Preface

Faulkner has been acclaimed as a writer of universal significance and his novels have been compared to Greek tragedies. Like Dostoevsky, he is considered to be in distress over mankind. At the same time, he has also been criticised for lacking a sense of history and being out of touch with contemporary reality. If we take into consideration the themes and characters of his novels, we find a good deal of obsession with the past and a certain amount of distrust of the present. Most of the critical studies, favourable and unfavourable both, are mainly concerned with the traditionalist elements in his works.

Yet, a close study of his novels would show that, although he loves the South very much, he does not approve of many aspects of Southern society. He certainly does not consider obsession with the past a healthy attitude as nearly all his characters with such a bent of mind destroy themselves in various ways. He also disapproves of pharisaical religion and morality, discrimination against the Negroes and the Southern attitude towards women. He has no doubt created some modern types who have no values; but if he is critical
of them, he is also critical of the fanatic morality of the past. Such an approach does not speak of a rigid mind set.

The present study, therefore, aims at exploring Faulkner's approach to change and the reason for his concern with the past of the South. It has, however, been confined mainly to five of his commonly acknowledged major novels: The Sound and the Fury, As I lay Dying, Sanctuary, Light in August and Absalom, Absalom! They represent the best of Faulkner and deal with nearly all his favourite themes.

In order to inquire into all the relevant aspects, the study has been divided into eight chapters. Chapter I is a general introduction. Chapter II investigates the Southern background of Faulkner's novels. Chapter III discusses his vision of change. Chapter IV deals with his use of myths and myth making. Chapter V examines the psychological reality of the characters. Chapter VI is a study of Faulkner's use of symbolism. Chapter VII explains his art and technique. The last chapter presents the conclusion of the study.

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