

## ***Apophasis, Aletheia: William Faulkner's The Hamlet***

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### **Abstract.**

William Faulkner loved the South, and he feared many of the same social currents that southerners have stereotypically feared: e.g., women's equality, the mingling of races and classes, and change of most any kind. Unlike most Southerners, however, Faulkner knew change *must* come for the life of the community to continue, so in his books he set about to make a flat, static, romanticized South a more open and dynamic one, not by seeking to wholly dismantle Southern historical misconceptions but by targeting specific areas and re-conceiving them through delicate and painstaking literary work. In *The Hamlet*, for example, Faulkner treats the areas of gender and class relations.

### **I**

William Faulkner had a copy of Lao Tzu in his library (Blotner, *William Faulkner's Library* 89), but he didn't need to go East for Eastern psychological theories, for such a sensibility exists at the foundations of Western culture in Heraclitus. Where Heraclitus found it is anybody's guess (although philosophies were probably traded with the stories and textiles along the ancient Silk Road, ca. 500 B.C.E), but nevertheless there it is. Richard Geldard recently retranslated and reinterpreted what little survives of Heraclitus, but first, in order that his readers may have the tools to approach non-binary philosophy, Geldard defines two Greek words: *apophasis* and *aletheia*. The first means "denial or negation" but "has the connotation of affirmation through negation. [...] For the Greeks," explains Geldard, "apophatic theology involved disposing of the myths of the Olympian gods while affirming a revised vision of the Unknown God, the unreachable, unmanifest but immanent deity" (23). Myths tend to gather layers of interpretations and reinterpretations as the generations pass, and for the Greeks *apophasis* or Negative Theology served as a kind of washing process, stripping away the caked-on build-up so as to get back down to the kernels of meaning. Rather than soothe believers, as is usually the purpose of those encrustations, the intended effect on the population was one calculated for shock value, so as to restore a lately sluggish and irresponsive community. A problem endemic to human organization (not to mention human being) is its tendency

to become weighted down by itself over time. Rules and regulations, though all very appropriate and necessary at the time they were drawn up, multiply asexually and eventually become burdensome, having the effect of overly dulling the receptivity of the social body to the sudden needs of changing times.

The second word – “the Greek word for truth, *aletheia*, consists of the prefix *a*, not, and *lethe*, forgetfulness or forgetting” (24) – expresses a negative as well, but it is a negation that affirms without assuming special knowledge: “not-forgetting” as opposed to “knowing.” It is a paradox, as it must be if one wants to prevent the perversion of reality by happy endings, letting humanity off life’s hook with a sweet and false sense that its hunger is sated. Geldard interprets Heraclitus’s statement “I searched my nature” as just such a negative affirmation; nature prefers to hide, and who are we to find it? The search is the thing, so the word “know” must go. Not-forgetting, on the other hand, denotes a non-linear or at least a non-progressive approach ... and since the journey is all, where is there to hurry to anyway? *Aletheia* as well connotes that an understanding of nature may be something we *were* close to but that we have lost and continue to lose as we progress in life. The more you know, the less you understand, hence the attempt at reversing direction when you sense the loss beginning. And this will *feel* appropriate somehow, for

genius rebels at received tradition, not because it is inherently wrong by being the tradition, but because we learn, as Ralph Waldo Emerson understood so well, not from instruction but from provocation. True teaching provokes in the student an intuition of the truth, but because it is provocation, there follows an aversive reaction in the one so provoked (Geldard 29) [,]

hopefully deterring a relapse into progressive thinking because, as Heraclitus warned, “Human beings are carried away by every new theory” (30). Geldard writes, “The attention which should be focused on knowing ourselves is whipped away by the attractions of new ideas and easy solutions to intractable problems” (30). Very few of us ever avoid this trap, as a look at a newspaper in any age proves.

If you are a writer looking to apply Lao Tzu, Emerson, or Heraclitus to your novels in conscious hope of slowing a constant depletionary cultural crop rotation in your own community, what would you have us not-forget? How would you prevent your arable community from becoming a Waste Land? First, you need a negative affirmation, a lack at the center so to speak, thus allowing you to get the separating of the wheat from the

chaff begun but not to think you have got it separated yourself, which is simply a providing of solutions that only become part of the problem. A book that had been around in Faulkner's thinking and manuscripts for fifteen years needed just such a Negative Theology, an Unknown God as its anti-thesis for all things Snopes – but it still had to *be* Snopes, right? That decenteredless book was called *Father Abraham* in skeletal form, but it took on flesh over the years in the form of added short stories and characters, and ideas for lacing this new meat to the original bone. Still, it would not live. A conscience and a spirit were eventually brought in (Eula) but it needed that missing heart, for in Negative Theological operations, viable contrivances must have *had* a heart once to have lived or to discover the possibility of living again because “was” is compost, manure, the quickening nutrients and minerals necessary to life. That heart proved to be Colonel Sartoris (Sarty) Snopes in a story called “Barn Burning.” It is a story of an anti-Snopes Snopes not-burning, of Sarty at least not-burning either a barn or his moral conscience as Snopeses are often, if not caught doing, at least reasonably accused of doing. Sarty is a quick kernel Faulkner places into the book's ancestral dust, a dormant Southern Superego located geographically, given physical presence, a name, and a non-action. Sarty is the apophatic heart of the book, the superego searching. Later, Eula Varner Snopes is introduced as the book's aletheic spirit, the id not forgetting, and V. K. Ratliff is its conscience on the move: the beachcombing ego's ever-mobile mediating between the heart's summons to abdication and the spirit's insistent past-pull. Ratliff moves methodically to and fro on his sewing-machine buckboard, tilling topsoil with sand and irrigating the lot. From the reader's air, and as the buzzard sees it, *The Hamlet* forms a kind of tessellate mosaic pattern shimmering in the sun like cut and shaped pieces of marble, hard stone, colored glass, terra-cotta, mother-of-pearl and enamel cross-plowed in thin strips and then cut into gold and silver cubes: gilded glassine slabs of pale shades with gold and silver leaf. There is a deliberate Byzantine irregularity to the painted surface, as there was in Crete and on the Greek mainland during the Bronze Age when water-worn pebbles were used to decorate floors in subtle, multicolored designs. Ratliff's design appears to live, shimmering in the solar heated air like fields of parti-colored wheat. But it is more like a surgical graftage, where, at book's beginning,

the heart (Sarty) is gone unsearched for, and the spirit (Eula) is wounded – which to the artist and to Ratliff simply means the compost is ripe and planting time nears.

At the end of Eula's chapter, after Ratliff glimpses her leaving in the buggy for her Texas honeymoon, the movement around him blurs into a stereoptic vision of time itself, and he is able to see beyond the harness of animal regret everyone else in Frenchman's Bend is locked into like trace-galled mules or their testosterone-galled riders keeping watch at the Varner house the summer previous. Images of wagon wheels spanning their serviceable existences provide V. K. an objective sense of calm beyond time's predatorial reach. He lets "the reins loose in one hand," seeing everything circle-spin before him in a reverie, a slow-turning epiphany. And a story emerges, of Flem cheating the devil out of Hell. Catherine D. Holmes reads a direct ironic allusion or two and attributes some quite specific wording in this scene to George Bernard Shaw's 1903 play *Man and Superman* (Holmes 101). This may be as close a clue as Faulkner gives to indicating a regenerative purpose, for in the allusions to and borrowed wording from Shaw's drama we discover that V. K.'s social function as his creator saw it is best explained by Don Juan in Act III, spoken to the Devil:

I tell you that as long as I can conceive something better than myself I cannot be easy unless I am striving to bring it into existence or clearing the way for it. That is the law of my life. That is the working within me of Life's incessant aspiration to higher organization, wider, deeper, intenser self-consciousness, and clearer self-understanding. [...] It is in absence of this instinct in you that makes you that strange monster called a Devil. It is the success with which you have diverted the attention of men from their real purpose [...] that has earned you the name of the Tempter. It is the fact that they are [...] drifting with your want of will, instead of doing their own, that makes them the uncomfortable, false, restless, artificial, petulant, wretched creatures they are. [...] [B]eauty, purity, respectability, religion, morality, art, patriotism, bravery and the rest are nothing but words which I or anyone else can turn inside out like a glove [...], mere words used for duping barbarians into adopting civilization, or the civilized poor into submitting to be robbed and enslaved. [...] [But] the philosopher is in the grip of the Life Force. This Life Force says to him 'I have done a thousand wonderful things unconsciously by merely willing to live and following the line of least resistance: now I want to know myself and my destination, and choose my path; so I have made a special brain – a philosopher's brain – to grasp this knowledge for me. [...] And this' says the Life Force to the philosopher, 'must thou strive to do for me until thou diest, when I will make another brain and another philosopher to

carry on the work.' [...] [M]y brain is the organ by which Nature tries to understand itself. [...] Does a ship sail to its destination no better than a log drifts nowhither? The philosopher is Nature's pilot. And there you have our difference: to be in hell is to drift: to be in heaven is to steer. (Shaw 368-71)

This speech touches upon so many of the moral situations and incidents in *The Hamlet* (and there are further connections to the larger action in the play as well: the theme of male subjugation to the feminine) that I am drawn to see the relationship between the two as exemplum (Faulkner's novel) and formal statement of creative intention (Shaw's play). It could be said that Faulkner's placing of Flem in hell in stead for Don Juan makes the book a parody of the play, but it must be remembered that it is Jack Tanner telling the story of Don Juan in Hell, just as Ratliff tells this story of Flem; the key is the teller and the allusion, not the stories told, for both in relation to the teller are meant to convey a feeling of psychological impotence. Tanner will work that out, finally understanding there to be no contradiction between his masculine idealism and his subsequent dedication to the feminine by marriage, and V. K. too will find a way to serve the feminine – though by speaking and acting for feminine principles rather than in marriage – but the story in itself is right now insolvable: Where did Flem's soul get to? Well, where is Colonel Sartoris Snopes?

The free-playing language of the second and third quarters of *The Hamlet* constitutes Faulkner's least constrained, possibly best and most beautiful poetry-prose ever, and it is the carnival that sets it free, as if he had dragged each pre-*Absalom* book into the hall of mirrors at the Lafayette County Fair one dry September day. Were Faulkner's entire body of work a typhoon, the second half of *The Hamlet* would be its quiet eye, enabling the senses to experience *all* of what the thunder said before Pound's red pen began circumcising the saying, hearing metamorphic yarns of interspecies eros as parodic mirror to familial betrayal, and seeing the spotted horses as they turn another mirror onto the mirror the way "dawn's rosy miniatures" in Book Three, Chapter One curve out in tiny detail the cosmic theme of the universal Book: the putrifaction of social status gained by money no matter how socially acceptable the method for gain may be and the fecund purity of happiness attained by love no matter how socially taboo the method for attainment may be. And as always, everything connects outwardly from the text too, not

only with other Faulkner work (as we've just seen) but with other literature. *The Hamlet* ends with a reworking of "Lizards in Jamshyd's Courtyard," which, as Mary Flowers Braswell clearly shows, parallels thematically Chaucer's ending of his *Canterbury Tales* (Taylor 66-70). And the book's connections go still deeper back.

The Genesis story shares an archetypal motif with Chaucer's *Tale of the Wife of Bath*— but the latter tale leaves off the Curse as a result of the fall of humanity; indeed, in Celtic mythology it is as if "she's the one" (as Faulkner wrote of Woman in *The Hamlet*) God made in His image, as if she's the hero of the tale, not Man. Chaucer's and Faulkner's recurrent utilization of this theme are not isolated and are certainly no coincidence, for the same mythological motif recurs in culture after culture, age after age— though its reference, as in Genesis, often becomes marginalized. As the myths do, Chaucer and Faulkner embed the archetype within current social dialectical forms so that it is pertinent and accessible. In Faulkner's dialectic, an ambitious young entrepreneur (Flem Snopes amounts to less ethically than the sum of his parts might suggest, just as the knight in Chaucer's tale does not equal his armor and rank) has selfishly taken into captivity a young maid. The community, though uneasy, has neither regard nor inkling for what the maid might herself desire; they are impotent to act, and so the maid's captor could care even less. Conversely, Chaucer's knight is sentenced to search out the answer for what a woman desires, for the order of Arthur's court sets a jury of the victim's peers as his judges. He finds different answers but never does one suffice. Then, as he is returning to Arthur's court in despair, he spies a magical circle of dancing beauties. They disappear at his approach but remaining there stands an old and ugly hag. She will give the knight the answer he needs but only after he promises to grant her any favor; he agrees and so she does and soon they stand together before Arthur *and* Guinevere where the knight repeats the words the hag gave him: "Wommen desiren to have sovereynetee / As wel over hir housband as hir love, / And for to been in maistrie hym above" (IIID 1038-40). No woman in the court can disagree with these words, and so the knight is freed. The hag cashes in her debt, however, and, to the knight's horror, marries him. That night, as the newlyweds lie in the marriage bed, the knight cannot bring himself to the task of consummation. The hag reprimands him for his failure, but then allows him a choice: either take her as she is and have a faithful wife or take her ever-beautiful and

ever-young but ever-unfaithful. The knight, breaking completely beneath these limited choices, gives the decision over to the hag. But due to this ability to admit his helplessness and give over control to the hag, she rewards the knight with the best of both worlds, transfiguring into a young woman of faithful beauty. “And whan the knyght saugh verrailly al this, / That she so fair was, and so yong therto, / For joye he hente hire in his armes two, / His herte bathed in a bath of blisse” (IIID 1250-53).

In Faulkner's *The Hamlet*, feminine principles and characteristics are of the same importance as in Chaucer, and though stated communal values may still reflect this, there has occurred a chemical imbalance in the soil of Southern culture so to speak, making coming to the defense of Woman nearly impossible. In general, men are afraid to appear feminine in any way these days, and that includes being accused by other men of holding feminine principles. A misinterpretation/misapplication of Feminism within the larger culture has contributed to this. In seeking political and economic equality for women, one of Feminism's goals was to revise the goddess/whore archetypal stereotype prevalent in Western myth. This revision was and still is essential to the growth of our culture, but demythologizing has proven to be a less than simple operation. The old male impulse to hold a door for a woman is indicative of an unconscious psychological respect for what women represent: the trans-temporal endurance of verities like compassion, nurturance, and home. This is an unfair standard for any individual woman to try and embody, just as it is unfair to expect any man to try and become the emotionless protector and servant of Woman. But, for the sake of community, we are all acculturated to subsume our ego to these founding myths, and when you make people cynical of their foundational myths you make them cynical of everything, including the prosthetic humanist values we have fashioned to take their place. The mind, fortunately or unfortunately, has not proven to be a test tube that we can drain of mythic poison and refill with our antidote. The result of the attempt has created a people without a past and without a present, left with nothing but their own self-serving impulses to guide them. The only way to regenerate a system of mythical acculturation is to work carefully within that system, as Faulkner attempts.

The difference between the Medieval romance and the Modern novel is the level of realism the author of the latter brings to the treatment of the issue of the imbalanced culture, in order to find a more viable solution. And such a regenerative end *is* reached

by Faulkner. Indeed, we do not even have to wait for it: even before it happens, we know that Snopes “would not possess her but merely own her by [...] the dead power of money,” and the code Eula represents will remain “the fine land rich and fecund and foul and eternal and impervious to him who claimed title to it, oblivious, drawing to itself tenfold the quantity of living seed its owner’s whole life could have secreted and compounded, producing a thousand fold the harvest he could ever hope to gather and save” (840). This is Labove divining Eula’s future, not because he knew Flem’s impotence specifically but because he intuited all men’s ineffectuality before the “supreme primal uterus” (835). It sounds funny, for even feminists today have devalued the feminine ethic in order to, they believe, best defend themselves against the many forms of rape men perpetrate against women, but men do it in a vain effort at canceling out their insecurities when they juxtapose themselves against women’s equal if not superior powers of reasoning, fortitude, nurturance, and morality. Labove fears what he might do in response to his emasculative feelings – not afraid for Eula but for himself “because there is nothing I nor any man could do to her that would hurt her. It’s because of what it will do to me” (841).

Faulkner once wrote that he did not believe insult “a very sound method of teaching anybody anything, or persuading anyone to think or act as the insulter believes they should” (Utley 263). But (as he noted in that same letter to a Memphis newspaper) since “the only alternative to change is death,” what tool or strategy might better persuade than an insult? Insult amounts to violent outside imposition, like a sudden and forceful push inward from without when you try to answer a knock at the front door: your first reaction is to slam the door closed. Faulkner knew Southerners preferred to bar the door shut after such an insult, for Faulkner knew himself and had worked through his trouble with the necessity of change. He had saved himself by opening himself up to the sun and wind outside, but how to convince his community? Such convincing must be cultivated from the barren soil itself, just as he had done in himself. The new stuff must be tilled into the old so a molecular reaction can occur; new without old is like sowing seed in pure fertilizer: the seeds burn up. What’s required is a balance of tension – what Heraclitus termed a *palintropos* – between old and new: an “opposing coherence” like a back-stretched bow or stringed musical instrument, or “[j]ust as the earth hurtles through space



away from the sun, so it is drawn back into the sun and as a result maintains its harmonious motion, held in orbit by that tension. The warfare between flying away and falling inward results in an eternal (relatively speaking) movement” (Geldard 39). James Gray Watson notes (as others have) that in the Snopes trilogy “principled opposition to amoral aggression is sustained as the basis for structural and thematic unity,” but Faulkner made clear that that this tension is sustained for larger purposes than structure and theme:

No, the impulse to eradicate Snopes is in my opinion so strong that it selects its champions when the crisis comes. [...] It doesn't mean that they will get rid of Snopes or the impulse which produces Snopes, but always there's something in man that don't like Snopes and objects to Snopes and if necessary will step in to keep Snopes from doing some irreparable harm. Whatever it is that keeps us still trying to paint the pictures, to make the music, to write the books [...]. (Watson 34)

In *The Hamlet*, “Snopes” – Flem Snopes in particular – represents not just animality but an animality far less humane than the animals display. It is a humanity degenerated to such a degree as to be more animal than human, a humanity degenerated by a single-minded pursuit for the fulfillment of animal appetites, as if human beings were no more than the sum of their physical desires. It is not a mindless pursuit, for Flem uses more mind than most to effect his purposes, but it is a consciousnessless and even incognizant quest which is what makes it animal. It is founded upon a false presumption that what makes us worthy is our over-large brains when in fact it is the existence of that “something in man” which tames the brain, yokes it in and focuses its meta(human)physicality into plowing seed rows. Ratliff hasn't much luck directing Flem, but for the tension of life to exist and so move he must only try not succeed. And it is joyful, this trying, for Faulkner imagines his Sisyphus happy. Upon the occasion of Albert Camus's death, Faulkner wrote:

At the very instant [Camus] struck the tree [and died], he was still searching and demanding of himself; I do not believe in that bright instant he found them. I do not believe they [answers only God knows] are to be found. I believe they are only to be searched for, constantly, by some fragile member of the human absurdity. Of which there are never many, but always somewhere at least one, and one will always be enough. (Utley 248)

And here, I think, is the key to understanding V. K.'s role (and probably to understanding how Faulkner understood himself) in reincorporating Sarty – the Hillman, the departed organ – back into the larger community: The use V. K. can be is not the Mother Teresa sort of useful, to be the heart himself (he will fail that test anyway), rather more the

Modernist kind of use. Amid the ruins and emptiness of the Waste Land he must continue to blow the dust from his eyes and plow; keep to his center and not rein in his impulse toward passion and compassion; keep the unbridled courage to turn over the apophatic dust and till an aletheic seedbed, to play his role to its fullest despite the infectious impotence of the community around him. It is not for such a one as he – Ratliff, the artist— to harvest the future, but meanwhile difficult and necessary seeds must be sown for the man in the hills to bring his work back down into town.

Flem Snopes is a working-class man with a dream to be master of a plantation estate, which represents, for Flem, freedom – or, more exactly, Flem’s definition of freedom which is money and power: the ability for him to now be rich and powerful. Flem’s dream comes true and he is, for the time being, happy. The estate is got at the expense of the Bartleby-esque lives lived by the more humane county people and by procuring a wife into living death, both of which turn out to be none too compromising for Flem and certainly worth the time and gray hair it takes to liquidate his humanity into property. But V. K. Ratliff, named for a Russian, a brother in commerce and teller of stories, takes no pleasure in Flem’s sort of happiness; it tastes sour and unripe to him. But the bitterness mixes with V. K.’s saliva and begins a chemical reaction that even as he feels Flem swallowing up everything and everyone in Frenchman’s Bend, feeling swallowed up by all the impudence and idleness of the strong and by the complacent paralysis that fear and risk and pain-of-any-kind avoidance brings on to steal their souls from them one at a time. V. K. realizes that that stolen soul is as necessary to life as the food they eat, and he wonders what they are all waiting for, waiting because they’ve bartered the guts to live, chasing after dream-horses to draw their attention away from the reality of their immobile lives. That might end the story, but there is more, for V. K. begins to understand that the spirit of the uncorrupted Hillman – a grown Sarty, kin to the Tall Convict in “Old Man” – will never be owned by Flem; that spirit will stay young, strong, in good heart and never tire of doing good. The Hillman is the intuition that if life has any meaning and purpose, that meaning and purpose certainly isn’t in his material happiness but in something deeper. True, the Hillman would not even care to try to grasp much of anything V. K. might think, nor would he consciously do much of anything “good” really ... unless, of course, it is “good” that he runs his farm and affairs as deftly as ever. The impudence and

idleness of the strong in Frenchman's Bend and the purifying ignorance and bestiality of the weak is a paradoxically-drawn binary, to be sure, as if a magical hex had been thrown on the country people, and another over that one keeping them from noticing the first. V. K.'s epiphany is the breaking of the latter spell on himself, freeing his (in)sight though leaving him powerless to break the former hex of inaction, spell of emasculation even, like the one on the spotted-horse chasers.

Sarty's spirit never reappears in the flesh in *The Hamlet*, but, V. K. knows, the idealized Hillman stands somewhere on a threshold, with a winnowing fan, busy in the noble pursuit of separating the aletheic wheat from the apophatic chaff. He might be fortyish, tall or stout, long-haired or not, more like a professor or artist than a landowner, but definitely strong – though lacking a lust for power and money or even self-awareness of most any kind. He is content to work hard, happy to swap stories, and barely notices going dirt-ridden for days in front of his Grail-Maiden-esque wife, she of the enigmatic Mona Lisa smile. He is Sarty, the heart of the country, who didn't leave after all; he just stayed up in the hills, sometimes going by the name McCallum, sometimes by Grier. Though he does not, *cannot* return in the flesh to *The Hamlet* (Faulkner hadn't much hope for the immediate future of the South, believing as he did in the ascendancy of Snopeses), the eventual future-hope that the Hillman represents fills the book; *The Hamlet's* analysis of Snopes-ism clearly concludes that Snopes would not, in the end, win, and as the progeny of the slave-mongers had forfeited any blood-right of their own, it was left to the meek to inherit the earth – the resourceful, suffering, honest, simple people who had no urge to migrate town-ward: they met all Faulkner's requirements. And it was at this time, during the re-structuring of the short-stories that would become *The Hamlet* that he recognized this future-hope. Just as he had addressed gender in the previous book (*If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*) and would take his biggest step by addressing race with the next (*Go Down, Moses*), *The Hamlet* book settled Faulkner's mind and heart regarding class. For thematic reasons (the short-term supremacy of Snopeses) the Hillman could not make it into this book and would not belong in the next one (though he does filter out from the big woods to lay claim to their share of Old Ben), but outside and after *The Hamlet*, as soon as Faulkner gave him flesh, the Hillman began to flourish, appearing in a handful of short stories written together as early as 1942 and as late as *The Rievers*.

In the end, V. K. Ratliff can only hope the as-yet-un-enchanted Hillman might stay un-enchanted and alert to the malaise, the collective hypnosis of Frenchman's Bend. But he cannot be blamed for this state of inactive hope any more than those at the Alamo can be blamed for being besieged. V. K.'s refusal to transcend a state of inactive repudiation (Harry Wilbourne's state of grieving was similar, and Isaac McCaslin's repudiation of his inheritance is almost exactly the same) is a kind of positive negation, like civil disobedience is: first, do no harm to your cause, particularly when one is unsure how to ameliorate a situation at its combustible apogee. What V. K. and Harry (and Isaac and the resurrected Quentin Compson) manage to do (as no other Faulkner creation had been able to do before the second Quentin) is to attenuate the possibility for regeneration by presenting the reins of future action *to the reader*, until we at some unknown future time can fulfill that possibility. Faulkner cannot in good faith write resolutions, for an action on a realistic, truthful unregenerate situation by a fictional protagonist would only allow his fiction to slip over the edge into romance, absolving readers of their very real regenerative capabilities by making them a part of the fiction. That is, Romance alleviates the reader of the burden of conscience but by leaving his moral narration incomplete – that is, by leaving Sarty, the moral center, out of the tale proper – Faulkner disallows such alleviation.

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