CHAPTER SIX
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THE ASPIRED AND THE ACTUAL

Every novel of Warren is a searching study of the extravagant aspirations of man and his actual attainments. One of the aspirations of the Warren protagonist is acquiring adult identity and self-knowledge. Many of them are bewildered as they are unsure of their own worth. Since they are not free of a sense of unworthiness they become cruel to themselves and to others.

The Warren hero wants to transform the world into a perfect and uncontaminated realm. But the required strength of mind to achieve this aim is lacking in him. He is passive and he withdraws from any active involvement in the fulfilment of his ambition. He avoids commitment and acknowledgement of his share in events.

In Warren's novels dreams never come true for his idealistic characters. There is always a conflict between the protagonist's private plans and public acts. The real achievement for a man who takes up a work, need not necessarily be his successful completion of it. But the appreciation he gets from the others for his endeavour is his achievement. That will be an encouragement for him to try till his success. On the contrary, if he is ridiculed by his fellowmen, he loses hope and feels shattered. Adam Rosenzweig, the protagonist of Wilderness (1961), the
novel discussed in the present chapter, is ridiculed by his companions when he stands with his clubfoot before the inspecting officer and tells him that his aim is to fight for the freedom of America. A normal human being would have felt ashamed by the roar of laughter that accompanies this statement. But Warren says that Adam is "startled by an inner strength" (W, 28) because of the provocative laughter.

Set against the background of the Civil War, Wilderness exemplifies how man's extreme ambition either makes him or mars him. Adam Rosenzweig is a clubfooted Jew from Bavaria. Adam's father Leopald Rosenzweig had fought for freedom and had been imprisoned for it in Berlin. He returns to Bavaria his home town, after his release, to die.

Adam, who leads a calm life repairing watches in Bavaria, plans to go to America during the Civil War, to fight for freedom. To conceal his congenitally crippled foot, he wears a "bright, strange, clever boot" (W, 16) of "cunning design" (W, 16). On the ship bound for New York, the sea breaks its rhythm and gives a twitch to the ship which throws Adam off balance and his foot and the peculiar boot are seen by all. Adam is refused enlistment among the recruits and Meinherr Duncan, the inspecting officer turns him over to the sailors to be taken back to Bavaria. A seaman offers him a plan to escape from the ship to go to New York.
In New York there is a race riot. Adam Rosenzweig finds negro hanged from a lamp post. Adam is saved from the angry mob by a black man named Mose Talbutt. Aaron Blaustein whom Adam meets as his uncle advised, asks Adam to take the place of his son who died in the war. Adam refuses and asks Aaron to help him go to the war. Blaustein makes arrangement for Adam and Mose Talbutt to go as assistants to the sutler Jedeen Hawksworth. They go south to sell provisions to the union troops.

Adam teaches Mose to read. In the meantime Blaustein is dead. Jed advises Adam to go and claim Blaustein's property, as Adam is Blaustein's only kin. In a confrontation between Jed and Mose, Jed rips off Mose's underwear and exposes the mark 'W' meaning 'worthless' branded on Mose's thigh. Mose tries to explain to Adam how he got the mark. Adam listens to Mose's tale with impatience and then asks him to keep quiet. But Mose continues to speak and Adam calls Mose a "black son-of-a-bitch" (W, 223), the words, Mose has often told Hawksworth not to use.

That night Mose kills Hawksworth and flees with Hawksworth's money. Adam buries Hawksworth's body in the forest. He fears that he might be accused of the crime. He feels that he is the cause for the murder as it was he who had made Mose feel frustrated by calling him "black son-of-a-bitch."

In a remote area he meets a man, an outlaw, who murders soldiers and steals from them. Adam gives the outlaw's wife
food from his wagon. The next day the man takes him across the river. Adam wanders in the wilderness. Eight Confederate soldiers knock Adam down and eat the food in his wagon. One of them removes Adam's boot and cries to the blue-eyed boy, the Tadpole that Adam is "mulefooted" (W, 295). Then some Union soldiers come. Adam kills a Confederate soldier. He takes the dead man's boot and wears it on his deformed foot. He feels sad thinking that he is the cause for the death of Blaustein and Jed and the fate of Mose. In the debris of the overturned wagon Adam sees the Prayer Book fallen from the satchel given by his uncle. Realizing what it is to be cared for, he removes the boot from his leg and places it along with the other boot near the soldier's corpse. He realizes that he need not try to deny his defect with the "clever boot" of "cunning design" (W, 16). He is after all a man like other men.

The novel wilderness clearly analyses the conflict of beliefs. There is a clash between human ability and lofty idealism. From the beginning Adam's experiences test his firm beliefs.

There is a shift in the novel from frustration to affection. As the novel begins Adam Kosenzweig thinks of the loneliness of the night on which his father Leopold Kosenzweig died. Many times Adam considers his deformity as his dissimilarity with the other people. When he tries to join the procession of the
people "whom the world had designed to be his companions" (W, 235), the people direct stares at him "that bleached him to nothing" (W, 237). "They accuse me of being like them," Adam thinks, "But I'm not, I'm not" (W, 237). Towards the end he realizes that he need not try to hide his defect. He feels that he is not "different from other men" (W, 307). He also learns that everything is a part of everything else. Adam understands as Barnett Guttenburg rightly observes:

that the world and the idea, which he views as separate, are inextricably intertwined in the web of being, so that motives, for example are neither as pure as he demands nor as corrupt as he suspects.1

Thus through a thematic shift from frustration to affection Warren brings out the conflict between Adam Rosenzweig's rigid aspiration for freedom in the beginning and the relaxed acceptance of brotherhood towards the end.

In the beginning of the novel we find Adam lacking in humanness. On the very day he lands in New York, he sees a man hanged. "He stared up into the face," says the author, "and in the sympathy of blood beating in his head and the stoppage of his own breath, he felt the agony that had popped those eyes and darkened that face" (W, 44). When Adam finds out that the man hanged is a negro,

in that moment of recognition, he realized that the sympathetic pain, felt at first when he had thought the darkness of flesh to be a mark of the agony of strangulation, was now gone. (W, 44-45)

Adam himself is ashamed of this change of attitude and feels vile and desperate.

Adam's failure as an understanding human being is significant in the scene when he rejects the human appeal of Mose Talbutt to listen to his explanation about how he got branded on his thigh. After the humiliating exposure of the mark 'W' by Jed Hawksworth, Mose Talbutt comes to Adam expecting human tenderness and love. In his exasperation, Adam not only asks Mose to "shut up" (W, 222) but calls him a "black-son-of-a-bitch" (W, 223). This lack of sympathy and harshness of Adam triggers the anger of Mose and leads to the murder of Jed Hawksworth.

Another scene where Warren depicts Adam's emotional aridity is the way he responds to Aaron Blaustein's maid who had worked to restore his Prayer Book from its cellar soaking. The maid had sat up at night to dry the Prayer Book and press its pages with a mild iron. But he had not looked inside to see how well she had restored the pages. Later Adam himself regrets the deed. Warren remarks, "He w'shed he had opened the book before her eyes and praised her. Why hadn't he done it?" (W, 305).

This sort of sympathy is felt by him only towards the end of the novel. He recollects the episode and feels sorry for not having shown any recognition for the maid's hard work. Later,
he feels a warm gush of pity for the Confederate soldiers when he sees them devouring the food from his wagon. These people have knocked him down to get the food. Yet, he blesses them unaware. Cleanth Brooks remarks, "Their hunger humanizes Adam." Warren observes, "Adam felt a sweet sadness fill his heart. He loved the boy because the boy had been very hungry and now had food" (W, 293-94). Just before his encounter with the Confederate soldiers Adam muses on the chain of events that had gone before his reaching this wilderness. "And sitting there," Warren tells us, "thinking that, Adam was filled with a tenderness, even a love, for Mose Talbutt. Let him go in peace he thought. Oh, God, lead him to peace" (W, 290).

Adam admires Jed Hawksworth’s generosity in defending a negro in the Court and Mose Talbutt’s kindness in saving Adam from the angry mob. When Jedeen Hawksworth was twenty-five or twenty-six he was courageous to go unsummoned to the court where a black man was being tried for striking the son of his owner with murderous intent. Jed’s father was a respectable planter and would be outraged. The mother was cousin to the plaintiff’s father Colonel Johnston F. Harris. The accused negro was his property. When Jedeen Hawksworth entered the court and said that it was not as they said and the negro did not strike the son of the plantation owner, Hawksworth’s word had had no

effect. The negro had been convicted and hanged. A mob took Jed out at night beat him soundly, swathed him in tar and feathers and rode him on a rail and dumped him into a swamp. Aaron Blaustein admires Jed, saying that in what he did, Jed had as much courage as in fighting. Adam sympathises with Jed and honours him for his courage. But Jed frankly explains to Adam that he had not stood up in the court out of any sense of human brotherhood to defend the negro but out of an outraged feeling against his father:

"Listen," he repeated, "it wasn't any cheering made me do it. Made me go in there and speak for the nigger. You know what it was?" ... because I hated my pa for making me ashamed of him." (W, 160)

The truth revealed, Adam's idea of benevolence is betrayed.
Likewise Mose Talbutt disappoints him saying that he did not save Adam from the angry mob with any good intention but just to prevent the other people from getting on to the shelf where Mose had been hiding for safety:

"That night you saved me -- when you pulled me out of the water," Adam asked, "why did you do it?" ... Then he heard the voice:
"If you tried to climb up -- if'n you got to clawen and couldn't make it -- and maken a racket -- then all them folks might of tried to climb up thar." (W, 221)

This is yet another betrayal of Adam's idea of goodness. Because of his disappointment Adam does not want to listen to Mose's explanation of how he got the 'W' branded on his thigh and his
irritation triggers Mose's anger to kill Jedeen Hawksworth. Adam loses his equipoise when the actual happenings are not as he expects them to be. If contrasted with the scene in which Adam feels a sweet sadness seeing the ravenous hunger of the Confederate soldiers being satisfied, these two episodes in which he feels disgusted over the betrayal of his assessment of nobility, prove that compromise is easier with an enemy than with a friend. Cleanth Brooks also has a similar opinion:

It is easier for the Adams of our world to accept the fact that they share a basic humanity with the enemy than to accept the evident bestiality within their allies or the latent bestiality within themselves.3

Adam is a hollow personality as Warren himself agrees:

You have the strange effect of a central hollowness with a rich context, with the central character as an observer who is a mere observer. He is involved intellectually but only intellectually. The story is never fleshed out in enough depth so that the world of context is related to his experience in the right way ... But the character does not develop to fit the context.4

"The development of the central character," according to Warren does not "keep pace with the development of the experience."5 The cause for this hollowness is Adam's failure to give importance to the world as to the idea.

5Ibid.
In his dedication to the idea, Adam does not mingle with the world and keeps aloof like Jeremiah Beaumont of **World Enough and Time**. Jeremiah, in his obsession with the idea of creating an uncontaminated world, keeps analysing his act of killing Fort. He ignores all other factors of life. Adam takes up the duty of teaching Mose. Mose copies the letters from the letter-cards Adam has given him and shows to Adam what he has written and asks him with extreme eagerness, "How dat?" ... How dat fer dis nigger chile of de Lawd - A - Mighty?" (w, 181). Mose asks in almost a whisper, pleading. Adam sees the man "bowed humbly forward, the blunt, dark face outthrust, the bloodshot eyes fixed on him in naked appeal" (w, 181). The word "Fine" (w,181) comes out of Adam's mouth with much reluctance. He himself senses the falsity of the tone. He fears that the tone might betray his pretended dedication in making Mose learn the letters and reveal his revulsion. To conceal his repulsive feeling he asks Mose, "has Mr. Hawksworth again spoken insultingly to you? I mean, has he called you a name you find offensive?" (w, 181). This enquiry makes Mose understand that Adam is inquisitive and not concerned. Warren remarks, "He became aware that Mose was studying him from behind some thicket of assessment and distrust" (w, 182).

Adam becomes aware of Mose's suspicion about his sincerity and he looks down at the letters Mose had so painfully drawn on the sheet of paper. "He forced himself to look at them" (w, 182) says Warren. This scene clearly proves Adam's attitude
to the world. He wants to set things right -- make a negro learn his letters -- but he has no patience to get fixed to the world. He considers himself a perfectionist as he just wants Mose, the negro to learn his letters. He does not act naturally to fulfil that wish. His action is forced as the ignorant Mose himself is aware of. Though Adam has the noble aspiration of fighting for freedom, his thoughts are unsubstantial and his movements are instinctive rather than intellectual. The sudden joy Adam experiences after leaving Monmorancy's place is indicative of this instinctive response that characterizes him. Monmorancy Pugh tells Adam the way through which he can move his wagon. He waters the horses and puts them to the wagon. When he picks up the reins, "joy stirred in his heart" ([W], 283), says Warren, "He thought that if he tried to say why that joy was there it would go away" ([W], 283). Till the next night he spends his time in such vague and useless thoughts, proving his hollowness:

He thought: I do not know what there is to think about. It is there, but I do not know what it is ... that thought, in his very resolution not to think, moved with him. Until in the later hours it changed its form. He moved now in the certainty that though he did not know, he would come to know. ([W], 283)

He who had started from Bavaria with a heroic aspiration of fighting for freedom, now spends his time in vague thoughts. He does not spend time in constructive plans about the future or thinking of the worthy things that had happened in the past
The next night he sees horse droppings which he discovers to be fresh by prodding it with his foot.

"In panic he jerked up to look both ways ... It must have been the Rebel Cavalry, he thought. Then all at once, his fear was lost in loneliness. He stared down at the horse droppings and felt as though he might weep." (W, 284)

Both the thoughts and actions prove Adam's hollowness about which Warren himself had been aware of as mentioned earlier in this chapter in his interview with Marshall Walker (p.203).

Cleanth Brooks does not consider Adam a hollow character. He says that Adam's mood shifts from obsessive guilt to pride in his newfound masculine power or from cynicism to sympathy before he finally attains to self-knowledge and through that knowledge to a way of accepting human kind. Warren has earlier set forth very skilfully the circumstances which have made Adam what he is and the psychological pattern through which Adam will be forced to move.6

For his obsessive guilt there is the scene where he kills the Confederate soldier and thinks, "I killed him ... because his foot was not like mine" (W, 304). There is the guilt where he thinks about his mother. Long back, as a boy, when he had been recovering from a long fever he had been awakened, feeling himself adrift in the air, pure and light as a feather. His

6 Cleanth Brooks, "Experience Redeemed in Knowledge," p.28
"mother had come and laid a hand on him. "That was the last
time she ever loved me" (W, 284), he thinks. Then he could
recollect with distant sadness that she had come to hate Adam,
his son, "because he had not forgiven her for not forgiving
his father" (W, 284). She was angry with Adam's father because
"he thought more of something else than of" (W, 284) her.

When his mother told him that she showed her dissatisfaction
in her husband's wish and endeavour to die for human liberty,
Adam then a small boy shouted in rage, "And so do I! And so
do I!" (W, 286). Now he recollects "the woman's stricken face"
(W, 286). In the vividness of that vision now while in the
forest, he wants to rise and cry out "no, no, it was not that
he didn't love her, it was something different, something he
had to explain to her, if she would only listen, if she would
only" (W, 284). Adam wants his mother's love and tenderness
which he had rejected earlier. From this guilt, as Cleanth
Brooks observes (quoted on p.206 of the present study), Adam
moves to a "newfound masculine power." He kills a Confederate
soldier somehow managing to get a rifle. He feels proud for
a moment as he had proved that he is man enough to act, though
a cripple.

The clash between the Confederate soldiers and the Union
men is the ensuing effect of the Civil War. This is the public
scene against which the private destiny of Adam is worked out.
Warren wants us to see the individual against the situation of the particular time. Neil Nakadate points out

Warren, of course, understands that social forces may mold character and dictate human action, but he establishes a tension between the individual and society in a relationship that permits character to jerk free and transcend events in the search for its own meaning.7

In this scene we feel the vitality of the connection between the individual and society. Towards the end of this episode we see Warren's skill in bringing out the conflict between the private plans and the public acts. After killing the Confererate soldier Adam feels a surge of pride in that act - a manliness. Suddenly he feels guilty for having killed the man. Consequently he thinks that "the world must be just, ... for he felt overwhelmed with guilt" (., 301), that is, he feels overwhelmed with guilt as he has killed a fellow human being. Though he feels triumphant at having killed the Confederate soldier, the remorse he feels at the killing makes him discover the fact that the world is just. Had it not been just, he would have felt happy about the triumph and would not have felt sorry for the killing of a fellow human being.

In this scene Adam is happy as an individual for having achieved what he aspired -- fighting for liberty. He feels guilty as he considers the dead man a representative of society. His

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private plan is to work for freedom. After killing the man he thinks, "we always do what we intend" (W, 300). Immediately "in the hollow darkness of his mind" (W, 301) he remembers the wild laughter by the crew in the ship teasing him when with his club foot exposed, he told them that he wanted to fight for freedom. Now he thinks how he had achieved something which seemed impossible to them as their ridicule revealed. There is a sense of justification, "I did nothing I did not have to do" (W, 301). Then "in sudden painfulness" (W, 301) he feels that Auron Blaustein and Jedeen Hawksworth would not have died if he had not come.

Every man like Adam, has to take on himself his share in the happening of events, because every man is responsible for the happening. Events do not come about on their own. At the next level he transcends events (as Neil Nakadate points out as discussed on p. 208 of the present study) and jerks free to search for the meaning of his character. Adam ascends gradually to that stage. When he takes on himself participation in events, he thinks that Mose had killed Jed when he ought to have killed Adam who used the expression "black son-of-a-bitch" (W, 223) to Mose. "Why hadn't Mose done that? He lay and wondered," says Warren. "Yes he thought, you cannot strike down what you have lifted up. So Jed, he decided had had to die in his place" (W, 302). Not being able to bear the depth of his thought he "stared down into it as into a deep well where
a little light glimmers on the dark water" (W, 302). Then he concludes that everybody has betrayed him and now feels that "everything he had ever known was false" (W, 303) and that he is on the verge of a great truth.

It is now that Adam realizes that he killed the Confederate soldier "because the dead man's foot was not like" (W, 304) his foot. Then Adam asks himself whether he is different from the others. After a chain of connected thoughts of similar type he understands "that he would have to try to know what a man must know to be a man" (W, 310). He realizes that he had been human and he would do it all again. "But Oh with a different heart!" (W, 310), slay again thus to protect another human being but the difference will be in doing it consciously. Only now he tries to probe into the meaning of his character. So long, as Leonard Casper tells us, he had "the desire to kill a world that is different from himself, and from his dream. Only at the end can he say 'I killed him ... because his foot was not like mine' ... He has become the true proxy son of Blaustein who knows so well that 'The hardest thing to remember is that other men are men.'"

What Adam realizes towards the end of the novel is that Divine Law itself requires action and responsibility from men and not resignation. In Adam's attempt at hiding his defect,

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he shows his reluctance to accept what is destined for him or at least his unwillingness to admit that he has a twisted leg. That is why he gets the special shoe to look like -- not be like -- other men. Towards the end we see the transformation in him in not trying to hide the defect and hence his decision to be like other men. Problems crop up for Adam in the earlier scenes, because he is not ready to accept his deformity. We find his reluctance to show his clubfoot in many scenes.

Soon after his father's death, when Adam tells his uncle that he will not stay in Bavaria where he does not have the rights of a man, where he cannot even marry unless he gets a family founding permit. Then his uncle looks at his left foot and Adam feels the impulse "to withdraw it, to hide it" (W, 15) Later when Mose calls Adam "Slew" with an implication that he has a twisted leg, Mrs. Maran Meyerhof thinks that it is his name and calls him "Mr. Slew" (W, 112). He tells Maran that his name is not 'Slew' and that they call him that because of his foot. Then too he withdraws his foot and stands "straight ... on it" (W, 116). Later when he talks to Aaron Blaustein about how he was rejected for enlistment with the mercenaries, the narrator states that:

His gaze dropped to his left foot. He found that it, as though independent of his will, as though unattached to his body even, had withdrawn slightly, like a sick animal trying to slip under the skirt of the chair. (W, 71)
Towards the end the special foot is taken away from him in the fight with the Confederate soldiers and he walks with his bare foot. He takes the boot from the dead man's foot propped over the dead mule and wears it. It is "infinitely precious to him" (W, 306), because it conceals his deformity. Then he removes it, takes the other boot also and keeps them near the soldier's corpse. Because suddenly he does not find any difference in him — in the deformed foot. He feels one with the world by accepting his clubfoot. Earlier he used to feel inferior to the others. But now he does not feel. He had always been giving importance to look like others. Now he is happy as he is like the others.

Leonard Casper says that Adam, a

"pure idealist longs to be heroic ... to suffer in public splendor; but finally knows that of him a more heroic decision is demanded — to be unheroic; to be like all others, in a way unforeseen, deformed and nameless; in humility to be worthy of what they as men ... had endured" 9

Leonard Casper further explains that what has saved America from complete self-deception is the development of certain men of moral awareness responsive enough to be able to find charity in the wilderness of war — "the capacity to understand and forgive." 10 The Confederate States espoused the slave trade.

9 Leonard Casper, "Trial by Wilderness," p.50

10 ibid., p.51.
Slavery and not racism is abolished. In *Wilderness* we have many scenes to prove the impact of racism. Man's aspiration to abolish the slave trade actually ended up in racism, which is worse than the slave trade. Instances are many in the novel. Maran Meyerhof has a brief conversation with Adam and she takes leave. After she leaves Mose Talbutt remarks "sawf and juicy" (W, 118). Adam immediately tells him "that's a white woman, you are talking about. Did you know that?" (W, 118). Jed Hawksworth immediately joins Adam, "and if it was some places and some folks and you talk that way about a white lady, they'd cut your black tongue out" (W, 118). Then he looks down at his knife and says "one time and I might of done it myself" (W, 118). Ironically the reverse happens and Jed Hawksworth is killed by Mose. This aversion and hatred for a man considered to be lower in rank, brings about Jed's death. This is one among the many instances to prove America's aspiration to abolish slave trade and the conflicting racism in actual life.

Maran Meyerhof is waiting sadly for her husband, Hans Meyerhof's death. She clings to Adam's coat in her sorrow. In the house she feels that her husband is going to die. Adam understands Maran Meyerhof's misery and wants to stay with her. He would help her in carrying milk, pumping water in the trough and in other things. He would lie in the attic where Hans Meyerhof, Maran's husband is lying and is expected to die
any moment. But Jed tells Adam sarcastically, "We're pulling out ... that is ... if you give yore kind permission" (W, 131). "If they had not said it" (W, 132), he thinks, he would not be in the wagon on this road. If it had not been for Jed and Mose, Adam might have stayed back.

He might have been able to deny to himself every motive that made him stay. But Judson Hawksworthy and Mose, Falbutt had known all the time, watching and grinning. They had understood his every motion, penetrated every self-deception. Dully, he asked himself if virtue was possible only in the shame of discovery, in the terror of accusation ... But then, in a distress of deprivation he demanded: what harm to have stayed? And he answered: None. None, for nothing was his fault. (W, 133)

In this episode Warren clearly brings out the conflict between the aspired and the actual. Though Adam sympathises with Maran Meyerhof and wants to help her, his actual plight is pathetic, for, as Goldsmith had said in his essay "City Night Piece," the person who sympathises with a sufferer and is unable to help is more pathetic than the sufferer. Adam here is in such a circumstance. He realizes that it is evil to leave the girl alone in distress. But he cannot help her either. He does not have the courage to reach out a hand to her. His thoughts coincide with those of Goldsmith who says,

why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without
a capacity of relieving, only makes the heart
that feels it more wretched than the object
which sues for assistance. 11

Towards the end Adam moves towards an awareness of human
misery as one of the epigraphs to the novel implies. Pascal
observes:

La grandeur de l'homme est grande en ce
qu'il se connaît misérable. Un arbre ne
se connaît pas misérable. C'est donc
être misérable que de se connaître
misérable; mais c'est être grand que de
connaître qu'on est misérable.

Toutes ces misères-là mêmes preuvent la
grandeur. Ce sont misères de grand seigneur,
imisères d'un roi dépossédé. (Pensees, 397-98)

That is, the greatness of man is in the fact that he knows
his condition of misery. A tree does not know its misery. It
is then miserable to know that one is miserable. It is the
knowledge of misery that makes one great. All these miseries
prove his greatness. These are the miseries of a great lord,
of a dethroned king. Just as the other epigraph taken from

Henry V states, human ends find imperfect means:

... the King is not bound to answer the
particular endings of his soldiers, the father
of his son, nor the master of his servant; for
they purpose not their death, when they purpose
their services. Besides, there is no king, be
his cause never so spotless, if it come to the
arbitrament of swords, can try it out with all
unspotted soldiers (Henry V)

11 Oliver Goldsmith, "City Night Piece," in The Other Harmony;
An Anthology of Prose Selections, ed. Prof. M. S. Nagarajan
The story of Jediah Tewksbury of *A Place to Come To* is about man's aspiration to be a fulfilled person and his efforts to achieve it and final knowledge that he as Charles Bohner points out, "comes to feel that his existence has been a futile exercise in filling up time, that he is, in fact, a superfluous man."\(^{12}\)

Jediah Tewksbury has two surrogate fathers in the novel. One is Professor Stahlmann, an intellectual and the other is Perk Sirms, Jed's step-father, an illiterate man. The intellectual father finds out his own worthlessness and emptiness and commits suicide. The illiterate father makes Jed realize the worthlessness of his life without love and waits patiently for his death when he wants his ashes to be "stuck in the ground out here" (*APCT*, 397) where Jed's mother is buried. Jed's aspiration to have a perfect father is unfulfilled and of the two actual surrogate fathers -- one proves ineffectual by showing his own life as a failure and the other reaches near an ideal father.

When Jediah Tewksbury goes to Nashville, his high school heartthrob Kozelle, whom he always had avoided becomes his middle-aged mistress. David M. Wyatt observes:

> A past rejection becomes a future, one must inevitably face; through this fateful (and

wish fulfilling) logic Warren guarantees that one must return not only to the abandoned parent but to the spurned girl friend. No other explanation is offered for this highly coincidental reunion other than the implicit appeal to the return of the repressed.13

Jedediah Tewksbury is not proud. His unassuming nature makes him humble and modest about his triumphs. The women who interact with him adore him - his mother, Rozelle, Maria McInnis, the daughter of a rich Nashville Banker, Rebecca, Jones Talbutt, Dauphine Finkel and Agnes Andersen.

Jed has a tendency which he has inherited from his mother to look "through the literal into the abstract."14 Jed's mother who is "not a large woman, on the small side rather" (APCT, 10) sits motionless with her eyes fixed on something as Jed puts it:

a nail in the wall, a stone on the ground, a tree on the horizon, or my father's body on the bed, and never shift her gaze, seeing and not seeing, and all the while you knew something was going on deep inside her like a stream in the darkness of a cave ... And when she looked at something even a rock or a tree -- or at somebody -- anybody, ... you had the feeling she was looking right into and right through whatever it was. (APCT, 10-11)

Just like her penetrating look, Jed's mother displays a strength in her gesture too. The power of her gesture is revealed when

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Mr. Tutwayler puts out his hand to her. After a handshake with Mr. Tutwayler's hand -- his mother's hand, as always in that act, "made a last, sharp decisive movement before it dropped" (APCT, 11). Jed's mother, capable of such a powerful look and gesture tells him that there is revelation for him somewhere else and hence he should leave Dugton with an expectation to see the enlightening revelation and should go away rejecting Dugton completely and along with it, his past.

Jed remarks, "It was my mother, I am sure, who, day by day expunged all possibility of any memory of Dugton, who accounted for the fact that for years I could not even remember the life there" (APCT, 25).

Jed hates his childhood experiences so much that while at Chicago he recollects his past as a humiliating experience: "Suddenly, there it is, the scene: the boy under the Chinaberry tree. I see it ... In many places, in many unexpected moments, I have seen that scene" (APCT, 9). When he writes about his past he is surprised by the tone -- arising from an outrage at himself -- He distances his present self from the child Jed as he observes,

That tone represents, I suppose, an unconscious will to detach myself from the scene that is my subject, to deny any sense of identity with the weeping child and the whole reality of the scene (APCT, 10)
He feels affliction and weakness "because of some unfomorable sense of the way the world is" (APCT, 10). Jed's aspiration is to emerge as an elated self. His hatred for the weak child in him shows his longing for what not to be, in future.

Gradually he tries for a transformation of himself from a crying child to a teasing boy. He defends himself against the aggressive ridicule of his school-mates. He repudiates his father. Warren says that like the little girl in Zola's P'Assommoir enacting the comic gyrations of her husband's death from delirium tremens, Jed enacts the death of his father (APCT, 22). Several nights later there is a popular demand that for the benefit of a new couple, he put on his most admired performance. He calls this his social success. Being attracted "by the authenticity, mystery and the challenge of" (APCT, 23) his first enactment of his father's death Dauphine Pinkel comes to him. He calls this his "first sexual success" (APCT, 23). Thus he manages to transform his childhood affliction into a social and sexual success.

In A Place to Come To Jediah Tewksbury is not gloomy and pessimistic as Percy Munn in Night Rider. Neil Nakadate says that the novel is "both introverted in focus and intellectualized in content."\(^{15}\) Neil Nakadate points out that this novel deals with evil and folly as the disease of the intellect. For this

again Jed's intellectual way of handling the shameful incident of his father's death and acquiring social success for himself from it is the proof of a diseased intellect.

The tragic death of Agnes Andersen enables Jed to complete writing his "Dante and the Metaphysics of Death" successfully. When he finds Rozelle a liar, he just rejects her and leaves without any delay. He never procrastinates but decides immediately and acts fast. What is admirable in Jediah Tewksbury is his honesty. Tjebbo Westendorp observes.

Jed Tewksbury comes off well with the reader in the end, I would argue. He tells the story of his life with some embarrassment (when things get really disgraceful, he switches to "he" and "him"), and with a great deal of honesty.16

Jed's parents confound his aspiration to have ideal parents who will provide him with a memorable and sweet home. Consequent on their failure Jed feels displaced and wanders around the world aspiring to find peace somewhere. In the story of Jed, Warren brings out the sufferings of Jed which highlight the intensity of the conflicting actuality against his aspiration. As the novel begins Jediah Tewksbury starts his life being sick of home. His life is haunted by a past and a place which continue to recur as memories throughout his life. Both his parents embarrass him -- the father by his ignominious death

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and the mother, being drunk and found with another man. Towards the end, Jed becomes aware of his guilt and after many years he revisits his father's grave with an understanding of his father, Buck Tewksbury's nobility. He feels that "the only thing wrong with Buck was he was born out of phase" (APCT, 400). Jed thinks that "if Buck had been born in 1840, he would have been just ripe for Sergeant in a troop of Alabama cavalry" (APCT, 400).

Jed is shocked to see his mother drunk. In the same way as he rejects his father he rejects his mother too. He says,

I stood there ... holding the glass in my hand, telling myself, in a dumb, light headed, bewildered way, how I had never seen my mother, not in all my born days, put lipstick on her lips. (APCT, 51)

Since he feels that he will not be able to bear any word of explanation she would utter, he himself speaks contemptuously, "I thought it was you who never touched whiskey!" (APCT, 52)

Then he starts laughing -- roaring with laughter -- releases the glass in mid air and leaves the house. Three weeks later he gets a letter from his mother telling him that he should not have left the house before knowing the truth. The letter further informs:

'Mister Simms is a hard working man and has troubles, including wife. About him and me ain't nothing I am ashamed of. Till that night from the time yore father had his
accident no human flesh ever touched my flesh. I tried to raise you up the only way I knewed good and decent so you could git out of claxford county and make yourself a man.' (APCT, 53)

Though the letter proves how honest his mother is, he ignores the letter. Towards the end Perk Simms writes to him about his mother's death and how Jed's mother was holding Jed's new photos in her hand when she went to the hospital and how before taking her to the operation room they had to remove Jed's photos from her hand. She has left many messages for Jed before her death. Jed decides to share his grief with Rozelle so that he could weep if he wants, without feeling ashamed. But Rozelle had left the place and Jed is left alone in his grief:

Before I feel asleep, I wondered how much the need to see Rozelle and talk to her about my mother's death had been merely a mask. ... How clearly! -- how clearly, in the depth of my being indeed -- had I known the comforting of grief and the wiping away of every tear would have wound up between the sheets. Yes, I had not read my Aristotle for nothing, for he, in the Rhetoric, points out that the awakening of an emotion of one genre evokes those of a similar genre. Tenderness calls forth tenderness. (APCT, 374)

He is reconciled to his mother soon after he gets the news about her death. When he reaches Lugton, Perk Simms tells Jed how his mother had the skill "To make a man always feel like a man. She could stop anything she was doing -- washing dishes or anything -- and just for a second give you a look that made
you feel you and her had a wonderful secret" (APCT, 393).
Perk tells Jed that living with a woman like Jed's mother is as pleasant "as living in a dream" (APCT, 394) and she could at the same time make him feel that "everything kept on being the truth" (APCT, 394). All these facts Jed hears about his mother, move him to make him go to the graveyard and feel like lying between the graves of his mother and father and stretching out his hand to each and being able to weep. Thus, a reconciliation between the son and the rejected parents, now dead, is clearly brought out in the novel.

This episode describing the son's frustration in the beginning and understanding towards the end, elucidates how the ideal parents whom the son aspires to have, prove to be failures in actual life and frustrate the son. Because of his disappointment in the noble aspiration, the son wanders in the world in search of peace and finds it finally in his reconciliation with the rejected parents and return to human community.

From a humble origin Jediah Tewksbury rises to be a great international scholar. From the time he is a child till his middle age when the novel ends, we find him indulging in self-analysis. William Bedford Clark says that "Jediah Tewksbury, the investigator is investigating Jediah Tewksbury, the subject."17 From the time of the bitter experience he has of his father's

shameful death, Jed feels ashamed of the contaminated world. By his humorous enactment of the dirty scene he tries to live through the sense of shame and ridicule. Thus, even as a schoolboy, he makes an attempt at learning the lesson of survival of the fittest, ignoring the fact that he teases his own father to survive amidst a ridiculing, heartless society.

Jed's quest for an ideal father and his experiences with women, give his life its form. Like his pilgrimage from place to place which is examined in Chapter III of the present study, he keeps moving from woman to woman. Every woman he comes across, finds him attractive. Rozelle who fails to get him in the senior prom and is disappointed when he walks out, finds him again at Nashville; at graduate school he attracts Dauphine Finkel, an intelligent student of the University of Chicago, Agnes Andersen, marries him preferring Jed to her fiancé; a lady named Clairbelle Spaethe who had travelled with Jed once in a train sees the tribute paid to him in the paper and writes to him praising him as "a real Man of Distinction" (APCT, 137) and writes frankly that she wants to be with him in Nashville, Tennessee and that she feels it in her bones. There in it, is enclosed a colour snapshot of her in a black bikini lying on her back, arms stretched above her head to ensure a good bust-rise. At Nashville, people try to match Jed with Maria McInnis with whom Jed "Drifts into having dates" (APCT, 144) and "who danced well, had lovely female manners" (APCT, 145).
He says that they were happy in each other's company as she did not ask him to marry her, "So I could," says he "float gently, contentedly, bodilessly, in the vacuum of my non-desiring and of her non-expectation" (APCT, 145). Rebecca Jones Talbut, an attractive middle-aged woman likes Jed's company and Jed teaches her Dante. Finally Dauphine Finkell, his schoolmate, rich and voluptuous, a photographer, marries him and after the son is born gets a separation as she says, "Oh, we tried so hard ... to do everything right. To make everything mean something. But nothing means anything" (APCT, 344).

When he was young, his mother had always asked him to keep away from Rozelle, whose name was to his mother always "like a red flag to a bull" (APCT, 136). Ironically his life is shaped by many women who have such important roles in it. The life that Elvira, Jed's mother leads with "Perk Simms is based on spiritual companionship and mutual understanding. She has a yearning that Jed too should get such a noble partner. Contradictory to her aspiration for a peaceful life for her son, till her death Jed does not know real happiness as we find revealed in his own words:

I have never had the slightest notion of what happiness is -- that what I had thought of all my life as happiness was only excitement. Of one kind or another. (APCT, 361)
Thus in many novels as in *A Place to Come To*, we find the human condition in Warren as being torn between the flesh and the spirit.

Jed's shifting from woman to woman proves that his yearning for happiness is not fulfilled. Without realizing that excitement would give him only momentary joy, he seeks that and ends up in alienation in life. Finally he sends a plea for reunion with his wife. As Allen Shephered remarks, in Warren's novels

> There is everywhere emphasis upon the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, the necessity of discipline, man's disposition to evil and the possibly redemptive nature of suffering.18

Jed's mother writes to him when he is in Nashville, Tennessee, "I reckin I love you but don't reckin that is no call to be seeing you in Dugton" (APCT, 158). In spite of her immense affection for her son she does not want him to come to Dugton. She does not want him to have any trace of Dugton. She wants him to wipe Dugton memories completely. But what he does is the reverse. He wants Rozelle, a Dugton girl whom his mother hates to go with him to start life anew. He would have started his life with her as his wife. But she is hesitant to come away from Carrington Lawford, her husband.

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For Rozelle Hardcastle, like Sue Murdock of At Heaven's Gate, the moment is important. She does not want to plan for the future and feel sad about the past. She takes life in her stride. Like Sue, Rozelle also goes from man to man and towards the end of the novel she is the wife of a Hindu Swami who is rich and lives in Morocco. She tells Jed, when he meets him in Rome that both of them would not have had a happy life if they had been married. She refers to herself in the third person and tells Jed:

"Suppose she had gone off to some jerry water college with you and went to pieces in some generally disastrous way? Or you had gone off to Europe with her to live on Butler's money and so had gone to pieces in your way? (APCT, 363)

She is happy with her present condition as a rich businessman - Swami's wife. For herself she had no aspirations and is at ease in her actual present.

As discussed earlier, Jed admits that he does not have the slightest notion of what happiness is. As a contrast to his condition, he finds Maria McInnis being happy, in spite of her miseries like her mother being in the mental hospital. Her father's efforts to protect her and the visits of her relatives have not saved her from having to become aware of the world of delusory hates and fears. She visits her mother every week though her mother has ceased to respond to her or anybody else.
McInnis's doctor forbids her from visiting her mother as McInnis herself falls ill -- "not in her head, just plain ill" (APCT, 194). She writes all these details to Jed -- how, for years she could not take trips except for a few days since she had to visit her mother. She informs him that "she had been happy in the happiness of her friends and even had a kind of happiness of her own." She writes to Jed, "Dear Jed -- I see it all to you." (APCT, 194). In spite of her miserable condition she is able to keep herself happy. She herself realizes that her happiness, when in such a sad plight is not sensible: "But, oh if she could just be sensible and see the truth" (APCT, 194), says Jed Tewksbury.

Jed reads her letter slowly and numbly, wanting the numbness to last. He finds peace in that numbness. Then he continues:

It did not last, for I made the mistake of closing my eyes, and then I saw Maria's face when, at the Cudworth dinner, she had leaned over Sally Cudworth's shoulder, embracing her, and had pressed her cheek against Sally's, and her own face had gleamed not only in the light of candles, but with an inner joy that appropriated Sally's joy as her own. (APCT, 195)

In her joy she excels even the objects of nature which Keats quotes in his poem, "The Happy Insensibility,"
In a drear-nighted December
Too happy happy Tree
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity...
Ah wouldn't were so with many
A gentle girl and boy!

In the month of December the trees do not remember their earlier state of being full with green leaves. They live in the present. Likewise McInnis also does not think of her mother's mental imbalance which causes her own illness and is able to be happy. She shares the joy of others. Such a joy is possible for McInnis because she knows that happiness is not where we seek it but where we find it. This episode about McInnis, when contrasted with the momentary satisfaction of Rozelle and the excitement of Jed which he mistakes for happiness, proves how man's mental equipoise leads to joy in his life.

Though Rozelle also does not care for the past and the future she is lacking in the equanimity which is excellent in Maria McInnis. In Maria McInnis's life too, there is no disappointment in actual life as she does not aspire for anything.

Warren posits that dreams never come true. A normal person wants to have a satisfactory and happy present. The primary requisite for a pleasant present is to accept the lustrless past. "We are all stuck with trying to find the meaning of our lives," says Jediah Newksbury, "and the only thing we have to work on, or with, is our past. This can be a question of life and death" (APCT, 19).
Jed's is a nasty past, for, even as a child he has had the bitter experience of being alone with his father and observing him shamelessly relieving himself on the hind quarters of the mule standing on the front part of the wagon, throwing the lines at the four-year old son Jed, to hold in his hand. Jed observes this when his father Buck Tewksbury takes Jed with him to Lugton while the mother is ill. The child feels uncomfortable when the father laughs and laughs while he relieves himself. Later, while engaged in this same nasty game Buck Tewksbury falls down and dies as the wheels of the wagon roll over his neck. As we have discussed earlier (p. 219), Jed parodies the scene and becomes popular. Jed observes:

In a way, however, I should have been grateful to the wicked father. He was, paradoxically, through that very school yard scene, in its very pain, to provide me later with the first — I almost said, only — social success I was ever to know. ...

(APCT, 21)

Though Jed as a youth distances himself from the miserable child, Jed tells us, "for I have no connection with the weeping child ... I always regard the scene from a distance" (APCT, 8) with such a bitter experience and since the past "can be a question of life and death" (APCT, 19) he manages intelligently to work on his spotted past and learns to survive by the fitting twist he gives to it by the enactment of the notorious scene. Neil Nakadate observes that Jed "wants to be able to revisit the past with a sense of its relationship to the present and future." 19

In A Place to Come To, Jed Tewksbury's mentor Dr. Heinrich Stahlmann celebrates his American citizenship publicly. It is on the same day he commits suicide, for not having returned to Germany, his hometown. Dr. Stahlmann escapes from the nation ruled by Adolf Hitler and comes to America with his dying Jewish wife, who dies in a hospital. He feels sad for having "betrayed that homeland" (APCT, 71). He says, "I should have gone back to offer the public testimony of my curse upon what my land had become. And to demand the consequences" (APCT, 71). His plan is to show his sorrow at being an exile deserting his homeland. But on the same day he publicly celebrates his American citizenship. Here again we sense the disharmony between the ideal and the real—the aspired and the actual. When the actual is in conflict with the ideal, men like Stahlmann are unable to bear it.

Professor Stahlmann tells Jed on the night before his death, that he had dreamed of "imperium intellectus" (APCT, 63) which will "illuminate and quicken the world of our bewildered body and bestial member;" (APCT, pp. 70-71). This world is one where, as in Dante's vision, the poets, philosophers and sages would sit and where the others who are none of those things (poets, philosphers or sages) would listen. Dr. Stahlmann who aspires for such a world, the mention of which makes Jed feel redeemed, commits suicide and betrays Jed who feels secure in considering him a surrogate father. After having given Jed
such an enlightening talk about the "imperium intellectus" (APCT, 63) he deserts Jed as Jed's prodigal father Buck Tewksbury had done. The impact of the loneliness would be more as Jed had felt the blessedness, the previous night. Blessedness turns to bitterness.

In Jed, we find a weary resignation to fate, the way things are. Such a blind submission to destiny will curtail any endeavour on the part of the individual to respond appropriately to the events of the world. Thus we find Jed accepting the death of Agnes Anderson. He knows that death is inevitable and accepts his wife's demise without much fuss or anguish. He does not worry thinking of how he will miss her but he feels sad about his own response to her death. He sits by her bed and yearns "for purity of feeling" (APCT, 107) and feels "if the yearning itself might not be the mother of self-deceit" (APCT, 107).

After his father's death also Jed cries, but not as interpreted by Mr. Tutwayler: "look -- the pore little chap, and him a -- cryen for his daddy that's dead" (APCT, 7) but fearing how the world would view his father's death and how it would humiliate him in future. His father's shameful death being an "unfended weakness in the face of the way the world was." (APCT, 9) he feels disgusted. Here too he accepts the loss as unavoidable in a blind submission to fate but worries
only about the shame he will be put to. Thus his acceptance of death as natural "only intensifies the bitterness left by the shattered ideal and deepens the despair at the discovery that the self is alone."^20 In the bitter experiences of Jediah Tewksbury who lives in resignation to destiny, we find the proof of what Cass Mastern of All the King's Men has written in his diary:

I do not question the Justice of God, that others have suffered for my sin, for it may be that only by the suffering of the innocent does God affirm that men are brothers, and brothers in His Holy Name. (AKM, 199)

The Cass Mastern episode which is an extraneous feature in the structure of All the King's Men underlines the themes of God's omnipotence and brotherhood of man. As Judge Irwin's suicide leads to the sufferings of all the other characters in All the King's Men, Buck Tewksbury's death, Professor Stahlmann's suicide and Elvira Tewksbury's relationship with Perk Simms make Jed suffer. Both the instances cited here, prove that men are "brothers in His Holy Name" (AKM, 199) and one person's guilt has to be suffered by others. Jed becomes prominent as an international scholar. This proves the belief of Willie Stark (All the King's Men) that good must come out of evil.

As the novel A Place to Come To beings, Jed is a tormented child. His mother wants him to go away from the native soil to

build up a prosperous and secure future for him. Before leaving Dugton he sees his mother's attachment for Perk Simms which frustrates him and makes him feel that he is an exile. From these evils which he flees, the good comes to him. He becomes a famous writer of international repute. Jed's ideal to get protection and feel secure somewhere is not fulfilled till the end. Though he hopes that his plea for reunion will be accepted by his wife, the novel is open ended. He goes from one place to another seeking peace. When either he is disappointed in getting what he hopes for or when the things that happen are the reverse of what he imagines, he flees.

"According to Warren," says James Ruoff, "man has moral choice, lives in an 'agony of will,' but, paradoxically, he has no choice, no power whatever, in the consequences of his moral life." Thus Jed does not feel at ease in each place and with each woman of his choice, as the consequences are beyond his power of control. When the reality fails to match his expectations he flees from the place which frustrates him. Neil Nakadate observes that:

Indeed, from time to time Tewksbury's narration has the cast of Marlow's voice at the end of his quest for Kurtz: 'Droll thing life is - that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose.

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21 James Ruoff, "Humpty Dumpty and All the King's Men: A Note on Robert Penn Warren's Teleology," Twentieth Century Literature, 3 (April to June, 1957), 130.
The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself — that comes too late — a crop of unextinguishable regrets. 22

Though his life had been full of regrets Jed is finally reconciled to it and hopes to start life anew. This knowledge — a crop of unextinguishable regrets — is what he gets from life as Neil Nakadate points out in the recent citation.

Through his novels Warren elucidates that man can never succeed in merging idea and act, the aspiration and the actual achievement. Elvira Tewksbury's aspiration proves this fact that idea and act do not merge. Elvira Tewksbury's idea is that her son Jed should acquire an enviable position in life, somewhere, away from Dugton. She makes him develop an aversion for his hometown. She calls it "this here durn hellhole" (APCT, 24) whenever she talks about Dugton she would do it "with a tight, quick shudder of revulsion" (APCT, 25) Jed feels "that it was the shudder, not the words, that did it" (APCT, 25). It is because of her that Jed considers Dugton "a valley of humiliation and delusive vanities" (APCT, 25). Thus Elvira Tewksbury instils in her son, an aversion for Dugton. Jed says, "It was, too, as a corollary of this, and not by her specific exhortation that I came to the passion for Study" (APCT, 25). Thus when her idea is to keep Jed away from Dugton, what she herself does, (her action) is that she leads a peaceful and comfortable life

in Dugton itself, starting life afresh with Perk Simms. Jed points out, "even if now she was stuck here for life and knew it, she didn't want me to be" (APCT, 25). Thus her idea and action do not merge with each other.

Towards the end of the novel, though she does not want Jed to come to Dugton she keeps Jed's bed fresh every night. Perk Simms informs Jed:

"You know, she said she done the best she knowed to raise you right and git you out of Dugton, and keep you out." And: "she kept that bed fresh every night said it was the least she could do. (APCT, 398)

When Perk Simms teased her for keeping the bed fresh for Jed she would say, "catch him com n to Dugton, I'll break his durn neck ... It's only I like to make a bed for him. it's way of sayen there's a place for him in my heart. But he shore better stay out of town" (APCT, 391). Here again her act does not merge with her idea. In Jed's life also, the actual is just the reverse of the ideal, for, it is only in Dugton which had earlier seen for him, a place of "delusive vanities" (APCT, 25) he gets the hope that a reunion with his wife Dauphine Finkel is possible. Though he goes to Chicago and does not stay back in Dugton, he plans to come back to Dugton to see that Perk Simms is cremated after his death and his ashes "got stuck in the ground" (APCT, 397) near Elvira's grave.
It is there his reconciliation with his parents is effected. Thus Dugton a place which Jed is made to despise, acquires an importance in his actual life and Jed accommodates himself to actuality towards the end of the novel. The reconciliation is effected only because of his step-father Perk Simms. James H. Justus observes:

Making peace with disappointment, the sobering acceptance of the gap separating expectation and fulfillment, is one aspect of the moral realism we see throughout Warren's fiction as grudging discoveries of protagonists, spurred on, sometimes subliminally, by the hard-bitten insights of peripheral folk characters.23

There is the scene of Jediah Tewksbury entering his house at Jonquil street, wherein there is a clear portrayal of the actual, confronting the aspired. Based on his mother's wish Jed also feels strongly that he should be away from Dugton. But towards the end when Jed returns home hearing from Perk Simms about his mother's death he says that his entry into his house: "was, literally, a daze for me. I kept trying to fix on some small object and claim old familiarity" (APCT, 340). This shows the attachment he would have had for his house in his subconscious mind. He wants this 'daze' to prolong, for, he says,

I stood there, clutching the suitcase, which I was afraid to set down, for that action might break the spell, andooked

23 James H. Justus, "A Place to Come To: Notes on a Life to be lived," The Achievement, p.315.
long and hard at each object, until another noiselessly summoned my devotion. Each object seemed to glow with a special assertion of its being—of my being, too, as though only now, after all the years, I was returning to my final self, long lost. (APCT, 390)

Warren defines the self: "The self is what you do. What you want to do, and what you do do."^{24} According to this definition, Jed did not have his "self" as long as his mother lived. Because during her lifetime Jed had been doing only what she wanted him to do and only now is there an awakening in him and he does, what he himself wants to do. That is why his recognition of the return of his "self, long lost" (APCT, 390). In his admiration for the objects of his house which "noiselessly summon" (APCT, 390) his devotion, he gets his "final self" (APCT, 390) back. The energy of Jed, who had been lacking in decisiveness throughout the novel recuperates by this getting back of the final self. This is the actual. The aspired—that is, his mother's and hence his wish, to be away from his birthplace—has come to this condition of being spellbound, just at the visual contact with even the tiniest objects of the house. The Southern writers' popular trait of the sense of belonging to the place of birth is revealed in this scene. About A Place to Come To, Warren tells an interviewer:

To speak about that book alone, all the people in it, who are concerned with their

relation (or non-relation) to a place — or community — and their relation to self ... the book is built around them ... I know many Southerners who, ... felt inferior because of it and wanted out.25

Warren gives an instance of such a man who wanted to go "where the big things are happening,"26 and went to Chicago. After a few years he came back and showed Warren some photographs as he wanted to prove his success. Warren says that

"in the middle of this self-congratulation — he suddenly said, 'I'm lonelier than God. People like that were the seed of A Place to Come To. I do attach a significance to the way a man deals with the place God drops him in."27

Jed willingly enters into the domain of human understanding by accepting his stepfather Perk Simms. In his immense love for Jed's mother, Perk Simms who normally addresses Jed as "Perfesser" calls him "son" (APCT, 393). While paying tribute to Jed's mother for having extended love, understanding and kindness to him, Perk Simms says that he worshipped her all the more as he had had the other kind of wife earlier, whom he had divorced. In his overwhelming love for Jed's mother he says:

she never come home and found me in th house without taking on over me like

26 ibid.
27 ibid., p.271.
I was a surprise package — ... He paused, looking into the fire. "We were married a long time, son, I mean, Perfessor." "I wish you'd make it son," I said. (APCT, 393)

This episode thus elaborately brings about the contrast between the aspired and the actual. Jed who had gone away rejecting Perk Simms now insists that Perk call him "son." Aspiring to be away from this man and his mother Jed went away from Dugton. Events progress in such a way as to make him come back and accept the same man as his father.

There are many proofs of the conflict between the aspired and the actual in Warren's other novels also. Thus for instance, in *All the King's Men* the fact that Willie Stark's hospital is never built according to his wish, in spite of a very strong aspiration and plans he has for it, underscores man's limitations. The reason for it is, as James Kuoff points out:

confined to a tenuous reality of isolated facts, hemmed in by illusory absolutes of good and evil, man cannot perceive the transcendent reality, the ultimate moral purpose and direction of life. 28

When Jack Burden retreats from his wife Louis and flees west after Anne becomes Willie's mistress, he actually escapes from

28 James Kuoff, "Humpty Dumpty and All the King's Men: A Note on Robert Penn Warren's Teleology," p. 129.
the reality which proves to be the reverse of his aspiration. Being unable to bear the consequences of the things that happen against his aspirations he becomes evasive and spends time in sleeping, what Warren calls the "Great Sleep" (AXM, 201).

Adam Rosenzweig, the deformed protagonist of Wilderness realizes that he is not different from other men, after all. Jed Tewksbury, the protagonist of A Place to Come To, recognizes his self in the place of his birth which he has fled earlier, aspiring to experience greater happenings in other places. The warren protagonist in these novels learn eventually to reconcile themselves to the fact that the ideal is not capable of being actualized.