CHAPTER: FIVE
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WARREN'S HOLLOW MEN

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass...

- T.S. Eliot ("The Hollow Men")

Most of the characters in Warren's fiction are ordinary people who resign themselves to fate. Some perform their duties without any conviction. For them, life is meaningless as they do not have any purpose like searching for the self or coming to terms with fellow human beings. They feel a blankness within themselves. As a result, they are perturbed and their feelings are unsteady. John Edward Hardy observes:

The theme that has principally exercised Warren's imagination is that of the incompleteness of man, the struggle to reconcile the idea and the need of unity with the facts of multiplicity in human experience.1

Warren depicts some types of such incomplete men in his novels. They are abstract idealists who are capable of self-righteous violence. They try to fill their emptiness by exercising power over those around them. There is an obsessive self-assertion due to the essential fear of nothingness at the core of their being as we find in Bogan Murdock in the novel, At Heaven's Gate.

Duckfoot Blake's words justify the unreal nature of Bogan Murdock:

Bogan Murdock aren't real. Bogan is a solar myth, he is a pixy, he is a poltergeist ... When Bogan Murdock looks in the mirror, he don't see a thing. (AHG, 373)

Allen Shepherd observes that Warren in his introduction to All the King's Men, refers to Bogan Murdock as a being "'supposed to embody in one of his dimensions, the dessicating abstraction of power, to be a violator of nature, a usurer of Dante's seventh circle and to try to fulfill vicariously his natural emptiness by exercising power over those around him ...'"2 Bogan Murdock exploits the people around him. He is devoid of any sense of responsibility. He is incapable of extending love to other human beings.

Bogan is viewed from different perspectives by several characters. Just as we do not enter into the inner working

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2 Allen Shepherd, "The Poles of Fiction," TSL, 12, 3 (Fall 1970), 710.
of Jasper's mind in *The Cave* we do not see the inner reality of Bogan Murdock's mind. That is, in the novel *The Cave* Warren does not describe the thoughts - the inner working of the mind - of Jasper Harrick. Similarly in *At Heaven's Gate* Bogan Murdock's actions are analysed only by the other characters in the novel and there is no reference to the inner working of his mind. We do not know how things are for him and what has made him the way he is. Bogan Murdock's wife Dorothy Murdock is what he has made her, "a drunken, sodden, self-abusing middle-aged bitch" (AHG, 347). Had Murdock cared for his wife she would not have felt neglected and become a drunkard. Dorothy's words to Bogan Murdock prove this: "yes, I am drunk. Sure, I'm drunk. But you shouldn't care. Oh, you didn't care about me" (AHG, 347). Duckfoot Blake's words to Jerry Calhoun reveal that Bogan Murdock uses the sympathy evoked by the death of his daughter Sue to distract public attention from his financial matters. Duckfoot Blake says,

> Getting Sue killed, Public sympathy. ... It takes folks' minds off Murdock. But getting Sue killed - oh, he'll know his cue, all right. They'll never get a conviction. They won't even get an indictment." (AHG, 373)

It is because of such despots as Bogan that establishing social order becomes difficult for socially conscientious people like Jason Sweetwater. Warren makes Sweetwater feel that the reason
for his inability to implement social justice is that society is ruled by such figures as Bogan Murdock and Governor Milan and supported by such retainers as Jerry Calhoun.  

Warren in his interview to Marshall Walker elaborates on the hollow people in his fiction:

... the dictator, the man of power, is powerful only because he fulfills the blankness and needs of people around him. His power is an index to the weakness of others.  

Like a relief in art Bogan Murdock's power reveals the weakness in others. From what he has, we realize what others do not have. Thus his power is only in the helplessness of others rather than a thing existing in itself. So they resort to oppression or to display of physical prowess,"^5 points out Leonard Casper.

Bogan Murdock's associates and the members of his family serve only as adjuncts to his power. He uses his deceptive exterior - the way he speaks and the pleasant manner in which he carries himself to attract people - to make them do what he wants. Duckfoot Blake calls Murdoch a "charmer" (AHG, 267). Jerry is one of the people who admire Murdoch. Jerry admires

^3Allen Shepherd, "The Poles of Fiction," TSL, 12, 3 (Fall 1970), 716.


Bogan Murdock as he satisfies Jerry's ideal of a perfect father. Though Jerry maintains his external relationship with his own father, old man Calhoun, by giving him money and discharging his duties as a son, he develops a resentment towards the dirty atmosphere of his home. Repelled by his father's clumsiness, Jerry aspires to the status of being Murdock's carbon copy. In Jerry's dreams too, Bogan Murdock usurps the place of his father.

Sue hates her father as he gives only "the sterile managerial atmosphere" to her house. Most of the characters in the novel are aware of Bogan Murdock's nature of manipulating the people around him. Because of the strong impact of Bogan Murdock even Jerry Calhoun becomes an "emotional cripple" (AHG, 99) as seen by Sue.

Slim Sarrett is another hollow man in At Heaven's Gate. Though he finds fault with Bogan Murdock, he is not aware of the same defect in him. Slim Sarrett's art is as dessicated, abstract and sterile as Murdock's finance. Sarrett's analysis of Murdock is applicable to Sarrett himself. Sarrett accuses Murdock of exercising a "special type of subtle pressure" (AHG, 250) and Murdock represents to Sarrett, "the special disease of our time, the abstract passion for power, a vanity

springing from an awareness of the emptiness and unreality of the self which can only attempt to become real and human by the oppression of people who manage to retain some shreds of reality and humanity" (AHG, 250).

Warren introduces speeches and gestures which accomplish their purpose of defining the character of the speaker or the person who gestures. They show the problem of the person involved in bringing about an association between the private and the public world. There are many such instances.

Early in the novel Bogan Murdock offers Sue a chair in his room, with a broad smile on his face.

"Sit down and have a chat," he urged, and dropped his magazine to the floor with a gesture of flatteringly spontaneous dismissal. (AHG, 6)

Sue herself interprets Murdock's politeness in the novel: "He's so polite, she thought ... Politeness, she thought, it's just a way of making people do things" (AHG, 6). His gesture of dropping the magazine indicates his wish to make her think that he considers her more important than the magazine.

In another scene Murdock is seated at the dining table with his father Lemuel Murdock and others. His conversation with his father shows Murdock's attempt at bringing about interaction between the private and the public world:
"I told him - I told him -" old Mr. Murdock said suddenly
... and stared from face to face ...

"Yes, Father?" Bogan Murdock questioned, and
inclined his head in that patient, schooled,
and impeccable courtesy which he always showed
the old man. The old man focussed his gaze,
as with effort, upon his son ... He shook his
head again, with an irritable baffled motion.
"That hay—that hay down there," he said creakingly
"—it ain't picked up right. It ain't—"
Bogan Murdock waited for a moment, his head
still inclined as though in invitation for
the old man to continue ...
"I'll see to it tomorrow, Father," Bogan
Murdock said, "without fail." (AHG, 19-20)

Bogan here uses the private world — the response he shows to
his father — for public appeal. That is, he wants to impress
the people around with his kindness for the old man. With
this show of emotion, Murdock makes the others believe that
he is very affectionate to his father.

In another episode Warren depicts Bogan's vanity clearly.
As soon as Jerry comes to join duty Bogan asks him whether he
has all the necessary papers with him. Immediately Jerry
Calhoun gives his briefcase containing the papers to Murdock.
Warren elaborates:

Murdock took it, and with the air of a man who
chucks down an old hat, tossed it on to the
broad ledge of the windows. Jerry had half
expected him to open the case and take out
the clean, crackling sheets which he himself,
on the plane coming down, had examined and
fingered so many times. He was almost dis-
appointed, almost hurt, by that easy motion.
(AHG, 12)
Then Jerry himself understands that action, so natural for any other man, would not have been natural for Bogan Murdock. Before Jerry leaves, Bogan tells him, "why don't you stay for dinner if you want . . ." (AHG, 13). Though he invites Jerry, the manner is throw away casual; it denies importance to the guest. This indifference of Bogan Murdock shows the shallow nature of the man. Bogan's vanity can be clearly noted if compared with the simplicity of Willie Stark in a similar situation. In Willie Stark, the Governor's invitation to Jack, an ordinary man we find concern and affection. Since Willie has just acquired the position, the highest office, he could have been arrogant. But Jack tells us that the boss's affection has not changed after assuming office. In another scene we find Bogan inviting Jerry home just because he finds Jerry handy for playing a bridge game (AHG, 83). Bogan's own daughter Sue does not see love or concern in her father. Even his own daughter feels that he wants to boss over people. She says, "because he made me, he thinks he owns me" (AHG, 104).

Chapter IV of the present study shows how Jerry Calhoun who is depicted as being hollow in the beginning of the novel turns out to be a fulfilled man towards the end of the novel. In the early half of the novel Warren portrays Jerry as a hollow man, being misled in life by his misconception of real worth. Till he realizes that Bogan is a bogus, a worthless man, he remains hollow. His repentance and the consequent redemption
due to the reconciliation with the father whom he rejected is fathomed, only when contrasted with the early hollowness in the same man, Jerry Calhoun. Sue considers Jerry Calhoun, a carbon copy of her father. She discovers a snob in Jerry. Sue's assessment of Jerry in the beginning of the novel that "he gets along well with everybody" (AHG, 6) is interpreted by her father as, "an asset in business" (AHG 6). Jerry hates poverty. It is revealed in his resentment for his dirty home and clumsy father. Jerry's snobbery is seen in his admiration for Murdock. When Jerry discusses Bogan Murdock's worry about Sue with Duckfoot Blake, Duckfoot suggests that Jerry could marry Sue. Though Jerry likes the suggestion, he does not openly admit his fascination for Sue and tells Duckfoot "in the midst of a surge of painful confusion and resentment, as though he had been spied upon," (AHG, 111) that "the old man is going to marry her to the Prince of Wales" (AHG, 111) implying that he is poor. Jerry always has a nagging sense of shame about his family background. Duckfoot Blake remarks "Oh, don't you fret," ... Don't forget old Governor Calhoun. Pal, you come of a distinguished though impoverished family" (AHG, 111). He needs someone else to remind him of his worth. The fact that Jerry Calhoun had been shallow in the beginning of the novel is further proved by Warren in the scene when Sue asks him to make love to her. Warren states:

... she had scared him ... the cold fright would come over him. ... on those occasions when she had compelled him to take her there
in the house, provoking him, wheedling him with a shameless innocence, accusing his love, cajoling him, calling him a hypocrite, impugning his manhood, daring him, until, anger and desire and humiliation mixed in him, feeling himself trapped in a complicated mechanism the meaning of which he could not solve, he would take her. (AHG, 116)

Jerry has very strong impulses but he is unable to express them before others. In Chapter IV of the present study (pp. 159 and 161), we have seen how Jerry gives vent to his resentment, going to a lonely place and pouring out vile words, not being able to bear his father's kindness to aunt Ursula. His father gives the shawl brought by Jerry to aunt Ursula saying that Jerry got it for her just because Jerry loves her. Jerry has brought it only out of a sense of duty and not out of love. Unable to bear his father's goodness Jerry goes to the back yard and utters "vile words he knew, which reduce everything to the blind, unqualified retch and spasm of the flesh, the twist, the sudden push, the twitch, the pinch of ejection and refusal" (AHG, 45). This outburst, a soliloquy in dramatic terms reveals the conflicting aspects between his public acts and private emotions.

Later when Jerry Calhoun sits worrying over Sue Murdock's death, Duckfoot Blake says, "stop feeling so damned sorry for yourself and pretending you're feeling sorry for her" (AHG, 369). Here Duckfoot Blake gives Jerry's character in a nutshell. We understand that he is self-centered. Sue Murdock's death will affect him and so he is sorry for himself. But he wants
Duckfoot Blake to think that he feels sorry for Sue. Duckfoot realizes this and rightly remarks that Jerry pretends. Jerry is provoked as Warren explains:

Jerry Calhoun heaved his weight on the cot. "Say that and I'll—" he said, and clenched his hands.

"Fine," Duckfoot encouraged, "get mad at me. Show some sign of life. Sure, she's dead and you ain't, and we got to get out of here ..." (AHG, pp.369-70)

This episode explains Jerry Calhoun's inability to express his feelings. Here we find his pent up emotions coming out raging against Duckfoot Blake and we find that he exhibits signs of being alive only when provoked. As we discussed in Chapter IV of the present study, Jerry Calhoun changes his attitude towards the end of the novel which is remarkable, only because of the transformation from being a hollow man to a redeemed individual.

Slim Sarrett is an abstract idealist lacking in self-knowledge. He makes the others believe that he is a strong and perfect personality. His manner with fellow human beings is assured and effective. Warren introduces him in the first scene of the novel. To Sue who "just lost interest in everything ... except riding" (AHG, 107), Sarrett says that horse riding is a snob symbol. Sue admires Slim because "he just knew exactly what he could do, and what he wanted to do, and that made him different from other people" (AHG, 4). Sue discusses all her problems with Slim Sarrett. When she informs him about her
latest dispute with Jerry Calhoun, Slim tells her, "you had made him up. He was just a fantasy of yours. To fit your own special needs" (AHG, 152). He speaks of his own experience. He has told a lie about his parents. His parents are just his fantasy to fit his own special needs. He has told Sue that he is the son of a New Orleans whore and a river boat captain who was killed when a boiler blew up. Both his parents are alive in Georgia as the novel reveals later (AHG, pp.255-56). But he creates a world for himself in which he finds his identity. The idea behind this fantasy world is that he has denied his parents. Since he feels isolated and is unable to bear it, he creates a world according to his choice. Why doesn't he create a perfect mother and accept his real father as he is? Sweetwater gives the reason:

May be he told you because he wanted you to feel sorry for him. Or think he was wonderful or something. But the real reason was because he is a liar ... He swims in a lie, and he is in the lie and the lie is in him ..." (AHG, 303)

Slim Sarrett encourages Sue's drinking and she becomes aware of it gradually (AHG, 251). Added to this he is a homosexual and ends up as a murderer. He is a manipulator of others like Murdock. Like Jerry Calhoun, Slim Sarrett is also a reflection of Sue's father. Because of his obsessive devotion to art he is unable to establish a viable human relationship which Sue Murdock wants. Constantidopeses reveals the fact
that Slim Sarrett's father and mother are not a barge captain and a whore as Slim has told Sue. Sue discovers that Slim Sarrett lives in an illusory world created by himself to suit his needs. Since the pure, artistic world he creates is polluted, Sarrett's pride is hurt. In his wounded vanity he kills Sue. Towards the end, he does exercises, takes a bath, applies oil to his flesh, combs his hair, dresses up neatly, looks at his reflection in the mirror and sits down to write a poem. Slim Sarrett is worse than Bogan Murdock. Bogan Murdock expresses his concern atleast for his daughter's indifference to everything, her gradual deterioration in studies and requests Jerry to save her, "you can help her to come to terms with herself. To overcome this restlessness, this unhappiness ..." (AHG, 110). Slim Sarrett has no such concern for any fellow being.

While depicting the hollowness in these characters Warren presents the conflict between the ideal and the real effectively. All the characters discussed in this chapter seek to attain perfection. This is their ideal. Sue Murdock whom Bogan describes as an affectionate child, leaves home to become Slim Sarrett's mistress and then becomes pregnant with Sweetwater's child. Bogan remarks:

She was an affectionate child, too, though she'd go for weeks sometimes not showing it, playing by herself. But then I'd be sitting, in here, ... she'd just sneak in—and she'd grab hold of me and hug me ... she'd say,
"Dockie, Dockie, I love you so much.' And I remember a time or two when she woke up late at night and sneaked down, barefoot and in her nightgown, to find me and tell me she loved me." (AHG, 107)

Such an affectionate girl goes from one man to another seeking security. Later at Sarrett's place she recollects her experiences:

After she lay there, remote events, and those which were recent came into her mind, like smoke. But they had not been like that. They had been real ... But, she decided, nothing was real by itself; things were real because they were together. And that was why she was here, and did not want anything. (AHG, 208)

After leaving her house and reaching Slim Sarrett's place she feels that she does not want anything else. She is sure that she will have a pleasant and peaceful life there. She imagines that her idea of what is perfect is fulfilled. But her hopes are shattered when she comes to know that Slim Sarrett is a homosexual and a liar. He also manipulates people, the same quality which had made her reject her father. Jerry Calhoun's idea is to emulate Bogan Murdock and to gain equal recognition. Jerry's ideal had been to get Murdock's place in the financial world. The irony is that he takes the place of Murdock in the jail. That is, he is arrested for all that had happened in Murdock's company. Slim Sarrett's ideal is to be recognized as a perfect gentleman in spite of being the son of
a whore and a poor man. He thinks that his perfection will be all the more marked if viewed against a very low family back-
ground and so he lies about his parents. The conflicting reality is that he gains recognition only as a liar, homosexual and a murderer. All these characters are conscious of their inner emptiness. To compensate for that they either indulge in violence or assert themselves in some other way as Sweetwater does — holding on to his principle of not marrying.

Jack Harrick, one of the main characters in The Cave is another empty man. Jack Harrick thinks of himself, "... he was nothing but a big fat hen in a dark hen house and couldn't even kick when the weasel was drawing the blood out of his throat" (C, 138-39). Till he is fortyfive he leads a free and happy life. He is not a coward. He has never been afraid of getting hurt. But he fears the thought of dying. Later in the novel he thinks of all the girls to whom he made love "looking sorrowfully at him" (C, 386). Most of their eyes "sick from loneliness" (C, 386). He recollects all the girls when he waits at the cave mouth to listen to the sermon that Brother Sumpter intends to preach. A sad hill girl, a town girl, a raddled French whore, Mary Tillyard, a farmer's wife, Jessamine Abernathy, "And the others, all of them — their names, he hadn't even known the names of some wanting something from him, always a different something, but something, and always something he didn't care whether, in their emptiness, they ever got or not" (C, 387).
Immediately after this he gets the thought "I am not ever
going to die" (C, 387). Then he continues his recapitualation
and wonders why all those women came to him. He hates them
all for their weakness, because it has made him what he is now:

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. (C, 388)

Then he realizes that it is not theirs, but his own weakness,
"he had dreamed the dream of Jack Harrick" (C, 388). He tries
to remember the words of Mac Carland Sumpter which imply that
he is all alone now in his suffering. He recalls snatches of
Psalm 38, verses 3 and 11: "... neither is there any rest in
my bones because of my sin ... My lovers and my friends stand
aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off" (C, 389).
Then the usual interrogation "who am I?" arises, for which he
finds the answer, "I am an old, nigh-illiterate, broke-down
blacksmith, sitting here in the middle of the night, and my boy
is dead" (C, 388). Thoughts reveal the character of the thinker
The emptiness of Jack Harrick is clearly seen in his thoughts.

Jack Harrick's hollowness is further revealed when his
fear of death is hinted at:

He thought: I did not want my son to come
out of the ground, because somebody always
has to go in the ground. If he was there
I would not have to go. ... But it puzzled
him, why he sweated when he thought of
dying. (C, 385-86)
This fear is just the reverse of his wife Celia Hornby's feelings earlier. She sees the T.V. camera focussed on her. So she covers her face with both her hands. "'They'll think I'm praying,' she thought. She even tried to pray" (C, 249) and the words from the Bible came into her head — for the rocks and mountains to fall on them -- Then she stops the prayer fearing that the rocks would really fall on her. Then again she thinks of saving Jasper by her prayer:

Then she thought that if she had been able to pray and the mountain had really fallen on her, that would mean she had taken Jasper's place and he would be saved. So she tried to pray, but the words wouldn't come. She would die for Jasper, she knew that, and the Lord God, who saw into the innermost recesses of her soul, knew it. (C, 249)

Unlike Jack Harrick, Celia is willing to accept death. These two snatches of thoughts reveal the emptiness of Jack Harrick and the depth of Celia Hornby.

Jack Harrick is forty-five years old when he meets Celia Hornby. As he walks beside her, he sucks his belly in and feels pretty good. She commands respect as she is sure of herself. When he holds her hands, even in their smallness and softness he feels strength. Even when they are together holding hands, Jack feels a surge of fear -- It is like "waking up in the dark and not knowing who you are" (C, 144) Warren says:
This moment was only a dream of the past, and it was about to whirl away into the dark and he would be alone on a mountain side, in the night-shadow of trees, ... (C, 144)

At that time he feels the pressure of her hand and feels secure, "he swung around and grabbed her hand with both his and cried out and fell to his knees like the stunned beef" (C, 145). Only then does he propose to her and they get married.

Later, when he is dying of cancer he imagines some other man being cared for by Celia Hornby. He is sick at the thought. Warren points out his possessive nature in the scene:

If only she were dead, then everything would be as it had been and not as it was now, and he would not be like an old tramp sneaking up in the dark cold night to a crack in a window to peek in. If he were dead then he would be for always the man who lived in that house. (C, 136)

In another scene Warren says, "Old Jack Harrick wished she were dead, dead so he could love her" (C, 150), because he imagines her as 'fighting off' a wish for 'a man shape' near her (C, 150). Jack Harrick's shallow nature is clearly seen when contrasted with Celia's wish to be by his side when he breathes his last. She prays, "Dear God, I can't stand it, but when the time comes I want to hold his hand" (C, 153).

Monty Harrick is another hollow man in Warren's world. Jo-Lea, his lady love is sure of herself, like Celia Hornby.
Warren says that Jo-Lea "somehow robbed him casually and indifferently, of the pride by which he lived" (C, 9). Though he loves her, Warren says that he hates her at times because "she was so completely herself ... she drowned darkly inward into herself he felt that she had no need of him" (C, 12). In another scene, when Monty informs Celia that he entered the cave, in her anxiety to know about her other son Jasper, Celia urges him to tell her. He feels miserable and tells her in irritation,

"I -- didn't go on. I just didn't go on. I didn't have any light. I was just afraid to leave the mouth of the crawlway." ... Then, the boy burst out: "All right, God damn it, I was afraid! Say it, somebody -- I was afraid!" (C, 184)

Since Monty senses his own weak nature, he bursts out in anger. He is irritated because he has to admit the fact that what he has told earlier (that he has entered the cave) is a lie and accept the truth that he had been afraid to enter the cave. In this scene we find Monty's spiritual bankruptcy. He need not have told his mother that he had entered the cave. He has done that to make his mother believe that he is bold. He fails to realize the fact that his mother would not have a mind to appreciate any heroic trait in him, when the only thought and prayer she has now is about her son Jasper's safe return from the cave.
The hollow world of man is suggested by the epigraph to the novel from Plato's *The Republic* (Book VII):

You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners. Like ourselves, I replied, and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

This shadow image defines the unreal state of the human beings who people the novel. All are nothing but shadows. If they are allowed to turn their heads they would see the fire at the back, which causes the shadows. But as Plato states, all that they know now with their heads fixed, is nothing but the shadows. If the fire is removed even the shadows will not be visible. In the same way as they can see both the fire and the shadows if they are allowed to turn their heads, they will be able to differentiate between their real interior beings from the shallow exterior shadow-selves, if wisdom dawns on them. This shadow-symbollism is similar to D·uckfoot Blake's view about Bogan Murdock in *At Heaven's Gate*. Blake says that Bogan Murdock is only an idea and a dream and he will not see anything reflected if he looks into the mirror (AHG, 373). Emptiness cannot be reflected in a mirror.
"Your business as a writer," says Warren, "is not to illustrate virtue but to show how a fellow may move towards it or away, from it." The characters discussed in this chapter move away from virtue. But there are also people like old man Calhoun and Ashby Whyndham in *At Heaven's Gate*, two of the spiritually strong characters in Warren's gallery of virtuous people. They are simple, strong-willed and have a clarity of vision which is lacking in the hollow men.

In spite of the pressures of poverty, old man Calhoun does not want to exploit Jerry's wealth. Warren depicts this virtue of old man Calhoun in the episode describing Jerry Calhoun's aversion for his family. Aunt Ursula is completely blind and falls ill often, and there are the bills for the doctor. Money is scarce and every penny which goes for Jerry's clothes and books could have gone to relieve the increasing burden of debt. Old man Calhoun sends the cook away and tries to do the work by himself. By the time he washes the face and hands of Aunt Ursula and settles her on her chair, the morning is half gone and none of his work has been done (AHG, 47). Seeing his father's plight Jerry suggests employing a servant:

"Well, you ought to get somebody, to come in and help her, some young nigger."

"I can't afford it, son. Not and things the way they are."

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"I'll pay it."

"No, no, anything you've got free that - a way I want to see put on the place. It'll be yours some day. But you-" ... "you do plenty as it is, and I'm grateful." (AHG, 49)

Old man Calhoun does much for his dead wife's relatives. But he is so humble that he feels obliged to thank his own son for his help. He is an effective foil to such a manipulator of others like Bogan Murdock - who uses even the sympathy evoked by his daughter's death for distracting public attention from his finance. Duckfoot Blake feels that Murdock has a sense of satisfaction instead of a sense of loss after Sue's death because the public attention has now turned from his finances to Sue's death. The people feel sorry for him now, forgetting their anger over his financial irregularities and corruption.

When Mr. Calhoun goes to the cell to see Jerry he doesn't know to say anything, "Son" (AHG, 380). He fumbles for words. "May be not, may be not, son -- may be I couldn't done a thing, but I could come" (AHG, 380). Then he takes Duckfoot Blake and Jerry home (Jerry is released on bail). The room is dark. Warren describes the scene of Jerry's reconciliation with his poverty-stricken father:

Calhoun struck a match, peered about with the tiny flame held up and located the lamp. "We just never got the electricity turned back on since we got back," he said, in a voice of careful explanation, not apology. (AHG, 383)
Old man Calhoun's essentially caring nature is seen in his striking the match and fetching the small lamp to enable Jerry and Duckfoot to enter the house when it is dark. We see his concern. He is very careful just to be explanatory and not to be apologetic, as indicated by the narrator's words, "he said in a voice of careful explanation and not apology" (NHG, 383). He takes life as it is without any high ambition. He has no future to hope for and no past to regret about. He lives in the present and has no complaints about what befalls him. Warren tells us that Old man Calhoun explained to Jerry about electricity failure in a careful voice, "not apology." Since Calhoun is a simple and honest man without regrets about what befalls him he does not want to extend apology to others. He takes life in its stride and is happy about the things around him. He does not want to be hypocritical by being apologetic for something which is not his fault.

If contrasted with another strong character "fulfilling" itself, the hollowness of the characters discussed in this chapter will be clearly seen. Munn's aunt Ianthe Sprague in Night Rider 's a fitting contrast like Old man Calhoun to the hollowmen of Warren. Though ill, her present being is a goal to which Ianthe Sprague has with sureness been moving. This fulfilment may not be actually willed but consequential to her

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good nature. But it is what the warren protagonist aspires for. Whereas people like Jack Harrick keep brooding over their past and feel sad about the present, Ianthe Sprague completely forgets her past and lives only in the present. Hence the incompleteness of Jack Harrick and fulfilment in Ianthe Sprague. Bogan Murdock remains hollow till the end of the novel.

A character, to be complete should seek a rounded relationship either in sharing his life with others or in his own feelings of joy hope or toil. Sue Murdock in *At Heaven's Gate* does not find this relationship though she moves from man to man. She remains unsatisfied throughout the novel. She dies without getting any of her dreams fulfilled.

Every individual surrounds himself with a certain boundary and keeps away from joining the community. Certain gestures of the characters show their response to their craving for crossing this boundary and mixing with the community. There are many instances for the craving for brotherhood. Sue Murdock kisses Aunt Ursula whom Jerry Calhoun hates just because she is dirty and a nuisance due to her complete blindness; Amanda kisses Hamish Bond's scar. She makes an attempt to cross the barrier that would release her into a complete human being.

Thus in warren's fiction we have different types of hollow people - The man whose power lies in the defects of others like Bogan Murdock; a character in a way peripheral to
what the book is about like Slim Sarrett; a person who while projecting the images of others into the limelight fades out of sight like Sue Murdock and one who wants his vacuum left behind him to be filled by others like Jack Harrick.

We have the spiritually strong characters like Old Calhoun, Ianthe Sprague and Ashby Wyndham who can be used as touchstones to assess the misery that befalls the hollow characters just because of their failure to be like these strong people. Thus for instance, we have Ianthe Sprague who closes the door leading to the memories of the past and sits firmly in the chamber of the present peacefully in spite of her sickness, from whom Percy Munn wants to learn the art of rejecting the past and the future.

Since every character discussed in this chapter is hollow, his or her idea of what is perfect conflicts with what is real. Sue Murdock's aspiration for an ideal father falters since her father as well as the other men in whom she seeks solace are egoistic; Slim Sarrett's quest for a perfect self grants him only an evasive nothingness; Bogan Murdock's longing for something grand -- a financial empire -- is shattered due to the evil inherent in him. The ideal is always out of reach of actualization for the type of people discussed in this section of the study since they are trapped in a self-created web of meaningless existence.