complicated than the normal tie between brother and sister. Quentin being governed by his passions becomes emotionally dependent on his sister. The observation in the American literature is worth recording here:

For all the Compson children the emotions have been given the unhealthy tinge of an ordeal on affliction, so that

for them we are justified in speaking of passions in the double sense of feeling and suffering . . . .

Again the father underestimates the passions of his son. His view of passion holds no good for Quentin:

Mr. Compson advocates that the rational person disavow his own passion as time's minion, a weakness and "impure property". His alcoholism is his suicidal tribute to — and Faulkner's comment on — this stoic aim. The philosophy the father offers ends not by diminishing Quentin's pain but by threatening its significance . . . .

William Faulkner has great admiration and love for his female character Candace Compson or Caddy. He spoke of Caddy as his favourite character. In analysing the character of Caddy, Faulkner once again stresses the fact that man cannot like in isolation and that he needs a healthy relationship with others. This is completely lacking in the members of the Compson family.

Caddy can be claimed as the chief figure in the novel. Benjy and Quentin appear helpless without Caddy. And Caddy had to step in the place of her mother to provide love and affection to her brothers. She is subject to physical and mental decadence. Jason's main object in life is to run after money. As for Quentin he is passionate and selfish, who cannot digest Caddy's relationship with any other man. It is Benjy the demented who is attached to his sister.

45 Ibid. p.149
It is significant that Caddy is the only lively and loving member in the family. The love and compassion she has for Benjy and Quentin is immense. There is no selfish motive behind the love of Caddy. She begs her brother to take care of their father and Benjy after she is gone. She demands a promise from Quentin that Benjy on no account should be sent to an asylum. Caddy is presented as a neglected girl who receives no affection from her family. Her attitude to love and life is normal. Therefore it is quite apparent for Caddy to flee into the outside world and seek the love of Dalton Ames, who after violating her deserts her. Her natural response to love is twisted and debased by her brothers and mother. Edmond Volpe observes:

Her loss of virginity produces a neurotic furore in the family. On orders from Mrs. Compson, Jason spies on his sister. Her mother’s self pitying lamentations turn Caddy’s love for Dalton into something evil. Quentin’s desperate death plea borders on madness and Benjy’s howl tears at Caddy’s heart... 46

The entire family feels that Caddy has brought a blotch on the family honour. Driven by her sense of guilt she becomes promiscuous. She undergoes a mental torture when she is compelled to marry Herbert Head for whom she has no love. She has got to marry somebody. To quote the words by Lyall H. Powers.

She has the capacity to love, generously and unselfishly. Her problem indeed, is her superabundance of love. Her

fall is the result of that superabundance, uncontrolled and undirected; her "sin" is the excess of virtue, the chiepest virtue. The lack of control and direction is the responsibility of her family . . . 47

Jason is generally regarded as the detestable villain in the novel. He is a typical modern man in the wasteland. He has no love or concern for his sister or his brothers. Human relations and feelings have no value for him unless they are equated with monetary gain:

"Jason going to be rich man " Versh said. "He holding his money all the time" . . . 48

Jason's view of life is materialistic and this widened the gap between himself and his family and his employers. The craze for money is of greater relevance and it is this defect that makes him an arrogant and cruel man. Mathur argues;

Jason is a perfect representation of men who are guided in their actions solely by self -- interest, resulting in their alienation 'from family and community . . . 49

Unconcerned with human emotions like love, humanity and forgiveness, Caddy's sin does not affect him in the least. What worries him is the loss of the bank job promised by Herbert Read. His mother has a special love for Jason calling him a Bascomb. He has been completely spoilt by the favouritism of his mother.

47 Lyall H Powers, Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha Comedy, p.25.
49 S.B.Mathur, American Fiction : The Technique pf Point of View, p.48.
Mrs. Compson wails:

I cannot stand it let me have Jason and you keep the others they're not my flesh and blood like he is strangers nothing of mine and I am afraid of them. I can take Jason and go where we are not known...

Edmond Volpe makes a pointed observation:

Mrs. Compson seizes upon Jason as the tangible evidence of her own separation from her husband and the Compsons. She makes Jason her ally against the enemy and spoils him, setting him apart from his brothers and sisters...

Faulkner established the truth that the Southern Whites suffered from want of proper relationship. Benjy cannot talk he can only moan and howl his protests, his likes and dislikes. Quentin with keen intelligence fails miserably to cope with reality. These constitute the major aspect of the novel *The Sound and the Fury*.

William Faulkner's genius is obvious in the creation of Dilsey, the Black servant maid. Dilsey is superior to the Compsons for she is the only balanced soul. Through Dilsey, Faulkner depicts the final fall of the Compsons. She has been a loyal servant serving the Compsons for several generations. Dilsey said, "I seed de beginnin, en I sees de endin." She keeps the Compsons in a state of comfort and peace. It is Dilsey who efficiently manages the household of the

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Compsons. She is the epitome of mercy, kindness, goodness and love. She is the connecting link between the family members. She serves the Compson family with great devotion and responsibility. She is a contrast to the Compson family. She is a dignified character not to be defeated by time and circumstances. She proves the statement that man's existence depends on healthy relationship with others. One learns enough about Dilsey's character so that one is not surprised to find that she is a wise woman, capable of detecting the nature of every Compson. Her attachment to Benjy is one of love and sympathy. On his thirty-third birthday she makes him a cake out of her own small income. She is a source of comfort. Faulkner depicts one such touching scene thus:

Dilsey led Ben to the bed and drew him down besides her and she held him, rocking back and forth, wiping his drooling mouth upon the hem of her skirt. 'Hush now', she said, stroking his head, 'Hush. Dilsey got you'.

One has great respect and admiration for Dilsey for the courage and dignity she has. She overcomes any hardship in life with patience and endurance.

William Faulkner expects every Southerner to develop this spirit of Dilsey. They are not to be cowed down but to march forth boldly with patience and endurance. The old General in A Fable "personifies the attributes of man most celebrated by Faulkner, the strength to endure his fate as the creature of his own history and pride in the capacity to endure."  

The Sound and the Fury has a rich variety of themes such as the decadence of the South, human relationship, split personality, the sin of misgenation, family honour, the merchant in man, loss of innocence and purity, Christian charity, patience, endurance and the will to prevail.

The Sound and the Fury was closely followed by a major fiction As I Lay Dying. This particular fiction can be classified as a monumental at work along with T.S. Eliot's, The Waste Land and James Joyce's Ulysses. The milieu moment and race are the same as in The Sound and the Fury but with different implications. The world that Faulkner creates is a realistic world. He makes one realise that the physical location of the land and the description of setting have several functions. The milieu enables one to comprehend the novel and gives an insight into the nature and state of mind of the characters. The opening chapter of the novel As I Lay Dying introduces the reader to the Southern setting:

The path runs straight as a plumb-line worn smooth by feet and 'bake brick hard by July, between the green rows of laid-by cotton, to the cottonhouse in the centre of the field, where it turns and circles the cotton house at four soft right angles and goes on across the field again, worn so by feet in fading precision. . .

It is to be noted that As I Lay Dying is not concerned "with the descendants of the pseudo aristocratic Southern families of antebellum days like the Sartoris and Compsons of its immediate predecessors, but rather with simple poor

Whites." They are poor illiterate hill folks. Sexually they are animalistic. Faulkner's treatment of the Bundrens demand sympathy. This does not mean that Faulkner ignores their folly. It is appropriate to name the fiction as Addie Bundren's novel. The funeral journey of Addie becomes the central action of the novel. Addie extracts a promise from Anse that she should be buried among her people. Her dying wish commits the whole family and every member gets a chance to ponder over their relationship especially with Addie. The weather keeps portending evil but Anse obliges his children to undertake the journey.

"... I [Anse] promised my word me and the boys would get there quick a mules could walk it, so she could rest quiet ..."

Cash, the eldest son sets to action at once. He prepares a coffin with great deft and skill to reveal his love for his mother. He seems to be an intelligent and cautious worker who believes that things must be done in a perfect manner. With great mental agony and pain he prepares the best coffin for his mother. He can be compared with Dilsey who has extraordinary capacity to withstand the hardships of life without a murmur. Both of them exhibit the unique quality of endurance. He is Christ like in his patience. Cash proves to be, a reliable, practical and a sensible person in a sense, "the fold hero" of the novel ...

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56 Lyall H. Powers, Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha Comedy, p.51.
57 William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying, p.18.
Cash is the redemptive figure who suffers and sacrifices. Being the eldest child Addie has a place for him in her heart.

Darl the most unfortunate son of Addie is one of the chief characters in the novel. In *The Sound and the Fury* one notices Quentin's yearning for his mother's love and in *As I Lay Dying* Darl states he has no mother. Addie's rejection makes him feel desperate as a lost and lonely child in the universe. Darl frequently extends his taunts on Jewel because his mother had denied him a place in her life:

... the nature of Darl's personality arising from his mother's rejection of him, the secret paternity of Jewel, the enmity between the brothers as well as other members of the family. . . 59

Darl gives himself to too much of thinking which enables him to delve into the private life of others and mercilessly exposes them. He is aware of the truth that Jewel is the illegitimate son of Addie's sin and he also knows Dewey Dell's pregnancy. It is therefore ironical that an amazing character should end up in a lunatic asylum. To quote the words of Cora Tull.

I always said Darl was different from those others. I always said he was the only one, of them that had his mother's nature, had any natural affection . . . 60

Next to Cash, Addie considers Jewel as her precious son. He is the only son not associated with Anse. This helps Addie devote all her attention on Jewel:

60 William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, p.133.
Jewel is my cross and he will be my salvation. He will save from the water and from the fire. Even though I have laid my life, he will save me. . . \(^{61}\)

Jewel does save his mother's coffin from fire. Addie feels that Jewel is solely hers and encourages him to reject the other Burdrens. When his mother is no more he lavishes his love on the horse. Though he is constantly teased by Darl. Jewel is a man of limited words.

The only daughter in the family Dewey Dell stands aloof from the rest. She is not perturbed by her mother's death yet she sits by the bedside with a fan. Dewey Dell terribly immersed in her own problems of life. She cannot communicate with anyone. Her communication with others is chiefly through silence or observation Dewey Dell is not like her mother, who is bitter about love. she accepts her position and endures despite her disappointment. The simple folks will repeat their folly but they will persevere, will endure and prevail. It is this quality of patient endurance that is much admired by Faulkner in his characters.

William Faulkner does not hesitate to give an accurate account on the innocence of the child Vardaman. He is more interested in the fish he has caught than his mother. He fails to understand the distinction between the dead fish and the dead mother. He says:

My mother is not in the box. My mother does not smell like that. My mother is a fish. . . \(^{62}\)

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\(^{62}\) Ibid, p.155.
As any innocent child, Vardaman is immature to understand the significance of the present events,

He is a child sensitive and even intelligent, who is exposed to tremendous shock and in meeting it, he has neither precedent nor advice to guide him. ...  

The little child shows his deep concern for his mother by drilling holes in the coffin to let in air. He shows his hatred towards Dr. Peabody thinking that he is responsible for the death of his mother Faulkner with great skill project innocence of the child as a contrast to the experience of the elders.

The main defect that lies in the Buudrens is want of proper communication. Addle and Anse are two extremes, they are poles apart:

... they represent the two polar opposites of action and words. Literally of cause, Anse acts and Addie talks but effectively Anse is emotionally impotent and Addie mute. ...  

For Anse words play an important part in his life. Words are his mighty tools with which he can mesmerize and control people. Addie staunchly believes that there must be a proper fusion of action and words Anse completely devalues her emotions and feelings. As a result they fail to establish a cordial relationship between husband and wife. Addie charges that Anse tricked her with Darl by

63 Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery, eds. William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism, p.244.
64 Southern Literary Journal, Vol.20, No 1 (Fall 1987), 61.
means of words. It is plain that Addie can accept only two children as her sons
the others are victims "Anse is alive, yet dead: Addie is dead, yet alive." 65

The children suffer from want of healthy relationship and proper communication
with the parents. There is no understanding and love among the children and
the parents. They find themselves isolated and beuddled. The characters
suffer from alienation and poor relationship between the members of the
Bundren family.

William Faulkner is successful in his effort in projecting a family that gradually
disintegrates. Faulkner has a clear view of Southern life and people. He brings
out the illicit relationship of mother and daughter, the selfish Anse and Jewel
and the genuine love of cash. Faulkner also exposes how the Southern White
females are subject to exploitation; especially Dewey Dell seduced by
MacGowan.

In The Sound and the Fury and in As I Lay Dying the decadent conditions are
traced but with a difference. The intersubjectivity is traceable to the decadent
Southern culture. Thematically and technically there is intersubjectivity.
Faulkner adopts the interior Monologue technique in both his fictions. In As I
Lay Dying the author adopts the multiple points of view technique, through this
technique Faulkner offers a variety of human attitudes, for human mind varies
person to person.

Eudora Welty is in the line of William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren. She
has been called the rising star that has acquired a permanent place in the
American literary firmament. She is an outstanding female writer. Like William

65 Southern Literary Journal, Vol.20, No 1 (Fall 1987), p.68
Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren she feels that the South is the most convenient locale for her fictions. Eudora Welty has great admiration for William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren, but she never imitates them.

Eudora Welty was conscious of the social disparity that existed but she never allowed the racial problems to disturb her mind. She was careful not to touch the social and economic problems which affect her characters.

Miss. Welty has no preoccupation with sin, she does not even share the "unorthodox kind of Southern orthodoxy, variations of which may be found in the work of Faulkner, Warren and Ransom. . . ."  

Eudora Welty shares the Southern temper with William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren Katherine Porter and Caroline Gordon. A close analysis of the fictions produced by Southern writers expose much of the similarity in their fiction.

Vande keift argues to the point

The materials of this body of fiction are regional, and they are based on what sociologists, for example, Howard Odum in An American Epoch have called a powerful folk society and culture in a period of transition. The physical and cultural environment are similar . . .  

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67 Ibid, p. 171.
Eudora Welty's characters are mostly drawn from her own place in the South, Jackson Mississippi. The names of towns and characters are chosen with minute care. Lucinda H. Mackethan writes:

Miss Welty's design for the use of place in her fiction might be summarized then as this: Place, as the "named, identified, concrete, exact and exacting, and therefore credible, gathering spot of all that has been felt" in a fictional work, can endow characters with sense of a lasting identity...  

The characters she introduces are not intelligent or educated. They are ordinary simple folks, children, young girls and uneducated middle class people whose hobby is talking. Like William Faulkner she lives in the midst of the life she writes about. Eudora Welty concentrates on ordinary people, she gave us rural characters who contrasted with the norms of their society by being earthly, and scandalous; they were pagans descendants of the people in myths and folk tales...  

It is interesting to note that Eudora Welty's territory is the world of human beings mostly Whites and their tangled relationship with others. Her fiction touches on history, myths, traditions, manners and customs that linger in the Delta culture. Eudora Welty was not much interested in politics. She was careful to choose the year 1923 for the time of her story Delta Wedding because it was a year free

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from politics, war and other natural disturbances. Her characters are energetic, but this vitality is not wasted on politics.

*Delta Wedding* is generally regarded by critics as a powerful novel. The story deals with the struggle of the individual to attach himself to a group, to attain a sense of belonging. In this fiction the main focus is on the nature and behaviour of the Fairchild clan:

On what distinguishes the men from the women, the insiders from the outsiders (that is, those who have "married in") the perplexities of their relationship to each other, and the solitary, unique, joyous or painful growth of each private sensibility, both as it reflects the others and as it begins to discover itself. Despite all their family warmth and shared activity the Fairchilds are intensely private identities. . . .

The Fairchilds are residents of the Sheilmound plantation. The family feels proud of their family history and family values. The claimed themselves to be superior because of their high position in their area. The family stands aloof from the members of the society, moreover Eudora Welty highlights on the peculiar rituals the Fairchilds entertain. They do not "communicate much of themselves to one another, however much they are in a sense involved with one another, and mutually dependent." 

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As a gifted writer Eudora Welty gives a precise picture of the family, the family functions and celebrations. Her main role is to unfold to the readers the family development in a variety of ways. Her concentration on family is explicit in her two major fictions, *Delta Wedding* and *Losing Battles*, *Delta Wedding* which won her remarkable fame is a close study of the Fairchild clan. The entire family revolves round George Fourchild. He is idolized and rendered as their beloved saviour and peacemaker:

At the centre, or the heart, of this circle is George Fairchild, and it is around him that four perceiving female consciousness of *Delta Wedding* revolve. . . . 72

George Fairchild becomes a kind of super hero for the Fairchild. He is their hope, their strength and salvation.

George Fairchild unties the family bond in choosing little Robbie Reid, a local store clerk for his wife. By marrying Robbie Reid is able to connect the inside and the outside world. He bridges Shellmound with Memphis. George can never be selfish in his love, but the Fairchilds are selfish, possessive and binding in their love. Robbie Reid is treated as an outsider and unworthy wife of George. Robbie’s love for George is too great and she is greatly troubled by constant demands of the Fairchild women. Unable to accept this her resentment bursts out into open rebellion. She is openly hostile to the Fairchilds. She cannot endure the Fairchilds influence on her husband.

Ever since her marriage Robbie has felt terribly "out of it". and now her resentment springs into open rebellion when it seems that the Fairchilds may demand even the life of her beloved, which would in fact, be her own life, since she loves him enough to want to "turn into him". . . .73

Robbie considers the Fairchilds as dangerous bogs threatening to drag George away from her. As an intruder she must share the love of her husband. In fury she runs away from George, though she is aware of the fact that he needs, her and loves her in a simple lovers way. The clan disapproves of members who walk into the Delta.

Ellen is the most lovable and balanced character in the fiction. She is introduced as an elegant gracious heroine neither adventurous like Dabney nor aggressive and rebellious like Robbie. She is endowed with great emotional tenderness and serenity. Being an outsider.

Ellen is more alive than all of them. Her life is a "widening susceptibility " she knows Laura Dabney. Shelley and Robbie better than they know themselves and she meets George with no ulterior selfish motivation. . . .74

She earnestly toils for the harmony of the family

Laura is the motherless child who comes with great expectation to Shellmound that the Fairchild clan will give her love and warmth and accept her as one of

73 Vande Kieft Ruth M., Eudora Welty. p.98.
their members. Laura being an outsider "could see as far as that she was the opposite of a Fairchild." The Fairchilds are so preoccupied with themselves that they fail to recognise her. While playing hide and seek no one comes in search of her, only then Laura understands that she is outside the Fairchild circle. Laura experiences pain and unhappiness caused by their isolation, "Laura wanted so badly to be taken to their hearts."76

Dabney like George breaks the family code by marrying an outsider Troy Flavin, their overseer. She is prepared to reject the Fairchild legend and honour for her happiness, "sometimes, Dabney was not so sure she was a Fairchild -- sometimes she did not care, that was it."77 Self centredness dominates the character of Dabney. She is narrowed by her interest in her own life. The aunts present Dabney a pretty night lamp which is an object of family tradition. As a mark of her rebellion and indifference towards the Fairchilds tradition she carelessly breaks it. Shelley Dabney's older sister is a sharp contract to her. She is an intellectual who can think and critically analyse. She can hardly communicate with any one except through her diary. She neatly records her secrets in her diary.

The novel explores the relationship between the individual and the Fairchilds. Eudora Welty stresses the fact that life should be based on the concept of love, and without intersubjectivity life becomes a myth. Therefore it is worth noting that the fiction.

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76 Ibid, p. 77
77 Ibid, p.32
Delta Wedding is a fresh and penetrating exploration of love, identity and the complexity and mystery of the human condition. One of the major concerns of the novel is the conflict between the need for individual autonomy and the equally powerful need for community and family. . .  

The fiction displays another vital factor about the joint family which is one of the salient features of the South. The Whites were not prepared to admit the outsiders into the family and the outsiders were not permitted to gain oneness in the family circle. This is critically viewed and resented by Laura and Robbie Reid. The Fairchilds, had never told Laura they loved her. Robbie acknowledges that "The Fairchild women asked a great deal of their men -- competitively." 

Thus Eudora Welty very minutely traces the defects and weakness of the insulated Southern White family. She is sure that the Southern white families are not going to shed their ego complex.

The next fiction that deserves to be mentioned is The Ponder Heart which has established the fame of Eudora Welty:

The Ponder Heart represents Eudora Welty at the best, which is another way of saying that here is a distinguished, individualistic, memorable work of fiction. . .

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79 Eudora Welty, Delta Wedding, p.144
80 W. Gaig Turner, Lee Harding, Critical Essays on Eudora Welty, p.168
The fiction is given as one long dramatic monologue spoken by the chief character Edna Earle Ponder in the quiet parlour of the Beulah Hotel in Clay, Mississippi. The Ponder Heart displays two stories -- uncle Daniel's troubles regarding marriage and murder and Edna Earle's sincere efforts and struggles to preserve and maintain the order. It is important to observe that the novel presents a clear picture of the agonies and problems confronted by the individuals.

Edna Earle with all her ability tries to preserve the order of the Clay society and uncle Daniel behaves in such a way as to thwart the plans of Edna Earle. Michael Krelying states:

Edna's ideal is orderliness, knowledge, experience. Uncle Daniel's urge, on the other hand, is to follow the spontaneous promptings of his heart, which invariably lead him to do the kinds of thing -- ogle chorus girls, admire Intrepid Else Fleming, to marry Bonnie Dee, and tell the truth about her death -- that rattle the secure world busily maintained by Edna Earle...

Uncle Daniel is portrayed as a very interesting character carefully preserved by the community of Clay. He is swept away by the society he loves. He appears to be too innocent and too generous. When agitated and restless he turns his attention to the opposite sex. He runs after girls and pays too much attention to Intrepid Else Fleming. The women most detested by Edna Earle are ardently admired by Uncle Daniel. He is in the habit of wasting his money and things on...

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these silly girls. Edna Earle is able to detect that uncle Daniel is mostly attracted by women who are just pretty as puppets unfit for stable household life. Edna Earle's views are orthodox. She cannot bear the very idea of Else Fleming wearing pants. She knows that such a woman will not turn out to be a good housekeeper and mother. Grandpa Ponder views marriage in different angle. He would like to pin down his son with a good wife, and it will be a permanent, strict and secure asylum for him. Uncle Daniel is married to Miss Teacake Magee, a devout Baptist lady and a widow, selected by Edna Earle and approved by grandpa Ponder. Uncle Daniel's interest turns elsewhere. He is enchanted by cute and fairy like little Bonnie Dee Peacock who is just seventeen. Uncle Daniel "was proud of her. " She's a natural born barber, " he said, " and pretty as a doll."\textsuperscript{82} De Yancy Clanahan remembers her all in pink and Edna Earle sees her as a tiny thing with yellow hair:

\begin{quote}
Baby yellow hair, downy like one of those dandelion puffballs you can blow and tell the time by . . . .\textsuperscript{83}
\end{quote}

Edna Earle has nothing good to say of Bonnie Dee. She is delicate and dainty but still a selfish intruder unfit for the Ponder household. She is a constant threat to the peace and tranquility of the Ponder family. She is a problem to Edna Earle who is the voice of Clay. She is a danger to the ordered society of the ladies of the Ponder world. Michael Kreylin argues:

\begin{quote}
Bonnie Dee is one of several women in Welty's fiction who represent selfish, potentially disruptive, erotic element. . . .\textsuperscript{84}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{82} Eudora Welty, \textit{The Ponder Heart} (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company 1954), p.34.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, p.42
\textsuperscript{84} Michael Kreyling, \textit{Eudora Welty's Achievement of Order}, p.111.
Added to this Bonnie Dee has no high esteem of marriage and prefers a trial before wedlock.

Uncle Daniel's marriage furnishes the fiction humour and laughter. He is old for Bonnie Dee who is in her teens. Edna Earle recognizes the fact that Uncle Daniel and Bonnee are not made for each other:

He was older than she was, and was good as gold, and he was prominent ... \(^{85}\)

Family prestige is more precious to Edna Earle and that heritage is what really counts than inheritance. She is aware that uncle Daniel has married twice below their social level. Miss Teacake, a Baptist and the "Peacocks are poor Whitetrash on all counts."\(^{86}\) Eudora Welty gives the notion that people often get married below their social status

Edna Earle's grandparents were not evenly matched. Grandpa Ponder loved isolated setting because he hated society, whereas Grandma loved society and the people. It is therefore apt to say that Beulah Hotel is symbol of the marriage of opposites. This is evident first in Grandma, and then in Edna Earle, the owner of the Beulah Hotel.

Eudora Welty fashioned her fiction *The Ponder Heart* in the Freudian method where super *ego* and *Id* are always in conflict. In Grandpa Ponder Super *ego* dominates and he tries to bridle his undisciplined son. To discipline his son he attempts to send him to an asylum, meant for insane people. Grandpa Ponder

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argues that a person who is not able to get on in the society should be enclosed in an asylum. As luck would Grandpa is mistakenly led off into the asylum.

Edna Earle like any other character of Eudora Welty, is a talkative character who narrates the story of her Uncle Daniel in the Southern Colloquial dialect. Edna Earle throughout her monologue expresses her love for her uncle. She also gives a clear picture of uncle Daniel, who is accused of murdering his wife. Uncle Daniel is however a man of immense good qualities:

He has the nicest, politest manners -- he's good as gold. . . .\(^{87}\)

"Uncle Daniel has a remarkable affection for everybody and everything in creation,"\(^ {88}\) and this is the greatest flaw in his nature.

Eudora Welty declares that The Ponder Heart is a short saga of family decline. The deterioration originated when the Ponders started making money by selling timber -- the land being raped and exploited is reminiscent of Faulkner's work. Her grand parents were well to do and two generations have forsaken Clay. Uncle Daniel is the only male member alive in the family tree of the Ponders. Uncle ponder can never gain a wife and will never bear an offspring. The next generation is Edna Earle who fails to win a husband. The two Ponders will spend the rest of their lives in each other's company. The Ponders will die out but the name will be forever to uphold the family tradition, honour, pride and loyalty in the face of the inevitable extinction.

\(^{87}\) Eudora Welty, The Ponder Heart, p.11.
\(^{88}\) Ibid, p.27.
The fiction abounds in exuberant appreciation from numerous critics. Ruth Vande Kieft labels this novel as "a light hearted murder mystery". Alfred Appel examines this book as a burlesque and Carol Manning sees *The Ponder Heart* as a fiction in Southern folk tradition. Charles Davis pays a lofty tribute to the novel for its pure Southerness. One should not fail to observe that the voice of Edna Earle is the voice of Eudora Welty that evinces a clear record of the passing of a way of life and of family values represented by the Ponders.

As an outstanding Southerner Robert Penn Warren utilised Southern materials and Southern history. He takes great pride in the historical heritage and this permits him to hold on to the past and historical background. Robert Penn Warren's novels and poems are history-oriented. *All the king's men, World Enough and Time, The cave* and his poem *Brother to Dragons* speak of Robert Penn Warren's love for history. His fame rests on his handling of various themes such as the sense of guilt, the need for expiation, the love hate relationship between fathers and sons. Like William Faulkner and Eudora Welty, Robert Penn Warren does not hesitate to introduce intersubjectivity on the level of themes and concepts. He stresses on the fact that man cannot live an isolated life and without intersubjectivity love cannot survive.

*All the king's men* is a historical novel about the South of the 1930. Robert Penn Warren's specific goal is to explore the connection between the self and American history. The story is based on the career of Huey Long the dictator, *All the Kings Men* has been widely interpreted as being primarily the story of Willie Stark, dictatorial governor of a

Southern state bearing resemblance to the Louisiana of Huey Long, the novel is clearly Jack Burden's story. . . .

The superiority of the novel lies in the double focus of interest in Willie Stark and Jack Burden. The fiction is mainly the story of Jack Burden's reorientated life. Jack Burden, the protagonist passes from a state of innocence to knowledge. Jack's endeavor is to analyse in detail the three stages of his quest to establish identity in History. It includes his involvement in the life of Anne Stanton his childhood sweet heart. He causes the death of Judge Irwin, his real father and finally the association of Willie Stark by Adam Stanton, Anne's Brother a skilled surgeon.

*All the Kings Men* is a dramatic monologue which explores the hardy theme of the conflict between the public and private self, the actual and the ideal, commitment and disengagement mainly concentrating on the uses of political power. This particular work of Robert Penn Warren best represents the political struggle of a village boy who rises to power and how he misuses the power. It is the "world famous American novel of power and corruption and the meteoric rise and fall of Willie Stark the politician." The fiction also explores the story of the chief narrator Jack Burden. He confesses:

... 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 . . .

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92 Ibid, p.11.
Jack is a student of history who refuses to accept the meaning in the story of case Mastern, his Ph.d dissertation topic. He is not prepared to understand the past and face the facts. "He was afraid to understand for what might he understood there was a reproach to him." He becomes an irresponsible isolated being actively participating in the world of Willie Stark. Experience teaches him that the universe is corrupt, ugly and full of evil. It is like an enormous entangled spider web. He comprehends that man cannot escape and live in ignorance of his own past.

Jack's birth into insight comes when he knows who his father is. There is alienation of self from the self of the past from the present, of the father from son.

Jack creates his own insulated sheltered, womb state world…

His political task for Willie Stark results in the death of Judge Irwin. The truth comes to him from his mother that Judge Irwin is his father and not the weak Ellis Burden. She accuses Jack of having killed his father.

"Your father", she said, "your father and oh! you killed him…"

Jack in turn has no genuine love or sympathy for his mother. He accepts her as a beautiful enchantress who keeps on changing the men in her life as she changes her antique furniture in the big house at Burden's Landing. Robert

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95 Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men, p.480.
Gray states that Jack is painfully aware that his mother really did not care a thing about him,

... I was just another man whom she wanted to have round because she was the kind of woman who had to have men around and had to make them dance to her tune. ... 96

The love -- hate relationship between the father and son, mother and son is profound in All the Kings Men. This is a clear sign of decadence that has set in the present South due to the accent an materially rather than in familial relationship.

The portrait of Willie Stark is a typical example of a governor who flexibly yields himself to corruption. He proves the fact that power lends to corrupt absolutely. He is disloyal to his wife Lucy and spoils the life of his son. He indirectly becomes responsible for his son Tom's death on account of too much paternal attention. Jack Burden who has suffered psychologically from a seeming neglect by his father now witnesses a strange reversal of the father son relationship. Willie's super-ego thirsts for power omnipotence and recognition by posterity. As an atonement for his sins and lost purity he desires to have a magnificent hospital built for the state untainted by corruption. To regain his former innocent self he chooses Adam Stanton as his redeemer to manage the hospital, but unfortunately his redeemer becomes his executioner. Once again it is Jack Burden who undertakes the task of linking the two opposite poles that destroy each other,

Adam and Willie stand for the division of an age, while Jack Burden is the man who, as his name indicates, must bear this division. The split between Adam and Willie is one between past and present. . .

The past in the novel is an unbearable burden for the characters. After a long struggle Jack completes his spiritual voyage. His attitude towards his mother is changed. Experience teaches him that without the past he cannot participate in the present. He settles down with his boyhood sweetheart. Finally he acknowledges:

The creation of evil is therefore the index of God's glory and His power. That had to be so that the creation of good might be the index of man's glory and power. But by God's help. By His help and in His wisdom . . .

Robert Penn Warren's characters experience the loss of innocence and they go in search of the knowledge of the past. All the King's Men is a splendid performance of a versatile writer. There is a perfect harmony of various themes such as birth, growth, decay, death, rebirth, sin, redemption, the search for self identify and the quest for an ideal father figure.

The literary productions of William Faulkner, Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren celebrate the Southern qualities of their region. It is important in this connection to call attention to the theme of their fictions. They glorify the theme of past. In fact they project the past into present. Their novels also signify the

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98 Robert Penn Warren, All the King's Men, p.600
death of the Southern community of past and present William Faulkner, Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren are sharply aware of the presence of intersubjectivity in their fictions with regard to their level of themes and concepts. The achievements of William Faulkner, Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren viewed individually or collectively voice the fact that man cannot live in isolation and his existence primarily depends on his relationship with others. This is the message that they draw from their sense of the past:

The past is never dead. It's not even past; The past is real, not even myth and dream. . . 99

Their novels signify the death of the Southern community of past and present. They are sharply aware of the fact that the past was a complete contrast to the present. The Southern past and the Southern present is conveyed with a purpose by the three fictionalist. They did not want the glories of the past to be demolished by the decadence of the present. The present trend should be reformed by the values of the past. The achievements of William Faulkner, Eudora Welty and Robert Penn Warren when viewed individually or collectively voice the fact that man cannot live in isolation and his existence primarily depends on his relationship with others. This is the message that they draw from their sense of the past.