The Novels of Andrew Lytle: a Study in the Artistry of Fiction.

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THE NOVELS OF ANDREW LYTLE:
A STUDY IN THE ARTISTRY OF FICTION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of English

by
Charles Chester Clark
B.S., The University of Oklahoma, 1940
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My gratitude and admiration to Andrew Nelson Lytle, Esq., of Monteagle, Tennessee.
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ABSTRACT

Andrew Lytle has published a relatively small number of stories and novels. The most important of his fictional works are *The Long Night*, *At the Moon's Inn*, *A Name for Evil*, *The Velvet Horn*, and *A Novel, A Novella and Four Stories*. Lytle's first published work of fiction, the short story "Old Scratch in the Valley," serves as a base mark in any attempt to assess his development as a novelist.

In "Old Scratch," Lytle presents a picture of the matriarchal society which he believes to have been the bulwark of the Southern family. The story illustrates his belief that "the last active expression of this [matriarchal] society" occurred in the period 1880-1910. Lytle's first novel, *The Long Night*, takes place in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee, from the 1850's to this post-Civil War period. A sort of Senecan-revenge tragedy, the novel is based, as some critics have failed to note, on a true story in F. L. Owsley's family history. The quest for revenge, as told by an eccentric recluse to his younger kinsman, is justifiably shifted to the third-person point of view by the young nephew, a teacher-writer, for he presents the tale he received from his uncle with parts filled in later from other sources. In his next novel, *At the Moon's Inn*, of which the novella *Alchemy*...
was originally a part, Lytle, a novelist who exhibits "the peculiar historical consciousness of the Southern writer," presents the stories of the Spanish conquest of Peru and of De Soto's Floridian expedition. De Soto, the man of Will, and Tovar, the man of sensibility, are compared and contrasted in an allegory which admonishes moderns to remember the medieval concept of de contemptu mundi. Lytle, in At the Moon's Inn, as in his other novels, is careful to work out what he considers a good balance between the narrative, or panoramic summary, and the dramatic. In the climactic scene, he presents De Soto as a Spanish puritan, a gnostic who usurps the authority of his priest. The novel is shot through with irony, the greatest irony being that the Spaniards are oblivious of the great worth of the fertile land through which they force their way in search of another Peru. The theme of gnosticism reappears in A Name for Evil. Lytle depicts in this first-person narration a psychotic middle-aged writer who, with his wife, tries to restore order to a farm as he struggles to achieve order in his own life. With Christian and Jungian symbolism, Lytle shows that only madness can result from an attempt to re-create history. The Velvet Horn, Lytle's summa mundi, consists of five parts with a progression d'effet structure. The protagonist of this novel, which has a Cumberland Plateau setting in Reconstruction times, is Jack Cropleigh, a "spiritual hermaphrodite," who, encompassing all the action in his mind, serves as "victim-redeemer" in an archetypal experience at once Christian and pagan. Lytle

Lytle is not another Southern purveyor of nostalgia: he is a creative artist of great skill; and his novels should be reissued. He is a Christian novelist who writes best of what he knows best--archetypal experiences in agrarian settings. In every piece of fiction that he writes he is, above all, an artist.
Although the fiction of Andrew Lytle has appeared at intervals since the publication of his first short story in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* forty years ago, and although Lytle's short stories (e.g., "The Mahogany Frame," "Jericho, Jericho, Jericho," and "Mr. MacGregor") have appeared in various anthologies, little critical attention has been given to Lytle's fiction until recent years. A large number of critics, Northern and Southern, have praised Lytle for his skill in rendering the illusion of life in his short stories and novels; but too many critics have spent too much time trying to correlate what Lytle, as the young Vanderbilt-trained Southern Agrarian, said in *I'll Take My Stand* and in *Who Owns America?* with what Lytle, as creative artist, says in his short stories and novels.

Certainly few fiction writers can keep themselves entirely out of what they write. Choices of characters and milieu tell us a good deal about an author. And it is apparent to anyone who reads only a few of Lytle's stories and novels that for the Tennessean time and place are vital aspects of art. Lytle possesses to a high degree what Allen Tate refers to as "the peculiar historical consciousness of the Southern writer." Lytle shares with Robert Penn Warren
and Eudora Welty a predilection for rendering specific environment in fiction. Writers like Thornton Wilder, on the other hand, consider environment unimportant in the American search for identity.¹

Lytle is primarily concerned in his fiction with creating an illusion of the past in the present. Although there is a strong aesthetic basis for this concern, there is also a strong moral and religious basis for it, a basis not in accord with the eighteenth-century concept of dulce et utile but rather in keeping with the convention of the ancient Greek dramatists of rendering archetypal experiences. Like Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides, Lytle says in effect: here is what has happened in the human experience; here is what will probably happen again; observe in this action the strengths and weaknesses of these people living in God's world so that, in learning what they are, you may learn something about what you are.

The archetypal experience, then, is at the heart of Lytle's method. Rendering actions based on archetypal experiences, Lytle, in his longer works, is often very complex. As M. E. Bradford points out, "... by reason of their complexity of design and (to the modern) shocking thematic burden, Lytle's novels and shorter fables have too infrequently provoked detailed examination."² Because the novels, which are

not presently in print, are very complex, more generous representations of their actions will be given in the following pages than ordinarily would be necessary in such an explanation.

This study is based on critical readings of the novels, examinations of the stories which bear importantly on the novels, examinations of source materials, and examination of critical essays (particularly those of Lytle), and upon information gathered by the present writer in conversations with Mr. Lytle at Monteagle, Tennessee, August 2 and 3, 1971, and at The University of Dallas, Irving, Texas, March 17, 1972.

It is to be hoped that the recent interest in Lytle's fiction (evidenced by the publication by The Mississippi Quarterly's special issue on Lytle in the fall of 1970 and by the publication of an essay on Lytle's first novel, The Long Night, by Robert Penn Warren) will soon bring about the reprinting of all of Lytle's novels and stories.

This dissertation, which examines Lytle's development as an artist from his first published short story, "Old Scratch in the Valley," through his last published novel, The Velvet Horn, shows that in a relatively small number of works Lytle

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3 Andrew Lytle, The Long Night (Indianapolis-New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1936). All citations here are from this edition.

exhibits great versatility. He began writing novels—and this study is primarily concerned with his novels—with *The Long Night*, a revenge tragedy based on an archetypal experience; next he wrote *Alchemy* and *At the Moon's Inn*, both of which are allegorical fictions admonishing the modern to follow the medieval concept *de contemptu mundi*; next he wrote *A Name for Evil*, a novel reminiscent of *The Turn of the Screw*, showing how an attempt to re-create history brings madness; and finally, selecting from what he had learned about technique (from Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Henry James, Percy Lubbock, and Joyce), from what he had learned about archetypal human experience (from Frazer, Jung, Zimmer, and—most importantly—from the Bible), and from what he had learned through experience about the people of the Cumberland hills, he wrote *The Velvet Horn*, a complexly-structured poetical novel of initiation and redemption. This work should ultimately stand as one of the finest novels of the Southern Renaissance.

Lytle exhibits throughout his fiction not only a great knowledge of narrative technique and a finely tuned ear for language but also great compassion for human beings. Only a writer possessed of Christian love for his fellow-man could portray in all their strengths and weaknesses such various characters as Pleasant McIvor, Pizarro, De Soto, Tovar, Henry Brent, Lucius Cree, Jack Cropleigh, and Ada Rutter. Andrew Lytle is such a writer, and no twentieth-century novelist surpasses him in describing the human predicament.
CHAPTER I

ANDREW LYTLE'S CONCEPT OF FICTION

Andrew Nelson Lytle was born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, December 26, 1902, the son of Robert L. and Lillie Nelson Lytle, and the descendant of Captain William Lytle, who fought in the American Revolution and later founded Murfreesboro. Lytle's knowledge of Murfreesboro and Middle Tennessee, as well as of Western Tennessee, is important in the greater part of his fiction.¹

After traveling and studying in England and France, Lytle returned to Tennessee, where in 1925 he took his Bachelor of Arts degree from Vanderbilt University. He studied drama under George Pierce Baker at Yale University from 1927 to 1928. Subsequently he returned to the "once rooted society

¹ Allen Tate in his foreword to Andrew Lytle's The Hero with the Private Parts (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1969), p. xiii, says: "His [Lytle's] first book, Bedford Forrest and His Critter Company, a biography, came out in 1931, and it must be linked with the novels because it gave Mr. Lytle the opportunity to study the rural life of Tennessee in its development from frontier to plantation; and the society of Middle Tennessee from the end of the eighteenth century to its destruction in the Civil War has given him the enveloping action of all his fiction." The statement should read "the enveloping action of the greater part of his fiction," for Lytle's novel At the Moon's Inn and his novella Alchemy are concerned with Spanish exploration and conquest in the New World of the sixteenth century.
uprooted . . . still conscious of its past,"² teaching English and history at Southwestern College at Memphis and at the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, from 1936 to 1944, and editing The Sewanee Review from 1942 to 1944. From 1947 to 1948 he taught creative writing at the University of Iowa; and from 1948 to 1961 he taught the same subject at the University of Florida. Since 1961 he has been editor of The Sewanee Review and Professor of English and comparative literature at The University of the South.

In 1938 Andrew Lytle married Edna Langdon Barker of Memphis, Tennessee. A widower since 1963, Lytle refers (in the part of his memoirs entitled "A Wake for the Living") to his daughters Pamela, Katherine Anne, and Lillie Langdon. His statement on familial love involves his concepts of time and eternity:

Now that I have come to live in the sense of eternity, I can tell my girls who they are. They are the rare and precious objects of my delight. But this is not enough. Two of them already prefer to be the delight of another. In either case this is a personal and individual matter, and their being concerns more than that. The sense of eternity gives a perspective on things and events which makes for a refreshing clarity. I don't care how many rabbits jump over my grave, they don't make me shiver. But I always speak courteously to them when we meet. The rabbit is the great African hero. . . . Perhaps our colored nurses instilled in us respect for this hero. Tommy Bagley will turn his car around and go another way rather than cross the path of so great a one, when his headlights happen to startle him in the road, and my father had had told him as a child all the Uncle

² Ibid.
Remus stories.³

After commenting on the richness of the world of his father's boyhood for a child's education, Lytle makes this judgment of the agrarian society:

I rather think that a country society, which ours was and is no more, by its habits and customs discovers the identity between the natural and the supernatural, that mystery which becomes ceremony to people who make their living by the land or sea.⁴

And then, after pointing out that "if you don't know who you are or where you come from, you will find yourself at a disadvantage" (a fine Burkean litotes), Lytle adds:

If we dismiss the past as dead and not as a country of the living which our eyes are unable to see ..., then we are likely to become servile: we will have nothing with which to resist tyranny. Living as we will be in a lesser sense of ourselves, lacking that fuller knowledge which only the living past can give, it will be easy to submit to pressure and receive what is already ours as a boon from authority.⁵

And Lytle illustrates his point with historical knowledge gained during his years of research for his novel At the Moon's Inn,⁶ based on Hernando de Soto's travels in North America (from which the novella Alchemy,⁷ the story of Pizarro's conquest of Peru, was created):

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⁴ Ibid. ⁵ Ibid., 586-87.
⁶ Andrew Lytle, At the Moon's Inn (Indianapolis-New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1941). All citations here are from this edition.
⁷ Andrew Lytle, Alchemy in A Novel, A Novella and Four Stories (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1958), pp. 103-64. All citations here are from this edition.
The Incas understood this. They had an invariable rule of conquest: to bring back to Cuzco the gods and young chieftains as hostages. The conquered gods became the courtiers of the sun and the young caciques learned Quechua. Atahualpa, the Inca who lost to Pizarro, was carried to his doom in an elaborate palanquin with the Lord of Chinca at his feet. To lose your language and your god surrenders all that you are, no matter how many grand abstract words like liberty . . . try to reassure you that you are something. Or that you have something to lose. Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness is the most heartlessly delusive of all. It is impossible to keep this as an end and pursue it; but if it were possible, it would be impossible to attain it. It is another version of the promise in the Garden: Eat of this fruit and you will live as the gods. To pursue in such a way is to destroy. Look at the pagan myths as well as this of the Garden, that pre-Christian and universal myth.

The family, Lytle believes, represents a form "most perfect for man in his fallen condition." To confuse the private and public acts of families is to return to chaos: "Not to know the difference between the public thing, the res publica, and the intimate is to surrender that delicate balance of order which alone makes the state a servant and not the people servants of the state." 9

In these excerpts from the first part of Lytle's memoirs, we see ideas that inform Lytle's fiction. Time, place, history, myth (pagan and Christian), family, and the matriarchal society—these are themes Lytle interweaves in the novels The Long Night, At the Moon's Inn, A Name for Evil. 10

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9 Ibid., 588.

10 Andrew Lytle, A Name for Evil (Indianapolis-New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947). The novel also appears in A
and The Velvet Horn and in stories such as "The Mahogany Frame," "Jericho, Jericho, Jericho," and "Mr. Macgregor." Lytle's rich tapestries re-create the past in the present; the figures in them tell us in new ways about our ancestors and about ourselves.

Although Lytle unequivocally states his Southern Agrarian position in "The Hind Tit," his contribution to the Fugitive-Agrarian manifesto, I'll Take My Stand, and in other essays primarily concerned with economic or political rather than literary matters, he is in his fiction preeminently the literary artist. Of course, Lytle's beliefs concerning such subjects as Christianity, history, and the relationship between the individual and the state are important to his fiction; however, in all of his fiction, save for a reference to materialism in his earliest short story, "Old Scratch

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Andrew Lytle, The Velvet Horn (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1957). All citations here are from this edition.


in the Valley,"15 a relatively simple short story about a Tennessee matriarch, there is nothing in his fiction that can be described as polemic or obtrusively didactic. In his best stories and in his novels, particularly in his masterpiece, *The Velvet Horn*, character and action are so well matched that they call to mind Yeats's question about the dancer and the dance.

Andrew Lytle is both a literary artist and a believer in the moral order of letters.16 He has stated on several occasions that he believes twentieth-century man is living in a Satanic phase of history.17 But he feels that it is wrong for creative writers to compose polemics in attempts to combat the materialistic forces that have brought about this Satanic phase, and he recalls—perhaps with the idea of the saving remnant in mind—that the Bible tells us that the gates of hell shall not prevail. In his foreword to *A Novel, A Novella, and Four Stories*, Lytle makes clear his opinion of politically-oriented fiction writers and their work:


17 Mr. Lytle made this observation in conversation with the present writer, Monteagle, Tennessee, August 2, 1971; it appears in his "The State of Letters in a Time of Disorder," *Sewanee Review*, 79 (Autumn 1971), 484: ". . . we still live within the confines of Christendom. Only now we are in its Satanic phase. This reminds us that we have been promised only one thing: that the gates of hell will not finally prevail."
It should be obvious that polemics is one discipline and fiction another. If you are going to preach, get into the pulpit; if you want to bring about political reforms, run for office; social reforms, behave yourself and mind your manners. The professions appear in a novel for technical purposes. A preacher may be needed to save a fictive, not an actual, soul, just as a bore may be put there to bore some other character; but the skilled writer will not bore you with a man of total recall any more than his preacher will save you your soul. Sometimes, though, the sense of damnation in a book may be grounds for spiritual review, as Dickens' Bleak House is said to have set about the reforms in the Courts of Chancery. Such is residual, however, not the essential intention of the writer towards his reader. When a novel obviously makes an appeal other than its proper aesthetic one, you may be sure it has been written with the left hand.

And, with one exception, Lytle has scrupulously avoided committing in his own fiction what Poe calls "the heresy of the didactic," as we shall see when we follow his development as an artist from his first short story through his greatest novel, The Velvet Horn.

Some novelists and short story writers begin with an idea, then select and arrange elements to illustrate the idea. Robert Penn Warren is such a writer. Lytle, on the other hand, begins with an idea to explore, steeps himself in the history and milieu of the people he is writing about, and lives with his characters for long periods of time. Sometimes, after living with characters for a while he changes his ideas about them and their parts in the action that he is rendering. Probably the best example of this experiential

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18 Andrew Lytle, A Novel, A Novella and Four Stories, p. x.
aspect of Lytle's art is The Velvet Horn, of which he writes:

When I first began thinking about the book which was to become The Velvet Horn, I was thinking consciously: that is, rationally. I could almost say falsely, except that the creative act uses all the mind's faculties. I thought I wanted to do a long piece of fiction on a society that was dead. At the time I saw the scene as the kind of life which was the Southern version of a life that, discounting the sectional differences, had been common everywhere east of the Mississippi and east of the mountains.

Then, well into the first section of the novel, Lytle forgot, he tells us, that he had wanted to bring a dead society to life. He became primarily interested in making "the action itself symbolic of the archetypal experience," and he used as controlling image "incest, the act symbolic of wholeness, not the wholeness of innocence but the strain toward a return to this state of being." But more on the genesis and development of The Velvet Horn later. The main point to be noted here is the painstaking care with which Lytle creates his works of fiction. He spent two years writing The Long Night, five years writing At the Moon's Inn, two years writing A Name for Evil, and nine years writing The Velvet Horn.

Lytle makes a statement concerning the completion of The Velvet Horn, which because it illustrates at once his dedication to art and his ability to criticize his own creative acts, is reproduced here almost in full:

20 Ibid., p. 188.
21 Conversation, Monteagle, Tennessee, August 2, 1971.
My pace of writing is generally very slow, with constant cleaning up and structural revisions. Too often I will spend a day on a paragraph; a page is a good day's work. But as I drew towards the end, the last thirty pages or so, the artifice completely usurped my mind. It possessed me... I wrote three or four pages a day, scarcely changing a word. It was as if I had divided myself into two persons, one watching and one doing. The physical presence seemed a shadow. I felt disgust for its demands, and appetite had lost its savor. My impulse was to remain at the typewriter and not get up until the book was done... Food and sleep were necessary, and the tactical considerations of how much changed from day to day. I could not bear to be touched or noticed. My nerves had drawn into the tissue of the skin. I forced myself to eat as in a dream. I would go to bed at seven or eight o'clock and rise each morning earlier, until I was getting up at two. In a kind of half-awareness I knew that I had to watch this expense of energy, or I would give out before the end. I sensed that if I did, I would lose it, that once this possession of me by the actors was broken, it would never return. It was as if there were only so many words left, and each had its place, if I could hold out to receive them. The last day my breath was all in the front part of my mouth, and began to fade, the substance of meaning growing lighter. When it was all done, ... I leaned back in the chair. I felt that all that had gone before was right, or the illusion of the last acts being not fiction but life would not have seized me.22

We are reminded of Flaubert's letter to Louis Bouilhet:

I have just spent a good week, alone like a hermit, and as calm as a god. I abandoned myself to a frenzy of literature; I got up at midday, I went to bed at four in the morning. I dined with Dakno; I smoked fifteen pipes in a day; I have written eight pages.23

And we are reminded of Flaubert's pronouncement: "Madame Bovary, c'est moi!"24

22 Lytle, Hero, pp. 190-91.
Allen Tate, speaking of Lytle's critical essays, which he likens to the Prefaces of Henry James, comments that Lytle's "passionate discourse as an amateur is, first, before it gets on the page, a way of talking to himself about what he has found in other novelists who have been useful to him; but once he starts writing out what he has found useful he begins to impart it to the general reader who is standing over his shoulder." Tate quotes Lytle's statement on critical writing: "It is part of the author's discipline to read well, and to read well you must write it down." The statement is deceptively simple, Tate points out; Lytle describes in it "a formal effort of the imagination which places the writer inside the consciousness of Stephen Crane, Flaubert, Faulkner; and, in the case of his The Velvet Horn, the 'post of observation' that he himself after wandering in his selva oscura at last knew was the right stance for the work in hand." Tate adds:

I cannot think of another record of a novelist's ordeal in the discovery of his technique in the subject which so convincingly reveals the creative process; and it might be more precise to say that "The Working Novelist and the Myth-Making Process" shows us how long meditation on the subject makes it possible for the subject to reveal to the novelist the right techniques for his particular purpose. For Lytle knows better than any writer today that there are no abstract techniques that can be taken down from the shelf, or provided by a computer, and superimposed upon the materials of fiction.  

According to Henry James, "The only reason for the ex-

25 Tate, Foreword to The Hero with the Private Parts, p. xv.
istence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent
life."\textsuperscript{26} Broadening the dictum to include all fiction, and
adding a comment that James was constitutionally unable to
make, Lytle writes:

Fiction above all should give the illusion of life,
of men and women acting out some one of the eternal
involvements we all know, resolving, not solving.
Only God may solve.\textsuperscript{27}

The representation of this illusion of life, Lytle believes,
can best be made through the archetypal experience. Speaking
of the writing of The Velvet Horn, Lytle says: "At some point
it came clear to me that it is the archetypes which forever
recur, are immortal, timeless; it is only the shapes in which
these appear that seem to harden and die, that is the shapes
are the illusion of time. What a shock this was to my par-
tial and emotional view of the South!"\textsuperscript{28}

Lytle, then, in writing of the South, recreates the
past in the present by depicting eternally recurring arche-
types. The actions of his novels are themselves symbolic of
the archetypal experience; and archetypal experience involves
a reliance upon myth. As Lytle puts it, "The writer working
out of some form of myth will accept the supernatural as op-
erating within nature."\textsuperscript{29} Because of the "weakening of the

\textsuperscript{26} Henry James, The Art of Fiction and Other Essays
\textsuperscript{27} Lytle, Hero, pp. 180-81
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., pp. 182-83.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 187.
formal authority of the Church," some sort of myth, Christian
or pagan or artist-created, is necessary to combat "the Sa-
tanic acceptance of matter as the only value." This re-
casting or creation of myth, whatever its value in counter-
acting the dehumanizing effects of positivism, represents
art, not polemic:

We sense again that people cannot live, except in
some belief outside themselves. The cycles of cul-
tures seem to show that when belief hardens into for-
malism, leaving the center dry and hollow, it is a
time, as Yeats says, of the trembling of the veil of
the temple. But before some new faith breaks through,
there is a withdrawal into the source. This I believe
to be the archetypal conflicts of myth which precede
the formalized rituals and dogmas of institutional
religion. This is a statement only an artist can
make. And he can make it only vaguely, as it affects
his work, for the artist is a cannibal of Gargantuan
appetite who does not exclude himself, if he is lucky.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY FICTION

Andrew Lytle published his first work of fiction in The Virginia Quarterly Review when he was thirty years old. "Old Scratch in the Valley" is a thirty-five-hundred-word tripartite story with a matriarch named Judith Mebane as protagonist. A member of the gentry, this woman, who is patterned on one or more persons Lytle knew in his youth, rules a mythical Tennessee Cumberland Plateau cove named "Long Gourd Valley." Judith is "the last matriarch to sit on the richest acres in the Dipper and govern the opinion of her dependents and neighbors." ¹ Her antagonist is none other than Satan himself, "Old Scratch," who contests mightily with her for "the soul and body of her cousin Micajah Searcy." ²

Near the beginning of the story, the first-person narrator, a younger member of the Mebane family connection, makes it clear that he is an adult looking back on events that he witnessed as a child and is attempting to put them into some sort of order. This dual-vision point of view places "Old Scratch in the Valley" in a long line of autobiographical and

² Ibid., p. 239.
fictional works by narrators who recount events of the past and comment on them and evaluate them in the light of the knowledge and judgment of maturity. The technique of "Old Scratch in the Valley" is basically that of Mark Twain's Roughing It and Life on the Mississippi and of Robert Penn Warren's "Blackberry Winter" and Peter Taylor's "A Spinster's Tale." The narrator, who witnessed Miss Judy's triumph over "Old Scratch," recounts its highlights with ironic hyperbole: "... the devil stopped wagging his tail; ... he dropped it beneath his legs like a yaller cur; and by the time she was done you could hear him thrashing his way back to the infernal regions."\(^3\)

Judith Mebane overcame the devil at her cousin Micajah's funeral. Micajah, after losing his mill in a flood, had blasphemed by declaring: "I'm going to build a mill God-a-Mighty can't tear down."\(^4\) Judith had tried to prevent the completion of the mill by convincing the workmen that in working for Micajah they were working for the devil. The workmen failed to show up, but Micajah completed the mill by bringing prison labor from the capitol. He was read out of church. Then, on the Sunday the mill was completed, "to show his cousin Judy what he thought of her, Micajah went down to grind the first bushel of meal." He died carrying a sack of corn into the mill: "The doctor said it was brain fever, brought on by excitement; but he didn't fool anybody. They

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 246. \(^4\) Ibid., p. 243.
all knew the Lord had done it."\(^5\)

In lieu of the preacher, Judith conducted the burial service over her cousin's corpse; and it was at the funeral--according to the account of the narrator--that she dispatched Satan and saved the soul of a member of her family. Perhaps "Old Scratch in the Valley" represents an adaptation of the theme of *Antigone*. Whatever the source of Lytle's donnée, the story presents a picture of a matriarchal society, which society Lytle believes to have been the basis of the strength of the Southern family. As the Memphis family of Peter Taylor's "A Spinster's Tale" disintegrates after the death of the mother, whom we know only through the narrator-daughter's memories of her, so the Mebane family and the other families of Long Gourd cease to prosper after the death of Judith Mebane in 1908. Lytle places "the last active expression of this society" [the culture destroyed by the Civil War] in the period 1880-1910.\(^6\)

Describing the lack of purpose in the people of Long Gourd Valley after 1908, the narrator comments: "And so the framework of Long Gourd society fell apart from the dry rot of an aggravated materialism, and sons and daughters of high-minded individualists lost the sense of independence which had formerly been cultivated as carefully as the valley's fields."\(^7\) In this statement, which strongly resembles a num-


\(^6\) Lytle, *The Hero with the Private Parts*, p. 179.

\(^7\) Lytle, "Old Scratch in the Valley," p. 237.
ber of statements in "The Hind Tit," Lytle commits "the heresy of the didactic." He was careful not to do so again. However, as we shall see, an episode from "Old Scratch in the Valley," Lytle's first work of fiction, reappears in his last work, The Velvet Horn.

Lytle's first novel, The Long Night, is an exceptionally fine first novel; indeed, it is an exceptionally fine novel. Even if one admits it has the structural flaws which a number of critics and reviewers—including Lytle's friends and fellow-agrarians John Crowe Ransom and Robert Penn Warren—have pointed out, it nevertheless stands as one of the best novels of the Southern Renaissance. It is sui generis. As Robert Penn Warren puts it, "There is no book quite like The Long Night, and there will never be another quite like it. It says something about the world of the South not said elsewhere, and something that is true. But more importantly, it offers its own special fascination and its own special pleasure. At least, that is what I always find when I come back to it, the fascination, the pleasure." 8

The Long Night is based on an archetypal experience dramatized by Seneca: it is a revenge tragedy rendered in the strongly Scotch, Irish, and English milieu of Georgia and

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8 We should remember that Lytle was a mature writer of thirty-four when his first novel was published.

Alabama during the 1850's, during the Civil War, and—by means of the frame into which the narrative is placed—during a very brief period in the late 1880's or early 1890's.

Ransom describes The Long Night as "an original and amazing book."\(^{10}\) With regard to Lytle's rendering of the Battle of Shiloh in the second half of the novel, Ransom says that the Shiloh section of the novel is "the best thing in fiction by way of a piece of military narrative . . . at once aesthetically satisfying and lucid in its logic" and says that "It is related to The Red Badge of Courage . . . as an orchestra is related to a fiddle."\(^{11}\) And Ransom must be credited with being one of the first critics to recognize that Andrew Lytle is a true artist, whose fiction is "epical," "almost wholly masculine." He states: "The hero is a Confederate soldier and the author is a Southerner, but it would have been the same story if both had been Yankees, for the author is not concerned with abstract or statistical issues but only with the requirement that the hero shall have a becoming fury and a gift for partisanship."\(^{12}\)

But Ransom makes a glaring error concerning the narrative technique of The Long Night:

To the technique of presentation I would certainly demur at one point, and violently, in justice to the literary creation which it blemishes. There is a prefatory letter at the front of the book addressed


\(^{11}\) Ibid., 404.  \(^{12}\) Ibid., 403.
to the proprietary teller of the oral tale from which Lytle professes to have built his story; this may be generous, but it would be better left to secure and notoriously technical writers, like the later Henry James, to explain to very special audiences their occasions and experiments; it grossly impairs the innocent reader's consent to artistic illusion. Worse than the letter, there is a fictional envelope around the story, offering a second and official account of its origin. Here the party of the first person is called to meet an unknown uncle, whose name is Pleasant McIvor, an aged man, who tells him his story because it must be preserved in the family history. The nephew would give it in his uncle's words, and begins it in the first person from Pleasant's point of view, but quickly recovers from that error and begins to tell it from the same point of view in the third person. When that proves irksome too, he calmly forgets the circumstances in which the narration started, he assumes such variety in points of view as he requires till his destined tale is finished.

Ransom's unfavorable comment in effect provides us a means of judging Lytle's artistry in his first novel. What Ransom seems to regard as a technical blunder by an inexperienced, though talented, writer is actually a deliberate shifting of point-of-view based on practical considerations of facts which supplied the frame and ultimately the final form of the novel. But to complete Ransom's statement:

The envelope is not only impossible, it is undesirable. It takes us back to the concept of those now-ancient writers, Defoe, Fielding, Scott, Hawthorne, who appeared to think that a fiction would not be accepted unless it could fool readers into mistaking it for history. It is significant that the early parts, in Pleasant's homely diction, do not achieve great distinction of dignity or delicacy. The character telling the story is not of the author's mental stature. He is cramping the author's style, he is a deadly incubus, but the author restores him to the ranks, and allows his own proper genius to bloom.  

13 Ibid., 405. 14 Ibid., 405.
As novelist-critics Tate\textsuperscript{15} and Warren\textsuperscript{16} have noted, not only is the envelope possible, it is a fact in the Owsley family history. And so the letter written to "Frank Owsley, Esquire" by "A. L." at Cornsilk Plantation, in August, 1936, is justifiable, not only as an expression of thanks for a donné but also as a preface to the seven-page introductory first section of the novel.

Lytle's narrator begins the story with a description of the transfixing words of the man who told it to him, his uncle, Pleasant McIvor:

His voice stopped suddenly, as a clock might stop. I remember the room for a moment seemed to hang in a hiatus of time, in such a hiatus as only the body can know when the heart's last stroke sounds down the blood stream. For twelve hours, from sun to sun, I had listened to Pleasant McIvor. By degrees the steady fall of his words had beat all the warmth out of my senses, until terror crept over my body, leaving it defenseless in the grip of rigid nerves (p. 13).

These opening sentences show that Lytle understood in his first novel the importance of using a combination of concrete imagery and suspense to compel the reader to turn the page and then turn page after page until with an inward sigh of regret he reaches the words "THE END." It is obvious that Lytle had Conrad at least in the back of his mind when he gave the final form to this thrice-told tale in the study of his Cornsilk Plantation. One finds a similar combination


\textsuperscript{16} Warren, 130-31.
of concrete imagery and suspense in Conrad's presentation of Lord Jim:

And later on, many times, in distant parts of the world, Marlow showed himself willing to remember Jim, to remember him at length, in detail and audibly.

Perhaps it would be after dinner, on a verandah draped in motionless foliage and crowned with flowers, in the deep dusk speckled by fiery cigar-ends. The elongated bulk of each cane-chair harboured a silent listener. Now and then a small red glow would move abruptly, and expanding light up the fingers of a languid hand, part of a face in profound repose, or flash a crimson gleam into a pair of pensive eyes overshadowed by a fragment of an unruffled forehead; and with the very first word uttered Marlow's body, extended at rest in the seat, would become very still as though his spirit had winged its way back into the lapse of time and were speaking through his lips from the past.

Warren says of the beginning of The Long Night, "We know that we are in good hands. The teller knows the craft of telling, and we are ready to turn back in years to the moment when all had begun." As Conrad, through his narrator Marlow, recreates the past in the present, so does Lytle, through his narrator "Nephew Lawrence":

From what he told me that night and from what I could learn from other sources, I was able to piece the story together, and of course you must understand that, at this late date, I cannot tell which words are his and which are mine... [Italics supplied].

(P. 20)

The story, then, represents a piecing together by the narrator "Nephew Lawrence" at a date considerably later than the mid-February night of his Uncle Pleasant's night-long re-

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18 Warren, p. 133.
counting sometime in the late 1880's. This fact, it would seem, justifies the shift in point-of-view that occurs at the beginning of Part 3 (p. 57), the shift which some critics have pointed out as a technical flaw; but more of this later.

Sometime in the late 1880's or early 1890's, the twenty-two-year-old narrator, who has just received his degree from an Arkansas college and is leaving for his home in South Alabama to marry and take his place in life as the head of a family, is summoned to his mysterious Uncle Pleasant's farm in a remote section of Winston County, in North Alabama, by a letter from his uncle which cryptically states: "Besides the gratification your company will give me, I have something to relate which should be of interest to you, the oldest of your Grandfather's issue" (p. 14).

Pleasant McIvor instructs Nephew Lawrence to go to Florence, where he is to receive directions to his "place" from Squire Hicks. Lawrence, who here is the first-person narrator, describes the two-hundred-twenty-pound coon-hunting, whiskey-drinking, railroad-hating squire in considerable detail; but the description (including the observation that the squire seemed not truly Pleasant McIvor's friend) does not exceed the bounds of verisimilitude, for a keen observer can learn much about a fellow-traveler from conversation with him as they pass through a mountainous wilderness in a buggy. And, as Nephew Lawrence proves early in his narration and corroborates throughout his narration, based on memory of his Uncle Pleasant's twelve-hour tale and what he "could learn
from other sources," he is one of those Jamesian persons on whom little is lost.

Seeing for the first time his Uncle Pleasant's "place," a dog-run log house, Lawrence observes:

The only entrance was by the road I would presently descend. At the base the gorge dropped in a series of falls, turning sharply to the west where it disappeared noisily through the pines and mountain growth. The road came to an end at a bridge which spanned the gorge. The whole pocket had the air of a feudal retreat an outlaw might defend indefinitely (p. 17).

This description, which is reminiscent of the finest descriptive passages in Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly* or *Rob Roy*, is rendered with respect to the effect of the scene on the narrator:

... why should Pleasant McIvor withdraw himself from a society he must have loved and hide out so far from his connections and kin? Such questions shook off the soothing rest my body was giving way to. I set out with a good stride, eagerly curious and meaning that this curiosity should be satisfied (p. 17).

And the reasons for Pleasant McIvor's self-exile as discovered (from Pleasant's narration and "from other sources") and related by Nephew Lawrence make up the subject matter of *The Long Night* and fully justify the shifts in point of view, for it is obvious that in the latter part of the novel Lawrence, the young college graduate, perforce presents the greater part of the action through "the roving narrator," i.e., third-person narration, with Pleasant McIvor remaining the central intelligence even though the point of view shifts to other characters from time to time. Even in the parts of the novel pieced together "from other sources,"
parts in which Pleasant does not appear, he is involved. The story is always his. Every episode that involves his sworn enemies—even the humorous episodes which show Sheriff Bot-terall's inordinate love for horseflesh—affects Pleasant. Every death at Shiloh—including General Albert Sidney Johnston's, which no man witnesses—affects him and brings about the denouement of the novel.

After Pleasant McIvor greets his nephew, Lawrence, he introduces him to his Aunt Martha, who, as we learn near the end of the novel, was the sweetheart of Pleasant's only close friend, Lt. Roswell Ellis, the young officer Pleasant met at Corinth, Mississippi, just before the march north to Pitts-burg Landing and the Battle of Shiloh. Lawrence meets the children, the eldest of which (a boy) is "scarce fifteen" (we note that the younger man refers to his uncle as "the old gentleman"). And, seated before the fireplace a few days later, after he has enjoyed the hospitality that would be vouchsafed a returned prodigal son, Lawrence hears Pleasant McIvor begin his story: "I have brought you here . . . for reasons unknown to anyone but myself. What I have to say is not a thing I can tell my wife and children. But it is a thing that must be told." He paused. "And you are next of kin" (p. 19).

The old man goes into a sort of trance as he begins to relive the past. His eyes, usually "a cold gray" appear "ruby red" to his young auditor, and "churning in their socks-
ets." He becomes a voice from the 1850's and suddenly Law-
rence is in Georgia with him: "In the late 'fifties," came the voice, "our family had its seat in Georgia. Your grandpa, Cameron McIvor, was the head of the family, and he had prospered. The thing that led to our humiliation took place at a militia muster" (p. 20).

Pleasant McIvor, in Part 2 of The Long Night (pp. 23-54), relates to his spellbound nephew the family history that led to the murder of Pleasant's father and Lawrence's grandfather, Cameron McIvor, by a band of "speculators" led by Tyson Lovell, a man who seems to be innately depraved, like the fictional master-of-arms Claggart and like the historical Natchez Trace murderer-insurrectionist, John Murrell, upon whom Lytle obviously patterned his demonic Lovell. The name "Lovell" suggests "Murrell"; and the given name "Tyson" is an appropriate one for the Satanic Lovell, tison in French meaning "brand, fire-brand, or embers."

In Part 2, Lytle presents through Pleasant's panoramic summary and rendering of scene the history of the Scotch-Irish McIvor family's removal from Georgia to Alabama (stopping first near Opelika then near Wetumpka) because of trouble with contentious twins, Job and Mebane Caruthers (we note the repetition of the name "Mebane" from "Old Scratch in the Valley"). In only thirty-one pages Lytle provides the basis for the action which the Presbyterian Pleasant McIvor feels moved by Providence to undertake, and Lytle accomplishes this by combining panoramic, or narrative, summary and highly dramatic, though brief, scenes in which realistic dialogue es-
establishes the character of the speaker. For example, Lytle has Pleasant narrate his father's wrestling match with Young Job, who forces the encounter on the older man, a renowned wrestler:

Right quick he grabbed pa and lifted him off the ground. He meant to make short work of it. The hands dropped their hoes. Old Caesar listened for his master's ribs to cave in. I can't say what happened, but I believe pa let him squeeze until his first strength winded, for before anybody could see how it was done, he had Caruthers on his hip. With a sudden heave and jerk he threw him over the fence, and there the twin lay with his arm broken in three places and a hole jabbed in his head. Some of the people carried him to the house . . . . Mebane was away at the time . . . , and he didn't return until Job was well enough to leave. We all thought the affair was ended, for Job left in the friendliest way. But Mebane was cold and sullen and barely civil (p. 27).

Then a touch of the dramatic is somehow transferred to our memory of the summary that has preceded it, making the entire episode come to life before our eyes:

"'I don't like the looks of things, Mr. McIvor'," said ma. 
"'Nonsense, Susanne'."
She shook her head. "The boy Mebane's heart stings for his brother's humiliation. Anybody can see, that is, any woman can see a dangerous jealousy there" (p. 27).

And again narrative becomes predominant, with now a touch of dialogue and now a touch of exposition in the form of what seems to be relatively unimportant reminiscing on family history by Pleasant. This seemingly unimportant reminiscing, as we see later, furnishes an important clue to the difference between Pleasant's personality and that of his brother William and therefore to the meaning of a scene in the latter
part of the novel that is as refined a treatment of sensibilities as is found anywhere in Henry James—the scene before William's open grave in the Chattanooga cemetery in which Susanne McIvor shows Pleasant her bitterness over the death of William (pp. 314-15). For, after telling of his father's fondness for two fine mares that he had raised and commenting that his mother would say, "Mr. McIvor, I do believe you'd as soon swap off two of the children as those horses," Pleasant gives his father's teasing rejoinder: "Well, Miss Susanne, I know the breeding of those mares on both sides for nine generations, while as to your children I can make out the papers for sure only on one line" (pp. 27-28). Pleasant adds: "She used to pretend that made her awful mad. She was a French woman, out of the Vine and Olive colony settled by refugees from Napoleon's armies. He met her on a trading journey into Alabama; and since the Frenchmen made a poor out at raising either olives or grapes, he used to tease her about them not being what they represented themselves to be" (p. 28).19

19 Kytle, Jack and Luther Clark, ed. Alabama: A Guide to the Deep South, American Guide Series (New York: Richard D. Smith, 1941), pp. 293-94: "During the winter of 1817, a large band of Napoleonic exiles arrived at Mobile on the ship, MacDonough. They called themselves the 'Association of French Emigrants for the cultivation of the Vine and Olive,' and had been granted four townships by Congress with the understanding that they grow 'the vine and other vegetables.' The Alabama Tombigbee country had caught their fancy, for it had once been a part of the old French Southwest. . . . No stranger colonists ever penetrated a wilderness. They were cultured people from the . . . glittering drawing rooms of the old French aristocracy. None had ever
Pleasant goes on to tell how the twins Job and Mebane asked to borrow the mares and were not refused by his father, who wished not to offend the twins. The twins returned the mares "dripping wet with sweat and wind broke" (p. 28). His father, enraged, picked a gun and shot both men, wounding one fatally. The survivor, Mebane, brought charges, and the two-year court battle that followed ruined Cameron McIvor financially and caused him to decide to move to Texas.

And, in his straightforward prose (Lytle carefully observes the rule of decorum) Pleasant describes for his nephew the McIvors' removal from Georgia in the late 1850's with three of Cameron's brothers and several cousins:

Brother William, the oldest son, drove the first wagon. Ma and little Levi sat with him. Lucius drove the second. Eli and I rode with him. The negro women were spread out between the two and in a cart behind. The men walked and looked after the cattle. Uncle John and the rest of the kin brought up the rear with their families . . . (p. 29).

Deciding to make a crop before pushing on to Texas, all but Pleasant's immediate family stop at Opelika. Cameron McIvor takes his family on and, near Wetumpka, decides that the land looks so good that he considers stopping to make a crop, too. With Pleasant, his favorite son, Cameron meets "a gentleman on a tall strong horse riding our way." Pleasant describes this gentleman, Tyson Lovell (patterned on the

set foot in a plowed field. The women had enjoyed the favors of Marie Antoinette and the men had followed Napoleon in his sweeping conquests." The colony was a failure, of course, and by the mid-1820's it was completely disbanded.
infamous Murrell) with dual vision, i.e., he describes what he observed as a boy and what he as an adult came to realize lay behind the observations:

I looked at him good. His eyes were set close together, but the right eye was larger than the left. He seemed to be a handsome man, until you examined each feature separately; then you got the impression he wasn't one man, but a lot of different men slung together. He was large in size, but his feet didn't fit; and when he knocked a fly from his nose, I got the odd feeling that somebody else was doing it for him. This quality, whatever it was, was confusing. It made you feel alone. If you weren't careful, you would find yourself taking him into confidences you wouldn't say to the closest of friends. I decided later that this was the secret of his great influence with men and of his power over them (p. 34).

Lovell, who has looked over the McIvors and their belongings ("He eyed our niggers and stock awful close" [p. 35]), makes Cameron an offer of a five-hundred-acre plantation for a fifty-fifty sharing of the crop. Cameron looks at the land, agrees to farm it. Pleasant's brother William marries two months later and moves to town to clerk for his merchant father-in-law.

Lytle continues to foreshadow the murder that brings about Pleasant's "long night": the McIvors soon notice that Lovell and the strange men who visit him act suspiciously and that the McIvor Negroes are "uneasy about something" (p. 36). Finally a McIvor mule disappears. With thoughts of the "underground railroad" and stock theft ("His barn [Lovell's] always had one or two strange mules to be fed" [p. 37]), Cameron McIvor, experienced in forest lore from his Indian fighting days in Georgia and Florida, tracks the mule north, "through
an old Indian trace," (p. 37), and ultimately is confronted by Lovell, who enigmatically repeats a rumor concerning the presence of "speculators," (men who steal and sell slaves and livestock) in the vicinity. 20

In a very dramatic scene, Cameron tells Susanne that Lovell is at the head of a band of speculators and that Lovell, who realizes that Cameron knows of his criminal actions, has picked a quarrel over wages due Cameron's hired hands and has demanded that Cameron and his family move by the first of August. Susanne advises her husband to stand his ground. He does, and shortly after the first of August, Sheriff Botterall and a mob of Lovell's men confront Cameron in his yard, accuse him of the theft of two Negroes, and take him to town in an attempt to frighten him out of the country (there is talk of tarring and feathering him). Shortly after Cameron is released (but with suspicion thrown on him in the minds of many people), two of Lovell's men, the Wilton brothers, come to the McIvor place, one of whom insults Cameron ("... Mr. Cameron McIvor, you black-livered abolitionist" [p. 47]) and is blasted along his backside with birdshot.

Lytle now advances part of the action by having Cameron, who anticipates a legal action by the Wiltons, take a

20 It is interesting to note that Lytle allows Lovell to mention Murrell by name. Lovell says: "It has been suggested, even, that one of Murrell's chief lieutenants heads it [the band of "speculators"] (p. 39). We are reminded of Faulkner's use of his created "Jefferson" and the real Oxford in Sanctuary.
riverboat, the *Coosa Belle*, to Montgomery to talk to the United States District Attorney (who, we later learn, is Lawson Welton [p. 71]). The District Attorney receives Cameron coldly and points out to him that Lovell is a highly respected planter (Murrell was a respected planter of Jackson, Tennessee). When Cameron returns home he discovers that the Wilton brothers have sworn out a bench warrant for him: "Cameron McIvor had been outlawed" (p. 50).

Lovell's men now draw the eldest son, William, to town by the ruse of a message that his wife is ill; Pleasant is seized after his horse is shot from under him, and bound and gagged in a log church about five miles from the house (he does not actually witness the murder of his father, as some reviewers have stated). With almost superhuman strength ("His [pa's] ghost must have given me strength . . . ") Pleasant, left by his two captors, chews through his gag and yells until someone comes to him from the road and turns him loose. Later, from his mother, he learns that after the gang broke into his father's room the Wilton brothers held his father "while a man by the name of Fox shot his head off" (p. 54).

Frank L. Owsley, Jr., writes:

According to my father's version, "Uncle Dink" [Pleasant McIvor] came to my grandfather, told him the story, and asked him to hunt down the last man. At that time "Dink" was an old man and had got all but one of the killers. . . . The last man was named Cox, and was supposed to have been the man who actually fired the shot . . . .

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21 Letter from F. L. Owsley, Jr., to the present writer, Sept. 17, 1971.
We note Lytle's close adherence to actual surnames in the fictional rendering from the donnée from his friend Frank L. Owsley: "McIvor" for "McGregor" ("Uncle Dink" McGregor), "Lovell" for "Murrell," and "Fox" for "Cox." By this subtle means he projects his frame, as acknowledged in the prefatory letter, throughout the novel. We shall return to the version of Frank L. Owsley, Jr., later for an evaluation of Lytle's artistic purpose in departing from the "Uncle Dink" story, for depart from it Lytle does, and drastically. He writes to Frank L. Owsley:

You will find that Pleasant McIvor's long night does not follow as closely as we had intended the performance of the original character. Perhaps this is inevitable. It is impossible, I believe, even if it is desirable to make a fiction adhere too strictly to life.22

In The Long Night, as in all of his fiction, Lytle is explicit as to where his characters live and where events take place. Lytle states that "... in fiction (as opposed to myth or fairy tale) the action must be put in a recognizable place and society"23 and that "Family and place ... go together."24 As Eudora Welty puts it, "It is by the nature of itself that fiction is all bound up in the local. The internal reason for that is surely that feelings are bound up in place." She adds: "Place in fiction is the named, iden-

23 Lytle, The Hero with the Private Parts, p. 189.
24 Ibid., p. 179.
tified, concrete, exact and exacting, and therefore credible, gathering-spot of all that has been felt, is about to be experienced, in the novel's progress. Location pertains to feeling; feeling profoundly pertains to place; place in history partakes of feeling, as feeling about history partakes of place. Every story would be another story, and unrecognizable as art, if it took up its characters and plot and happened somewhere else."^25

This feeling for place is strong throughout Lytle's fiction. Even in A Name for Evil, the novel in which not a single place-name appears, there is no question as to region in which the action takes place. Lytle's portrayal of characters and their occupations, his descriptions of land and crops--such elements combine to show us all we need to know about the geography of the novel for an understanding of its action.

And, of course, in all of Lytle's fiction time and place function together to produce a proper background for a particular society, from which come characters with all their kin and "connections." In The Long Night Georgia and North Alabama of the mid-nineteenth century furnish the proper milieu for the McIvors, who obviously have pretty much the same feelings for the mountains and caves of the Cumberland hills as their clansmen-ancestors had for the Highlands of

Scotland in preceding centuries.

In the third part of *The Long Night* (pp. 57-189), Lytle accomplishes a remarkable feat: after showing the dramatic gathering of the clan—the McIvors and all the family "connections"—he renders in scene after scene, tied together by narrative, actions in the lives of the members of Lovell's band of speculators. Lytle renders the feelings of the "speculators" for place and the things inevitably concerned with place, e.g., the feelings of Sheriff Botterall, so fond of his horses that when he is drunk he stables one of them in a bedroom (p. 160). It is a mark of Lytle's artistry that he not only makes the various sworn enemies of Pleasant and the other McIvors and members of the connection come to life, but he also makes them, after a fashion, sympathetic characters. As Warren says, "In a sense, they are not, after all, villains. They are merely men, certainly no better than they should be, but trapped somehow in their destiny. Whose side are we on? This doubleness of view, and the irony it entails, is a fundamental fact of the story as it appears in the novel."  

To accomplish this feat, of course, Lytle must shift his point of view. He shifts it, not to the omniscient point of view, as so many critics who have cited the shift as a flaw have said, but to the point of view referred to by

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26 Warren, p. 137.

27 Tate, "A Prodigal Novel of Pioneer Alabama": "... Pleasant begins to tell his story of vengeance to his nephew, who reports it to us. Then suddenly the narrator no
Allen Tate and Caroline Gordon as that of the "roving narrator." (Lytle prefers the term "hovering bard," which seems to be his own coinage). We recall that in Part I Nephew Lawrence makes it clear that he has pieced together the story (presumably in writing) from what Pleasant McIvor told him and from what he could learn from other sources (p. 20). The story, then, is obviously not just Pleasant's story: it is Pleasant's and Nephew Lawrence's. But even though throughout the remainder of The Long Night the third-person point of view shifts from Pleasant's consciousness to that of other characters, sometimes during fairly long episodes (as in the story of the death of Bob Pritchard), the point of view always returns to Pleasant, the central intelligence; and it is with Pleasant's troubled thoughts that the novel ends. The story is primarily concerned with Pleasant from start to finish. The point of view has to be shifted from first-person narration to third-person (actually various third-persons, including Pleasant) so that Nephew Lawrence can, to the best of his ability, provide as complete as possible a rendering of Pleasant's revenge tragedy.

At the beginning of Part 3, the longest part of the novel, we are struck not only by the change in point of view from first person to third but also by a change in style. Longer reports Pleasant directly; he shifts to the role of the omniscient narrator, giving us to understand merely Pleasant's own story, but the tremendous background of an action that he has placed together from many sources.

It is not perfect novel technique, and doubtless Mr. Lytle might have solved his problem in another way."
Ransom comments:

It is significant that the early parts, in Pleasant's homely diction, do not achieve great distinction of dignity or delicacy. The character telling the story is not of the author's mental stature. He is cramping the author's style, he is a deadly incubus, but the author restores him to the ranks, and allows his own proper genius to bloom.

Of course the early part of the narrative is in "homely diction," for Nephew Lawrence is recording Pleasant's words exactly or, in some places, as accurately as he can. Lytle, throughout his fiction, is careful to observe the rule of decorum, as we shall see in *At the Moon's Inn*, *A Name for Evil*, *The Velvet Horn*, and in the shorter works, particularly "Mr. MacGregor."

Nephew Lawrence, the recent college graduate, who when he heard the story from the lips of Pleasant McIvor, was on his way to South Alabama to become a school-teacher as well as a husband, would certainly employ a mixed prose style as he "pieces the story together" from Pleasant's words and from other sources. But the novel from this point to the end is no more a product of Lytle's "proper genius," as Ransom puts it, than is Pleasant's first-person narration.

Nephew Lawrence begins Part 3 with a poetical passage, which serves as a fine introduction to the burial of the murdered Cameron McIvor and to the gathering of the clan:

The August night was almost spent. Its brief darkness had cooled for a moment the hot dry world, but the air about the cracked earth quickly cankered, and

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28 Ransom, 405.
over the fields, the woods, the barns and houses lay
the stale warmth which shrivels the grain in the ear
and curls the green leaves about the stalk. Over the
McIvor house it gathered its sickly taint, but there
its warning had come too late. In the empty bedroom
lay the stilled form of Cameron McIvor (p. 57).

The dead man's four brothers—Washington, Clarke, John,
and Eli—and his widow Susanne are sitting up with the corpse.
They are listening to the sounds of Pleasant's voice which
comes from behind the locked door of the boys' room. "How
long has Pleasant gone on like this?" asks Clarke, and Susanne
answers that since he was brought in the previous morning
and, at his request, shown his father's body he has kept him­
self locked in the room "without speaking to us, without ask­
ing how it happened." She adds: "Sometimes we can hear him
praying and crying . . . . [W]e heard strange prayers, awful
prayers." And in Clarke's consolatory remark "It won't be
long until light, sister," as well as Susanne's reply, "No,
it won't be long," there is, of course, dramatic irony that
calls to mind the title of the novel and suggests that the
son Cameron McIvor loved best will endure much mental anguish
before he recovers from the trauma he has experienced, if he
ever does.

Following Owsley's story pretty closely at this point,
Lytle has Clarke and his brothers leave. Susanne, who under­
stands that Cameron's murderers must not know of their pres­
ence, follows them out. When she returns to the house, Wil­
liam, who has been listening to his brother, tells her: "He
thinks he's talking to pa. He thinks pa is telling him who
the murderers are" (p. 59).

Lytle has carefully prepared the groundwork for his McIvor ghost, we realize, when we recall the descriptions he has presented through Pleasant's first-person narrative of the closeness of the relationship between him and his father. Visitations of the recently dead to grief-stricken survivors in states of physical exhaustion or in dreams are common in human experience, and the visitants often speak words of consolation or advice to the bereaved. Indeed, we are not justified in referring to Pleasant's hearing of his father's voice as a modernization of a convention of Senecan tragedy or an echo of Hamlet, as some critics have done. Ransom, for example says: "He [Pleasant] has the illusion of being directed by his dead father; this feature is part of the convention but its use here is infrequent and, I think, gratuitous." But Pleasant's hearing his father's ghost and talking with it is not just an adaptation of The Spanish Tragedy or Hamlet, rather it is a restatement of an archetypal human experience. As Pleasant's quest for vengeance goes on, the terrible hurt which came to him with the death of his father is deadened by the anodyne of time; he hears his father's voice less and less frequently; and at the end of the novel he no longer hears it.

Pleasant at last comes from the room in which he has locked himself: "... his youth seemed gone. In its place

29 Ibid., 404.
there was a terrible patience and a terrible purpose, and at once she [Susanne] knew this younger son, grown so wonderfully strange, would take their shame away" (p. 60).

Lytle, in a discussion of a Peter Taylor play, *Tennessee Day in St. Louis*, says: "Nowhere else in this country is the family as a social unit so clearly defined as in the South. Its large 'connections' amplifying the individual family life, the geographic accident which allowed the family . . . to extend itself in a mild climate and alluvial soils . . . , and slavery too, gave the family a more clear definition of its function as not only an institution but the institution of Southern life." 30 This concept we see exemplified in *The Long Night*: two weeks after Pleasant comes from the room a changed person, the kin--the McIvors, the Longs, the Pritchards--gather at the home of Thomas McIvor, uncle to the deceased Cameron and his brothers. Armistead McIvor, Cameron's double first cousin, who is to be avenging agent and then a Confederate Colonel under General Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh, arrives from Kentucky and says to Susanne: "He will be avenged." She replies by repeating his words.

Old Thomas presides, "wearing his hat even under his own roof as a mark of rank and dignity . . ." (p. 63). The hat, of course, is traditionally the mark of authority. As

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we shall see, Major Brent, the "ghost" in A Name for Evil, is wearing a black hat whenever his psychotic descendant sees him). "The rooms [grow] still . . . . " and Pleasant remembers his father's funeral: he remembers the people who came to see if his father had him to avenge his death and he reflects that it was right for his uncles to leave during the night of the wake. Bob Pritchard is ready to ride. William, who not only looks like his mother but is like his mother's people ("Vine and Olive Colony" aristocratic Frenchmen) wishes to make the two Wiltons and Fox stand trial. Armistead McIvor says to him: "The courts, sir, are for land litigations and the punishment of the state's criminals" (p. 65).

Perhaps this discussion echoes the national forensic discord of the 1850's as to the course the South should take. At any rate, when William, whom Lytle develops as a very civilized man, insists on first trying to preserve the family honor by legal action, young and handsome Bob Pritchard, with a "youthful face, already hard with a lifetime's violence [it is scarred]" touched with "the mark of early death," objects contemptuously (p. 66). Finally, Cyrus Long of Georgia makes a speech which he concludes with this peroration: "If you mean to kill a snake, you've got to crawl on your belly. Let us meet guile with guile, secret death with secret death" [Italics supplied.] (p. 68).

Re-emphasizing the Senecan ghost-convention, Lytle has Pleasant, entranced, look at Cyrus and beyond him. "Did you hear?" he says. "That was pa talking. He came to tell us
what to do" (p. 68). And then Pleasant tells how he followed the murderers from the funeral ("They came to his burying to gloat ...") and identified them: "Some of the animals I knew, the sheriff's gelding, and Judge Wilton's roan" (p. 69). He tells how he hid near an open window and how God (Providence) kept the murderers away from the window. Bob Pritchard after driving his desk into the wall in a paroxysm of anger, offers Pleasant his hand in allegiance.

Armistead McIvor approves. He comments "... I'm of the notion that what is to be done is going to be done by us right here in this room" He adds a hunting metaphor: "Too many hounds will spoil this chase" (p. 70).

And so the means of retribution are decided in the family meeting. Whether or not retribution is to be exacted has never been in question, only the means. Pleasant and his kinsmen, who are, like him, true descendants of their Highlander ancestors, win out over William, who is like his aristocratic French forbears of the ill-fated "Vine and Olive Colony." Armistead reminds William that he is Cameron's double first cousin and therefore has more of Cameron's blood in his veins than William has, and he adds: "I'll take care of this Judge Wilton" (p. 71).

Lytle now puts us into the mind of the district attorney, Lawson Wilton (ironic given name) who, because he recently has had trouble sleeping at night, has begun to stop by the Coosa River Inn bar for a nightcap before retiring to his bachelor quarters. At the bar he meets another patron,
a large personable stranger, who introduces himself as Armistead Weatherford, a planter from Kentucky, and expatiates upon the advantages raising tobacco has over raising cotton, the chief of which is that raising tobacco requires small tracts of land and few, if any, Negroes. Wilton replies to this agrarian argument (reminiscent of Jefferson's dream of the ideal society) by stressing the dangers to the Constitution from the abolitionists.

Next evening the two new acquaintances meet again at the Coosa River Inn, this time for dinner. Over the after-dinner brandy and cigars Wilton unburdens himself by telling the story of a "colleague," who, he says, is a man about his own age, "whose story might interest you." This "colleague" is facing a crisis in life. Wilton wishes to help the man "bring it to a happy conclusion"; and he suggests that perhaps "Weatherford" can advise him as to how to help bring it about (p. 79).

Lytle shifts to narration (actually, narration within a scene) by having Wilton relate the story of the "colleague," whom "for the sake of convenience" he calls "Purtle." Wilton, of course, is telling his own story to his new-found highly sympathetic acquaintance, whom he regards as his friend, in an attempt to achieve catharsis in a sort of confession. The weak-willed, guilt-ridden Wilton reveals that he became a tool of "C----," who was "a large planter, reported to have property in land and slaves scattered all over the black belt" (pp. 86-87). "C----" gave "Purtle" legal business,
took him to New Orleans, where they engaged in bouts of debauchery, and where "C----" forced "Purtle" to help him dispose of the body of a young Bayou La Fourche sugar planter whom he killed for the money the young man had gotten from the sale of his widowed mother's sugar crop.

Wilton relates that on the ride North from New Orleans "C----" confided in "Purtle" that he was at the head of "a fine body of speculators" and that he is going to take "Purtle" into the band. And then, Wilton continues, "C----" described the four "realms" of the hierarchy of the band to "Purtle" and also his ingenious scheme of selling recovered runaway slaves, the loss of whom had been advertised in the newspapers: ". . . a breach of trust and only a civil offense" (p. 92). Lytle, in this part of the novel, is relying on various stories of the activities of the Murrell gang, chiefly those based on the accounts of Virgil A. Stewart, the man who ingratiated himself with John Murrell, joined his gang, and exposed him and most of his men.

Lytle interrupts Wilton's narrative from time to time with brief descriptions of Wilton pausing, knocking the ashes from his cigar and throwing it over the balcony into the river (descriptions reminiscent of Conrad's Marlow) and of Wilton pouring and gulping another glass of brandy while his non-drinking auditor remains strangely silent.

Finally Wilton tells his listener that "Purtle," who had come to realize that he was "a pawn in the hands of a madman," was ordered "to perfect the plans of the slave insur-
rection" (p. 95) and that his feeling of impending doom reached its lowest point "when he was ordered to take part in the murder of a gentleman from Georgia who had discovered by accident enough evidence to threaten exposure." Wilton tells Armistead that "Purtle" was greatly troubled by the killing of the Georgian, but that he met a stranger whose integrity and honor were so obvious that "Purtle" decided to "pull away from C---- and all his ventures." And as the Coosa Belle sounds its "deep-toned" whistle, "moaning and quavering, down the night air," Armistead identifies himself as Armistead McIvor, kicks the transfixed Wilton over the balcony to his death, and soon afterwards escapes on the departing riverboat (pp. 96-97). There is, of course, poetic justice in the death of Judge Wilton, the District Attorney—pawn of Tyson Lovell: Lytle, dramatist-turned-novelist, has his avenger in this episode, the virile middle-aged gentleman-farmer Armistead McIvor, whose portly frame is contrasted with his aristocratically small feet, kick his cringing weakling adversary to his death.

The next revenge killings that Lytle renders are carried out by Pleasant and by Bob Pritchard; and we return to the consciousness of Pleasant, whom we have not forgotten in following the Armistead-Wilton episode. In this portion of the novel Lytle carefully interweaves the events leading to the death of Bob Pritchard and descriptions of the lives and deaths of members of Lovell's gang of speculators—Dee Day, Brother Macon, Damon Harrison, and Sheriff Lem Botterall.
And at the end of this part of the novel he presents the dramatic confrontation Pleasant has with Lovell.

For a fancier of fine horses, as Lytle obviously is, the story of Pleasant's revenge against Sheriff Botterall is one of the most interesting episodes in the novel. The animal-like Botterall, gross in body and spirit, seems to regard his horses as people, addressing them as "sir" and "madam" when he talks to soothe them, e.g., "Heish, sir." and "What do you mean, madam?" (p. 103). And yet, even with all grossness there is something engaging in this Gargantuan minion of Lovell. We see him in his stables, with his favorite creatures, his horses; and we see him at his breakfast table when a deputy arrives to report the death of Judge Wilton in a fall from the Coosa Inn balcony. The sheriff finishes his breakfast in his own good time, calls for his horse, and accompanies the deputy to Wetumpka to investigate Wilton's death; the deputy has told him: "They say as how he might have been knocked off" (p. 108).

Lytle shifts the scene to the general mercantile store of Mr. Quintus Harrison at Buyckville, where men are waiting for the sheriff. Lytle uses the omniscient point-of-view to present expository information on the "low country below Montgomery" background of the Harrisons and their son Damon ("'that Damon,' wild in his ways and with the mad glint about his eyes that is so often found in overbred horses" p. 109); however, Lytle does not simply resort to authorial comment: he presents the Harrisons as they appear to their neighbors
of eight years, emphasizing the apartness of the "newcomers" by pointing out that during the eight-year period Quintus "had shown the slightest degree of intimacy with but one man -- Lem Botterall" (p. 110). Both the apartness of the elder Harrisons and the wildness of young Damon, established in a relatively brief space, become important facts in the rendering of the scene of the death of Damon later in the novel.

And in the presentation of the Harrison store scene, Lytle lays the groundwork for another later scene, the washing of Brother Macon's corpse, by presenting a humorous anecdote of a Campbellite preacher's technically honest sale of an almost worthless milk-cow to an avaricious farmer, who thinks he is getting a great bargain (Brother Macon, of course, is a Campbellite, or, as he prefers to be called, a Christian).

The earthy humor that Lytle presents in this corpse-washing scene is reminiscent of the humor in the famous knocking-at-the-door scene in Macbeth (II,iii). As Shakespeare's porter, by his drunken prattle, relieves the tension regicide has aroused in the playgoers, so the "speculators" and their families, with their frontier humor, relieve the tension aroused in us as we follow Pleasant and his confederates in their murders of revenge.

The Long Night is indeed a very carefully constructed novel. Not only is its humor functional, but descriptions and anecdotes present characterizations and implant in our minds knowledge with which we are able to understand more
fully subsequent parts of the action. The novel contains few, if any, loose ends. Lytle, who holds James Joyce's *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in high regard, obviously mastered early in his career some of the same methods for tying a work of fiction together that Joyce mastered.

When Botterall arrives, Harrison tells him that "the boys heard you mean to ride that stallion [the fine, yet-unbroken horse that is Botterall's most prized possession] this evening" (p. 115). Botterall answers: "Looks like . . . I won't ever git to ride that animule" and adds portentously: "Penter Wilton . . . has been dragged to death by his nag" (p. 115).

In the next scene, which takes place in the Quintus Harrison home, Lytle emphasizes the apartness of the Harrison family. As H. L. Weatherby puts it,

Damon's father, Quintus Harrison, has gambled away his family plantation in the Alabama Black Belt and has been forced to begin life again, and in straitened circumstances, in the hill country of Coosa County.

Weatherby points out the importance of this change of family fortune to the action of the novel:

His [Quintus's] wife resents the loss and the new life bitterly, primarily because she sees that Damon, now eighteen, is being drawn into the life of the hill country, "the Buyckville world," which is foreign to his blood and breeding. She is not simply a snob; and her apprehensions are ultimately justified, for it is Damon's relation with that community which costs him his life.

31 H. L. Weatherby, "The Quality of Richness: Obser-
Damon enters the Harrison diningroom, kisses his mother, takes a seat by his father and tells his father that Penter Wilton was too good a horseman to die as a result of a fall from his horse. And immediately Damon's father places a "reproving hand on Damon's arm" (p. 118) with a glance at Mrs. Harrison at the other end of the table. Damon flushes, bends over his plate; and we are in his mind as he thinks of the reckless gambling of his father that brought the family to the hill country: "This [feeling of resentment in his mother] Damon with his years could never understand. He could only feel shame at the change he felt in his mother. This led him, as he grew up in the strange country, to drift farther away in sympathy from his mother, and more into the hill country about him" (p. 123).

Then Lytle deftly shifts his panoramic summary to the consciousness of Mrs. Harrison:

Her resentment of his behavior and his sullen persistence in finding the most reckless companions rarely came to the surface as it had on this evening. The meal came quickly to an end. The mother rose and went to her room. The boy and his father sat for a while in the cool of the evening. She listened with her ear to the window. She had known her son rioted around with the Wiltons, and she knew the Wiltons were no fit company for a boy of his disposition. As she pressed against the curtain, upon her face, exposed in the pale light, was a drawn look of dread (p. 123).

A short time later, Damon, riding his horse down a road "in a fast running walk" [Lytle's knowledge of gaited

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vations on Andrew Lytle's The Long Night," Mississippi Quarterly, 23 (Fall 1970), 385.
saddle horses is apparent], encounters pretty sixteen-year-old Ruth Weaver, who is capturing a swarm of bees, and assists her. He is charmed by her but reluctant to show his feelings. He gallops on to Sheriff Botterall's place, where he breaks one of Botterall's wild mules and receives the animal as a gift from the sheriff. **Lytle shows** us Damon's wild streak, important in a later scene.

Botterall, after riding his magnificent gray stallion for the first time, learns from his deputies that Tyson Lovell has just sent word that Jeems Wilton has been found on his place, shot to death. It is now clear to Botterall, as it must be the other members of Lovell's gang of speculators, that the speculators are being systematically picked off: "That makes three Wiltons, Quintus," Botterall said, and his voice was hard" (p. 132).

At a meeting in his hill country plantation dog-run house on a September night, Lovell upbraids the speculators. He and his men discuss the possibility that the McIvors, the widow and her three sons, who have left the country, might have something to do with the three deaths. Lovell sends Botterall to investigate the killings, then instructs his loathsome overseer Dee Day (physically deformed, Day stinks) to remain at the dog-run house to look after the place while he follows Botterall to make sure he does not bungle.

**Lytle shows** Pleasant accosting Day in the house, giving him two minutes to pray (if he can pray), strangling him, then knifing him to make sure he is dead. **Pleasant sets fire**
to the house with a kerosene lamp and flees to the southwest toward "the Staircase," the shoals of the Coosa River (p. 138). As Pleasant strides along, we are in his mind; we learn that he has emptied the rain barrels near the houses to prevent the Negroes from putting out the fire, for, hoping "to throw a spell of mystery about the deaths," he intends for the details of Day's death to be destroyed: "He halfway regretted the decision to make away with the overseer just at this time, but he could not ignore the chances of Providence. He had put himself in Its hands, and he must do what It told him to do" (p. 139).

Pleasant decides not to go to his hideout, a cave near the river; he decides, instead, to join his Uncle Eli and Bob Pritchard even at the risk of meeting Botterall's deputies. And so he heads towards Botterall's place and is almost discovered by two of the deputies. He hides, however, and Providence saves him. Lytle continues to stress his protagonist's Calvinistic belief that he is God's instrument.

Lytle now re-emphasizes Pleasant's alienation from his fellow man. Frightened, Pleasant returns to the cave and finds that Eli is already there. Eli tells him that Bob has gone to look for Fox, the man who shot Cameron McIvor's head off; and he replies that Bob has upset things, for Fox has left the country. Pleasant, who is becoming more and more certain that he can accomplish more alone than he can with colleagues, sends Eli to Opelika, promising to join him in a few days. "Just one man can do what's got to be done now,"
he tells Eli (p. 143).

Lovell, looking at the ashes that were his house, knows what has happened: "For the first time in his life he felt he had met an enemy as dangerous, as subtle, as himself. The fire, coming at the moment when he took over the fight, was a direct challenge of no quarter" (p. 144). The news of the fire spreads to the posses. Botterall rides "as a man possessed" (p. 145).

Lytle now shifts the point of view to Pritchard: "Meanwhile Bob Pritchard, keeping at times to the woods and at times to the roads and paths, circled and backtracked to elude the live net that [was] closing in around him" (p. 145). Lytle uses fox-hunting imagery particularly well in this episode: "'I've been in many a fox hunt, but this is the first time I've played fox,' he said half aloud, and a twisted smile curved down his mouth" (p. 146).³²

Lytle, having prepared us for Bob Pritchard's death by stressing Pritchard's hardness, makes the death ironic by having the fierce young man take pity on Damon. Hiding in a thicket, Pritchard sees a rider on the road (Damon Harrison

³² Elizabeth Hatley Rodgers, in her "The Quest Theme in Three Novels by Andrew Lytle," Doctoral Dissertation, Emory University, 1971, p. 38, points out that: "In The Long Night references to the 'chase,' the 'fox,' and a variety of stalking and attacking maneuvers sustain the imagery of the hunt and focus relentlessly, until the time of the Civil War, upon Pleasant's actual hunt for his father's killers." The qualifying "until the time of the Civil War" does not seem justified, for Confederate soldier Pleasant McIvor effectively stalks and attacks comrades-in-arms who participated in his father's murder.
riding toward Ruth Weaver's house); he sees it is "nothing but a kid" (p. 146) and disdainfully lowers his pistol. Damon, we learn in the shift in point of view to Damon's consciousness, has seen Pritchard out of the corner of his eye; he reports the sighting of a man in the bushes "about a quarter back" (p. 147). The posse surrounds Pritchard in the woods. After Pritchard has shot two members of the posse (one of whom we soon discover is the Campbellite "Brother Macon"), he is shot to death: "Another volley shook his clothes. The hand turned loose [from the limb of a tree] and, squatting on his haunches, he dropped to his knees. He felt his legs spread apart, felt the jar as his butt struck the rock, the bump of the head, and then, for a moment, there was nothing between his wide blue eyes and the narrow blue sky but the still trees and their green branches" (p. 151).

The next scene takes place at the Weaver house: "In the front room, together on the double bed, Brother Macon and Alf Weaver, the casualties of the afternoon, lay stretched beneath the sheet" (p. 151). Obviously, Pleasant, though he is hiding outside the house, could not have observed all details of the activities connected with the "shrouding," as Robert Penn Warren calls it, nor could he have heard much of the conversation. But there is no problem of verisimilitude, for "Nephew Lawrence" is narrating the tale from what his Uncle Pleasant told him that cold February night and "from what [he] could learn from other sources" (p. 20). And it is not difficult to imagine that Lawrence, between the time he
heard the entire story from his uncle and the time he wrote it out, learned many things about the hill people of Alabama, for the scene is a study in customs.

Abner Buchanan instructs Damon Harrison to bring hot water for the washing of Brother Macon. Damon is happy to go to the kitchen, for there he will see Ruth Weaver. Damon waits, listening to the talk of the women. Old Aunt Patsy Weaver, who sits by the fire smoking her pipe, says: "Somebody'll have to show the neighbors whar the herbs and seasnen air"; and she instructs the younger women as to the best way to jug pigeons. Finally Ruth appears, and Damon nods toward the porch. She smiles and nods in assent. And then, on the porch she promises Damon to meet him outside after supper.

On Lytle's artistry in presenting frontier life in this part of the novel, Warren comments: "Bit by bit, the reader's attention is shifted from the story of the avenger . . . to the common, daylight life of the community, the life that the secret members of the gang must live with their families and friends. Again and again, we enter that common life. It is a life of affection, pathos, and humor intertwined with the secret evil but rendered with full fidelity to those normal interests and values." Lytle shows the women, inside the house, talking of their family lives: "The voices were freer. They took on the peculiar tones of intimacy, at moments almost of conspiracy, that is never heard in

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33 Warren, 136.
mixed company" (p. 159). Sal Botterall remarks of her hus­
band: "That Lem of mine, it's God's mercy he ain't broke his
neck on them wild horses. He's so tubby he can't git on'rm
from the ground" (p. 159). And when someone says she bets
the bed isn't too high for him, Sal, embarrassed, says that
Lem has "done quit studying sich." She adds: "All Lem studies
is horses. Why two weeks ago the old fool come in late and
drunk, and fust thing I knowed I heard a commotion in the run
and he was trying to stable his mare in the house. Had her
in the run."

"Don't say."
"He led her in our room and hitched her to the
bed post. Made one of the chillurn fotch an armload
of fodder."
"What'd you do, Sal?" Betsy's voice was scandal­
ized.
"Do. What could a body do? With him heavy drunk
and the crittur nervous and skeered. Sayen his crittur
was as good as anybody and by-Goden around. What was
good fer me and the chillurn warn't too good fer his
mare."
"Well, Lawd, what'll they do next." . . .
"I got in bed with mammy, but I couldn't sleep.
Who could sleep with him a-snoren drunk and the mare
a-tromping and you know what in my bedroom? He et
humble pie in the mornen," Sal said with a firm set
to her chin. "I seen to that."
"What'd you do?" Betsy asked.
"I never give him a bite to eat, no sir, not a
God's bit, ontell he cleaned and scrubbed that room
himself."
She looked at the women with pleasure at the
memory of her defiance (pp. 159- 60).

This story of frontier humor, highly compressed, is as
risible as Faulkner's "Spotted Horses." And, of course, it
is intended to have as a part of its purpose something other
than the provoking of smiles or laughter: its purpose is to
emphasize the inordinate love that Sheriff Botterall has for
horses, thereby anticipating Botterall's death scene and heightening its irony.

Next, the washing of Brother Macon's corpse takes place. Lytle renders the scene with grim humor:

"You boys ain't white-eyed on me?" Abner asked cheerfully.
"Hell, no," said Beatty. "He won't bite" (p. 163).

Warren comments: "In that world of common life, the members of the gang wait for the moment when the avenger will again emerge from the shadows. And our knowledge and suspense gives an image of, and empathy for, the growing dread of the guilty as they realize, death by death, the doom hanging over them."34 In Ransom's words:

The author does what is Shakesperian enough, he turns, and shows us the villains about their private and domestic lives, and they are not thorough villains any more. Mr. Lytle's relish of life is extreme . . . . The passages are racy, humorous, and beautiful which shows the sheriff's weakness for horses, and the household affairs of the Quintus Har­­risons and the Weavers. All the more does Hamlet's revenge therefore horrify the reader by the author's own act of sympathetic projection."35

Damon, going outside after supper to wait for Ruth, sees the "shadow of a man disappear around the porch" (p. 165). With thoughts of love in his mind, he draws back [presumably guiltily], and thereby ultimately brings about the end of his scarcely begun love affair and of his life.

A man named Simmons tells of seeing a face; Sheriff Botterall, attributing the report to a gray cat that has been

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34 Ibid., 137. 35 Ransom, 404.
chased from the room and to jangled nerves, offers Simmons a drink:

Simmons pushed the jug aside.
"I'll tell you another thing, Lem Botterall. I never said nothen about it before, because I thought maybe I was seeing things. But I saw a face, a brown face, brown as an Injun's, with white burnt ha'r jest after we come in from supper. It slid up from the ground and when it saw I was a-looken, it slid down agin."
"Better take that dram, Simmons." Beatty reached for the jug and handed it to him. "You need it."
(p. 168)

But not one of the "speculators" is suspicious enough to insist on a search for the avenger that they all fear. Of course, they have been drinking, and so both their senses and their judgment have been dulled. And Damon, whose senses have been both quickened and dulled by love, meets Ruth and walks with her into the dark woods.

In the woods Pleasant, who has been following the young couple, causes a rock to tumble into a spring. Damon, on the verge of seducing Ruth ("Will you be my girl?" "If you want me to, Damon." p. 170), remembers the shadow of the man he saw near the Weaver's porch, leaves Ruth, and finds Pleasant. With Pleasant's knife against his ribs, he hears:
"You've made enough noise, Damon Harrison, to wake the dead. ... But you'll never raise Cameron McIvor from his grave" (p. 172). And Damon replies: "If I could I wouldn't raise that son-of-a-bitching nigger stealer from his grave ..." (p. 172). It is in character for Damon, whose wildness Lytle has emphasized, to make this statement, even with Pleasant's knife against his ribs. He is a hot-blooded young man, whose tryst
has been interrupted by his enemy: "Here was something to whip to a focus the scattered turbulence of his own feeling. He had found his enemy, and on the moment he knew he should spend the full measure of his fresh strength in her [Ruth's] defense. He felt the pitiful weakness of the knife pressing his ribs. Its threat was lost in his own exquisite desire to fight" (p. 172). At this insult, based on the Lovell-prompted charge that his father was an abolitionist, Pleasant mortally wounds Damon and flees. Pleasant himself is wounded: in the brief struggle Damon seizes the knife and slashes Pleasant with it.

Ruth, who had remained at the oak, where Damon had left her on hearing the rock fall into the spring, hears the scuffling, calls Damon's name and comes to him. Damon dies in Ruth's arms. With the girl's poignant outcry "Oh, Damon, Damon. . . . I'll love you all my life" (p. 173), Lytle brings the brief scene to an end. Of course, Pleasant, having fled, cannot hear Ruth's pledge and Damon's rejoinder that he is "a dead man"; therefore, this part of the scene must be considered as coming from the imagination of the older Pleasant or of his nephew, Lawrence.

Damon's story is an initiation story that is in some ways similar to Hemingway's "The Capitol of the World": like Paco, Damon dies on the threshold of life, never really understanding the way of the world he has lived in. As Weatherby describes the irony of Damon's death, "... Damon is killed for belonging to a world which in the person of Ruth
Weaver promises him the life and happiness which his mother and father in their exile have lost."^36 Weatherby also points out "Damon's role in the book as a foil to Pleasant":

Consider for a moment Pleasant's situation at the moment he drives the knife into Damon's side; it is potentially more complicated than that of the boy he kills. He has vowed to revenge his father's murder and to restore thereby the family honor. In other words he, too, is representative of a community, that of his own kin, and in his case too the sources of life and death are closely linked. . . . We begin to see that he is in a genuinely tragic dilemma. To sustain the honor of his family, which is the principle of community, he must sacrifice that very principle and become an alien, a "loner."^37

The Pleasant-Damon relationship adds dramatic intensity to the novel, of course, but we should think of it as a modernization of the duel between Prince Hamlet and his foil, Laertes. Probably Hamlet and other revenge tragedies were in the back of Lytle's mind when he began to write The Long Night; however, the novel, as we have seen, is based on the life of an actual person, "Uncle Dink" McGregor. And, as Allen Tate points out, the tale created from the "Uncle Dink" story "follows closely the pattern of a whole saga of similar tales, and thus it has a certain familiarity, an inherent probability. . . ."^38 In other words, Lytle's first novel is based on archetypal human experience, and so are the rest of his novels, as we shall see.

Re-emphasizing the archetypal nature of his novel, Lytle has Pleasant stop "at the edge of the woods, in the

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36 Weatherby, 387. 37 Ibid., 388. 38 Tate, 3.
full light of the old moon" to examine his superficial wounds. The youth vows never again to be governed by anger, and he remembers the insulting words:

He closed his eyes and whispered, "Pa, I'll hunt them down, if I have to go to Africa." And then his lips trembled in his impassive face. "Give me a little time, pa. Give me a little time, and you'll rest easy" (p. 174).

Stealing a mare tied to a fence near the Weaver house, he quietly leads her away, then mounts and rides hard toward Sheriff Botterall's place (p. 174).

Lytle now turns our attention to the sheriff approaching his death. Botterall, still somewhat drunk, rides up to his place and decides to sleep in the barn near the animals he loves so much. Pleasant, waiting in the loft, sees the sleeping sheriff, swings down, and kicks Botterall awake.

And now Lytle switches from narration to scene:

"Who's thar?" he [Botterall] growled, half-awake. "Get up!"

Pleasant shook him by the shoulder and punched the pistol in his side.

The sheriff reached his feet and pushed back against the gear room. He opened his mouth to speak and, as his eyes came awake in the faint light, dropped in a whisper, "Old Man McIvor's ha'nt."

"No, Mr. Botterall, his flesh and blood."

The flesh about Botterall's mouth went to pieces. "But I seen'm blow your head off."

"I'm his son Pleasant, the one you had chained in the church house."

Botterall tells Pleasant to "Git away," crouches against the wild gray stallion's stall, and faints (pp. 177-78). And now Lytle reverts to narration:

The boy unlatched the horse's gate and, lifting with great difficulty the inert body of the sheriff, rolled it inside. The stallion backed away, rose on his
haunches, and drove his front feet down so near the head they kicked the straw upon the drooping mouth (p. 178).

Pleasant picks up Botterall's whip and by punishing the stallion into a frenzy of kicking and plunging and stomping murders Lovell's corpulent sheriff-speculator. Botterall, ironically, meets his death because of his weakness for horseflesh; he is killed by the creature he loves above all other creatures in his world, even above the members of his immediate family.

In the next scene Lytle shows the reconciliation between the Quintus Harrisons after they have learned of their son's death, as well as the sheriff's, and after Quintus has brought Damon's body home in a wagon and carried it into the house. "Mr. Harrison, forgive me," the wife says; and later she helps him from his chair in the dining room, where he has been sitting in a trance after ignoring the food the servant offered him. "Come, Mr. Harrison, you'd better rest yourself" (p. 180).

Then Lytle resorts to the omniscient point of view, or rather a variation of the "roving narrator" point of view (for certainly Pleasant's influence is implicit in the statement):

But in all the other cabins, dog-runs, and big houses around Buyckville the lights burned late. With the night, fear settled over the hills and people drew close together and talked in low voices. Little had been said about what was on everybody's mind until after the funeral. But at the churchyard the mourners noticed that several who had sat up with the dead were missing, and it was whispered that they had packed up and left for Texas. . . . In the broad
daylight the most reckless men looked pale and un­
certain (p. 180).

Pleasant, fleeing Buyckville "astride a long-stepping
blue mule" avoids the roads. For sixteen hours he rides; then,
in a canebrake, he hobbles the mule and rests. Just before
he falls asleep his jangled nerves cause him to cry out, "'I
will not be at their mercy'" and "the still night replied,
'From now on I'll strike alone.'" (p. 181) Pleasant still
hears a voice that tells him what to do, but now it is the
voice of "the still night," not that of Cameron McIvor. By
steadily diminishing the influence of Cameron and Providence,
Lytle foreshadows Pleasant's post-Shiloh epiphany.

In the beginning of the last chapter of Part 3, Lytle
compresses two years into a few sentences:

Pleasant sat in the mouth of the cave waiting for
twilight. Earlier than that he dared not venture
abroad. It was two years now since his first sally
into the hills above Wetumpka. In that time he had
pursued his enemies, over many states, and always he
had returned to his secret hiding-place unfollowed.
He had chosen it well. . . . Since establishing himself
in the neighborhood, he had spied on Lovell's place
until he knew all about the habits of his people, when
they rose, when they went down to the fields, when
they ate. He was at last sure of the dogs. It had
taken him two weeks to make friends with the pack
(pp. 181- 82).

During the day Pleasant watches Lovell's house (this
house, unlike the other one that Pleasant burned, is far from
the woods); then in the dark of night he walks up to the
house, as though he is a workman on the place, enters Lovell's
darkened office with his pistol raised and hears: "I've been
expecting you" (p. 185). The scene is suspenseful. There is
a stichomythic exchange, freighted with irony, in which Lovell, intuiting Pleasant's thoughts about the darkness in the room, says: "You've just come in out of the night. In here it is much darker" and "There can be no light between you and me. . . . You know that." (p. 185). And finally when Lovell asks Pleasant if he is ready and where his hounds are Pleasant realizes that Lovell takes him for one of his men and identifies himself: "I'm God's judgment, Tyson Lovell" (p. 187).

Lovell enigmatically tells Pleasant that he has been expecting him for the past two weeks: "Ever since your reappearance in the neighborhood" (p. 187). Pleasant replies: "You have two minutes to say your prayers" (p. 187). And Lovell coolly insists on having his say during his last moments: he sarcastically informs Pleasant that he, Pleasant, has failed:

"War, sir. Where have you been? Oh, yes. You've been in hiding. Quite proper. But while you have burrowed in your hole, great things have happened. The Southern States have seceded and formed a Confederacy at Montgomery. In Charleston Harbor they very foolishly fired on Fort Sumter. Lincoln called for troops. The Border States seceded, and we are now at war." He paused, looked sharply at Pleasant [the moon, which has been under a cloud, now furnishes enough light for such descriptions]. "That's why I thought you had returned for me, for surely you had intended saving me until the last. Surely you would do me that courtesy. I calculated that you knew the armies would swallow my men, the objects of your vengeance, just as they have ruined my profession, and that, if you must be thwarted of the others, you would have me at least. But even in that you have failed, for there is nothing left me in this changing world but death, the perfect death to finish a great career—the perfect instrument to give it. That instrument is you" (pp. 188-89).
Then on Pleasant's trail, the approaching bloodhounds yelp. Lovell says: "Your life for mine. You didn't think you could outsmart the old fox, did you?" (p. 189) Pleasant quickly answers: "I'm not going to kill you now, Tyson Lovell. But I'll return." He adds:

"If you are speaking true and there is a war, I'll comb every company in the army. When I come back, you'll know all the others are dead but you. It may be months, it may be years, but every day of those years, you will think of death. And now, when you wake up, you'll know your hounds have lost their man" (p. 189).

Pleasant knocks Lovell unconscious with the butt of his pistol, stoops over to check his heartbeats to make sure he has not killed him, and flees the house.

Lytle makes it clear in this dramatic ending of the pre-Civil War parts of his novel that Pleasant intends to kill Lovell but only after Lovell has suffered from frustration and fear. As Warren sums it up: "... Pleasant, to compound his vengeance, spares Lovell to let him taste the frustration of his dream and await, over years if necessary, the death stroke." 39

It could be argued that in this scene Lytle should have had Lovell refer specifically to his planned slave insurrection (based on Murrell's), which Judge Wilton described in his story to Armistead McIvor (pp. 95-96). True, the insurrection is implicit in Lovell's taunting remarks to Pleasant; but some combination of the words slave insurrection and

the rejection of the William Lowndes Yancey statement about "the man and the hour" would have emphasized the fact that war brought for Lovell overwhelming frustration in which Pleasant, insanely certain that somehow Providence has selected him to be Lovell's nemesis, could afford to leave his chief enemy.

Another time-break of about two years separates Parts 3 and 4. Part 4 (pp. 193-307) opens on April 2, 1862, at Corinth, Mississippi, just before the Battle of Shiloh, near Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, April 6 and 7. The first character to appear in this part of the novel that renders the "public" life of Pleasant McIvor is Lieutenant Roswell Ellis, the young man whose death is ultimately to bring Pleasant to his decision to cease killing the surviving speculator-murderers of his father and to desert the Confederate army and to go "into a remote section," as Ransom puts it, "to lead his sullen half-life."  

We are in Ellis's consciousness as Ellis, in the room that serves as army headquarters, sees a tall, square-built officer whom he belatedly recognizes as Albert Sidney Johnston:

In the small room, and Ellis thought that large rooms must look crowded when he [Johnston] moved about them, it was impossible to reckon with his complete character. Men, in self-defense, would seize upon some trait and pretend that Albert Johnston was thus and so. Then it came to Ellis like a revelation that he must always, at close quarters,

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40 Ransom, 404.
remain unknown. Like a carving on a mountain he was seen in right proportions only at a distance. Only in the field, on parade, wherever there was pageantry or action on a large scale, could he seem real. He was made for charges (p. 195).

Thus Lytle, student of history and biographer of Bedford Forrest, with a few deft strokes characterizes Albert Sidney Johnston and perhaps the feudal society, which, because of such factors as Davis's departmentalized system of conducting strictly defensive war operations and Davis's failure to use Forrest to keep the Confederacy intact, was inevitably to fall, just as the noble Johnston was to fall at Shiloh.41

Johnston's character is shown in the scene in which Tom Fox, perhaps the Fox who shot Cameron McIvor's head off (p. 54), is brought before Johnston because of hints that he has important information. When Fox suggests to the general that the general pay him to have Andrew Johnson, whom he describes as Tennessee's enemy, killed, Johnston is infuriated:

Johnston rose slowly to his feet, and his eyes were kindling. "Sir, the government I serve meets its enemies in open and honorable warfare." The words were concise, measured, slow. "It scorns the assassin's knife and the scoundrel who would suggest its use."

Fox batted his eyes behind the gold-rimmed spectacles, curved around the chair, and, before the clerks could look up from their papers, was gone from the room (p. 197).

Is this enigmatic character the speculator Fox? If he is, Lytle's purpose in introducing him in this scene is not clear,

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for he leaves before Pleasant is brought in to answer Johnston's questions about an attack on an outpost in which Pleasant was the only survivor (p. 198). Actually, the sergeant and four other men were speculators, and Pleasant was the attacker (verisimilitude is not in question here, of course, for in the Civil War men from a community formed units and served together). Perhaps, if this is the speculator Fox, the irony of his just missing a confrontation with Pleasant is calculated to add to the suspense in the back of the reader's mind because of Pleasant's moratorium on Lovell's death. Whatever the explanation, Lovell never appears in the novel after Pleasant strikes him senseless, and Fox (whether the speculator Fox or another man bearing the same name) does not appear again.

Lytle now renders a scene in which Pleasant lies to Johnston about the death of the five men. Pleasant convinces the general that he escaped by running a zigzag course and shooting at intervals to make the Yankees think they were facing a number of men. Johnston compliments Pleasant on his intelligent action and dismisses him. This ironical confrontation of "public" and "private" war in the persons of Johnston and Pleasant foreshadows Pleasant's great change after Shiloh and, more immediately, leads us into Pleasant's thoughts as he relives the killing of the five men.

In the street, Pleasant first reflects on what a fine man Johnston is and on how he regrets that he has to deceive such an honorable man. Then he calls up in his mind's eye
the killing of the five. He remembers how he ingratiated himself with them over a period of two months and how, at last, he lost all his money in a card game one evening so that the sergeant, Beatty, would send him to take the sentry's place. He recalls how, going into the forest, which was becoming dark, he felt at ease (we note that at this point Pleasant still looks on the forest as a friendly environment) and smiled when he thought of the sentries who strained their eyes by nervously peering about them. And then he recreates in his mind his return to the campfire, his holding his Navy Six on Beatty and the men, his shooting Beatty as he charged, his giving the other four a minute to prepare for death, shooting them, and arranging the bodies to corroborate the story he would tell (pp. 198-202). Pleasant seems to enjoy his recent exploit as he recreates it in his mind. It is obvious that he is pleased by his success in planning and carrying out this operation in his private war. The public war presents him the opportunities for revenge that he anticipated when Lovell informed him that Fort Sumter had been fired on, but at the same time it brings him a confusion of purpose and a surfeit of killing that ultimately cause him to abandon his role as nemesis to his father's surviving murderers.

Lytle links Pleasant's career as a Confederate soldier to his pre-war career as Providence-directed avenger: Pleasant continues to hunt down and kill his father's murderers in the Confederate army. But his life as a soldier is also linked to his life as a civilian by other means: he encount-
ers his cousin Armistead (p. 207), whom we last saw in the novel as he took passage on the Coosa Belle after kicking Judge Wilton to his death; and he tells Armistead, now a colonel in the Confederate army, about his hiding place in the hills of Winston and about his successes in tracking and killing his father's murderers, including a detailed account of the killing of a man named Osborn, who had fled to Louisiana, where he seduced a spinster and caused her to help him rob and wound her father. Armistead advises him to forego the acts of vengeance for the time: "You must forget this thing until the war is over and our country is free. It's every Southern man's duty to put away his private life now" (p. 224).

Lytle also links Pleasant's civilian and military careers as avenger by the story that Colonel Rob tells Colonel McIvor and the other officers at McIvor's barbecue, the story of the matching of the Louisiana champion, Wagner, and the Kentucky champion, Grey Eagle, on the Oakland course of the Louisville Jockey Club (pp. 228-35). Not only does the story of the horse race, which took place in 1839, link the narrator Rob's memories of Kentucky to the war-torn South of 1862, but it also reminds us, through its imagery and tone (Lytle's love of fine horses is again apparent in descriptions, e.g. Grey Eagle: "a magnificent gray nearly sixteen hands high, with the step of a gazelle and the strength of Bucephalus" [p. 231]), of the trampling to death of Sheriff Botterall by his wild gray stallion, frenzied by Pleasant's wielding of the whip (p. 178). And, of course, Armistead
McIvor's comment on Rob, after Rob has finished his story and left, links the pre-war South and the wartime South by telling how the patriotic Southerner Rob (a lover of fine horses) reacted at the advent of war:

"I was with him when Abe Lincoln's proclamation reached Kentucky asking for troops to subdue her sister states. He didn't do anything but walk out to his stables and order every animal, from brood mare to colt, got ready for sale. . . . He cleaned out his stables and equipped a battalion from the sales" (pp. 235-36).

And the horses sold by Rob, as well as the race-horses Wagner and Grey Eagle, are in the backs of our minds when we read about General Johnston on his famous charger, Fire-Eater, in the Battle of Shiloh (e.g., "Roswell saw the spurs dig into the flanks of the great boy, Fire-Eater . . ." p. 292 and "Harris pushed his horse against Fire-Eater and, putting his arm around the general's neck, caught him by the coat collar and righted him in the saddle" p. 297).

According to Robert Penn Warren, "In the sequence leading up to the Battle of Shiloh, we lose Pleasant, the focus of interest shifts, becomes generalized and diffuse, and when we rediscover him in the battle, something has been lost and never, perhaps, completely recovered." And then Warren adds: "No, that is not true. It is recovered, but only at the last minute, in the splendid conclusion." Part 5 is the "splendid conclusion," of course, and there is no question but that throughout the conclusion the central intelligence

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42 Warren, 139.
is Pleasant McIvor's. However, when we examine Part 4, the Battle of Shiloh section, we find that Pleasant appears in nine of the fourteen chapters (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 14). In these chapters the central intelligence is Pleasant's, even though many other characters appear, e.g., Generals Albert Sidney Johnston and P. T. Beauregard, Lieutenant Roswell Ellis, and numerous enlisted men, some of whom Lytle not only names but also develops as characters. With the fortunes of these Confederate officers and enlisted men, Pleasant's fortune is inevitably involved; indeed it is most intimately involved with the fortune of one—Roswell Ellis. And in the chapters in which Pleasant never appears (5, 7, 10, 12, and 13) the reader never forgets—largely because of the intercalation of "no-Pleasant" chapters with "Pleasant" chapters—that the panoramic narration and scenes have as their primary purpose the representation of the great battle that is so drastically to alter Pleasant's life.43

In his rendering of the Battle of Shiloh in The Long Night, Lytle does something that Tolstoy does in War and Peace: he presents the thoughts, the speech, and actions of both generals and common soldiers. Like Tolstoy, he presents a rich picture of war, a picture, one might argue, much richer than those presented by Stendhal in The Red and the Black, by Thackeray in Vanity Fair, or by Crane in The Red Badge of Courage. Ransom observes, we recall, that The Long

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43 According to this reading, Pleasant is the "roving narrator," to use the Tate-Gordon term.
Night "is related to The Red Badge of Courage . . . as an orchestra is related to a fiddle." 44

Ransom's analogy, it would appear, is a good one. The Red Badge of Courage, of course, is not based upon any identified or identifiable battle or battles. Though its central intelligence is Henry Fleming, an enlisted man in the Union Army as Pleasant McIvor is an enlisted man in the Confederate Army, it does not take us into the minds of other characters, as The Long Night does. For example, in the Battle of Shiloh section of The Long Night we find this description of Johnston as he views some of his troops just after the battle has begun:

This resolute step, this eagerness to close with the enemy, how different from the straggling march and the confusion there [in the skirmish], thought Johnston as the troops swung by. And then his mind began to reach forward, decipher the mystery of the deep woods. What is beyond? What is beyond? he whispered. And his eyes remained open, but his sight was closed; and through his ears came sound to feed that other sight, the cold mind which must see without being able to see: the stealth of forty thousand men moving in ambush, the three lines. . . . The enemy's forces might be larger, but Grant could present no greater front between the creeks than he could . . . . He would hammer him! (p. 284)

And later in the battle, Johnston's character is further revealed by words he speaks to a subordinate, Governor Harris of Tennessee. A Tennessee regiment, shaking with fear, is falling back from the line. The influence of Henry James's comments on "fine sensibilities" is obvious in the

44 Ransom, 404.
passage:

"Governor . . . go to that regiment you have just put in line . . . and encourage it."

The words were courteous, saying that the regiment had behaved with caprice, purposely and obstinately, to draw their governor to them.

Harris whirled around and galloped away. Soon he was seen among his people delivering a sharp harangue. Then he dismounted and, with pistol in hand, brought the uncertain regiment again to its line (p. 295).

Lytle's presentation of the thoughts and words and action of Johnston is obviously based on careful study of biographies of Johnston and descriptions of the Battle of Shiloh. Any reader of The Long Night who has toured Shiloh National Military Park recognizes not only names of streams (e.g., Owl Creek, Lick Creek, the Tennessee) and places (e.g., Shiloh Church, Pittsburg Landing, and Corinth) and of generals and aides (e.g., Beauregard, Hardee, Bragg, Polk, Breckenridge, and Harris), but also the terrain itself, the fields and the ravine-cut forest. Lytle, we recall, believes that "... in fiction [as opposed to myth or fairy tale] the action must be put in a recognizable place. . . ." 45

Lytle develops the battle in breadth by showing its panoramic sweep and in depth by showing the feelings of selected participants, from generals to privates. The most important feelings portrayed, of course, are those of Pleasant McIvor. In Chapter 11 Pleasant leaves his young Uncle Eli dying beside a log and, with "the woods ringing with that savage hog-calling [the rebel yell]," runs toward the Yankee

45 Lytle, The Hero with the Private Parts, p. 189.
if he could just reach that blue line... he prayed to reach it... he'd be willing to die if he could just get that far and beat their brains out" (p. 281). Pleasant here experiences a new kind of irresistible impulse to exact vengeance, an impulse with a cause that is at once private and public.

The climax of the battle for Pleasant, and the climax of the novel, occurs in Chapter 14 (pp. 298-307). Pleasant remembers Eli and realizes that he will never see him again. He sees his comrades suffering from the effects of the battle: Long Boy Taliaferro, fierce and unnatural-looking, marked with blood, powder, and sweat, and little Arthur Clay, with a dark line of spit and powder running down from the corner of his mouth like a tusk, "making his boyish face leer in a curiously evil way" (p. 299). Pleasant sees killing as animalistic and evil.

In a charge, just after he has fired at a Yankee and exultantly watched him fall, Pleasant, reloading his rifle, is incapacitated by a wound in the hand (p. 302). The wound, of course, is symbolic of the change that is taking place in Pleasant: Pleasant, who by his hand has killed so many of his father's murderers and the nameless Northern soldier, now flees in panic to escape the bullets and the shells of the enemy. In his flight (which, though it is reminiscent of Henry Fleming's flight in The Red Badge of Courage, does not occur as a result of cowardice in battle), Pleasant sees and reflects on the carnage of war. He anticipates the coming of
the night, the night which in the past was the time in which he felt most at ease, in which he operated most effectively as a nemesis to his father's killers, and he is distressed: "It wouldn't be long till sundown, and he would be left alone in the darkness. He could not bear the thought. To be lost in the night . . . if only he could find his comrades" (p. 304). And so we see a new Pleasant, discomfited by thoughts of darkness, longing for human companionship. This Pleasant stumbles on, sees a pond (Bloody Pond, to which, during the Battle of Shiloh, soldiers from both sides came to drink and to wash their wounds): "He found an opening and got down to drink, but the water was bloody. 'How can you drink it?' he asked of the man next him, but the man made him no answer." And Pleasant stands up, "faint with nausea," and walks away (p. 305).

Pleasant walks up to a group of Federal soldiers, has coffee with them, and sleeps. An Ohio major awakens him before day breaks and warns him to leave to avoid being captured. He shakes hands with his enemy, slips away, finding that his "old habits were returning, and [that] he retired easily from cover to cover" (p. 306). However, he realizes that his life has changed: His old life with its clear sure purpose lay somewhere lost in this confusion, and he would never reach it again" (p. 306). As he steps down the road to Corinth, he thinks: "Is there no end to anything? Can the day's victory be tomorrow's defeat? Can friends die for nothing, and all yesterday's blood and sweat be wasted?" And
Pleasant's epiphany—to use Joyce's term—is recapitulated in the final paragraph of Part 4:

As if for answer he raised his eyes to the forest for comfort. But there was no comfort there. The heavy-topped trees, the black-jacks, the stubborn thickets stood up from the ground glistening with the early morning dew, but darkly glistening, close, hostile about the narrow road that stretched its thin way between Pittsburg Landing and Corinth (p. 307).

At the beginning of Part 5 (pp. 311-31), the final section of the novel, Pleasant is on the train traveling from Chattanooga to Murfreesboro. It is October, but the weather is hot. Pleasant looks out the window at the corn cut and stacked, at the "snake fences outlining row after row of canelike stalks" (p. 312) and remembers events of the past months: the "fighting for water-holes at Perryville, and afterwards the army's withdrawal through the mountains to Knoxville, to Chattanooga, then to Murfreesboro, and halting there" (p. 313). And he reflects:

But how much had happened, how the world had changed since the spring in Shiloh woods, when he had walked away with a bullet in his hand. Brother William was wounded at Perryville. . . . It was . . . gathering time for those who were left to gather. And he was on his way back to the army and Brother William was on his way to the ground (p. 313).

Through the window he sees "an old man walking down a fence row, kicking up the dry dust from the brown stubble," which settles "like the red dust around the clods that fell from the shovels in the soldiers' burying-ground at Chattanooga" (p. 314). And the Proustian madeleine of old man kicking up dust causes Pleasant to relive the witnessing of his physically slight mother's exhibition of strength of
will in supervising the exhuming of the bodies of William and Levi (Levi had died from getting up too soon after having the measles in order to nurse William, dying of gangrene). He recalls how his mother, standing on the other side of the wagon from him, with "the long rough box, bulking large between them" looked at him with bitterness for an instant; then

... in a moment her sight was clear, and it said, These I have lost and it is a loss that you cannot understand, but you are left, and I could better lose them both than you, for my oldest [William] and my youngest [Levi] have wasted themselves on foolish adventures. You will never turn away and spend yourself on things that do not matter (p. 315).

In this passage, Jamesian in its subtlety, Lytle takes us back to the first part of the novel (pp. 32-33 and 64), where we learned that Pleasant resembled his father Cameron in build and temperament and that his brother William resembled his mother. And we recall that Susanne's people were French aristocrats of the Vine and Olive Colony (p. 28).

Susanne McIvor, then, although she does not know that Pleasant has almost completed the exacting of vengeance upon the band of speculator-murderers, intuits it. And she, the proud descendent of hot-blooded French aristocrats, brings Pleasant back to his purpose with her look:

Not until that moment, with her dead between them, did Pleasant realize what he had done. ... The knowledge that he had turned aside, that he was failing, came like a blow too great for man to stand. Not since Shiloh woods had he attended to what he had to do. For months he had held his hand, had let his father lie uneasy in his grave (pp. 315-16).

Pleasant sits on the bumpy train, thinking of the bravery of his mother, of the deaths of comrades and of
Colonel Armistead McIvor (who, wounded at Shiloh in both legs and dying, had two slaves carry him into battle). He thinks of his friend Roswell Ellis, who, at his own request, obtained a transfer from staff duty to active duty in the ranks; and again he realizes that at Shiloh a change of some sort came over him:

Before Shiloh there had been one thing in his heart: love for his father, hatred for those who had come slipping through the night to trap him. . . . he had to admit it, the old hatred had gone a little stale. . . . This was why his father had not come to him during all these months (p. 319).

Lytle continues to emphasize Pleasant's change. Shortly after Pleasant arrives in Murfreesboro, to be met by Roswell, he returns to field duty as a scout, accompanied by Roswell. He leaves Roswell to track down one of the speculator-soldiers, a man named Awsumb. Unobserved by Awsumb, who is on picket, he aims his pistol at Awsumb but is unable to squeeze the trigger:

As he stood behind the tree, shivering with nausea and the cold, he accepted the truth: it was not in him any longer to kill in cold blood (p. 327).

He thinks of Roswell and feels "the first peace he had felt since that time he stood before his brothers' grave" (p. 328).

Reaching the pike, Pleasant turns toward Murfreesboro, rides to headquarters to report on the concentration of Federal troops at La Vergne, which he had observed before he had stalked Awsumb only to let him live. He discovers that his thirty-six hour delay in reporting the concentration necessitated the sending out of his brigade to test the enemy's
purpose and that in the fighting Roswell was mortally wounded.

He tortures himself:

If only he had come in, the brigade wouldn't have
gone out. Or if he had talked with Roswell, told
him. But Roswell would have said with Cousin Ar­
mistead that there is no time for private vengeance
[see p. 224]. Now there is no time . . . for ven­
geance. Vengeance—the dark way. Into Shiloh woods
he had gone, had carried it there (p. 330).

And now Pleasant realizes that he had failed both his father's
ghost and his friend Roswell:

Twice he had loved--once the dead, once the living,
and each by each was consumed and he was doomed
(p. 330).

He looks southward:

Far to the south the hills of Winston rose close and
stubborn out of the lowlands. . . . There he would
go. There, in the secret coves, far away from the
world and vengeance, a deserter might hide forever . . .
(p. 331).

According to H. L. Weatherby, Pleasant McIvor experi­
ences some sort of repentance at the end of The Long Night. 46
This view is correct, it would seem, only if one regards
Pleasant's revulsion toward the suffering and death at Shiloh
as repentance. The wounding and killing of so many men in
such a short time (two days) has a traumatic effect on him.
When later his actions in attempting to kill Awsumb bring
about the death of his friend Roswell Ellis, he knows that he
has had enough killing of men. There is, as Warren points
out, only one thing for Pleasant to do: go to the hills of
Winston. 47 There he obviously salvages something from his

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46 Weatherby, 389. 47 Warren, 139.
life, with Roswell Ellis's girlfriend as his wife and the mother of his children.

It should be noted that the ending of The Long Night differs greatly from the ending of the story of "Uncle Dink" McGregor. Frank L. Owsley, Jr., who points out that the "Uncle Dink" story, although supposedly true, is an as-I-re-member-it story, says:

According to my father's version, "Uncle Dink" came to my grandfather [Frank L. Owsley's father, not Frank L. Owsley, as Warren has it], told him the story, and asked him to hunt down the last man. At that time "Dink" was an old man. . . . Because of his age "Dink" wanted Mr. Lawrence to finish the job. My grandfather, being a very kind and usually peaceful man, refused. However, soon after that, he moved to the town where the man lived. The last man was named Cox, and was supposed to have been the man who actually fired the shot. In any case, Cox lived in the center of a cotton field, with no trees or bushes closeby, and never showed a light in his house after dark. He also kept the shutters closed at all times. . . . he died a few months after my grandfather moved into the community. My father . . . thought that old man Cox died of fear. F. L. Owsley, Jr., adds that his father always thought that Lytle would have had a better story if he had followed the family version of the story, i.e., with the last of the speculators, Cox (Fox), dying of fear in a lone house in the middle of a field.49

But where in this ending, this presumably true-to-fact ending, would the element of tragedy lie? Pleasant is compelled to make a decision: after witnessing the carnage at

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49 Ibid.
Shiloh and the deaths of his comrades, and after helping bring about the death of Roswell Ellis in the public war by his abortive attempt to carry on his private war, Pleasant decides to kill no more speculators. He realizes, of course, that in giving up his quest for vengeance, he is being untrue to his father's memory (at this point in the novel, Cameron's ghost seems no longer to exist for Pleasant). And so he is a man without a purpose: he can no longer carry on his private war, and he can no longer carry on the public war. He is not so much a man who has failed in a search for identity; rather he is a man who has lost his identity. For at the end of the novel he is, in his tortured mind, a McIvor in name only; and, of course, he is a deserter of the Southern cause. A careful following of the "Uncle Dink" story would have removed the element of tragedy which gives the novel the flavor of Elizabethan drama.

In a letter to Jessica Mannon, an editor at Bobbs-Merrill, Lytle says:

The novel is finished. I found that the original plot, the life-plot, as is so often the case, cannot be held to too literally. The man I developed has too much sensitivity not to be affected by the tremendous drama of a war, which became the world. . . . He had already been made aware of the change in his nature by his mother [in the confrontation with his mother at the Chattanooga cemetery]. . . . there is nothing left him but the long night, the retreat from the world and vengeance. His realization of his situation makes him a tragic figure.  

50 Lytle, in Noel Polk's "Andrew Nelson Lytle: A Bibliography of His Writings," Mississippi Quarterly, 23 (Fall 1970), 446.
Pleasant McIvor has to experience two wars, one private, the other public, to realize the tragedy of his life. Without Shiloh and the Civil War, and without Roswell Ellis, the novel would fail to be Lytle's "true lie"; and so the two parts are essential parts of one action, just as the war and peace sections of Tolstoy's great novel make up one action and not, as Lubbock claims, two novels.

The controlling image of The Long Night is the quest for vengeance; to keep this image in the minds of his readers, Lytle employs, in a combination of panoramic summary and scenes, the imagery of the hunt. For his controlling image in his next novel, At the Moon's Inn, Lytle, historian as well as novelist, uses a special kind of alchemy--alchemy in men.
CHAPTER III

ALCHEMY IN MEN

In 1856 William Gilmore Simms published as preface to his *Vasconselos: A Romance of the New World* a letter addressed to Dr. John W. Francis of New York. Expressing the hope that his friend would write a novel based on Hernando de Soto's exploration of Florida, Simms wrote:

As a drama, embodying a most curious and interesting progress, during a singularly-attractive period in our ante-bellum history, the invasion (not the conquest--very far from it!) of the empire of the Floridian (Apalachian) savage, by Hernan de Soto, affords a vast and fertile region for him who works in the provinces of art in fiction. It is, in brief, one of the most magnificent of episodes in the history of progress and discovery in the western world . . . .

Sometime in the late 1930's Andrew Lytle, who may never have read the introduction to *Vasconselos*, began to write his second novel, *At the Moon's Inn*. But Lytle obviously developed the donnée quite differently from the way in which Simms himself would have developed it. Simms's *Vasconselos* is a melodramatic novel about the Portuguese captain who served under De Soto. It has an Olivia straight out of *Twelfth Night* (Vasconselos's page, Juan ["Olivia"]).

Lytle does not attempt in *At the Moon's Inn* to represent the dialogue of the Conquistadors in sixteenth-century English, as Simms does in many parts of *Vasconselos*. And he uses Spanish phrases and terms sparingly. In "Caroline Gordon and the Historic Image," Lytle says:

It must be emphasized that there can be no absolute sense of contemporaneity in the presentation of any age, or segment of an age, anterior to the time in which the author writes. Indeed, if this were so, the principal value of using historic material would be lost: the value being just this illusion of the contemporary within a context of historic perspective, so that while an act takes place it is rendered in terms larger than those of its immediate appearance. This is, I believe, the furthest extension, and it is just that, of the aesthetic distance taken by writers concerned primarily with the formal, objective view [Italics mine].

According to Lytle, a critic making a study of a novel written by an artist who subscribes to the above aesthetic cannot move directly from source to finished work. The best the critic can hope for is that he recreate as accurately as possible the milieu, that he somehow reestablish in his analysis the feeling of time, and, with that feeling reestablished, explicate the novelist's created work.³

Lytle, by his own account, read history for two years before he began to write *At the Moon's Inn*. He did some of his research in various libraries in California.⁴ As Noel

Polk points out, "In the Lytle archive at Vanderbilt there are nearly 300 pages of miscellaneous notes, plot outlines, bibliographical and historical data reflecting Mr. Lytle's research into the historical period he is writing about. . . ." Although it would be impracticable, if not impossible, for any critic to duplicate Lytle's research for At the Moon's Inn (and for the novella Alchemy, which was extracted from it), the critic can get a feeling for the time of the conquistadors by reading histories and accounts of Pizarro's conquest of Peru and De Soto's explorations in Florida.

Lytle obviously relied on Prescott's History of the Conquest of Peru in shaping the narrative of the novella Alchemy, which should be read as a prologue to At the Moon's Inn. But he did not forget to render the action of the novella "in terms larger than those of its immediate appearance." According to M. E. Bradford, "The title of 'Alchemy' is both a description of an action and an allusion to the frame of reference within which that action unfolds its

Polk, p. 449.


According to Lytle, Alchemy, originally a part of At the Moon's Inn, should be incorporated in any reprinting of the novel as prologue (Conversation, Monteagle, Tenn., Aug. 2, 1971).
plot." The first-person narrator, one of Pizarro's soldiers, gives an account of the Peruvian conquest many years after it took place (1532); but ironically, like the dual-vision narrator of Lytle's short story "Mr. MacGregor," the unnamed monologist of Alchemy fails to understand fully the action of his story, though he seems to realize that the devil's will, not God's, has prevailed. After reporting that De Soto commented on the winning of a "kingdom of riches such as we had never imagined" through slaughter of the Indians and capture of the Inca, Atahualpa, with the whispered words, "God's miracle," the narrator says:

"Amen," I murmured or thought I spoke. Now I am unsure. Now that de Soto, Pizarro, all who took part in that conquest are dead, either dead or scattered, or like me fit only to speak of the things they did when their strength was in them, now the word sounds across the past like the sign of an alchemical charm. That day a kind of Alchemy was done. So it seems to me, now that I can better see the end. Most men are hasting to meet some disaster. Yet whatever it was which on that day of triumph filled the eyes of those two captains [Pizarro and De Soto], it seemed to them a thing of radiance, in white robes and most beautiful. But beside them there was in attendance a companion clad in very different guise. As they reached out their hands to clasp their desires, that other--the dark thing--stepped forward to receive them (pp. 163-64).

The narrator begins his story by telling of the landing of the one-hundred-and-sixty-seven man army at Tumbez, after Hernando de Soto arrived with his men of Nicaragua. He describes the disappointment the Spaniards felt when, 

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8 M. E. Bradford, "Toward a Dark Shape: Lytle's 'Alchemy' and the Conquest of the new World," Mississippi Quarterly, 23 (Fall 1970), 408.
after a brisk fight with the Indians, they searched the coastal town for treasure and found none. And he tells how De Soto, by a question as to how the carefully fitted rocks of the abandoned fortress reached the sandy shore, made clear the point that a highly civilized race of Indians must live in the mountains.

The Spaniards at the time of the Conquest of Peru were the best soldiers in the world. They had recently conquered the Moors at Granada, and they were yet to be defeated by the British and the weather in the English Channel. Lytle makes clear throughout Alchemy that the Spaniards were preeminently men of will. Regarding the Peruvian conquest as Lytle depicts it in his novella, Bradford comments:

Add to the figure of the crypto/chemist the metaphorlic associations of the westward and upward Peruvian journey (of conquest, enrichment, and death) toward what was foreseen by the journey makers themselves as a demiparadise, and the meaning of [the] title is completed, the image at the heart of Lytle's novella [the "controlling image"] identified: a searching out and up, by sacrilegious means, toward the condition of a self-anointed godhead. Discovery and possession of the Indies are, therefore, in this narrative an alchemy in men.

Hernando de Soto, of course, is the epitome of the man of will. Lytle so depicts him in Alchemy and in At the Moon's Inn, altering the statement in his source to suit his artistic purposes. Prescott tells us how Atahualpa, after he finally appeared to the Spaniards at Caxamalca, haughtily kept the white men waiting by telling them that they could

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Bradford, "Toward a Dark Shape . . . ," 408.
occupy public buildings on the square until he had completed his fort and how De Soto reacted:

Soto, one of the party present at this interview, as before noticed, was the best mounted and perhaps the best rider in Pizarro's troop. Observing that Atahualpa looked with some interest on the fiery steed that stood before him, champing the bit and pawing the ground with the natural impatience of a war-horse, the Spaniard gave him the rein, and, striking his iron heel into his side, dashed furiously over the plain; then, wheeling him round and round, displayed all the beautiful movements of his charger, and his own excellent horsemanship. Suddenly checking him in full career, he brought the animal almost on his haunches, so near the person of the Inca, that some of the foam that flecked his horse's sides was thrown on the royal garments. But Atahualpa maintained the same marble composure as before. . . .

Lytle's narrator compresses the same episode as follows:

I was dismayed, for I knew de Soto would not leave thus chided. His barbary was wiry, intelligent, and trained. In the space before the baths, he made him to prance, curvet, and charge, and at the end drove him straight upon Atahualpa. At a full gallop he brought him to a stop so close to the Inca the horse's breath blew in the Indian's face. Several of his subjects drew back in terror, but Atahualpa made no move nor did a wrinkle come in his grave, handsome face. Only this: as de Soto bowed, he turned his head and spat into the hands of one of his wives (p. 153).

Bradford, after pointing out Lytle's use of geography as symbol and inverted symbol of spirituality, contrasts the Indians and the Spaniards: "The Incas [Indians] are the antitypes of their European adversaries. As Renaissance men, the Spaniards are all will. The Indians are all submission. The proper attitude of the truly human being is, of course,

10 Prescott, p. 931.
somewhere in between."  

The unnamed soldier-narrator of *Alchemy*, in his mellowed middle years or old age, seems to be an exception to the statement that "the Spaniards are all will," for this Spaniard notes that, after the victory at Caxamalca, a "dark thing" stepped forward to claim De Soto and Pizarro (pp. 163-64). And he describes himself as he was during the action of the novella (i.e., De Soto's display of horsemanship before Atahualpa) in these terms: "I was dismayed, for I knew de Soto would not leave thus chided" (p. 153). This old soldier-narrator, then, is a man of feeling, a man of sensibility. He is a foil against whom Lytle displays his man of will—Hernando de Soto.

The old soldier-narrator's counterpart in the novel *At the Moon's Inn* is Tovar (Nuño de Tobár). Tovar, unlike Lytle's narrator of the Peruvian conquest in *Alchemy*, is not a first-person narrator in *At the Moon's Inn*. He is, however, the central intelligence in the longer, more complex work, which is written from the "roving narrator" point-of-view. Referring to "the narrators in both works" (and, in a sense, Tovar is a narrator), Bradford points out that the old soldier-narrator of *Alchemy* and Tovar "act Ishmael to the Ahab of their great captain"; and he points out the link that the Admiral of the Ocean Seas, Don Christopher Columbus, forms

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11 Bradford, "Toward a Dark Shape . . . .," 411-12.
between the novella and the novel.\footnote{Ibid., 409.}

In *Alchemy* the narrator and a sentinel discuss Columbus in a brief scene that takes place on the way to Caxamalca (and ultimately to Cuzco):

"The Paradise of Pleasure," whispered a voice,
The voice was so low I thought I had been deceived,
There was no one except the sentinel, "You spoke?" I asked,
"The great admiral . . ."
"Yes?"
"When he saw these mountains from the other ocean,
I heard him say--I was on watch and it was the turn-
ing of the tides--he said, Somewhere in those peaks
must lie the Paradise of Pleasure" (p. 124).

And in the first part of *At the Moon's Inn* the Marshal of Seville, speaking at the valedictory banquet of De Soto and his lieutenants, just before their departure for Florida, describes the fall of Granada, which he helped bring about, and adds:

"Granada fell in 1492. Later that year your Columbus made such a hole in Christendom I fear me it can never be plugged. I had seen the adventurer about Their Majesties' pavilions earlier in the siege. I had thought him an alchemist. I knew he was no soldier. And, for truth, he did turn out a kind of al-
chemy." The marshal hesitated. "Yes, a kind of al-
chemy, for too much gold pours into this frugal land.
Remember this, young captains. On that blessed day when Doña Ysabel rode in triumph into Granada, she held in her hands the sceptre of Castile. It was a slight thing of silver gilt. Yet it brought low the
Infidels who had usurped our kingdoms for seven hun-
dred years."

He thrust the cup before him. The lights made it
glow. With all eyes upon it, he thundered, "Señores,
I give you poverty, that poverty of the Cross which
is Spain!" (p. 47)

As Bradford points out, Columbus is the villain of the Mar-
shal's speech: "In the fellowship of 'new' men, empire-builders and victims of a secularized eschatology (including priests, noblemen, and his own grandson), this Quixote with a sting is alone. But the remainder of this novel proves him out as wiser than his sullen auditors. Later in *At the Moon's Inn*, in the book's climactic scene, the Adelantado of Florida, Civil and Military Governor of Cuba, and Vice-Regent of God in North America (above Mexico), commits himself to the old enemy whom all alchemists serve, to him who from the first offered full power over and an immunity to the law of Nature."  

Bradford's statement of the controlling image of Alchemy as searching . . . by sacrilegious means, toward the condition of a self-anointed godhead," then, is a valid statement of the controlling image of *At the Moon's Inn*. According to Lytle, the controlling, or central, image, found in "novels which are dramatic, which render the direct impression of life," may also be a "dominating symbol, placed at the post of observation and at the center of the author's seeing eye." The sacrilegious quest, the controlling image (some critics might prefer the terms "central theme" or "controlling metaphor") of both *Alchemy* and *At the Moon's Inn*, is not identical with the "dominating symbol," of both works, the cross, depicted in forms both ecclesiastical and military; rather it is augmented in the reader's mind by the

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"dominating symbol" as it recurs in the dramatic parts of the action.

Lytle emphasizes his belief that a central or controlling image can exist only in a dramatic novel:

Now you will not find a controlling image in the memoir type of novel; nor in the narrative which reports the complication. . . . There is, to paraphrase Lubbock . . . , always someone standing between [the reader] and the action, talking about it. He may talk very well and hold you to the end, as does Thackeray; but it is a lesser art, because a report is never so dramatic as the action itself. Mark Twain's Joan of Arc is a specimen of the failure of this kind of novel. There is not a scene in it; not even the trial or the burning. Everything, even the battles, is second hand.  

Lytle succeeds in making both Alchemy and At the Moon's Inn dramatic works. An Ishmael-Ahab relationship exists between the old soldier-narrator-protagonist of Alchemy and his immediate commander, De Soto (and, by extension, between him and Pizarro); and the same relationship exists between Tovar, the protagonist of At the Moon's Inn, and his commander, De Soto.  

Lytle has stated that he intended to portray in At the Moon's Inn "the man of will" (De Soto) and "the man of sensibility" (Tovar).  

The eight-section novel of the attempted conquest of Florida by De Soto and his conquistadors begins in Spain with a scene in an inn at San Lúcar. Tovar, a youth, but a vet-

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15 Ibid.  
16 Bradford, "Toward a Dark Shape . . . ," 409.  
eran blooded by an Indian arrow at Cuzco, and Silvestre, a boy who wishes to serve under De Soto, drink a toast to their part in the forthcoming conquest of Florida and Tovar relates the story of his enlistment for the Peruvian Conquest, supplying Silvestre and the reader information about De Soto's service under Pedrarias and marriage to the Lady Ysabella de Bobadilla, daughter to Pedrarias. Tovar cuts short the conversation: "But come, lad, we must be off to Seville. He [De Soto] gives a feast to the great who have helped him to the conquest of Florida. We have a hard ride if we would reach there in time. There could be no better time to present you" (p. 20).

With Tovar established as the central intelligence, Lytle, in the next scene shifts to the consciousness of Doña Ysabel. Apprehensive because of the imminent departure of her husband for the New World, she kneels in the oratory to pray and relives De Soto's courtship of her and their betrothal when she was sixteen and re-endures in her mind her seventeen years of waiting to become a bride while De Soto "crossed the seas to lay the new world's treasure at her feet" (p. 38).

At the banquet the Marshal of Seville warns against "a kind of alchemy," as discussed above, offers a toast to "that poverty of the Cross which is Spain," and takes his seat without realizing that he has drunk alone (p. 47). Then De Soto arises and reads the royal proclamation which grants him power and authority "to conquer, pacify, and populate the lands that there are from the Province of the River of Palms"
to Florida, the government of which was bestowed on Pánfilo de Narváez . . . ," and which confers on him the title of Adelantado (Governor).

We are again in Tovar's mind:

He [De Soto] had made his titles clear. There could be no doubt, no reproach against such authority, Captain General, Governor, Adelantado, High Constable in perpetuity--High Constable of the world's end. There in Seville he sat in promised greatness, dividing spoils and vassals in a land he had never seen, might never reach, as calmly as if he were laying down clauses in a contract. . . . The world's end--could man in his frailty go there? Or, might he return home again? Was it this which had made him pause with so much scorn at de Narváez' name, that luckless gentleman whose temerity had carried him to the outer provinces of the earth's corner to perish--to Florida to perish? . . . Tovar looked at those who had been to Peru. Certainly they had no doubts. At that instant he understood how set apart were these men, himself included, who had pursued the falling sun (p. 49).

The perceptive reader who has lived with Strether in Paris, Marlow in the Congo, and Quentin Compson in the cold dormitory room at Harvard now knows that Tovar is the central intelligence of At the Moon's Inn. He knows that Tovar, "the man of sensibility," though not a first-person narrator (and therefore not a commentator on the action), will offer, through his actions and thoughts, a key to an understanding of De Soto, "the man of will," who at the climax of the novel reveals himself as the first puritan in the New World.

After De Soto's counteracting of the Marshal of Seville's admonitory toast, the banqueters discuss Florida and its "pacification." De Biedma, who is to be factor of the expedition (whose narrative supplied Lytle part of his
frame) asks the Adelantado which weapon will be most effective in Florida and receives the answer that the horse, "feared by these Indians as a god" (pp. 50-51) is more effective than any weapon. And this statement evokes talk of the conquest of Cuzco and its golden halls. De Soto, who received a third of the wealth of the Inca (enough to buy a navy and raise and equip an army) says: "God showed us great courtesy that time," . . . "To a handful of Christians he delivered a kingdom." To this sacrilegious statement Juan de Añasco adds the comment: "God's miracle!" And De Soto, with great relish describes the treasure of the sun-god. This scene, of course, links the scene which follows the Battle of Caxamalca in *Alchemy* and the beginning of the expedition to seek gold in North America.

Don Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca arrives and is announced by the major-domo. Splotch-faced and emaciated, he startles the guests, one of whom leaps up crying "The plague!" De Soto asks De Vaca if he has changed his mind and decided to join the expedition. De Vaca, an embittered man, says no and gives Providence as his reason; De Soto says "There is but one fortune I trust, Senor . . . this!" and sticks his dagger in the table:

Stilled and bright, the Cross of Santiago stood upright in the spilled wine. The breath rasped in the throats of Estremadurans, the slashed and pinked bloods of Castile, the men from Peru and Darien. With their eyes upon the Cross's image, they made its sign (p. 55).

When De Soto removes the dagger, a young priest arises
and warns De Soto against avarice and pride; he adds:

"The people of Florida perish for lack of the Word. What will you bring them? Salvation?" He reached forth his arms, slowly let them fall. "No salvation. You will bring them the sword. And what will you have of them? A crown in Heaven? No crown. You will take of them their riches and the labor of their hands. Will you be lost? Perhaps you will be lost. But there is hope. I bring you hope, for the Word is more cunning than sin. For to that dark and ignorant land you will carry the Holy Cross . . ." (p. 56).

When the priest, after making the sign over the board, takes his seat again, Tovar looks around and sees the guests shedding tears "to think that sinners might bear the Cross . . ." (p. 56).

Then Tovar notices that De Vaca has risen and is standing before a small chest he has set on the table. De Vaca says: "Only four men of all that numerous armament of the Governor de Narvaez escaped from Florida with their lives. I was one of those four. . . ." Then he announces that he has in the chest "a parting gift from one who knows better than you what you are undertaking," and adds "I have seen the time I would have given all the pearls that do pasture in the meadows of the sea, the gold of Peru, and the pride of power for it." He opens the chest and takes out an ear of maize, a buskin, and "some laces of curious leather." De Soto's guests are incredulous.

When Tovar insolently asks "What brings you here, Senor?" De Vaca answers that he brings the secret of Florida and reveals that the lacets and buskin were made from the skins of Spaniards. Picking up the maize, De Vaca comments:
"The rest of the conquerors . . . were eaten by their companions" . . . "for lack of this" (p. 58). Then he bows to De Soto, who does not acknowledge the gesture, and leaves. Tovar hears a gasp and sees that it is a youth vomiting.

In the final scene of Part I, "The Feast," which might be described as a prologue in Spain which presents the controlling image and controlling symbol of the action in the New World, De Soto, still flushed with wine, describes for Doña Ysabel in her chambers De Vaca's story of cannibalism and his ghostly relics. Revoluted, she pleads with him to abandon the expedition: "... give over this Florida. It is an evil place" (p. 62). De Soto answers that there is no place for him in Spain (he will not be a "shepherd" or a "lackey at Court") and that they will "found a . . . princely house in the wilderness," . . . (p. 63). Later, after they have gone to bed, De Soto, the man of will, takes his wife against her will:

Her head whirled as thick and stifling pressed down upon her a sweet and unbearable odor. It was that of corrupting flesh! Cannibal! She opened her mouth, but no sound came; and then she felt herself grow heavy and inert (p. 68).

Part 2, "The Ocean Sea," opens with Tovar standing on the beach in Havana, watching the fleet preparing to leave for Florida: "For the first time in weeks Tovar [the man of sensibility and sensuousness] felt the old quickening of his pulse and a return of his desire for outland places. The armament at last was almost come to its goal, with Florida only a few days away, ten at most, after thirteen hundred
wearisome leagues of water, a year of recruiting in Cuba and gathering horses and supplies" (p. 71). Thus Lytle at once compresses and presents expository material by narrative summary in the thoughts of Tovar, his central intelligence.

In the consciousness of the retrospective Tovar, the reader learns the details of the departure from San Lucar and of the journey to Cuba. Tovar, who "had been Lieutenant-General of the army and captain of the Magdalena, the second ship of the fleet" (p. 73), reflects that had the fleet stopped for supplies at the Grand Canary instead of at Gomera he would not have the time for idling and looking back. It was at Gomera that Doña Ysabel, charmed by Doña Leonora, daughter to the Count de Gomera, persuaded the Count to allow his daughter to accompany her to Cuba, where Doña Ysabel was to serve as Governor while her husband was on the Floridian expedition. Fate seems to deliver the nubile Doña Leonora into the hands of the young and virile Lieutenant-General Tovar, and the inevitable takes place. De Soto, when he learns of the seduction of his and Doña Ysabel's charge, who is with child, peremptorily reduces Tovar in rank (p. 82). The reader later learns that Tovar married Leonora before leaving Cuba (p. 101). According to Carter, "This reduction serves Lytle well: Tovar reflects the opinions of both officers and ordinary soldiers. He is devoted to de Soto; his feeling of closeness to the commander humanizes a figure who has abstracted himself to a single purpose."  

Thomas H. Carter, "Andrew Lytle," *South: Modern*
is sound. The reader, however, should realize that Lytle here is following history to advance his own creative purposes: he is not altering history. "A Fidalgo of Elvas," reports the story as follows:

Before our departure, the Governor deprived Nuño de Tobár of the rank of Captain-General [sic], and conferred it on a resident of Cuba, Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa, which caused the vessels to be well provisioned, he giving a great many hogs and loads of cacabe bread. That was done because Nuno de Tobar had made love to Doña Ysabel's waiting-maid, daughter of the Governor of Gomera; and though he had lost his place, yet, to return to De Soto's favor, for she was with child by him, he took her to wife and went to Florida. 19

After his seduction of Leonora, Tovar visits a priest. In the sanctuary Tovar suddenly sees four green leaves sprouting from a ghostly stem. He cries out; and when the priest asks the reason, he answers: "The sap, Father! In God's house." . . . "The wilderness grows here, too" (p. 92).

Tovar's hallucinatory vision, the meaning of which completely escapes the priest, is to recur to Tovar in Florida (p. 277).

Section 3, "The Wilderness" (pp. 99-150), opens on the beach in Florida; and Tovar and the reader remain in Florida (actually present-day Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana) until the end of the novel. At the beginning of Part 3, Tovar, on the beach, inspects his mare's saddle and

trappings and looks about him at the flickering fires in the darkening camp. Here at "the Bay of the Holy Spirit" [Tampa Bay] Tovar relives the trip from Havana and his sighting of Florida and congratulates himself on having been made a guard over the guides: "This kept him out of the ranks and allowed him the privilege of riding with the officers of the Royal Hacienda . . . .". He recalls the bloated carcasses of horses that died at sea rolling in the gulf and, by association of ideas, Leonora, his wife, "standing there on the beach in Havana after they had parted, swollen in her middle . . . ." (p. 101).

Guided by Indians, the Spaniards move inland toward the Indian town Ugita. Looking at an Indian guide, Tovar remembers an encounter with the Indians in which a downed Indian, spitted by a Spaniard's lance, tries to draw himself up the shaft of the lance to get at his enemy. Florida Indians, he has begun to realize, will be implacable foes. And a little later in camp after another encounter with the Indians, De Soto tells his men that Satan has made contracts with the caciques but that "We shall bring the Word to these lost souls, the Word made image. . . . The Word shall be . . . our chain, and Satan enchained on his rock . . . ." (p. 118). Father Francisco of the Rock cautions De Soto: "Take care, Excellency." . . . "Satan will be enchained in God's time. Take care, Senor Governor, you do not commit the sin of pride" (pp. 118-119). This admonition reiterates the theme of pride and anticipates the climactic confrontation between
De Soto and Francisco: *At the Moon's Inn* can be read as a sort of medieval allegory, an exemplum admonishing de contemptu mundi.

De Soto and the men in the camp hear shouts. Alvaro Nieto arrives with a story of the "capture" of an Indianized Christian. This Spaniard, Juan Ortiz, a survivor of the ill-fated De Narvaez expedition, had lived for twelve years as captive of the Cacique of Ucita. Ortiz, of course, will be a great asset to De Soto's expedition, for he can act as interpreter and help De Soto avoid the futile wandering so fatal to the De Narváez expedition.

The next morning De Soto orders Father Francisco to say a Mass especially for Ortiz. Ortiz's Mass (pp. 122-50) serves as an important key to the meaning of *At the Moon's Inn*: the story offers a statement of De Soto's gnosticism (De Soto, as Lytle represents him, is a "Spanish puritan"), as well as another foreshadowing of the climactic scene of the novel, in which De Soto blasphemes by usurping the authority of his priest. This Mass emphasizes one of the great ironies of the novel: Ortiz must be rehabilitated as a Christian so that he can assist in the "pacification" of Florida.

Ranjel, who does not mention a Mass for Ortiz, reports that "The delight of the Christians was very great in God's

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20 This section of *At the Moon's Inn* constitutes "Ortiz's Mass," _NN 4_ 5, pp. 67-100.
having given them a tongue and a guide, of which, at that time, they were in great need. . . ." 21

"Ortiz's Mass" begins with the point of view of Father Francisco, God's vicar on earth. Father Francisco looks at the altar made of stone and cypress log and dirt; he notices that all the men are much more eager for worship than they had been and reminds himself that he will have to speak to them on the vice of curiosity. He looks at his server, sees that he is wearing spurs (like the sword, a symbol connecting the Church and the death-dealing Spanish cavalry), and orders him to remove them. Then the priest reflects on the twelve years of darkness experienced by Ortiz: "Day following dark day, time hurrying him to death and judgment, when time would be no more, and he so deep in savage sloth as not to know or care" (p. 123). And, just before he intones "In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti" as he comes to the foot of the altar, he thinks: "Perhaps after all the Church is wise to make daily the Sacrifice of Our Lord, the Sacrifice which consecrates, the Consecration which is the Sacrifice--Christ Himself offering Himself" (p. 124).

The point of view shifts: now everything, including the counterpointing words and actions of the priest celebrating the Eucharist, is presented through the consciousness

21 Narratives, II, p. 57. Both Biedma's account (II, pp. 3-4) and Ranjel's account (II, pp. 56-58) of the recovery of Ortiz are brief; however, they provided Lytle with his donnée.
of Ortiz. The story of this mass, ordered by De Soto for the purpose of reconsecrating Ortiz to the service of the Cross (and sword), is one of Lytle's finest creations. Reminiscent of Conrad's combining of scene and narrative of events long past by means of his narrator Marlow and Marlow's auditors (as in *Heart of Darkness*), "Ortiz's Mass" more closely integrates scene and narrative. Lytle, who considers *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to be Joyce's best works, may have taken the idea for the frame of "Ortiz's Mass" from Joyce's rendering of Stephen Dedalus's participation in the Mass in the third chapter of the *Bildungsroman-Künstlerroman*. At the end of the chapter,

He [Stephen] knelt before the altar with his classmates, holding the altar cloth with them over a living rail of hands. His hands were trembling and his soul trembled as he heard the priest pass with the ciborium from communicant to communicant.

*Corpus Domini nostri*

Could it be? He knelt there sinless and timid: and he would hold upon his tongue the host and God would enter his purified body.

*In vitam eternam. Amen.*

Another life! A life of grace and virtue and happiness! It was true. It was not a dream from which he would awake. The past was past.

*Corpus Domini nostri.*

The ciborium had come to him.  

Ortiz, while listening to the words of the priest in the Mass ordered especially for him, relives his past twelve years, spent as captive of the Cacique Ucita. At an Indian ceremony, which parallels in part the Eucharist,

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The Waiter sang as before. As it [a conch filled with cassena] passed from mouth to mouth Ucita broke into a sweat and with great composure leaned over to vomit, . . . the Waiter came to him.

His hand shook as he reached for the shell. He drank deep of the bitter stuff.

May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me . . .

He began to sweat, a nausea seized him. He leaned over and the warm bitter liquid spewed out of his mouth.

Ite[,] missa est.
There was the murmur of a great throng moving and a voice said, "You may rise now. It is over." And then he felt a jerk at his arm. He turned his head, his eyes focused. De Soto was smiling and his hand was on his sleeve. "You live again as a Christian, Senor. Among Christians" (p. 150).

In some respects Lytle's treatment of his subject is more artistic than Joyce's, for Lytle's combination of scene and stream-of-consciousness narrative spans a much longer period of time than does Joyce's, and Lytle's rendering presents two quite different cultures, pagan as well as Christian.

After reading the ritual of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in a Missal, one can imagine Lytle spreading out the ritual on a number of manuscript pages and then carefully interpolating his fiction of Ortiz's twelve years as captive of the Cacique of Ucita. However he wrote the story, he ended up with a very fine piece of fiction that stands on its own as a short story and furnishes a most important key to the meaning of At the Moon's Inn (we are reminded of "The Grand Inquisitor" chapter of Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov). How does "Ortiz's Mass" serve as a key to At the Moon's Inn?
An examination of Ortiz's twelve-year ordeal as captive, with respect to parts of his "Resurrection" Mass should suggest answers to this question.

Ortiz watches the priest bow, strike his breast, and repeats after him the Confiteor: "... through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault." His body has been trembling since he sank to his knees before the Presence on the altar. He sees the sunlight, which passes through the forest behind him, fall upon the silver cross (Cf. the Marshal of Seville's "slight thing of silver gilt" [p. 47]) and make the cross appear to run with blood [appear to be a bloody sword]: "He beat his breast in a frenzy of remorse and fear and hope, and then he grew very quiet, ... In that instant he felt the darkness of his purgatory slip from his eyes ..." (pp. 124-25).

The key word in the above description of Ortiz's experience is "purgatory." The ritual of the Mass involves a purging of sin, for the communicant must be made worthy to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But of what is Ortiz being purged? Certainly he is not, in the Pauline sense, being purged of sins he has committed during the past twelve years as a result of human fallibility. Rather he

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23 According to Pope Saint Pius X, "If you wish to hear Mass as it should be heard, you must follow with eye, heart and mouth all that happens on the Altar. ... . When acting in this way you have prayed Holy Mass." Saint Joseph Continuous Sunday Missal (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1958), p. 9.

24 The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, iii, 23: For
is being purged, on De Soto's orders, of his acquired paganism: "One had only to look to see that he had been wholly lost. There in the presidio rubbing the Governor's shoulders for greeting like any heathen until even the Governor had mistaken him for an Indian" (p. 123).

Ortiz remembers that on the De Narváez expedition he and González were captured by the Indians as they came ashore in a small boat. González was slain, dismembered, and scalped; but he was captured (the communicant hears the priest say: Oramus te, Domine . . .). And Ortiz comments on the ephemerality of human life: "'He [González] was here. He is gone--gone.' . . . 'An hour ago he was alive and pulling at the oar'" (p. 126).

Ortiz relives his ordeal. At the Indian town, he is tied before the war leader's house; and just before dawn, exhausted, he falls asleep after listening to the whooping and singing of the women and observing the war leader come out every two or three hours and dance three times about the war pole in front of his door. The women and the war leader, of course, are practicing their religion. In "Caroline Gordon and the Historic Image," Lytle points out: "Their warfare did not evince a destructive instinct. It was a religious rite, and therefore a social rite, which submerged the end of fighting which is death beneath the ritual practice of it."

Ortiz is awakened by his guards as they strip him of his clothes so that he can play his part in the ritual torture to be called by Anglo-Saxon frontiersmen "running the gauntlet." Running down the lane formed by the two lines of women armed with sticks and hoes, he is knocked unconscious. When he comes to, he sees that he is tied to a frame. Four men carry him to a scaffold around which brush is piled; he feels the heat of a yellow flame and screams. . . .

In his mind Ortiz turns momentarily from the Indian "altar" to the priest at the altar saying "Kyrie, eleison. Lord, have mercy upon us" (pp. 128-29). The word "mercy" brings back the memory of the soft hands of Ucita's daughter spreading salve over his blisters as he regains consciousness. Later he learns that the girl and her mother consider it a shame that a mere boy without war honors be burned like a warrior. The girl pleads for his life; and her father, feeling that Gonzalez's scalp had released his mother's spirit "from haunting the eaves of the lodge" (the Indian correlate of the Christian Purgatory), commutes Ortiz's sentence from death by fire to a life of drudgery under the supervision of women.

After the cacique's little son dies, the cacique orders Ortiz to watch his bones. Ortiz has to purify himself for this duty by washing in the stream and by chewing green tobacco until he vomits ("Purgatory"). The girl gives him a charm for protection and an herb to drive away ghosts. . . .

The priest finishes the Collect and speaks of "that
one man sent from God who is not the Light but is sent to bear witness of the Light, the Light born not of the blood, nor of the will, nor of the will of the flesh."²⁶ For the reader of At the Moon's Inn, the phrases "of blood" and "of the flesh" serve to call to mind the contrast between Christ, the Perfect Man, and Tovar, "the man of sensibility"; and the phrase "of the will" calls to mind the contrast between Christ and De Soto, "the man of will." For Ortiz the words bring back a wondering about the mystery of the "absolute oneness between the Indians and their world" (p. 133). Lytle says in "Caroline Gordon and the Historic Image": "The Indian settlements had barely disturbed the endless wastes of forest and plain. A religious people, their behavior was governed by fear of and identity with the power of nature. The supernatural existed as an extension of nature."²⁷

Ortiz follows tribal patriarchs ("the old beloved men") to the place of the dead: "Not a leaf shook as they passed, but where he went vines and thorns leaped to bind him. . . . He would never discover the mystery of this absolute oneness between the Indians and their world" (p. 133). Near a thicket in which there are tree-burials that resemble great eagle nests except for the fact that the "nests" are in low forked limbs and rough log coffins in frames on the ground, the guides, after the proper ritual spotting of "hilis hatki" juice, give Ortiz two flint-tipped darts and leave.

The stench of decaying human flesh almost overcomes

Ortiz: "With lips clenched he thought the borders of purgatory must be like this . . ." (p. 134). He builds a fire and begins to like his solitude, even though the place is disagreeable, for he has greatly missed, in his communal Indian life, "the privacy of Christendom." He hears an animal and sees eyes: "Many of the grandfathers of Ucita's people are out tonight, he said softly to himself, but I shall waste no darts on them or else I shall have to pay forfeit to their kin" (p. 135). Regarding the Indian identification of families with animals or fish or the elements, Lytle comments: "In their positive identity with the natural world families traced their descent from the beast, the fish, or even the wind. The preservation and continuance of life, therefore, became the center of their religious practice. . . ." 28

Ortiz is unable to stay awake:

The time came when there was no time, only the heavy slow effort of the will to stiffen his neck and shake out the heavy fog which settled over his eyes, which blew thick and slow through his eyes, into his head, weighting it, pulling it down, down, and a down . . . down . . . (p. 135).

At dawn Ortiz wakes up hearing voices. The dead child's mother and grandmother or aunt are waiting and rhetorically asking "Why did you leave us?"

The next night Ortiz resolves to remain awake, for he knows Ucita would like to have him put to death for fail-

28 Ibid.
ing to protect the corpse of his child. But again he falls asleep, and in his dream Ucita's daughter comes to him, takes him by the hand, and leads him on a journey on the spirit's road. Ortiz says to the girl that if it is the spirit's road he must be . . . and she interrupts by telling him that he is (dead):

How easy it is to die in Heathendom, he thought. No purgatory, no hell, no sins to account for. Only to travel without tiring, without hunger or thirst, across the sky to the land of the Breath Holder (p. 139).

Father Francisco intones to the Christian Breath Holders: "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house and the place where Thy glory dwelleth."

Ortiz and the Indian girl must pass four dangers. First, they must cross a body of water that blocks the path. Second, they must pass through a place where a tribe of snakes ("Highland Moccasins," or copperheads) have raised their town and are dancing a death dance. Third, they must pass through a valley where a fiercely fought but never-ending Indian war is taking place. And, fourth, after passing through the four seasons, they must pass through a place where there are no seasons, a passage guarded by a great eagle. The eagle stoops; instructed by the girl, Ortiz throws his darts, hears the eagle scream, then hears a thud. Ortiz awakes from his dream to hear something being dragged through the brush (pp. 139-45).

Ortiz runs to the child's coffin, finds it overturned and empty. He runs down the dark path, hears a crunching,
then a growl. He throws his first dart at a dark object; and, when he throws his second dart, he realizes that the dark object has already moved. He returns to the burial yard, certain that he is a doomed man, and waits by the fire until the Indians come to the yard the next morning.

Father Francisco elevates the Host ("Take and eat ye of this, for this is My Body") and then the Chalice ("Take and drink ye all of this, for this is the Chalice of My Blood of the new and eternal Testament. . . .") (pp. 146-47).

The Indians discover the empty coffin, seize Ortiz, and take him before Ucita.

Father Francisco says: "It is ended."

The ritual of the Indian trial at the council house progresses.

"Father . . . Thy will be done."

Ortiz knows that he must show no fear, knows that he must appear indifferent.

"Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy on us."

There are outcries. The scouts return with something.

Father Francisco places the Bread on his tongue and gives him the precious Blood: "It was no longer the priest who lived. Jesus Christ lived in him" (p. 149).

Ortiz sees the dead wolf on the floor of the council house, the handle of a dart projecting from its breast. A Waiter (Indian equivalent of server, or acolyte) hands Ucita a conch shell filled with cassena. The Indians drink, ac-
cording to their rank, and finally Ortiz drinks "the bitter stuff" (pp. 149-50).

Father Francisco terminates the Mass, which for Ortiz is a curious synthesis of paganism and Christianity, by intoning: "Ite[,] missa est." De Soto, in one of the most ironic scenes in a novel shot through with irony, smiles and congratulates Ortiz: "You live again as a Christian, Senor. Among Christians" (p. 150). Juan Ortiz, purged of twelve years of life among the Indians, is now worthy to serve "the man of will," the commander of lancers and swordsmen, as interpreter in his quest for gold in Florida.

At the beginning of the next section, "The March" (pp. 153-212), De Soto asks Ortiz if he has seen no gold, and Ortiz answers that he has seen none. De Soto, however, still has hope when he learns that Ortiz has traveled only about ten leagues into the interior. When Ortiz tells him of a land called Urriparacoxit, about thirty leagues to the northeast, where maize and beans are plentiful, De Soto is almost jubilant; he slaps the arm of his chair and says: "Gentlemen, Ortiz brings us luck. I only want to be certain of supplies. I have no doubt of gold. Florida is so wide that in some part of it we are bound to discover a rich country" (p. 153).29

29 De Soto's "Florida" consisted roughly of the southern part of the United States, e.g., Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana. A decorated map printed on the end-papers of the 1941 edition of At the Moon's Inn, adapted from a map in the final report of the United States
De Soto and his cavalry and infantry, with a herd of swine which Tovar jokingly refers to as the "swine squadron" (p. 162), leave the Port of the Holy Spirit (Tampa Bay) and move northeastward. Before giving the order to march, however, De Soto makes an example of an Indian woman who persuaded the Indian envoy despatched to Urripparacoxit to desert and boasted about it; De Soto orders the woman to be thrown to the dogs, makes a bet with his constable, Gallegos, as to which dog will win the fight for the carcass and calmly discusses with Gallegos the details of the march inland while the huge dogs [wolfhounds and mastiffs] attack the woman, who, though torn apart, never screams. De Soto cuts short his conversation, looks to the center of the square, and hands Gallegos five gold coins. "That Brutus is a remarkable animal" is all that De Soto says (pp. 160–61). This grisly scene (actually a combination of narrative and scene), framed as it is by the coldly logical conversation concerning the search for gold, and ended by the payment of five gold coins (symbolic, perhaps, of the five wounds of Christ), is a dramatic foreshadowing of how ruthlessly De Soto and his men will act in their attempts to enrich themselves by conquering with both guile and force a people whose main concern is to live in consonance with nature. At "the river of Mocogo" the Spaniards, the finest soldiers in the sixteenth-century world, De Soto Expedition Commission, shows the route De Soto follows in the novel.
build a bridge, cross, and turn northward. In camp, Tovar commends Moscoso, De Soto's second-in-command on the march they have made. Moscoso answers: "Gold, comrade. It makes light feet" (p. 169). Later, in another camp, Tovar watches soldiers, chasing a rabbit on a savannah where the horses are grazing, stampede the horses. Tovar, Silvestre, and Silvestre's page pursue the horses, mount three of them, round up the others, and bring them all into camp. At this point in the novel there is a comment, which, though it could have been in the mind of Tovar, the central intelligence and "roving narrator," actually represents the omniscient point of view: "Fortune had smiled upon the expedition that night but all understood how close the conquest might have come to a shameful ending" (p. 175).

Lytle uses the vicissitudes of the march inland to arouse tension in his readers. The army makes camp at Lake St. John and, the next day, passes through a sandy wasteland covered with "scrubby bushes" (pp. 175-76). Men and animals suffer in the heat; one man, De Soto's steward, dies of thirst; but De Soto, "the man of will," keeps "the straggling column" moving until it reaches shade (p. 179).

Moving on, the Spaniards reach the deserted villages of Guacoco and Luca and—a short distance from Luca—a great cypress swamp, which De Soto somehow gets his army through. The struggle through the swamp is depicted from the point of view of Tovar, who, when the ordeal is over, feels "a sudden swell of disgust and anger that his talents must be wasted
and a bitterness that he should be thrown down from his high place to herding swine" (p. 186).

Carter describes the march as follows: "There is an epic march. This is naturally limited to the short view; but there can be no long view when men are continually breaking new ground." Carter correctly describes the march as "epic"; however, his statement that this part of the novel is rendered strictly by means of the "short view" (scene) is wrong. Throughout the novel Lytle achieves a balance between "the short view" (scene) and "the long view" (panoramic summary or narration). For example, after sending Tovar ahead to join Moscoso and the rest of the army at Tocaste, De Soto backtrails southward to search for a crossing through the swampy country. He finds a crossing and deputizes Silvestre to ride, with a companion of his own choosing, to Tocaste, where he is to tell Moscoso to march back to De Soto. On his way to his horse, Silvestre, prideful because De Soto has singled him out, sees the young esquire Cacho resting at the foot of a tree:

"Get up," . . .
"Get up, hell!"
"We're going to Tocaste."

"Why didn't you choose Vásquez? He likes to offer himself."
"I chose you because I love you," he said dryly (p. 196).

This scene at once serves to carry forward the action, to re-

30 Carter, 292-93.
emphasize the pride of De Soto and his soldiers, and to relieve by its wry humor the tension evoked by the enveloping action.

Lytle now shifts back to narrative:

... the two boys rode on in silence, at an easy canter, until they came out of the two leagues of thick and miry woods which bordered the swamps. It was well dark by this time, but the moon was rising. They had been travelling due west. Now they turned south, along the treeless plain out of which for the past two days de Soto had made his numerous sallies into the forest, only to be stopped each time by lakes and swamps. For once, Silvestre thought, if he felt fresher he would take pleasure in going straight across instead of always coming back to the invisible maze where one man could wander forever (p. 197).

Lytle alternates the dramatic and the narrative throughout his rendering of this mission. Cacho becomes very sleepy and finally says: "Either let me sleep" ... "or kill me with a thrust. I am dying of sleep." Silvestre gives in: "All right, ... Get down if you want the Indians to kill us" (p. 203).

Later, after Silvestre and Cacho have rested and resumed their mission, they are attacked by Indians. Lytle presents the attack and pursuit in a combination of narrative and dialogue between the two youths. They are saved by their gallant horses and by Moscoso's men, including Tovar ("Out in front rode Tovar, ... Who else had such a seat? Who else could make such a charge, ... ?"). With cries of "Santiago and at them!" Tovar and his followers rout the Indians. To Tovar, Silvestre says: "Take me to Moscoso, ... The Governor has found the crossing" (p. 206).
Lytle's rendering of the mission of Silvestre and Cacho not only advances the action but also serves as a foil to set off De Soto's pride. As Silvestre rides in the dark through cane thickets and forest, he suddenly realizes:
"... it was easy for them to go astray. There was nothing for them to do but depend upon the intelligence of the animals. The Governor must have had this in mind when he picked Zapata. At the time Silvestre thought it was his own endurance the Governor had in mind, but he had been careful to choose not the right man but the right horse. He supposed he ought to take offense, but he felt only a great humility" (p. 206).

Later Tovar and thirty men, including Silvestre, ride into De Soto's camp by the stream and find it deserted, though De Soto had told Silvestre he would wait for him here. Silvestre, exhausted, experiences a flesh-disdaining euphoria: "He understood that Holy triumph in the wilderness, the forty days. How vain the world, and how false Satan's promise of pomp and riches! What mattered it if the Governor was lost or dead? What mattered it if the army perished? They were not lost but saved. He would disclose his revelation." But Tovar makes excuses for De Soto and commands Silvestre to sleep (pp. 206-207).

With great difficulty, the thirty men and their horses cross the swift stream by means of a tree-bridge left there by De Soto and the men who had remained with him. They reach Uqueten, in a rolling valley with fields of ripe maize, to
find De Soto waiting for them. "Ocale is farther on," he tells them. "Be careful you don't founder your horses" (p. 210). Soon after leaving Uqueten, the refreshed Spaniards reach an abandoned town of ten houses (the ashes of a fire are still warm). Silvestre asks Tovar whether they will make camp or go on to Ocale. Tovar portentously says: "This is Ocale," . . . (p. 212). Silvestre had thought: "Perhaps they would find a city with walls covered in gold as the Governor had found in Peru" (p. 194). We are, of course, reminded of Coronado's wanderings across a large part of the North American Southwest in search of the fabulous "Seven Cities of Cibola." 31

In the next section of the novel, "Apalache" (pp. 215-266), De Soto and his men travel northward, westward, then northward again, through the land of Apalache. The point-of-view at the beginning of the section is Ortiz's; Ortiz stands in the yard of Ocale and looks toward the forest. Ortiz, who, in spite of his purification at his first mass after twelve years among the Indians, still thinks like an Indian, recalls with apprehension the words the cacique of Ocale spoke in his temporary quarters in the forest:

"The Master of Breath has hung war on the sky. So be it. . . . You tell me the cacique Pope has given my land and my people to a cacique you serve. . . . This Pope must be a fool to give what is not his and you must be fools to make war for another. I devote you all to death. You have no women, so you cannot

31 See J. Frank Dobie, Coronado's Children (New York: Literary Guild, 1931).
breed. I will take your hair and you will be no more. So be it" (p. 215).

Ortiz's anxiety is augmented a short time later when, on a walk into the forest, he comes to a beautiful spring (probably Silver Springs). First he meets and talks with Father Francisco, who admires the fish "swimming together in innocence as they did before the Fall," and then suddenly asks if the Governor is worried about his halberdiers who, with Father Luis, went with Espindola to Acuera to harvest maize. When Ortiz answers that De Soto thinks only of Apalache, the priest, annoyed, says: "I fear it [Apalache] will be like all these other provinces, . . . God keep us" (pp. 216-17).

Lytle continues to foreshadow the climax of his novel. Francisco is only one of many discontented followers of De Soto. In a scene in which Moscoso allows his officers to throw dice for the jobs they will undertake in the Apalache campaign, including the bridging of the river, Lobillo says: "There are no riches there, . . . Narváez would have found them" (p. 218). And when Gaytán, the Treasurer (who near the end of the novel attempts to lead an insurrection), says sarcastically: "I think the Governor has sunk his fortune in this discovery" (i.e., De Soto will risk everything, including men's lives, in his gamble to recoup what he has already lost), Tinoco, De Soto's cousin, bristles, and Moscoso has to intervene to prevent a fight (p. 219).

Lytle re-emphasizes the gambling metaphor that repre-
sects the entire venture by having the men continue to throw dice. Ortiz suddenly looks up from the ground to the tops of the water oaks and, shocked, calls attention to dismembered bodies swinging from the top branches—the bodies of the three halberdiers who had been sent to work the maize fields at Acuera. Ortiz knows that this is the supreme gesture of contempt and remembers that the Indians have "devoted" all of the Spaniards to death (pp. 220-22).

Foreshadowing the near-insurrection in Part 7, Lytle has Gayton bait De Soto on the failure to find gold at Ocale (p. 223). When a sergeant blurts out: "There is no gold in this country, Excellency," De Soto merely answers: "You have lost too much salt, . . ." (p. 224). Ortiz, no longer a young man, is concerned about his future. Wondering why De Soto risks the great fortune he won in Peru in search of another fortune, he concludes:

... whatever the secret need which brought De Soto here there was no doubt about his men. They had come for gold. And he had never seen or heard of gold in all his twelve years in the land. Traders went great distances with their wares of shell, arrowheads, salt and pearls. If there was gold, they would have traded in it, for it had a lustre suitable for gorgets and bracelets, though not so beautiful as mother of pearl . . . (p. 228).

This indirect interior monologue of Ortiz's contains dramatic irony: Ortiz realizes that the men undertook the venture for gold (avarice); but, Spanish soldier that he is (even after his twelve years with the Indians), he cannot see De Soto's great flaw, a pride which keeps De Soto (who, like Marlowe's Tamburlaine, exhibits the strength of the lion and the guile
of the fox) moving northward and westward toward his death. The discovery of gold is a necessary step in De Soto's vague but grandiose plans to "pacify" the great section of North America known as Florida, to colonize it, and to set himself up as absolute ruler of Spanish Christians and Christianized Indians. One of the great ironies of *At the Moon's Inn*, of course, is that De Soto and his men, in their futile search for gold, traverse some of the most fertile land in the North American continent. But Renaissance Spaniards who had shared in the treasure of the Inca or who had heard the stories of the Inca's treasure could see the great forests and lush vegetation only as impediments keeping them from the wealth of another Peru.

Before a campfire around which a number of soldiers have gathered, Ortiz sees Tovar for the first time. Tovar, who greatly admires De Soto even though De Soto reduced him in rank, steps near the fire and ironically poses this question to the men: "What did you expect when you signed on for this conquest?" A voice from beyond the fire answers: "Another Peru, not these forest deserts." Tovar mockingly asks the disgruntled soldier what he knows of Peru; then he gives a summary of the conquest, stressing the hardships that Pizarro and De Soto and the rest of the army had to endure before they won the treasure of the Inca (pp. 230-33). When Tovar has finished his story, his heckler calls out: "That was Peru! Peru is not Florida." And Tovar answers: "You are right, Senor... Peru is not Florida, but it has bred Flor-
ida" (p. 233). Tovar, "the man of sensibility," the central intelligence of the novel, understands what Ortiz has failed to understand: Tovar understands De Soto, "the man of will"; and although he does not know at this point in the action whether or not De Soto will find the gold necessary to his plan to colonize and govern Florida, Tovar knows that the Promethean De Soto will never give up his quest as long as he is able to move with his men toward one more unknown place, which may prove to be another Cuzco.

And so the army moves on again. Encountering another swamp, De Soto, who expects trouble from the Indians, rearranges his columns and draws up a plan of defense. The cacique Aguacalaquen remains with De Soto as hostage to prevent an ambuscade. At Napituca, a town near two small lakes, De Soto studies the terrain and decides to make camp, telling Ortiz that it is "a very fine place for stratagem" (p. 237).

That night, in a lodge, Ortiz hears an Indian sing like a "mock bird" near the town. He slips out, stalks the singer, finds him behind a tree and kills him with his knife. Then he scalps his victim. On the way back to town he is stopped by Tovar, who says: "Don't you think you'd better give me that? . . . The Governor might ask questions." Ortiz divides the scalp into two parts with his knife and gives one to Tovar: "This ties the knot of friendship," . . . (p. 240). Tovar recognizes the fact that, despite De Soto's especially-ordered purification Mass for Ortiz on his return to the Spaniards, Ortiz remains a sort of Indianized Christian. Quietly,
he advises Ortiz to wash the blood from his body, accompanies him to the spring, and returns with him to the town at daybreak, just in time to answer the trumpet call to Mass. Lytle, with beautiful irony, has Ortiz take his place at the "Governor's side at the right of the altar" (p. 241).

Lytle now shows the personal bravery of his "man of will" in a confrontation with the Indians who have "devoted" De Soto and his men to death. Two Indians, waiting at the edge of town, tell De Soto, through Ortiz, that "seven caciques now gathered in the forest, . . . friends of Aguacalencuen" wish to help the Spaniards in their war against the Apalache. In return for their help, they wish the release of their friend. Realizing the meeting is a trap, De Soto agrees to meet the seven on neutral ground (the plain). When De Soto enters the trap, Indians rush from the forest. There is a fierce battle, which the Spanish lancers win (two Spaniards dead, compared with forty dead or dying Indians). The surviving Indians, closely pursued by the lancers, plunge into the lakes "as the only relief from capture and death" (p. 248). The Indians in the larger lake swim to the edge and escape to the forest. The Spaniards, however, are able to surround the smaller lake, in which approximately two-hundred Indians swim about: "Moving among the lililies, with only their feathers showing, they looked at a distance like a flock of birds just settled in their flight" (p. 248).

De Soto orders Ortiz to call on the Indians to give themselves up, to tell them that they will receive clemency.
The Indians respond to De Soto's offer with insults (p. 248).

Tovar, recovering from an arrow wound, sleeps (p. 249). When he awakes, seven or eight hours after the battle, he rides to the lake and finds that the Indians have not come out, that De Soto is still keeping watch with the guards.

Suddenly he realizes what is at stake:

Now all was clear, . . . the Governor's stubborn persistence in his efforts to bring them to land. A second time, here as upon the plain at Caxamalca, the Indians had summoned death to stand between the Christians and their prize. Word would pass to the other tribes how their brothers at Napituca had swum until they could swim no more rather than wear the strangers' chains. Everywhere this choice would raise an endless war, the one thing de Soto most feared, . . . (p. 252).

Finally, three of the water-logged Indians swim toward the shore, hesitate, turn, and swim away. Ortiz softly calls to them (". . . the tone of his words was low and caressing" p. 251) and succeeds in bringing them ashore. "Saved" by De Soto, the Christian, for his non-Christian purposes, the exhausted Indians are wrapped in blankets and led to the fire. Others come in from time to time--two-hundred in all--until only seven, including the Far-Away-Cacique Uricitina, remain in the lake. De Soto orders Ortiz to send the Urriparacoxit Indians into the lake to drag out the seven. Only Uricitina struggles. On shore, he makes a defiant statement of resistance to the Spaniards, which he wishes a messenger to take to his people. Ortiz turns to Tovar and tells him that "It is a war to the death" (p. 256).

Tovar sees that De Soto feels he is triumphant:
he [De Soto] had consolidated the army behind him. Until the battle of the lakes he had dragged his men by force of will through their difficulties, had dismissed their frailties and a growing distrust of the narrowing, unknown trails. But now he had shown he was equal to his purpose. He knew how to wait and how to act and he had exposed his person to a greater risk than any other under his command. Now his will was the army's will. No longer would he need to force it (p. 255).

A comparison of Lytle's rendering of the removal of the Indians from the lake with the account "the Gentleman of Elvas" gives of the episode shows how Lytle's imagination and creative talent make De Soto and his men and the Indians come to life again. The fidalgo writes:

... Juan Ortiz told them that, as escape was impossible, they would do well to give up; which they did, driven by extreme chillness of the water; and one after another, as cold overpowered, called out to him, asking not to be killed—that he was coming straightway to put himself in the hands of the Governor. At four o'clock in the morning they had all surrendered, save... the principal men, who... preferred to die rather than yield: then the Indians of Paracoxi, who were going about unshackled, went in after them... They were all put in chains, and, on the day following, were divided among the Christians for their service.

De Soto has the caciques released (here Lytle follows the narrative of Ranjel rather than that of the "Gentleman of Elvas") and puts them at his table among his captains, with Uricitina at his right hand. As heads are bowed for grace, Uricitina whoops and strikes De Soto in the face, knocking out two teeth. The captains stab Uricitina; the

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[32 Narratives, I, p. 43. Ranjel's account (II, pp. 75-76) is similar.]

[33 Narratives, II, p. 76.]
other Indians escape to the yard in the confusion. In the battle the boy Benito parries a blow intended for Tovar and dies from a severed artery in the neck (pp. 256-58).

After the revolt is put down, and after the re-captured Indians have been executed by the halberdiers and by the Ur-riparacoxits, Tovar and Silvestre take Benito's body, in a weighted shroud of skins, to the center of the lake on a raft and bury it: "... not a ripple to mark its wake, here two thousand leagues from Christendom." This burial, of course, prefigures De Soto's burial in the Mississippi at the end of the novel.

Five days after the revolt, De Soto (who now understands Ortiz's warnings concerning the intransigence of the Indians [p. 260]) and his men move westward to the town of Anhayca Apalache, only eight leagues north of the sea, where they decide to spend the winter. In spite of attacks by the Apalachians, the Spaniards manage to move in supplies of food from neighboring fields.

After wintering in Anhayca Apalache, continually harried by the Indians, De Soto and his men, on March 3, 1540, begin marching northward (p. 266).

Part 6, "Cutifichiqui" (pp. 269-326), begins with a fine example of Lytle's ability to compress. Tovar, unable to sleep in a lodge in Patofa (a town situated in what is now central Georgia), thinks back on all the lodges he has slept in and all the rivers he has crossed during the past two months. He wonders if the boy Perico, whom De Soto took as
guide from Anhayca Apalache, has told De Soto the truth about the fabulous town Yupaka (Cutifichique) and where it is situated. The boy has told that, years ago, he saw a yellow metal taken from rock there. If he told the truth, was the metal gold? Or was it copper?

Perico, who has lost his way, has a nightmare. One of the priests, Father John, says the boy is possessed and, holding the cross to his lips, exorcises him in the name of Christ. De Soto enters the lodge and questions the priest; then he tells the priest that the boy may have been dissembling, as there is a great discrepancy between the distances he has given and those the cacique of Patofa reported. Perico, who speaks half in Spanish and half in Timucuan, tells how Satan appeared to him "with the body of a snake and the head of a man" and commanded him not to guide the Christians through the wilderness: "He begged, therefore, to be made a Christian, for only by the Cross would his life be spared" (p. 274). De Soto says: "It's possible the boy may know of a shorter way. And certainly," . . . "it would be Satan's strategy to strike us at our weakest place." At the end of the episode, Ortiz, deprived of his bed, follows Tovar to his quarters:

"Do you know what I think?" he [Ortiz] asked.
"What?"
"I think Senor Perico has lost his way."
Tovar considered a moment. "I suppose de Soto would have scruples about throwing a Christian to the dogs."
"Perico thinks so" (p. 275).

Later, moving northeastward, the column suddenly halts;
and Biedma\textsuperscript{34} says: "The trail has given out." Tovar realizes that

They had reached the borders of the unknown, untenanted wilderness, without a path, without a guide, with little food and no way of getting more. It had come, the thing that in Cuba [he] had seen as clearly as a vision, when, walking after the priest down the aisle of the log church, he looked up and saw the wilderness growing out of God's altar. At last the Governor had met his adversary (p. 277).

Tovar, we recall, after he sinned with Leonora, went to the log church greatly troubled, saw four green leaves sprouting from a "ghostly stem" forming part of the "rough Sanctuary," and cried out: "The sap, Father! In God's house . . . The wilderness grows here, too." He was, of course, relating in his mind his sin of lust (i.e., of the blood) and the altar itself, from which grows four leaves.\textsuperscript{35} In an association of ideas, represented by blood and sap and forest, Tovar experiences a vision. He realizes that the wilderness is De Soto's antagonist, De Soto's evil. There is, however, dramatic irony in Tovar's vision, for Tovar does not realize that De Soto is at heart a Spanish puritan, a gnostic who by nature thinks of any opposing force or obstacle as an instrument of the devil. For De Soto, as Tovar realizes, the wilderness (including the Indians who live in consonance with it) represents the evil principal. The Adelantado, as Lytle

\textsuperscript{34} De Soto's factor and one of the authors of The Narratives.

\textsuperscript{35} The number four is symbolic of the earth and of the human condition. See J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), p. 222.
portrays him, is a spiritual ancestor of the New England Puritans.

After enduring many hardships, the Spaniards reach the country in which Cutifichique is situated. To the fatigued and half-starved Tovar the land seems almost an earthly paradise:

How fragrant was the land! With roses blooming sweeter than those in Spain and endless groves of mulberry trees in season, strawberries running wild over the ground. What a godsend was this fruit! Tovar breathed deep . . . (p. 288).

But Tovar's exaltation is short-lived. An Indian seized by Romo for questioning as to the way to the town of Cutifichique (probably Silver Bluff, twenty miles below Augusta, Georgia, on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River), refuses to talk, even though he knows his refusal will at best only delay the arrival of the Spaniards at the town. Following an old European custom, De Soto, in order to make an example of this captive before Romo's three other captives, has the Indian burned at the stake (no one intercedes for him, as the cacique's wife and daughter interceded for Ortiz). Tovar leaves the place of execution to feed the horses. He listens for cries but hears nothing: "He had known from the start that it was a waste of time to burn the Indian" (p. 290). By continuing to render scenes of this nature, Lytle shows the inevitability of the defeat of the monomaniacal De Soto.

A woman brought in by the Constable guides the Spaniards to Cutifichique (a two days' march from the camp where
the Indian was burned at the stake). The cacica, "the Lady of Cutifichique," a young and beautiful woman, comes to greet the Spaniards. Lytle's description of the Senora, though rendered in prose, is reminiscent of Enobarbus's description of Cleopatra (Anthony and Cleopatra, II, ii, 194-208):

She sat high upon the shoulders of her servants. The litter that bore her was covered in a soft white linen and she was all in white. Her hair flowed loose about her shoulders and she sat with an easy grace, looking before her. The bearers walked with slow and careful steps, so that her chair seemed to drift like a boat upon the air. Over her head two youths held fans of herons' wings and ... shielded her face from the sun ... 

... She alighted and entered a canoe ... and sat in the stern upon two cushions, under an awning. ... At a signal the canoe into which the head men had embarked shot into the water, tied to her bow and began to tow her where the Governor waited (p. 294).

This beautiful cacica36 springs lightly to the bank:

"Her feet were as small as a child's, enclosed in buskins embroidered in seed pearls. Her skirt was white and of the softest doe and over her shoulders she wore a shawl of mulberry cloth. Her eyes were black, her skin the colour of almonds." Falling to her waist are four strands of pearls "as large as hazel nuts" (p. 294). The Lady makes a courteous

36 We cannot be certain as to which tribe of Indians the Lady of Cutifichique ruled. Although Swanton does not commit himself on the identity of the tribe, he suggests that it probably was a Creek tribe, the Kasihta. See John R. Swanton, The Indians of the Southeastern United States, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 137 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 143. Lytle, however, believes that because of its matriarchal structure the tribe was the Cherokee (Conversation, Dallas, Tex., Mar. 17, 1972).
speech of welcome to De Soto, begging him to accept the gifts her retainers drop at his feet (skins and fardels of cloth) and the necklace of pearls, which she drops over his head. Through the translation of Perico and Ortiz for De Soto, Tovar understands that the Lady offers De Soto half of her town for quarters and as much grain as she can spare.

Tovar, looking about, sees that these are the most highly civilized Indians he has encountered in Florida:

They are dressed, in many respects like Europeans. But suddenly Tovar realizes that something is missing: the Indians do not wear gold; they wear only necklaces and armbands of pearls. And Tovar notices that the pearls worn by a girl who attends the Lady, and who is looking at him, are especially fine (p. 296).

After Tovar has lived in "utter comfort and peace" for a while, with venison, beans, salt, wafers, and fruit to eat, he is willing to settle in Cutifichique. He knows the Indians possess great quantities of pearls (p. 297); and, after he has gone deep into a grove with the pretty attendant of the cacica (p. 306), he wishes to prolong the idyllic existence as long as possible. Here people "love without thought of sin. . . . And yet they were a moral people. Once given in marriage the woman was bound. The Senora had been careful to stress this" (p. 303). Tovar, "the man of sensibility," is content without gold: "Never had he felt so gay, not since Cuba, when in his despair, . . . he had walked into God's house and found the wilderness sprouting from the altar. He had fled the sight but could not flee the dread. . . . Now it no longer haunted him" (p. 303).
De Soto, the Renaissance man, emulates Machiavelli's fox by allowing his men to take part in the life of the town. Near a scalp-decorated pole in the chungke square, where the Spanish soldiers are witnessing the Indians' celebration of the Mulberry moon, Father Francisco asks De Soto: "Are you going to assist at these heathen rites?" When De Soto answers that "The Señora has asked it," Francisco forbids attendance. De Soto's will prevails, however, and the Spaniards attend the pagan rites, during which, from time to time, some of them steal away with unmarried Indian girls (pp. 299-302).

De Soto, of course, has not changed. Like Faulkner's Thomas Sutpen, he holds to his grand plan. As he tells Father Francisco, when the priest reminds him that the Indian rites to the moon are "To the pagan goddess of the woods and fields and streams," he has dedicated the conquest to God: "First the conquest must be made and the land pacified. When all of Florida I have added to the Crown then, Father, we shall bring them to grace." Francisco, aware of the meaning of De Soto's use of the pronouns "I" and "we," blurts out: "It is of Christian souls, your soul, I now think" (p. 299). This confrontation prefigures the climax of the novel, the scene in which De Soto, directly challenged by Francisco to give up his monomaniacal plan, usurps the authority of his priest.

Tovar realizes, when he sees the rest of the army arrive, that the idyl which has existed with only the Governor and his escort in town must cease. Now it is clear that the
Spaniards occupy Cutifichique. A disturbance breaks out: a Spaniard is caught by the Indians in one of their granaries; De Soto has the offender thrown into irons.

But De Soto and his men enter the temple and bring out basket after basket of pearls, and finally De Soto brings out three Biscayan axes. When De Soto asks the Senora where she got the Spanish axes, she answers that they had been left by strangers with beards who had landed on the coast. Biedma says: "That must have been the Licentiate Ayllon"; and De Soto interrupts with "How far is the sea?" The Senora answers that it is two days away, and suddenly announces to the Christians that if they want pearls they can go to her town Talimeco and find more than their horses can carry away. But De Soto, who has been to Peru, declines the gambit: "Let them stay there. . . . To Whom God makes a gift, may Saint Peter bless it" (p. 309). De Soto knows that his men would be satisfied with the pearls and the other products of the rich land, but he must continue his search for gold.

Tovar, who understands why De Soto rejects the treasure of Talimeco, determines to assess it. With his mistress, Tsianina, he goes to the town, which is now deserted. Entering alone (Tsianina will not accompany him), Tovar remembers that the Senora had told him how, because a tender of the holy fire allowed the fire to die and rekindled it with profane fire, sickness and death came and the people abandoned the town (p. 312).

In the temple Tovar finds, stored with the bones of
the dead a great fortune in pearls, strung from beams and stored in chests. He finds, in a large chest, "bones bedecked with trinkets and pearls, with pipe and club and . . . hickory bow. . . ." He sees a yellow gleam and picks up a small gilt cross. Tovar realizes that

Not his own will but another's had set him on this track, to find in the adipose substance of the dead the sign of salvation. And to bring it forth tarnished. Other things now grew sharp and clear. That look and bearing of the Senora's . . . . It was not from love she had spoken of her town of Talimeco. Not willingly had she let her sacred places be ravished, her hospitality outraged, and her people brought to shame. Strange it must have seemed to her, this Christian lust for trinkets; and yet she was quick to use it for her vengeance. Upon Christian heads would she bring down the wrath of the Sun. So she had directed the Governor towards Talimeco (pp. 315-16).

Three days after his trip to Talimeco, Tovar, "the man of sensibility," against the advice of Silvestre ("No good has ever come to you through women") marries Tsianina "Indian fashion" (pp. 316-24). He knows that he will have to take her with him. for De Soto, who has placed the Senora under guard, will resume his search for gold. And he knows that the evil he had seen at Talimeco still lives: "He had seen its long reach and the damage it had done. And he had felt it" (p. 320). In spite of his realization, however, Tovar remains loyal to his Adelantado, even to the end of the novel.

After Tovar's Indian marriage ceremony, a wedding well witnessed in a communal lodge, Tovar returns to the quarters of the Spaniards in time for Mass. He kneels to one side of De Soto and Ranjel and reflects:
Well might this Governor pray for guidance, for it was not gold he would be seeking when, a few hours hence, he set out again on his way. Daylight would find him entered in the lists of a grimmer journey (p. 324).

Tovar realizes that, once again in the wilderness, De Soto would be fighting for his life. And then he thinks of the paradox symbolized by the cross:

The cross was de Soto's weapon, but he bore it with pride. In avarice and pride the bands of horse and foot had entered into his train, of all sins the most mortal save that one sin for which there is no atonement (pp. 324-25).

Preparing to quit Cutifichique, De Soto twits Tovar:
"... has the bridegroom left the bride so soon?" and Tovar answers that it is the custom. From the ironic question and ironic answer stems a stichomythic exchange:

"... Just when I think I can use you again ..."
"You will use me again, my lord," . . . .
"Not a moon-struck man."
"Mayhap we are all moon-struck."
"What mean you?"
"I mean nothing, my lord" (p. 325).

But, of course, as De Soto well knows, Tovar means a great deal by his play upon the term "moon-struck." The moon-image, as Maud Bodkin points out, is an ancient one. The moon, which controls the tides, the fecundity of women, and the fertility of vegetation, represents the feminine principle. A moon-struck man may be, like Othello, woman-crazed or jealousy-maddened, but he may also be lunatic in other ways: he may have a non-sexual monomania. There is dramatic irony

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in the sharp exchange between "the man of will" and "the man of sensibility," for Tovar obviously does not realize that De Soto is a Promethean character who must continue to attempt to transcend his human condition. With this exchange, Lytle begins to spell out the meaning of the title of the novel; he completes the statement in the thoughts of Tovar, his central intelligence and "roving narrator," in the last pages of the last section.

In Part 7, "Mauvilla" (pp. 329-74), the penultimate section of *At the Moon's Inn*, Tovar sees the premonitions experienced at the final Mass in Cutifichique realized. There is a long time-break between Parts 6 and 7: a conversation between Silvestre and Ranjel, on the march, as to the date reminds Tovar that it is now October and that it was spring when the Spaniards left Cutifichique. Tovar recalls the hardships of crossing the mountains (Appalachians), the escape at Xuala of the hostage Lady of Cutifichique with a trunk of unbored pearls (p. 330). Again Lytle shows his understanding of the difficulties his historical frame presents him by relying on reflections of his protagonist to summarize routine details of the march.

At Athahatchi, De Soto meets the cacique Tascaluğa (Tuscaloosa), "a giant of a man," who does not rise when De Soto approaches (p. 331). Tascaluğa supplies De Soto with bearers but tells De Soto that he will deliver to him the women he has requested at Mauvilla (p. 333). Tovar has noted that "It had been a long time since the word gold had been
mentioned. Maize and women. This was all the Christians talked of these days" (p. 331). Tovar's observation, of course, does not include De Soto, who thinks of food and sex as a means to hold his army together so that he can discover the gold he still believes to be in Florida and establish an empire.

In his fortified town of Mauvilla (Mobile), Tascaluğa tells De Soto that he will not furnish him bearers or women and suggests that the Spaniards leave at once, if they wish to leave in peace. Even after such a rebuff, De Soto, who realizes that he and his men are greatly outnumbered and in the enemy's stronghold, wishes to rely on diplomacy. But an incident between the Constable and an insolent Indian brings about a fiercely fought battle which the Spaniards win, after firing the town. In this Battle of Mauvilla, the Christians kill twenty-five hundred Indians and lose only twenty-two men, although two hundred and fifty Christians are wounded.

During the battle, Tovar sees Tascaluğa's son "leap up with his arms outspread. In each hand he held a silver chalice used to bear Our Lord's blood in daily sacrifice for the sins of man . . ." (p. 345). After this episode of inverted symbolism, in which a pagan takes as prize religious artifacts, De Soto, at Moscoso's suggestion, gives the order to fire the town. Ironically, the Christians must rely on fire, symbolic of Promethean over-reaching and Satanic pride, to defeat pagans. For Tovar, "the man of sensibility," the irony becomes shockingly personal. Attacked by Tascaluğa's
son between two burning houses, Tovar, on his mare, defends himself with his lance and kills the young cacique immediately after the lance is inexplicably struck. He shivers as he sees an arrow piercing his lance near the middle: "So this had been the blow which almost knocked him from his seat. With this cross . . . , he said, and the words dried up in his head" (p. 355). A check of the relation of Ranjel shows how Lytle converts history into fiction. Ranjel records the freakish incident in one sentence: "The arrow shots were tremendous, and sent with such a will and force that the lance of one gentleman named Nuno de Tovar, made of two pieces of ash and very good, was pierced by an arrow in the middle, as by an augur, without being split, and the arrow made a cross with the lance." And so, from a brief account by De Soto's secretary, Lytle reinforces his controlling image with a new and, as it were, Providentially provided representation of the controlling symbol, the same symbol that the traditional Marshal of Seville toasted alone (p. 47), the same symbol that the Promethean De Soto, saying "There is but one fortune I trust . . . ," thrusts into the banquet table—the Cross of Santiago (p. 55).

Tovar realizes that De Soto has won a Pyrrhic victory at Mauvilla: "There was no way to disguise it: the victory, overwhelming as it was, carried for the Christians all the gloom and uncertainty of defeat" (p. 359). The men, many of whom are badly wounded, are now almost completely dispirited.

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38 Narratives, II, p. 127.
"But the worst blow of all was the loss of the pearls. This Tovar sensed in the changed attitude of the Governor" (p. 360). A great effort had brought no treasure. And Maldonado, as the men know, should soon arrive in the port of Ochuse (Mobile Bay) with his caravels loaded with supplies from Havana. The men wish to give up what they are certain is an ill-fated quest and return to Cuba and to Spain. And De Soto knows how his men feel. When Juan Gaytán attempts to lead an insurrection, De Soto boldly confronts him and, by force of will, maintains order (pp. 364-66).

The Mass of Thanksgiving, which De Soto orders to be given for Mauvilla-wounded, now recovered, is the climactic scene of the novel. The army, as everyone knows, will, in a day or two, move northward into the wilderness again. It is ironical that this Mass of Thanksgiving (which takes place not many years before the first Thanksgiving in New England) is to be the last Mass in which the Host is held up to the altar. Because the moulds and wheat were burned at Mauvilla, all future Masses are to be "dry Masses, as are sometimes held at sea." Tovar reflects that "This was in no way so comforting as seeing God's actual body consumed for the sins of man . . ." and that "... all had gathered in great humility of spirit, in thanksgiving, and with melancholy and some fear" (p. 367).

In the middle of the service, which moves the men deeply, for they realize as never before how ephemeral human life is, Father Francisco stops short just before he is to
eat God's body and, tears streaming down his cheeks, calls authoritatively: "Hernando de Soto, come before me" (p. 367). De Soto immediately obeys. Francisco asks De Soto if he believes that what Francisco holds in his hands is "the body of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God"; and when De Soto answers "Yes, Father, I believe it," Francisco asks him: "How is it you do not take the advice of your captains and go out of this land, where for your sake this people have perished and are perishing? Or hearken unto me who have often warned and implored you?" Then the priest, in a stream of impassioned rhetoric, delivers his ultimatum:

"If until now you have not hearkened unto men, listen to the Son of the Virgin, who speaks to you. By this God, whom I hold here in my hands, I warn, I beseech, I command that you now do that which you have not wished to do, which in your stubborn avarice and pride you have refused—Go out of this land! Follow the command of this Lord and I promise you escape for all. Disobey His command and receive chastisement by His hand" (p. 368).

De Soto, still kneeling, says nothing; the priest rapidly completes the service and withdraws. Tovar, lifting up his eyes, sees, in the first light of morning, the moon (the regulator-deranger of tides and of life) just as he hears De Soto's command: "Fetch me the priest."

At first Francisco refuses to go to De Soto; and Tovar, becoming angry, sees "Father Francisco . . . standing in all the arrogance of spiritual pride, his face flushed . . ." and reflects that the priest's voice was "loud and slightly quavering" as he refused to obey the Governor (p. 369). Tovar, temper flaring, seizes Francisco and threatens to drag
him to De Soto. Escorted by Tovar, the priest presents himself to De Soto; and the Governor, like a Roman orator, makes an eloquent plea to his army. Skilfully beginning his speech with an ethical appeal in which he presents himself as a man of good will, De Soto says that Father Francisco spoke "strange words" regarding him because he actually believed God was speaking through him. Adding that Francisco "has ever been God's faithful and earnest servant," De Soto points out that "--it is passing strange that God chose the time of our greatest trial... to call upon me, the Adelantado, to abandon the conquest I have dedicated to Him. To flee the land! To flee it empty-handed and with our work undone. To abandon Florida yet unpacified, abandon the thousands of souls now living in darkness; leave them without the knowledge of the only faith and the only salvation" (p. 370).

When De Soto says that he cannot think the priest understood what he was asking, Francisco steps forward in a fury to ask what he means. De Soto answers: "In God's name you attempted to usurp my authority" (p. 372). And then De Soto states that he will decide matters concerning the army and that the priests and his brothers may guide in matters "pertaining to the welfare of... souls" (p. 372).

The priest, superb casuist, puts De Soto into a dilemma with a single question to which he demands a yea or nay answer: "Is it not true, my lord, that you, a layman, inevitably embroiled in the world's Corruption, are less fit to interpret God's will than I, God's anointed [sic] priest?"
With irony, he adds: "No equivocation Senor" (p. 372).

Tovar sees that the men, who have been a little slow to understand the cunning of the question, are avidly awaiting their commander's answer. De Soto hesitates only briefly; then he says: "Heed me, priest. ... I believe it is God's will that this land be pacified. Pacified it shall be. There is your answer" (p. 373). De Soto stands waiting for the pronouncement of heresy, but Francisco merely comments in a low voice that the answer, then, is nay and adds that "The devil knows how to wear the raiment of Paradise" (p. 373).

Tovar, in his thoughts, sums up the situation from the viewpoint of orthodoxy:

Father Francisco was right: Nay it was. He had set his private will outside the guidance and discipline of the Church, the will which, unrestrained, serves only the senses, as the senses only the flesh. He a layman, had undertaken to interpret God's mind. This is what his decision meant, no matter if he denied or disguised it. From here it is only one step further to supplant God's will by man's and call it divine--man made God, man with all his frailties and pride setting up the goods of the world over the good of heavenly grace (p. 374).

Tovar's recapitulation of the scene is a statement of the form of gnosticism that Voegelin and others have called "the puritan heresy." From this point on, the remaining action can only be falling action, to use dramatic terminology. Tovar, still overcome by what has just happened, asks himself: "Where would this bring him [De Soto]? Where would it lead

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them all?" He turns, faces the wilderness and his answer in
the form of "a cold wind . . . , sweeping sharply down the
plain" (p. 374).

Father Francisco, of course, attempts to usurp De
Soto's secular authority, albeit presumably for the good of
all of the Spaniards, including both De Soto and himself. As
Carter points out, the climax of the novel "... prefigures
the modern dilemma in which spiritual and temporal authori-
ties confusedly usurp one another's realm." 40

Between the Battle of Mauvilla and the beginning of
Part 8, "The Conquest" (pp. 377-400), the ironically entitled
concluding section of the highly ironic novel, two years
pass (p. 378). At the beginning of Part 8, Tovar looks with
misgivings at the gaps in the walls of a town and reflects
that now the Governor, relying on guile, leaves walls down
and gates open to show the Indians his disdain for them. He
reflects on how much the army has grown: "Not a man lacked
a slave. . . . Service they did render, but for every hanega
of maize the Christians ate it took two for the slaves" (p.
377). 41 And he listens to the new interpreter, a boy from
Cutifichique who knows little Spanish, as he tries to under-
stand five Indians of five different tribes. Silvestre com-

40 Carter, p. 294.

41 This reflection is reminiscent of the Indian Three
Basket's thoughts on slavery in Faulkner's "Red Leaves,"
Collected Stories of William Faulkner (New York: Random
ments: "Ortiz was the greatest loss we've had, . . . In four words he could have understood what it has taken this boy all day to make out" (p. 377). And Tovar, who has endured two years of fruitless marching in the wilderness since Mauvilla, states, in querulous conversation with a dispirited compatriot that Ortiz was lost at Autiamque. The account from which Lytle fashioned the succinct expository remarks about Ortiz reads as follows:

Jean Ortiz died in Autiamque. . . . Thenceforth a lad taken in Cutifichique, who had learned somewhat of the language of the Christians, served as the interpreter. The death was so great a hindrance to our going, whether on discovery or out of the country, that to learn of the Indians what would have been rendered in four words, it became necessary now to have the whole day. . . .

Thinking back on the battle with the Indians at Chickasaw which ended in a stalemate, Tovar realizes that the success of the expedition is dependent on De Soto's will (p. 384). Though De Soto is ill, perhaps even yet "He might . . . stumble upon the golden city . . ." (p. 385).

The north wind that chills Tovar after De Soto's heresy does not foretell a golden city: it foretells death and corruption. At Guachoya, on the east bank of the Mississippi (near Natchez) the dying De Soto orders Tovar to carry out a massacre against the Nilco people to the north. Tovar, "the man of sensibility," carries out his orders and rushes back to Guachoya to tell De Soto, "the man of will" of his success

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42 Narratives, I, pp. 146-47.
(one-hundred Indians killed, many wounded).

But Tovar is too late. When he returns, he finds that De Soto has died. He goes to De Soto's quarters, where he experiences a vision in which he is at last enlightened as to the meaning of the abortive expedition. De Soto's prostrate armor-clad corpse appears to Tovar and addresses him:

"It was not like you, Nuño, to tarry."
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
"My lord?"
"Yes, Nuño?"
The words were clear. . . .
"Then I have come in time," he said.
"There's only one time at the Moon's Inn" (p. 397).

Again Lytle uses a stichomythic exchange to re-emphasize his controlling image. There is only one time for a man to decide whether he will pursue vain delusions or accept the limitations of human existence while hoping for another existence the nature of which his mind is incapable of understanding.

Tovar answers: "... You do not lie at the Moon's Inn (i.e., in the open). You are in Guachoya, with a roof over your head. ... I shall see that this is remedied."

Tovar hears: "There is no remedy. ... It is the Moon's Inn for all, ... ." [i.e., man cannot escape his human condition]. Then Tovar hears a catalogue of guests at the Moon's Inn: Ayllón, De Narváez, the great Admiral, Compañón, De Leon. . . . "Where lie they now? Where Hernando de Soto . . . ?" Tovar answers: "My lord, you lie before me." And Tovar adds: "This time, at least," . . . "I did not fail you. . . . The will remains. . . ." And Tovar hears:

"The will is not enough. It is not enough for one
bent on his own destruction. Did I lead the chivalry of Spain to the sacred groves, the blessed land of Jerusalem? No, I am the alchemical captain, the adventurer in gold. Gold the wanderer. Pursuing, I found the world's secret, the alkahest and the panacea. They are one and the same. The universal menstruum is this... [i.e., this dust to which all men return] Slowly from the ground the arm raised up, the bony hand reached forth, white and shining, and the voice, thin and distant, "Only the dead can prophesy" (pp. 397-98).

His vision suddenly coming to an end, Tovar feels a presence in the door behind him, leaps up, steps back, and sees in the moonlight, now coming through the doorway, upon the floor where the casque had lain--nothing. He rushes out and witnesses the reburial of De Soto in the Mississippi. Moscoso orders the men of the burial party to go quietly to their quarters: they move into the shadow. But in the last paragraph of the novel, a one-sentence paragraph, "Tovar moved forward into the light" (p. 400).

One of Lytle's sources, "The Gentleman of Elvas," in an obituary paragraph, suggests that De Soto was a historic example of the tragic hero, similar in some respects to figures portrayed by Boccaccio in his De Casibus Virorum Illustrium and by Chaucer in his The Monk's Tale. "The Gentleman" writes: "He [De Soto] was advanced by fortune, in the way she is wont to lead others, that he might fall the greater depth..." But Lytle does not make De Soto his protagonist; he begins the novel with Tovar and ends it with Tovar. As Carter points out, "We are not told [De Soto's] thoughts;

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43 Ibid., p. 161.
we know him as we know an acquaintance—by watching his actions and hearing him talk."^{44} Nuno de Tovar is the protagonist of *At the Moon's Inn* as clearly as Quentin Compson is the protagonist of *Absalom, Absalom!* As Quentin observes the fall of the Promethean Sutpen in the light of his own experiences in an attempt to understand his part in the human predicament, so Tovar observes his Promethean Adelantado, though not nearly so self-consciously. Does Tovar understand his experiences, particularly the culminating one of the dialogue with the spirit of De Soto? The answer—within the context of Lytle's novel, of course—would seem to be no; for, as in the cases of Ivan Karamazov (who converses with the devil) and Tate's unnamed visitor (who reflects at the cemetery gate), there is no "knowledge carried to the heart."^{45} Tovar's last words to De Soto's ghost are "My lord, say you have forgiven me that one time in Cuba . . ." (p. 398). Had he understood what the ghost of "the alchemical captain" told him, his last words might well have been "My lord, say you have forgiven me for all that I did to help bring us to this place." Be that as it may, there is no doubt as to the nature of the light into which Tovar steps after the midnight reburial of De Soto's sand-weighted, skin-wrapped corpse in the middle of the Mississippi (p. 400). Ironically, Tovar's last act in

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^{44} Carter, p. 292.

^{45} Allen Tate, "Ode to the Confederate Dead," ll. 87-88.
the novel is to step into the moonlight. Tovar never fully understands the nature of his failure, just as Henry Brent, his twentieth-century successor in the Lytle canon, never fully understands the causes of his defeat.
CHAPTER IV

A NAME FOR EVIL: A SEARCH FOR ORDER¹

A Name for Evil, first published in 1947,² is Andrew Lytle's depiction of the effects of a perverted view of tradition. Lytle's intention in this novel has been generally misinterpreted because reviewers and critics have been primarily concerned with the discovering and pointing out of Jamesian correspondences and similarities.³ Of course, Lytle wrote A Name for Evil with The Turn of the Screw in mind as a sort of frame; but the psychological novel he created is quite different from James's enigmatic tale. Lytle's narrator, talking of himself and his problems, leads us to an awareness of the nature of his psychosis. He shows us how he destroyed his wife and unborn child and thereby rendered his life virtually meaningless in the traditional

¹ Adapted from the present writer's "A Name for Evil: A Search for Order," Mississippi Quarterly, 23 (Fall 1970), 371-82.


Southern-Agrarian context he had chosen for it.

Henry Brent's struggle and ultimate defeat occur within a definite time and place. Lytle, we recall, states that "there is little or no natural landscape, no recognizable cities, in myth or fairy tale. This is a crucial distinguishing feature between myth and fiction which deals with myth. They have the archetypes in common, but in fiction the action must be put in a recognizable place and society." The action of A Name for Evil takes place in a tobacco- and grain-growing area in the southeastern part of the United States during World War II. Lytle makes good use of physical description of The Grove, the house and run-down farm which Henry Brent, with Ellen, his wife, buys to live on and to regenerate. The Grove is situated in limestone country: one of its fields has sinkholes and subterranean streams, an important fact in a key scene—but more of this later...

Brent, a middle-aged writer, tells his own story, apparently in an effort to achieve some sort of catharsis. His first-person narration, rendered in a sometimes faltering involuted style, is suited to his character. By reviewing and probing his thoughts and actions, he shows the cause

4 Lytle, Hero, pp. 188-89.

5 According to Carter (p. 285), "Aside from the obvious ability [Lytle's novels] all reflect, they bear no superficial resemblance to one another. Since Lytle varies his texture to suit his story, they do not even have a common style."
of his trouble: his solipsism. For it is a self-centered Henry Brent who comes to The Grove, which was once owned by his Civil War ancestor, one Major Brent.\(^6\) Putting the house and farm in order, Brent believes, will delay his achievement of order in his own life: "If it was to be finished, we would have to do of necessity what once had seemed a labor of love; that is, do a great part of the work ourselves. This would take years out of our life and make of these years confusion and disorder, for a house must be so arranged that there is a place for everything" (p. 189).

The controlling image of Lytle's novel is suggested by the name The Grove. In antiquity heathen peoples planted groves which they used as places for the reception of images. Manasseh, King of Judah, blasphemed by planting a grove in honor of Baal\(^7\) and was put to death for his sins by a jealous and wrathful Jehovah. Like Manasseh, Henry Brent worships a false god; but Brent's false god is something he has created in his mind. Brent is a creator of his world as he perceives it.\(^8\) And in this world—which for dramatic purposes Lytle,

\(^6\) Brent, the past participle of the Middle English verb brenne, to burn, provides an appropriate surname for the Promethean-Satanic Civil War officer and for his suffering twentieth-century collateral descendant.

\(^7\) See 2 Kings xxxi,3: "For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal... 7: "And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house...."

with bad country roads, makes isolated—Henry Brent, as regenerator (creator), must oppose the Satanic Major Brent, dead seventy-five years. Major Brent appears to Henry Brent and to the superstitious Negro hired man, Johnny (who imparts the history of Major Brent to the narrator as he received it from his father, one of the Major's Negroes). And so Lytle's novel, at first glance, seems to be based upon a synthesis of *Paradise Lost* and *The Turn of the Screw*.

There is, however, dramatic irony in Lytle's recasting of the Edenic myth through the consciousness of Henry Brent: Brent obviously does not realize that he is interlacing his narrative with Gnostic symbols. He considers himself a traditionalist and hates the force of evil that exists in his world. This force, which threatens to destroy what he seeks to rebuild, is Major Brent. He knows that Major Brent despises tradition: Johnny has told him how the Major disinherited his sons, kept his daughter a spinster, brought the grain fields of *The Grove* to a state of perfection, and then—perversely and egoistically approving sterility—allowed the grain to stand in the fields until it rotted. Yet Henry Brent, a man plagued with a "chronic sterility" which has caused his marriage to be childless, a man as self-centered in the mid-twentieth century as Major Brent was in the mid-nineteenth, is unable to see that he is as much an enemy of the principles of the traditional society that he professes to support as was his Civil War ancestor. And, at the end of the novel, Henry Brent becomes the Major Brent he has created
in his mind.

Lytle achieves this Doppelgänger effect by artfully arranging narrative and scene to show the psychosis of his protagonist. Lytle gives his novel unity of place (all of the scenes take place at The Grove, either in the house or outbuildings or in the surrounding fields); taking the year as his unit, he gives it unity of time; and he makes all of the action, physical and psychological, lead to the catastrophe. Frequently employing dramatic irony, Lytle shows the deepening of Brent's psychosis: throughout his narrative, Brent continually condemns himself unknowingly; and, finally, holding his dead wife in his arms, he fails to realize that he has killed her.

At the beginning of his narrative, Brent tells of buying The Grove, of his plans to regenerate it, and of his arrival in early spring with Ellen, who refuses to allow him to carry her over the threshold because he has carried her over two thresholds already. She runs from him and slips into the house. He cannot open the door to follow her—this foreshadows her death at the end of the novel, when, startled, she flees from him.

Brent tells of these things, but in his narrating he renders vivid dramatic scenes with excellent dialogue, for his proper work is writing.

When the narrator reprimands Johnny for not cleaning up the little room upstairs, Johnny answers that it is Major Brent's room: "He a hard man. He don't like folks project-
ing wid his things" (p. 178). And when the narrator asks him if he believes in ghosts, Johnny evades the question by describing in detail (with the remarks of Major Brent, preserved in Negro dialect) how Major Brent relentlessly drove his sons and field hands. Major Brent is very real to the superstitious Johnny, who confuses in his mind the past (the stories his father told him) and the present. But, later in the novel, Johnny cannot see Henry Brent's nephew, Moss, though Moss is very real to Henry. Obviously, Johnny has heard no stories about the young World War II soldier, and he cannot see the shade of a man whom he has never known by reputation.

After the room-cleaning confrontation, the narrator admits that Johnny "in his way . . . had shown respect for its [The Grove's] tradition. . . . For almost the years of his life Johnny had seen owners and tenants abuse house and land. It was to his honor that he kept faith with the memory of Major Brent, the only man within his knowledge who had brought The Grove to its highest moment and then sustained it. In his tradition-respecting mind Johnny could find little help from the dead. Countryman that he was, he was too familiar with the natural order: the dead are dead. So dramatically . . . he went beyond the laws of nature and endowed the Major with the mystery of immortality and its limitless prerogatives" (pp. 181-82). And then the narrator, with the flash of insight sometimes granted to the mentally disturbed, in his discordant style characterizes himself:

I am not a romantic. The true romantic has hidden
for his hat (Jungian symbol used by Conrad in his Doppelgänger story "The Secret Sharer"), sees against the windowpane the face of the uninvited visitor he has seen on the gallery, and—like James's governess-narrator—realizes that the intruder has come for someone else. As the governess frightens Mrs. Grose, Henry Brent, by putting his face against the pane at the place where the intruder's appeared to him, frightens Johnny as he enters. And then, after Brent describes the intruder to Johnny (a continuation of the governess-Mrs. Grose parallel), he asks: "Then you've seen him?" and Johnny replies: ". . . Sho', I've seed him. . . . Why that's Major Brent . . . I sees him all the time" (p. 206). Whereupon the narrator discloses his reaction to Johnny's answer:

I knew that sooner or later I would have to have it out with Johnny. . . . I must discover just where Johnny's loyalty lay. I must know what he saw . . . exactly what communication existed between him and the former master of The Grove. I come right out with it. I do not speak of ghosts or apparitions. I speak of Major Brent. To give a name to evil, if it does nothing else, limits its range and that is the beginning of accepting it [italics supplied]. (pp. 206-207)

After talking more with Johnny about Major Brent and learning that the Major "doan rest easy" because "all the meanness he done plague him" (p. 208), the narrator makes this self-revealing observation: "I had been fairly certain that Johnny saw no more than all those who believe in ghosts see, that is, the shadow of their imaginations, filled by old stories, myths which grow like moss about the ruin of the cornerstone." Then he adds: "But this was not what I saw.
What I saw, I saw alone" (p. 209).

The narrator, concerned lest the failure of his hopes to provide his wife with material comforts and "status equal to [his] love for her" (p. 218) threaten his manhood, works on reviews and essays in his study "to get the material for the campaign" (p. 219). He has to mortgage the property for money to add to the money gained from the sale of his wife's ring (the circle—the form of the mandala and Ouroboros of the Gnostics—becomes a dominant symbol at the end of the novel). Thinking of the mortgage and of other time-money relationships, he says: "... I must have been a little mad. I dared not look the timepiece in the face but always hurried by with averted eye ..." (p. 220). And in Jung's explication of the lapis-Christ parallel, we find this statement:

The Christian receives the fruits of the Mass for himself personally and for the circumstances of his own life in the widest sense. The alchemist, on the other hand, receives the fructus arboris immortalis not merely for himself but for ... the perfecting of the coveted substance. ... [S]ince he is the redeemer of God and not the one to be redeemed, he is more concerned to perfect the substance than himself.11

Henry Brent's search for order, therefore, is dependent upon his regeneration of The Grove as a mark of material success, that is, as a measure of his manhood. "The redeemer of God and not the one to be redeemed," he becomes a sort of creator himself, who must oppose the force of evil represented in his mind by Major Brent. Although he does not realize it,

11 Jung, p. 352.
Henry Brent is a modern gnostic.

For a while Henry Brent hopes to pass The Grove on to his brother's son, Moss, who mysteriously returns to The Grove from the South Pacific, where he has been serving in the war against Japan. Though Moss, in a stichomythic exchange with Henry in the study that is suggestive of a person arguing with himself, seems to doubt the existence of Major Brent, he agrees to take the night watch to protect Ellen, while Henry agrees to take the day watch. Moss is to live in an old office in the yard, his presence known to no one else except Johnny. There is subtle dramatic irony in the narrator's account of his introduction of Johnny to Moss: "I said, 'Lad, this is Johnny. He will look after your needs.' Johnny gave a quick glance to the corner where Moss was, stiffened slightly--only I would have noticed it--and then stood there with respectful dignity, hat in hand, looking not at but just to the side of Moss's position. In any other situation I would have smiled at his cunning. Nobody could trap him into admission of seeing anything." He adds: "Moss turned, smiled in his charming way, and nodded. . . . I never saw a more difficult situation handled by both parties with greater ease or discretion . . ." (p. 235). Then, in the presence of Moss, he elicits from Johnny more of the story of Major Brent's perverse attacks on tradition--how he disinherited his sons, deeded The Grove to his spinster daughter, and committed "that last affront to tradition, the unmarked grave" (p. 236). And musingly he sums up the situation bet-
ter than he realizes: "... where will it lead me ... this cold scent, but where all false trails lead—back upon myself?" (p. 238)

Shortly after this, the narrator finds Ellen in the garden, which is some distance from the house, and learns that, hoping to surprise him, she has been regenerating it. Suspecting that her interest in the garden is due to a malignant influence of Major Brent's, he arranges to have Johnny help her. At one point he almost tells her of Moss's presence at The Grove, but he decides not to do so. After spending idyllic afternoons at a nearby creek swimming and picnicking, and after working on the interior of the house (during which they engage in a verbal exchange about jugglers reminiscent of Shakespearean bawdry), they return to the garden to re-examine and discuss it. Johnny, on duty as Ellen's helper, supplies necrological information: projecting from the hexagonal springhouse like the spokes of a wheel are the six graves of Major Brent's wives and housekeepers, five of whom died in childbirth.

The garden is at once a Christian and a Jungian symbol: it is a symbol of Eden and man's state before the fall; and it is a mandala, an archetypal symbol of man's struggle to achieve order and of his attempt to group all the facets of life about a center—the self. According to Johnny, Major Brent mysteriously disappeared after observing his perfect, but unharvested, crop from his throne-like chair and had no grave known to man; this suggests that the sardonic Major,
when he designed the garden, considered the springhouse his symbolic grave, his inversion of the fountain of life.

When Ellen leaves the garden, the narrator first fears that she is in danger from Major Brent. Later, at the house, he sees Moss, apparently hypnotized, walking toward the rotten rail of the still unrepaired balcony and realizes that it is he whom Major Brent wishes to destroy at this time. The narrator calls his nephew's name and saves him from falling to the bricks below. In another stichomythic exchange Moss exasperates the narrator by disclaiming knowledge of Major Brent; and the narrator knows that he will be hard-pressed to save Moss, his prospective heir, from the tradition-despising enemy.

As Moss and the narrator part, the latter broods about Major Brent's presence at The Grove and decides that the Major is being punished for the misdeeds he committed during his life: "To be neither of the world nor altogether out of it—that was his punishment" (pp. 266-67). Again he fears Major Brent has selected Ellen (woman, "the carrier of tradition") as victim in a sacrificial act intended to win him his freedom from "the blur of mortality." The narrator enters his wife's bedroom and, jealous of Major Brent, quizzes her enigmatically, but unmercifully. To assert his manhood and his right as husband, he extinguishes the light by pressing his hand "on the hot circle [of] the lamp chimney" and takes her by force (p. 271).

The next morning, Brent, remorseful, decides that he
and Ellen must flee the place; but he knows that first he must deal with Moss. He goes to the old office where Moss is staying and sees that the bed has not been slept in; he finds Johnny and commands him to take him to the place where Major Brent looked over the fields (with their perfect crop) for the last time. When they reach the field, now overgrown with trees and underbrush, Johnny refuses to enter. The narrator goes on alone into what is now forest (symbol of the unconscious) and sees Moss. He calls out to him, but Moss disappears into a sinkhole from which the sound of running water comes: "How long I remained staring I do not know, long enough to feel the dangerous pull of the subterranean sound, promising release, escape from the unbearable, the lull of utter rest and oblivion" (p. 278). Saved from this Lethean attraction by the sudden realization that he still has someone to protect, the narrator looks up and sees, on the other side of the sinkhole, Major Brent with the triumphant look of a carnivorous beast on his face, but "no satiety on those lips[, which] still hungered" (p. 279).

Distraught, the narrator hurries back to the house, only to find that Ellen has gone to town. He tortures himself with the thought that she has gone to Major Brent. When she returns from her visit to his brother, she tells him that Moss is dead, that the Army has notified Moss's parents that he has been dead three months. This, of course, is the climax of the novel: from this point the action is falling. When, a little later, the narrator tells Johnny that Moss has
been dead three months, the Negro says: "A mile don't mean nothen to a dead man" (p. 290). The narrator reaffirms that he saw Moss at The Grove and asks Johnny if he saw him. Johnny replies that he never saw him, that he threw the food intended for Moss to the chickens, and that he made the bed one time. At the end of the scene, Johnny suggests that Moss's ghost came to tell the narrator something: "Maybe he done tole you, kin you cipher hit" (p. 291).

After a supper in which Henry and Ellen drink a toast to the memory of Moss (a sort of communion), Henry announces that "his [Moss's] death is our salvation" (p. 298) and that he is going to take Ellen away from The Grove, as the place is haunted. Then she tells him she is pregnant. He is shocked that his "chronic sterility" should have disappeared so suddenly. Regarding the pregnancy as a sort of miracle, he comments: "Now I knew that my good daemon had deliberately led me to The Grove. Not to escape the accident of the world but to come into my own. I was now to be the head of a family, a true family, returned to my proper place, and that place physically and spiritually of a sound and explicable history" (p. 300). As everything in Henry Brent's life revolves about himself, he thinks in the first-person singular on such an occasion.

Brent lives in a state of elation during the remainder of the fall season (his changes in mood suggest manic-depressive tendencies). With insight that seems uncanny to the neighbors and to Johnny, he harvests the tobacco crop just
before a frost which damages the crops of others. And, one night in the barn, where the tobacco is being cured, he sees Major Brent again: "His face, as red as the coals he was hovering over, distinctly carried an appeal, but it was so loathsome in its naked directness he must have seen how it repelled me. In a flash he was threatening me, and the cold fury of it left me shivering in the heat of the barn" (p. 305).12

Stating that Major Brent must have known he was preparing The Grove for his unborn child, Henry comments that he knew the Major would turn his evil upon the child (p. 307). And then he says:

False romantic that I was when I first came with my idea, how was I to know when I bought a run-down farm to restore that I had bought nothing, that the fiction to own, in spite of deed and possession, describes the most ephemeral of all artifices? How was I to know that I had put myself in way of the past and the future, bemused by the mad fancy that I could reach into history and regenerate, a function proper only to a god? [Italics supplied]

And Henry continues his description of his thoughts immediately after seeing Major Brent in the barn:

... it came to me with the suddenness of revelation: was not my idea the obverse of Major Brent's act, with the difference that he had died unrepentant and the vanity of his act bound him in torment to the shadowy air of the place, haunting it until that time he could work his release? ... Unpurged, unregen-

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12 Here Lytle is using the Dantean-Shakespearean-Miltonic representation of punishment by heat and cold. In many parts of A Name for Evil he interweaves descriptions of the four elements (important in mandala symbolism, as well as in Renaissance poetry).
erate spirit that he was, he would know only to seek his release through a repetition of the original error (p. 308).

Major Brent, then, represents the tradition-despising evil principle ("... Major Brent. To give a name to evil ..." [pp. 206-207]). Preferring chaos to order, this devil hovering over the coals in the firing barn would again destroy family and tradition. But gleefully reflecting that phantoms are beyond history and only think they may perpetuate it, Henry goes to the house to warn Ellen, who is, of course, quite upset when he finally tells her that he has seen Major Brent.

Early in December, Henry's brother, a successful businessman, arrives from town in response to a letter from Ellen. He reprimands the narrator for telling ghost stories to his pregnant wife and promises to supply the couple a house in town.

But in January, shortly after Christmas ("We spent a quiet Christmas. ..." [p. 319]; the only statement the narrator makes concerning either of the two most important days in the Christian calendar), fate in the form of weather delays the removal to town. Rain, sleet, snow, and a steadily dropping temperature cover everything with ice and snow. The narrator takes Ellen to the garden to show her its beauty, perfected by snow and ice, and made eerie by fog. They become lost. In an attempt to find the gate, he leaves her in the vicinity of the springhouse (with its Christian-Ouroboros serpent-fountain and its six graves). Unable to find the
gate, he begins to move in circles to find Ellen. Suddenly he sees her, head down, apparently listening to something. He screams her name in warning. Startled, she looks at him, backs away, saying, "No, no, no." Then the narrator sees Major Brent, dressed as a bridegroom, reaching forth his arms for her. Shouting, the narrator dashes forward. Ellen leaps upon the rotten platform of the springhouse and falls through it. The narrator rushes to her side and lifts her: "Already I knew what it was I held in my arms, and I knew that at last Major Brent had triumphed and I was alone" (p. 327).\(^\text{13}\)

The circling that the narrator does to find his wife is, of course, symbolic of his solipsism, as is the mandala-shaped garden in which he moves. At the end of the novel he is at the center of his spiral. Probably Ellen, a frail woman, highly nervous because of her husband's mental condition, her pregnancy, and the eeriness of the garden, thinks, when she sees her husband just before she falls to her death, that she is seeing Major Brent. And, in effect, Henry Brent has become Major Brent: he is the jaguar leaping for his own image.\(^\text{14}\)

One critic has said of A Name for Evil that "this novel seems the best single refutation of Agrarian-traditionalist positions that has been produced either by its [sic]
This statement is wrong. In *A Name for Evil* Andrew Lytle depicted what he intended to depict—the fatal effects of a distorted, private view of tradition. To do this, he used what he had learned from Henry James (form and need to dramatize), from Jung and other psychologists (archetypal symbolism), and from Joyce (epiphany and secular communion). But, most of all, he used what he had learned through experience, of a people and a country.

It is easy to think of Henry Brent's narration as the tale of a completely psychotic intellectual who is desperately trying to achieve some sort of catharsis through writing. According to this approach, there is one Henry Brent in *A Name for Evil* (Carter refers to him as a "daft Agrarian"). However, there are actually two Henry Brents in the novel, and by means of the two Henry Brents Lytle achieves irony and ambiguity. A brief examination of a frequently anthologized Lytle short story, "Mr. MacGregor," shows the subtlety of the method of narration of *A Name for Evil*.

As Madison Jones points out, the fight between Mr. MacGregor and his Negro slave Rhears took place when the narrator, MacGregor's son, was eight years old. "But it is the man, many years later," Jones continues, "who is telling the story and whose garrulous comments, first, clarify for us the


16 Carter, p. 295.
immediate significance of that remembered action and, second, indirectly apply that significance to the narrator's own predicament." Jones contrasts the speech to which the narrator was accustomed as an eight-year-old:

"I have whipped Della," says Mister McGregor to his wife, "and sent her to the field for six months. If at the end of that time she has learned not to forget her manners, she may take up again her duties here."

with the speech of the narrator:

Rhears warn't no common field hand. He was proud, black like the satin in widow-women's shirtwaists, and spoiled. And his feelens was bad hurt. The day before, Pa had whupped Della, and Rhears had had all night to fret and sull over it. . . .

And Jones states: "This contrast in manners of speech . . . is the strategy by which the reader is drawn, with perfect finesse, into the real center of the story. The ground is thus prepared for those self-revelatory remarks of the narrator which complete the description of his present condition and also point to the cause of it."18

Both "Mr. MacGregor" and A Name for Evil are dual-vision narratives. They are told in the first-person by protagonists who report events that occurred in their past and reappraise (or attempt to reappraise) the significance of the events in the light of acquired maturity.

A Name for Evil, however, differs from "Mr. MacGregor" in that it does not cover a wide time span. The action the

18 Ibid., p. 367.
narrator Henry Brent renders (he is a writer) took place during World War II: he received a letter from his nephew Moss, who was serving in the South Pacific (p. 217). However, he never makes clear the time of his writing of the story. Of course, we know that the book was published in 1947, but we must look for evidence within the story. We find very little. The narrator gives us no information about himself at the time of the writing of the story. At the end he simply says: ". . . I knew that at last Major Brent had triumphed and I was alone" (p. 327).

We can, however, surmise that Brent is writing the story only a few years, at most, after the death of his wife and unborn child. From the recurring flashes of self-castigating irony, and from his failure to condemn his former self for the destruction of his beautiful wife, his unborn heir, and his agrarian dream, it seems that Brent is in a state of partial recovery from his psychosis at the time of narration. At the beginning of the novel, after he has reported the westward movement of his ancestors, Brent says: "To yearn for the West is simply to yearn for death. Why was it given to me, to me alone, to understand it like a prophet and to suffer it like a martyr?" We note that he writes "was it given," not "has it been given" and that he includes the ironic appositive intensive "to me alone."

When the narrator says he is not a romantic and explains the difference between the true romantic and the false romantic, he changes tenses. He begins by saying "I am not
"a romantic"; then a little later he says: "I am, I was that most unhappy of hybrids, the false romantic" (p. 182). The implication seems to be that at the time of writing he has only recently experienced a change in his philosophy of life and that now he considers himself cured of his "false romanticism." He seems now to consider himself some sort of realist.

Reporting how, after he received the letter from his nephew Moss, he thought of Moss as his heir and worried about financial failure ("to fail in a material way is to fail in manhood"), the narrator says:

> In such fashion I allowed myself to be taken off guard. There are no other words for it. What devious ways does not an imperfect apprehension take us? Had I been put on record before a jury of sensible men--I do not say peers, for where in the sweepings of this continent could the peer to such extravagant individualism have been found--and had I been asked . . . . Can you do it? I at least would have paused and assessed the odds for what they were worth . . . (p. 219). [Italics supplied]

Soon after writing this self-castigating irony, the narrator says: "The strangest comment on my state of mind was the way I was able to shut it (the subject of those regions where time is unknown) out of my own thoughts" (p. 220). And then he recalls: "'And where will it bring me,' I said aloud, 'this cold scent, but where all false trails lead--back upon myself?!'" (p. 238). And the narrator comments on himself as he was immediately after learning of Moss's death in the South Pacific: "I was not so mad as to think I was done with Major Brent. A presence of such formidable proportions would not frequent the scene of its mortal life
without some dreadful purpose. . . . Perhaps it was given me to understand this purpose but to remain tongue-tied.

To savor the saving words but feel them dry up overnight like a cut flower. To fail." And the narrator, attempting to explain his seeing of Major Brent, the evil principle, elaborates his concept of the human condition:

To fail because we, the sensible inheritors, will not face the need for any such return . . . . in our earth-bound blindness we see no farther than some sentimental explanation. This is our pitiful limitation. We cannot comprehend life out of time or without matter; yet we believe in it. We are attracted to and repelled by it. Witness the desperate need to come to grips with, to explain it, to take comfort from our fear of it, which is the fabric of all religious experience and the source of the great entelechies of philosophy and the ritual of churches (p. 286).

Obviously, Henry Brent recognizes that he experienced a period of madness when he searched for order in trying to re-create history and reestablish tradition through the re-generation of familial land. He adds:

But always the vocabulary fails. We have words: spirit, soul, life after death. We have myths: fallen angels, gardens of Paradise, the resurrection of the body. . . . Yet what are these but material definitions made by the senses recoiling from timely limits and from the corruption of the body into which, at last, they must disappear? How can we, fastened to and made dizzy by the turning of the earth, see but as the drunkard sees or speak other than with a thick tongue? (p. 286)

Henry Brent is still confused. Although he apparently looks on himself as a realist, he remains the man he described as "the false romantic." In his attempt to vindicate himself by his rhetoric, in his ignoring of his responsibility for his pregnant wife's death as evidenced by his terse report
that "Major Brent had won," he shows that he is only partially recovered and that he is still circling in an attempt to find himself. Unlike the self-centered Henry Brent, Lytle's next—and perhaps last—fictional protagonist, Jack Cropleigh, finds himself in self-sacrifice.
CHAPTER V

THE VELVET HORN: A LIFETIME'S DEATH IN LOVE

Lytle's last novel, The Velvet Horn, begun in 1948, shortly after the publication of A Name for Evil, and completed in 1957, is his summa mundi. In writing this carefully structured work, Lytle, the mature artist, used much that he had learned from Henry James, Lubbock, Joyce, Conrad, and Ford Madox Ford. But, as in his writing of A Name for Evil, the most important knowledge that Lytle put to use in The Velvet Horn was not acquired knowledge of technique but rather knowledge of a land and its people gained through experience.

The Velvet Horn is concerned primarily with three families in the Cumberland hills: the Cropleighs, the Crees, and the Rutters. (We recall that Lytle in his memoirs describes the family as the form "most perfect for man in his fallen condition.* 1 Of these families the most important characters are Lucius Cree and his uncle, Jack Cropleigh. The opening part of the five-part novel is presented through the consciousness of eighteen-year-old Lucius. As Lucius accompanies his uncle, a scholarly bachelor (who in his phi-

1 Lytle, "Wake," 587.
losophizing jokingly alludes to himself sometimes as Dionysus and sometimes as Christ) on a water-witching mission up the Peaks of Laurel (a Cumberland correlative of Mount Olympus), the novel appears, at first glance to be a Bildungsroman, an elaborated version of Lytle's "The Mahogany Frame," the initiation story based on a young boy's first duck hunt with his maternal uncle. As Krickel points out, in matriarchies the maternal uncle acts out the male role in the initiation ritual (separation of the youth from the community, transformation, and return to the community in the new role).  

Although the initiation of Lucius Cree into the problems of his human condition (problems which become psychically excruciating to him as he and his Uncle Jack descend the Peaks of Laurel) is an essential part of the controlling image of the novel (incest), it is Jack Cropleigh, the maternal uncle, rather than Lucius, who is the protagonist. Jack, whose initials are the same as Jesus Christ's, as one critic has pointed out, is the central intelligence and the "roving narrator." Lytle describes the genesis of his novel:

I . . . had a firm grasp upon the point of view, and I knew who the protagonist was. Everybody was the hero and heroine, but only Jack Cropleigh, the brother and uncle, could represent them, for Jack, the spiritual hermaphrodite, contained them all in his mind. He alone could suffer the entire myth. The

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point of view would therefore be that of the Roving Narrator, where the variety of the action might lie within the levels of his consciousness as it met the unconscious: time and eternity. Having set him apart with no life of his own, other than his entanglement with all life viewed by family and community, he was best suited to control as central intelligence, and his office as victim-savior could bring it all (the five sections of the novel) to a focus by his death.

With respect to time and eternity, Lytle says: "I now saw my two working parts of the structure: the moving present tense which is the world's illusion, and the eternal present tense which knows nothing of past or future but always is." Lytle's statements about his "victim-savior"-protagonist are reminiscent of T. S. Eliot's spokesman in the part of Four Quartets entitled "The Dry Salvages":

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint—
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
[Italics supplied]6

In the "East Coker" part of Four Quartets Eliot's spokesman says:

The dripping blood our only drink,
The bloody flesh our only food . . .

Jack Cropleigh's last words, "Christ! This cannibal world" (p. 368), precede this description of the final moments of his death:

4 Lytle, Hero, 189. 5 Ibid., 188.
The legs pushed forward as against some obstacle; his chin rose level with his forehead; the lips moved soundlessly. And then from his eyes there sped a light, in a perfect focus upon some point above, both luminous and sharp. After a while it could be seen its concentration was too perfect (p. 369).

Lytle in his Christian novel evidently had the idea of Eliot's Christian poem in his mind as he rendered Jack Cropleigh's self-sacrificial death in a poetic expression of Jack's passage out of time into timelessness. Trowbridge says the above passage makes it clear "That Jack's union is with the Word, which is light . . .".

Of The Velvet Horn Lytle says that as soon as he "began to feel the right limits of the structure" he was able "to deal with its formalities":

Within the various levels and distinctions of the mind, especially where it oscillates between conscious and unconscious, I could put the sense of eternity, the images of the past which are not past but forever quivering with immediacy [the recurring archetypal experiences]. Opposed to this, by closing the mind and letting the action take place as upon a stage, I could use the moving present tense, the action in time.

But, Lytle makes clear, the action of the novel is not governed by chronological time; indeed, The Velvet Horn has no beginning, middle, and end in the Aristotelian sense:

... this was not to proceed in a continuous movement of surface beginning, middle, and end. Each of the five sections was to be nearly complete within itself, the tensions of the action evoked by eternal knowledge acting against time's knowledge. The movement in time would allow the sections to be dramatically connected, each showing a whole but differently,

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7 Trowbridge, 67.  8 Lytle, Hero, p. 189
involving, I hoped, the fullest possibilities of the central image: incest. Not until the end of the book would the shock of meaning connect all the parts and the action be complete. There would be no way to turn to the end of the book and find out what had happened.

Lytle admits that "This [way of writing] puts a handicap upon reading, this juxtaposition and accumulation rather than the steady advance of a conflict, which is the way of naturalism and the oldest form of all, the simple art of narrative."¹⁰

Conrad, of course, employs such an impressionistic method particularly well in Lord Jim and Heart of Darkness. Albert J. Guerard in his discussion of Lord Jim says that the purpose of the method is "to create in the reader an intricate play of emotion and a rich conflict of sympathy and judgment, a provisional bafflement in the face of experience which turns out to be more complicated than we ever would have dreamed." And after citing as examples of Conrad's method The Great Gatsby, Remembrance of Things Past, and Ulysses, Guerard adds: "But the culminating triumph of Conradian impressionism is Absalom, Absalom! This austere masterpiece, by complicating each of Conrad's complications, helps us define the earlier experiment. We see the novel developing a musical form. But the main instruments are the reader's mind, feelings, nerves."¹¹ Guerard could well have included in his list of examples the novel that is probably the best work of

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Conrad's sometime collaborator, Ford Madox Ford: *The Good Soldier.*

Possibly Lytle, who expresses indebtedness to Ford for teaching him the mechanics of revision ("cleaning up as you go along"), has the technically almost perfect *The Good Soldier* in the back of his mind as a sort of frame when he began writing *The Velvet Horn,* just as he had *The Turn of the Screw* in mind when he began writing *A Name for Evil.* In writing *The Velvet Horn* Lytle used *progression d'effet,* the technique that Conrad used in *Heart of Darkness* and Ford used in *The Good Soldier.* Ford defines the technique as follows:

> In writing a novel we agreed that every word set on paper—every word set on paper—must carry the story forward and, that as the story progressed, the story must be carried forward faster and faster and with more and more intensity. That is called *progression d'effet,* words for which there is no English equivalent.

Discussing Ford's use of *progression d'effet,* Cassell says: "Difficult to define precisely, it [progression d'effet] involves the employment of all devices in order to gain verisimilitude and a sense of inevitability; all the conflicts and forces released by the author must ultimately coalesce, not so much by resolutions of heretofore unrevealed actions at the climax as by the accumulation of the reader's emotional responses and of his moral and intellectual evalua-

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tions. The focus is on the effect to be aroused cumulatively from combined effects throughout the novel.\textsuperscript{14}

As Lytle has said, each of the five parts of \textit{The Velvet Horn} tells essentially the same story.\textsuperscript{15} Each of the parts does tell the same story but with a variation in the telling which suggests to the reader that he is viewing a kaleidoscopic presentation. He gets the effect of what Lytle refers to as the "moving present tense" ("the action in time") and "the sense of eternity" ("the images of the past which . . . forever [quiver] with immediacy").\textsuperscript{16} \textit{The Velvet Horn} stands as a great prose poem, and to attempt to dissect it is to attempt murder. However, some sort of summary of the action rendered through the five parts is necessary to show the consummate skill of Lytle at his highest point of development as a novelist.

Part I, "The Peaks of Laurel"\textsuperscript{17} (pp. 3-96), begins with Sol Leatherbury's report of the presumably accidental death of Captain Joe Cree, the legal father of Lucius. Sol, "the woods boss," speaks in a poetical backwoods dialect. In his prologue Sol says:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Richard A. Cassell, \textit{Ford Madox Ford: A Study of His Novels} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 175.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Lytle, Conversation, Monteagle, Tenn., Aug. 2, 1971.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Lytle, \textit{Hero}, p. 189.
\item \textsuperscript{17} The five parts of \textit{The Velvet Horn} are named but not numbered. For convenience Roman numerals will be supplied in this study.
\end{itemize}
The tree.
The tree fell
Fell and killed Captain Joe Cree.
It waer a white oak. The widow [Lucius Cree's
Uncle Duncan Cropleigh's widow, Amelie, as we learn
in Part V] had as good a stand of timber as growed,
but hit topped aer tree she had. Hit was the line
tree. It had stood from the time of man...

The dust piled up like young horns [Lytle's in-
troductory allusion to this controlling metaphor].
Each stroke brought sweat but no man white-eyed on
me...

I seen Captain Cree too late. I hollered. He
taken no notice... He walked like that tree
would be proud to git out of his way...
The tree killed Captain Cree.
The tree (pp. 3-4).

Landess observes: "The tree which falls on Joe Cree
in the prologue to the first section is of course the arche-
typal tree of knowledge: Cree has discovered that Lucius is
not his son but the product of Julia's illicit conduct prior
to marriage. This discovery is too much for the proud man to
bear; and so, in an act perfectly symbolic, he commits sui-
cide, destroyed by his own new understanding of an old sin."18

The point of view in Part I is Lucius Cree's, and the
reader of the novel for the first time assumes that he will
be following a Cumberland Bildungsroman which takes place
during Reconstruction (1879, Lucius's nineteenth year: Part
I begins in August, the day before Lucius's eighteenth birth-
day).19 But Lucius—though he is a very important character,
upon whose initiation and search for identity the action of the novel as reinforced in the reader's mind by the controlling metaphor of "the velvet horn" inevitably depends—is not the protagonist. As Lytle has pointed out, Lucius's mentor, his maternal uncle, Jack Cropleigh, is the protagonist. Jack Cropleigh's consciousness serves as a means of bringing the five parts of the novel into focus. But, more importantly, Jack learns more than does anyone else in the novel: in the climactic scene in Part IV, "The Wake," Jack has a vision in which he realizes the meaning of the death of the habitually careful Joe Cree under the falling white oak.

In August, 1879, during a time of drought, Lucius accompanies his Uncle Jack up the mountain. Jack, who has the magical powers of water witching, has agreed to witch a well for "Cousin Frankie" Dunbaugh. Jack, in Part I, is Christ-Dionysus. Jack says of himself: "Christ never spent a hotter three days" (p. 8) and "... I'm the gift of salvation to dying cattle..." (p. 24). Little Eph [Dunbaugh] exclaims: "He's [Jack is] a bull"; and Jack counters with "Will your Baptist cows drink Bacchus water [water witched by a whiskey-drinking man like me]?") (p. 24) To which old Aunt Nanny adds: "Whoever heard of cows drinking baccy [tobacco] water?" (p. 25) Lytle is ironically foreshadowing the catastrophe of his novel by the double metaphor of the Dionysus-
At the end of the novel, in the catastrophe, it becomes clear that Jack, as victim-redeemer, represents Christ.

Going up the mountain, Lucius remembers how he had idealized the trip: "The switch would go down and they would dig there until they found water. There would be all the fun of camping out, hunting before day for meat. . . ." Then he thinks: "Well this was no fun." And Lytle signals a time shift by a device which he uses again and again: a sentence beginning with a lower-case letter set off by double spaces:

he pulled his hat over his eyes (p. 29).

The odor of the hatband, like Proust's madeleine in Remembrance of Things Past, and like Tate's "whiff of salt fish" in The Fathers, brings back the past. Lucius smells in the hatband "the sweet stale residue of himself and the dust from the mill" (p. 29). This memory takes him back to the discussion he had with his father, Joe Cree, about the high-risk contract his father had made with Amelie Cropleigh, widow of Lucius's Uncle Duncan. And his father, in telling him why he had contracted to cut the timber in such a short time (to

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recoup financial losses suffered in the Civil War), tells him the story of Amelie's following her new husband Duncan to war and of Duncan's death at the entrance to Parcher's Cove (p. 35), the Edenic valley to which Beverly had withdrawn after the death of the parents of the Cropleigh children in a steamboat explosion (p. 18). Lucius begins to realize that "this trek he was now on, which at first had seemed no more than a simple errand, was charged with hidden meaning" (p. 35).

On the mountain Lucius meets his friend Jeff Dunbaugh (p. 36) and witnesses a fight between Jeff and Jeff's father, Eddie, over the favors of a "poor white" Rutter girl, Ruthy (pp. 70-73). When Lucius asks his Uncle Jack why the fight took place, Jack, drinking, answers: "I've the eye of a hawk... My nose is as refined as a buzzard's. I've the touch of the blind, the ear of a watchdog, and no invalid can show a better palate. In all, a gifted sensibility... I know what any man that keeps above ground knows. But do you think I can impart this knowledge? Christ, boy, even Jesus spoke in parables" (p. 74). But Jack goes on to say: "That the begetter and the begotten could probe the same blind channel, ... Mix up time. That's the paradox..." (p. 75).

Influenced by the sexuality of the people he encounters on the mountain ("I saw you [Jeff] and Ruthie [Rutter] in the laurel" p. 77), Lucius loses his virginity in the arms of Ada Belle Rutter, Ruthy's younger sister. (The sur-
name Rutter is an appropriate name for Nate and Ada and their children: these poor whites, seemingly amoral rather than immoral, live as free, almost, as wild animals live, being governed principally by appetite.) However, Lytle, using the technique of progression d'effet, does not reveal the story of Lucius's sexual initiation until Part IV, "The Wake," where he renders the remorse Lucius feels for betraying his father by going up the Peaks of Laurel with Jack because of his own desires (pp. 225-26).

Ruthie Rutter tells Jack and his helper on the waterwitching expedition, Steele, that Mr. Pete Legrande has given orders that her brother, Othel, shoot anything drinking at the spring. Othel must obey, for the Rutters are living in Legrande's house on his property (p. 50). Othel (anagram for helot) is his mother's "man-fetus" (p. 90), his mother's demented dwarf-slave. A deadly shot with rifle or pistol, except when Jack gets him drunk to protect Eddie Dunbaugh at the spring (pp. 65-69), Othel, maneuvered by Ada Rutter, at the end of the novel provides Jack Cropleigh his opportunity to fulfill his role of "victim-redeemer."

The scene in which Jack plies Othel with whiskey until Othel can no longer shoot is humorous, as is the scene in which Jack, sleeping off the effects of alcohol in a cluttered room in the Rutter's dog-run house, awakens feeling that he has been struck on the foot by a rattlesnake and gulps Ada's "tobaccy tea" to draw the poison (p. 83). Jack expresses his suffering in Biblical rhetoric: "Bruise the
head; bite the heel. Let them that think hell is a metaphor look at me" (p. 84). Ada Belle ("more of a woman than Ruthy," Lucius notes) shows Lucius with a poker that Jack's snake was actually a little black hen that roosts in the room and strikes anything that comes over the foot of the bed into her range, be it human heel or iron poker. Jack ("Not snake bit," but "Hen bit") says: "I'll wring her neck, that's what I'll do. I might have known a rattler would have more honor than to strike a sleeping man. After all the serpent is only the agent of trouble. Theoretically nobody had to pay any attention to him, . . . but this hen, she's the principle itself" (p. 88). In this scene Lytle not only provides humor to augment his characterization of Jack Cropleigh as a very human hero-redeemer, but also, through Jack's characteristically rhetorical philosophizing, alludes to his concept of "the three stages of Eden." According to Lytle,

In the Garden of Eden section of The Velvet Horn ("The Water Witch") there are three parts that represent the three stages of Eden as symbol of the world drama. Adam alone, the hermaphrodite, is the entire creature isolated within himself, the stasis of innocence, the loss of which is the beginning of action. When the woman is taken out of his side . . . the separation begins the perpetual conflict. Incest is the symbol for this next stage. The third is the continuing action of the drama, the effort to fuse the parts into a wholeness which is complete knowledge. The symbol for this is the serpent, the old intruder. But there is another symbol for wholeness, the uroboros, the serpent eating its tail, lying about the waters of chaos. . . . Adam within his form contains the uroboros . . . the feminine in Adam becomes Eve, the masculine the Serpent.

This symbolism is elaborated in Part II, "The Water Witch,"

22 Lytle, Hero, p. 187.
where it is epitomized in the twelve-point rack of a stag in the velvet.

Near the end of "The Peaks of Laurel" Sol Leatherbury arrives to notify Jack that the line tree has killed Captain Cree (p. 90). Jack, before he awakens Lucius, tells Ada what he has learned, and she comments: "Mister Cree is no man to let a tree fall on him" (p. 92). Jack shushes her, but Ada regards him with what he takes to be a look of malice and continues:

"You Cropleigh brothers. Smarter than other folks. A-branging up a little sister in man's rough company. No woman to holp her. And her growing up thinking she was no different from a boy until she's lost in the woods with Pete Legrand. He learned her, and your brother Duncan cut his guts out. . . . And that doctor brother sewing them back in. I've heared he made as purty a stitch as aer woman."

When Jack whispers that "Nobody saw," Ada replies:

"You think Doctor Cropleigh sewed Legrand's clothes on him, too? You think a body can wear a scar, and it looped on his belly as keen as a new moon, and nobody know it?" (p. 94)

Ada's words cause Jack to begin reliving the past as he goes to Lucius, awakens him, tells him to come outside: "Don't go back to sleep. I have . . . well, news for you" (p. 96).

Part II, "The Water Witch" (pp. 98-143), begins with Lucius and Jack on the turnpike at the foot of the mountain, the toll gate behind them. Jack admonishes Lucius, who is driving the buggy in a sort of trance, to slow down: "The dead will wait" (p. 99). The point of view is now that of Jack Cropleigh, the protagonist and "roving narrator." Jack wipes his brow, pulls his hat brim lower (again the Jungian
symbol of the hat) and thinks of Lucius and time and history: "Lucius will weep, sleep, afterwards wake to eat a hearty breakfast: the drought will break, the rains come, the seasons turn, and you're left with history. History, the delayed surprise" (p. 101).

Jack recalls a day in April when he and his brothers and sister were young. In his mind's eye, "Clusters of azalea burst from their varnished leaves; overhung the path to brush the mule's flanks in colored dew. Wild honeysuckle, the dense laurel set the backward-leaning ridges afire. Through the jasmine roving the steep way, gay in blossom, streaks of color flashed, cut out of the depthless air a continuous silence. Did the birds blossom, the flowers sing? His senses were all bewildered . . ." (p. 103). It should be noted that Lytle, in rendering this impressionistic memory (reminiscent of Baudelaire and the French symbolist poets, particularly with respect to its confusion of sense impressions) shifts from the narrative or pictorial to the dramatic or scenic. Soon young Jack is with his brother Beverly near Parcher's Cove, which Jack believes to be shut in by the mountains. Beverly says: "Come with me there. The deer have shown me the way in. It is their sanctuary" (p. 110). When Jack tells Beverly that in time even it (Parcher's Cove) will be farmed, young Jack seems to hear a voice:

"Not while I am keeper," the voice whispered.
"In time it will be."
"But not my time," Beverly said as one done with
speech.
And then he knew that nothing he had heard moved
tongue or lip.
"The ear," he thought "has a metaphysics all its
own" (p. 110).

Lytle, in this scene, telescopes thought within thought: it
is the young Jack who comes to the conclusion about the
"metaphysics" of the ear in the memory of the middle-aged
Jack, who is riding in the buggy driven by his nephew.

At the entrance to the Parcher's Cove of long ago,
Beverly and Jack hear the cry of hounds and see a great stag
break from cover, plunge into the pool at the foot of a
waterfall. The deer is a mystical deer. Unlike Faulkner's
mystical deer in "The Old People," which bears "antlers
... looking like a small rocking-chair balanced on his
head" (a cliche among Southern deer hunters), Lytle's mys-
tical deer bears "twelve velvet points," which rock "like
the crown of a sapling submerged" (p. 111). This twelve-
point rack in the velvet is of course Lytle's controlling
symbol for his novel as well as the source of his title.

In "The Working Novelist and the Mythmaking Process,"
Lytle explicates his controlling symbol:

... the action itself [of a novel] must be sym-
(bolic of the archetypal experience. This, I consid-
er, was the most important thing The Velvet Horn
taught me. The symbol must be more than an inert
sign or emblem. Where symbols appear--and there
will be one to contain them in all their relation-
ships--they represent the entire action by compress-
ing into a sharp image or succession of images the

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23 William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses (New York: Modern
Library, 1942), p. 163.
essence of meaning. For example, in animal nature, the horn stands for both the masculine and feminine parts of being, the two aspects of the opposites which make a whole: the two in one contained by a single form. Add the velvet to this and you posit the state of innocence, that suspension before the act which continues the cycle of creation [i.e., during the period of regrowth of the annually shed antlers a hair-like skin covers and nourishes the antlers]. At a certain moment the buck, out of the mystery of instinct, rubs the velvet off against the tree, and then he is ready for the rutting season [The connotations of the surname Rutter are obvious].

Lytle continues the explication of his Edenic-Jungian imagery:

The velvet grows about the feminine end of the horn [Actually, the velvet grows over the entire antler], and it bleeds as it is rubbed away. . . . In human nature the horn would be the hermaphrodite, Hermes and Aphrodite contained within the one form. Their separation, Eve taken from Adam's side, at another level continues the cycle of creation. Both forms exist within the constancy of the seasonal turn of nature. The entire range of imagery relates to these.

For Lytle, then, "the image as symbol becomes the clue to reading, the means by which all the parts are related to the structure. It is not inert but active, being both root and crown of a particular living experience." This "controlling image" protects the reader against reading into a novel "his own preconceptions and preoccupations," and it "guides the judgment as it analyzes the rendition."

Lytle dislikes the pigeonholing of fiction: "To see a fiction either as so-called realism or symbolism is to commit the literal error, either as writing or reading." And regarding the basic form of The Velvet Horn, he says:

24 Lytle, Hero, pp. 185-86.
Realism distorts or diminishes the full action by plotting beforehand a beginning, middle, and end. How can this be done without inhibiting the creative act? How can a writer know beforehand what his people will do, until he has put them into action...

In explicating his controlling symbol Lytle neglects to mention the number of tines of the stag—twelve. According to Cirlot, the number twelve is "Symbolic of cosmic order and salvation. It corresponds to the number of the signs of the zodiac, and is the basis of all dodecanary groups [e.g., the Tribes of Israel and petit juries]. Linked to it are the notions of space and time, and the wheel or circle (including the ouroboros)." And, of course, the twelfth labor of Hercules involved a descent into Hades, "The Night Sea Journey," the title of the concluding section of The Velvet Horn.

At the end of the first section of "The Water Witch," a division called "The Trace," there is another time-shift, signalled by a one-sentence paragraph beginning with a lowercase letter ("but he heard a voice, not his voice, twist his tongue"); what the middle-aged Jack Cropleigh hears is:

God, Adam was tricked by sleep. He had no want, to lose the rich horn out of his side (p. 112).

And by this remembrance of his roving narrator, Lytle re-emphasizes his controlling symbol, the velvet horn.

In the next subdivision, "The Garment," Jack remembers being in the dining room at home; it is November, and a fire

is blazing in the fireplace. Dickie is there, and Aunt Emm and her son Joe Cree. Joe says that he had hoped Beverly, who had given Jack his share of the family estate in return for powder and lead and salt and had withdrawn into Parcher's Cove, "would come to his senses" (p. 114). And Joe asks Jack and Dickie for Julia's hand in marriage (p. 116).

Later, when Jack and Dickie are alone, they discuss Joe's suit and the effect it will have on Duncan. Jack recalls to Dickie the very strong love Duncan has always exhibited toward Julia, but Dickie says: "... Duncan is a man now" (p. 117). Continuing the discussion of Julia's marriage, Dickie [reinforcing in our minds the controlling symbol] says that there are needs of the body, that "The caduceus is two snakes coupling" (p. 118). Duncan enters the room and shows his brothers a hunting garment he has made for Julia from the skins of "Twin summer does" (p. 119).

Dickie reprimands Duncan for coming into the house in sweat and dirt-stiffened old clothes: "You're rude and rough as one of Brother Jack's jackasses." Jack gives a peroration on the virtues of jackasses. Jack, who has become a breeder of mules, points out the decorum with which the jack comes to his "nuptials" and reminds his listeners that "the jackass was the only creature with compassion enough to follow the emigrant out of the garden gates and take upon himself man's burden" and that Christ rode an ass into Jerusalem. He concludes his statement with "Ah, what a divine world if all men were jacks" (p. 121). As Trowbridge points out, Jack deliv-
ers his eulogy to the jackass to "divert the attention of those he loves [Dickie and Duncan] and stop them from fighting."
At the end of the novel Jack's profession as breeder of mules is again important from the standpoint of at once achieving humor and humility.  

Duncan, when he learns that Cousin Joe Cree wishes to marry Julia, portentously replies: "Joe Cree's too close kin. She might as well marry me" (p. 123). He gives the doeskin garment to Julia so that she can wear it on the hunt the next day.

The point of view for the remainder of this subsection, "The Garment," is Duncan's. However, this part of the action could well lie within the imagination of Jack, the roving narrator.  

Duncan remembers the nights he and Julia had been "caught out hunting . . . with a skin below and above, to wake into the glistening iron dawn, their eyelashes rimed over, the fire ash gray, but warm together, the heat of their bodies sealed in by the stiff-biting skins. . . . It was like sleeping with yourself doubled up, with none of you missing, until the skin opened back, all hard, and the air slid in and you shivered apart, halved but still one" (p. 124). The double-entendre of this imagery, of course, foreshadows the act of incest between Duncan and Julia, which the controlling image is all about, and which provides the ambiguity of Lucius's paternity. But more of that act and that ambiguity

In the last subsection of "The Water Witch," entitled "The Chase," the point of view is again Jack's. Jack, Dickie, and Duncan search for Julia, who, with Pete Legrand, the wealthy young outsider (from Virginia), is missing on a deer hunt. The brothers, searching for their sister, pass through the waterfall-entrance to Parcher's Cove in a skiff and find sleeping "at the base of a glade Julia and Pete Legrand . . . upon a bed of fragrant boughs . . . A bearskin . . . up to their middles" (pp. 130-138).

Lytle's description of the fight between Duncan and Pete Legrand is a compressed masterpiece:

"Hold hands," Beverly ordered. Slowly, fumblingly, since they could not look, their hands reached for each other. Their fingers touched as tentatively, as gently, as lovers. With a thrust they slid into the clasp. There seemed to be something outrageously improper in the clasp of two left hands.

"All right," Beverly ordered. There was an instant; then Duncan feinted at Legrand's throat, sliced downward towards his crotch. Legrand was a little slow to parry, but his blade caught the other blade at the navel. But not to hold. Deflected, it slipped across his belly. A line as thin as a new moon appeared on his flesh. It darkened; opened wide as a mouth belching, and his guts began to spill. He turned loose, caught them, still facing Duncan with his knife at parry; then he grunted and stepped back. Wonderingly, he held the dull slick coils writhing in his arms. His gashed middle smoked in the chill of morning. He looked up in appalled surprise and carefully sank to his knees.

"The flaming sword," Jack whispered. "It was there all the time" (p. 140).

In this dramatic scene, rendered through the consciousness of his roving narrator, Jack Cropleigh, Lytle presents a fight in less than half a page. In his short story "Mr.
MacGregor," (published twenty-two years before The Velvet Horn was published), he required about four pages to render a similar fight. Although "Mr. MacGregor" is a moving story, Lytle, in twenty-two years, obviously learned a great deal about presenting physical action in an economy of words.

Jack's comment about the "flaming sword" is, of course, an allusion to Genesis 3:24: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." The comment keeps in our minds the velvet horn and the tree of life and, by extension, the tree of knowledge.

Dickie, who has brought along his satchel of surgical instruments, performs a life-saving operation on Pete Legrand. In "The Peaks of Laurel" Ada Rutter, we recall, correctly surmised the details of the fight and the surgery that Lytle elaborates through the consciousness of Jack Cropleigh in "The Water Witch."

The long flashback ends with

the vehicle came to a halt, suddenly. The shafts ran forward, jerking his hat off [Italics supplied] (p. 142).

After they drive a short distance beyond the toll gate, Lucius says: "It's my fault"; when Jack tells him to hush, Lucius adds: "When I did it up there with that girl, I knew. I knew something bad would happen" (p. 143). Landess states: "Cree's suicide . . . is the direct result of his knowledge about the earlier indiscretion of Julia and Pete, the event
Jack has been reliving at the moment Lucius interrupts his reverie." Landess adds that "the feeling of guilt is not without validity, for . . . he has without knowing it . . . reenacted the sin of his mother" and that Jack Cropleigh "recognizes the intrinsic relationship of the two actions . . . ." 29

Part III, "The Passionate Husk" (pp. 147-78), with a sub-title, "The Lumber Inspector," begins with a meeting between Hopgood Schott, a company lumber inspector and buyer from the late Captain Joe Cree, and Pete Legrand. Schott, who had been unable to cheat Joe Cree as he had been accustomed to cheating the "peckerwoods," had considerable respect for Cree, but he cannot understand how a man like Cree could "walk out and let a tree fall on [him] and mash people ten miles around" (p. 153).

Schott tells Legrand about going to Joe Cree's sawmill, encountering Lucius Cree (at the description of Lucius, Legrand seems to wince inwardly), and talking with Joe Cree of a scheme to sell a stand of great white oaks to the furniture manufacturers ("--Schott, this is too good for lumber. This is Grand Rapids stuff" [p. 156]). Schott tells Legrand that Cree, after proposing that Schott and Lucius go into the lumber business with him to sell fine oak to Grand Rapids firms, described the conditions under which Amelie Cropleigh, widow of Duncan, agreed to sell the stand to Cree at a bar--

29 Landess, 357.
gain price. Cree had to cut the timber in half the time anyone else could be expected to do the job. Because Cree had such a fast sawyer, Schott continues, he agreed to go into business with the Captain. Then, he laments to Legrand, "He lets this tree fall on him and my prospects. I made it up to myself as best I could" (p. 158). When Legrand asks how Schott recouped his loss, Schott replies that he re-tallied the last barge he had bought for his firm at a lower grade (going against his word in order to make a personal profit); Legrand dismisses Schott with a brusk "You are a fool and a knave. Good day, sir" (p. 159).

In this conversation, Lytle presents the background of the lumber-cutting deal with Amelie, which will be so important to Lucius in the latter part of the novel. Schott, in his account of his conversation with Joe Cree, reveals that Joe Cree knew the gamble he was taking, knew that Amelie was glad to have the opportunity to ruin Joe financially because she blamed him for the death of Duncan, who was killed while serving as a Confederate scout under Captain Cree.

After the Snopes-like Schott has left, Pete Legrand (from whose point of view much of this part of the novel is rendered) begins to think of Julia and the past. Lytle indicates the time-shift by a transitional paragraph which begins with a lower case letter ("he must say it before the body shudder would loose the chill and shaking, Julia, he whispered . . ."); then he begins the flashback: "by the well-kept fence, raised two rails higher than most, all
around the pasture to the side of her house . . . " (p. 160).

The scene that Legrand relives in this flashback is the scene of his first visit to the Cropleigh farm, where, he was told, "he could be guided to the land he had inherited" (p. 161). Legrand goes to the barn, where the brothers are at work gelding colts. Duncan restrains Julia, a tomboy of thirteen or fourteen, from entering the barn where the work is going on. This pretty girl, who strangely affects the young Legrand, returns to the house. Legrand helps the brothers by daubing tar after Duncan wields the knife. Suddenly Legrand comes back to the present (1879): "... Why did he see that knife? His scar tightened his lace of pain" (p. 163); and we remember with him Duncan's words just before the fight in Parcher's Cove: "I'll alter him" (p. 139).

Legrand, before he drives a buggy to visit the new widow, Julia Cree, thinks: "... and I have waited for my love. Mine now. And no man can say me nay. ... It was I, Pete Legrand, who made her a woman, who gave her a son, a son who does not know his father. ... But now the long dry season is over" (p. 164).

One of Legrand's employees, Saul Slowns, a former Yankee soldier, drives the buggy. Slowns looks at the sky and sees that a thunderhead is building in the northwest. They pass some cotton pickers, one of whom looks stonily at them. Legrand thinks it is a man who owes him money:

He had no time to be hailed today . . .
Him
It's him.
Away he goes
It don't make that
Pete Legrand no diffunce
hit's a-fixing up to rain. Wind
and water can beat out the cotton, he'll
still gin it. He'll take his toll, good
grade or bad. He don't pay none.
Whur's he a-tolling them bays
s'fat and pretty? Turn
around, chillen.
Pick it.
Pick.

... he turned too sharp. His scar, it caught him (p. 166).

Obviously this insert (reproduced above exactly as it appears in the text), a rough diamond in form and content, cannot be attributed to the mind of a poor white and probably should not be attributed to the mind of Pete Legrand, whose physical appearance (brilliance) and wealth it symbolizes for the cotton picker. Although a knowledge of "shaped verses" is not unreasonable for Jack, the roving narrator and central intelligence, for whom the use of the convention could function to characterize Legrand, the insert represents a sort of choral comment. 30

When Pete turns too quickly from looking at the man, the pain reminds him of the past again; and he remembers how in Parcher's Cove Julia, uncomfortable in the too-tight doe-skin suit, stripped and lay with him by the campfire. Lytle adroitly joins past time and present time in Legrand's mind:

It was not until she began to struggle that he was

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aware his hands clasped her and that they would not for a time release her
a plunging jerk ... the buggy whip snapped and quivered its length into the socket ... "Goodness," he said, "what a washout."
"Drought or flood, they damage the same," Saul said (p. 168).

This transition is an example of what Macauley is talking about when he says: "Lytle, in the good tradition of James, Conrad, and Ford, accomplishes his time shifts with ease and often with virtuosity. ..."31

After a series of interpolated paragraphs, remarks by people who live along the road or remarks imagined by Pete Legrand, from whose point of view the action of this part of the novel is seen, Slowns and Legrand talk. Legrand confesses that he was a Whig who fought for the Union cause and that he has prospered by taking advantage of the foibles and ill-luck of his fellow man (pp. 172-73). Legrand, of course, is Lytle's representation of modern non-traditional man.

After presenting more choral comments, which Legrand hears, or imagines, as he travels down the pike with Slowns, Lytle renders a scene which recalls his use of the mandala and ouroboros in A Name for Evil and in earlier parts of The Velvet Horn. As the travelers drive through a dark tunnel in a cedar brake, they hear a woman (in a cabin which they cannot see) sing:

I gave my love a ring that has no end

Saul comments: "Travel as he will, a man is always circling

about his predicament." Legrand answers: "A man must stand up, Slowns. Sight with the eye. That brings him the shortest way through. In love or anything else." But Slowns is unconvinced: ". . . he [a man] rings up where he began" (pp. 176-77).

At the end of Part II, Legrand and Slowns encounter Pennyweather, a farmer who owes Legrand money (presumably the man of the diamond-shaped insert). Pennyweather is taking a bale of cotton to town to sell. He needs money for coffee and shoes for his family, he tells Legrand; but Legrand orders him to take the cotton to his gin, not to the town gin, adding "And remember this, Pennyweather. The hand that gives is above the hand that receives." As Legrand and Slowns drive on, Slowns asks: "Where does the hand of love lie?" When Legrand asks him what he is talking about, Slowns, the ex-Yankee soldier, says: "You just gave to that poor bastard back there a lecture on hands, I guess because you didn't want to get on the subject of shoes, that half-grown barefooted girl might not have listened so well." And Legrand answers stiffly: "I spoke of a just debt," . . . (p. 178). And we suddenly remember that the "shaped-verse" diamond described Legrand as hard and cold.

Part IV, "The Wake" (pp. 181-272), shows the initiation of Lucius to the reality of death and includes Jack's climactic vision. 32 It also includes a fine rendering of

32 Landess, 358-59.
Cumberland hill life at a wake (we recall the finely wrought sequence of scenes at the wake in Lytle's first novel, The Long Night).

At the beginning of "The Wake" we are in the consciousness of Julia Cree. Old "Uncle Peter," the Negro servant, asks her where the coffin is. She answers that it is on the ell porch, but he says it is not there. In this section minimal punctuation shows the shock Julia is experiencing. Dialogue is not differentiated from description.

The question about the coffin introduces a brief flashback. Julia remembers:

Yes, ma'am. I'm going to cut me that big cherry down by the branch and make my coffin, husband said when husband was new. And she could see in his eyes the question in hers, looking up from the baby smacking at her breast. Oh, I'm not studying any present need for it, he said, I don't mean to break a filly for another to ride... [He laughs at his trope, then in a serious mood tells her that he likes to be ready for any eventuality. And he teases the nursing baby.] Go make your coffin and let Lucius alone (p. 182).

The name Lucius brings Julia back to 1879; she asks Peter why Lucius has not arrived.

Lytle, in these first two pages of the climactic section of his novel, reiterates his theme; he interweaves tree and death and cause of death again: we progress in our thoughts from Sol Leatherbury's announcement of the death at the beginning of the novel to the cause of the death that requires the coffin and from the species of tree (and the pun it involves) to the illicit act which results in the birth of Lucius (or so Joe Cree, Lucius's legal father, a
careful man who builds his coffin when he is still relatively young, believes just before he commits suicide).

Three poetical inserts, presumably spoken or thought by neighbors of the Crees, present the themes of procreation and birth, death (specifically the death of Joe Cree under the falling oak), and sorrow. The last line of the third choral comment ("Waily, Julie. It brings ease.") serves Lytle as a bridge back into the consciousness of Jack Cropleigh:

That wail . . . Jack could not get it out of his head. It swelled as in some seashell under water, deep down . . . . It made him hesitate on his way to Julia (p. 185).

The seashell-water metaphor, of course, ties together all of the novel, from "The Peaks of Laurel," with Jack as a "water-witch," a sort of Christ-figure as well as a modern pagan, to "The Night Sea Journey," with Jack as victim-redeemer and savior of his nephew Lucius, the living symbol of Julia's sin. As Landess says, water in The Velvet Horn symbolizes baptism, "the Christian equivalent of the pagan initiation rite."³³ Water is symbolic of maternity, as in the above description of Jack's thoughts.³⁴

Jack goes to Julia, sees Joe Cree's corpse on the bed in the house which had originally been left uncompleted because of Cree's service during the Civil War (and which had

³³ Ibid., 355.

³⁴ According to Cirlot (p. 345), "In the Vedas, water is referred to as matritamah (the most maternal) because, in the beginning, everything was like a sea without light."
remained uncompleted because Cree "would finish it right or not at all" [pp. 185-86]), and witnesses the meeting between Julia and Lucius. The conversation between mother and son is a long one. Lucius assures his mother that he will take care of her: "I'll do what he [Joe Cree] would want me to do" (p. 188). Julia complains to Lucius about her loneliness at the farm while Joe and Lucius were busy felling the timber. To his mother's "He took you away," Lucius answers: "It was for me to learn." And then Jack can hardly believe what he next hears:

"He [Joe Cree] took you to the woods," she [Julia] said harshly. Her voice looped the space between them. It caught him and he stopped. . . . Then recklessly she said the words that must bring him back. "I know what the woods can do. My brothers took me there as a little girl" (p. 189).

Julia's statement, of course, constitutes dramatic irony, for she does not know that Lucius had his first sexual experience within sight of Parcher's Cove, where she lost her virginity in an incestuous union with her brother Duncan. Landess comments: "... the forest [in this case Parcher's Cove, the obvious equivalent of Eden] provides the perfect setting for sin--both the original and the inevitable re-enactment." 35

When Jack is alone with his surviving brother, Dickie, after Julia has left, and after Jack has sent Lucius to look for the coffin, which Cousin Charles (who habitually gathers

35 Landess, 354.
the apples on the farm) has misplaced, Jack and Dickie dis­
cuss Joe Cree's death, a death they recognize as suicide.
Dickie says: ". . . I took the chance Joe would never find
out about Legrand. But I didn't look for this." He adds:
"Whoever told Joe . . ." And Jack completes his statement:
"Might tell again. . . . That's the burden Joe has bequeathed
to us" (p. 196). Dickie says that "We must save them, Julia
and Lucius." Jack replies: "First we must bury the dead."
And he leaves his brother and goes outside to check on the
coffin and the barbecue and, of course, his whiskey (p. 197).

Jack's Negro servant, John Greer, tells Jack that he
has brought him fresh clothes, that Rhears,36 the Negro over­
seer, is off "keeping time and weighing up the cotton," and
that the coffin is under the old winesap "half full of ap­
ples" (pp. 198-99). The symbolism of the cherry coffin used
as a container for apples seems too contrived; such rein­
forcing of the controlling image, incest, seems unnecessary
at this point in the action.

Jack, after ordering John Greer to get Rhears to help
him bring in the coffin, enters the office, where he is to
sleep, washes, and dresses. Then he finds the jug of whiskey
that John Greer has cached for him, with beautiful irony, in
the slop jar:

Now why had he put it in the slop jar? To hide it
maybe, but that sly look of his. No, John had put

36 See "Mr. MacGregor" for Lytle's first use of the
name "Rhears."
it there to remind him of their common frailty, in this way to redress the inequalities of the world. Well, John was always putting him in his place (p. 200).

Jack soon becomes a little drunk. He remembers Julia in Legrand's arms and Julia on the arm of Joe Cree at her wedding. Dismissing a Wordsworthian metaphor disdainfully ("Trailing clouds of glory, hell . . ."), he thinks: "Snip the cord as quick as you will on the female babe, the womb whispers to the blood . . ." (p. 201).

Jack relives the wedding, including Duncan's anguish and the wealthy young widow Amelie's delight when Duncan begins to affect an interest in her. Lytle's rendering of the square dance is superb:

The dance went on, but the tempo changed. Lifting high this foot, then the other, the thighs spread in their strain, he [Duncan] brought them down to every fourth beat; the fiddles were high, the guitar strumming bass. The tight fawn pants [the imagery is reminiscent of another garment], the brocaded waistcoat rippled over his muscles. He seemed at one moment upside down prancing on the air; at another like one falling . . . Amelie's neck was at last stilled; her feet had ceased to move. Her eyes were two ripe pears falling . . . half man, half beast, the dancer now threaded the maze. Always he seemed about to escape; yet always came back upon himself . . . (pp. 206-207).

This synthesis of backwoods "buckdancing," Greek mythology, and Freudian symbolism takes place, of course, in the consciousness of Jack Cropleigh, Lytle's "spiritual hermaphrodite," who "alone could suffer the entire myth" rendered in The Velvet Horn. 37 Jack knows that Dickie, who had been woo-

37 Lytle, Hero, p. 189.
ing Amelie, looked for her after she left the dance at inter-
mission and that after he found her in a room with Duncan he
closed the door in great embarrassment and went back to med-
ical school for post-graduate work in surgery (pp. 208-209).

Jack, drinking steadily, hears someone speak of the
washing of Joe Cree's corpse (Lytle does not choose to recast
his fine rendering of the washing of Brother Macon in The
Long Night), and makes a cutting remark about salting the
corpse to delay corruption: "Pretend a few hours it's not
so, and then . . . six foot under." Dickie, feeling guilt
for the death, answers sharply: "I knew I would find you
picking at the old scab." And Jack tells Dickie that if he
had told Duncan at the wedding that Amelie was his woman, Joe
Cree would still be alive: "It was Amelie told Joe his boy
was a bastard" (p. 210).

When Jack tells Dickie that Dickie must marry Amelie
to make her hold her tongue, Dickie calls Jack's attention
to his stump (he now has a peg-leg) and reminds Jack of how
he lost his leg: how, the day of a raid during the war, Dun-
can, a scout, led Captain Joe Cree's men to the entrance of
Parcher's Cove, which Duncan knew Beverly Cropleigh had vowed
would forever be free of all human habitation but his own
(p. 212). The charge of powder that Beverly had set at the
entrance killed Duncan and Beverly and blew Dickie's leg off
(p. 213). By this dramatic exchange, which reminds us of
Eden and its loss, Lytle foreshadows the climax and catastro-
phe of his novel.
Pete Legrand arrives in the buggy with Saul Slowns. Lucius, talking with his Uncle Jack, calls Jack's attention to Legrand's arrival; and Jack sends Lucius to his mother. Lucius reflects that his father, who had realized he had failed in the timber venture, wanted the tree to fall on him: that he killed himself over Lucius. This realization fills Lucius with remorse: he blames his frivolity in leaving his father "alone with his travail" (p. 225) to go with his Uncle Jack on the well-witching job. And Lucius, his grief suddenly suffused with thoughts of erotic love, relives his sexual initiation in the arms of Ada Belle Rutter on the Peaks of Laurel. He recalls how, near daybreak, with the girl sleeping next to him, he relaxed, "as if listening to the world's body dreaming its myriad reflection . . ." (pp. 226-30). The term "the world's body," is an appropriate metaphor in the description of Lucius's expanding consciousness; perhaps it also serves as an internal tribute to John Crowe Ransom, to whom The Velvet Horn is dedicated.

Lytle continues to stress the question of Lucius's paternity: Legrand pays his respects to Julia and offers to help her; and he implies that Lucius is his son by saying that he has wondered "... with each passing year ... that a marriage of so many years has brought forth only one child." Julia replies by questioning his wondering about "God's mystery" (p. 232). And when Legrand tells her that he wishes to save Joe Cree's estate, she counters by saying she and Lucius can live with her brothers. With a reference to Jack's busi-
ness of breeding mules, Legrand points out that going to Jack's as a penniless relative would not be pleasant. Julia asks Legrand his price, for, as he has told her, he always deals with people on a businesslike basis. He answers that the price is the opportunity to advise her so that he "may become friends with—with Lucius." Julia remains silent. The confrontation is ended by Rhears, who knocks and enters with a tray of buttermilk and rolls (pp. 233-35).

Rhears, who, we recall, oversees the Cree farm, apparently represents Lytle's idea of the good servant. We see him through Legrand's keen eyes:

Of course he [Legrand] knew Rhears as he knew everybody in this part of the country worth knowing. He had noted particularly the efficiency with which he oversaw the gravel hauled to the pike; but now, close up, his worth showed in all its entirety. He took in the reserve and poise of his carriage. . . . He had seen powerful men ill at ease inside a house. Rhears would be ill at ease nowhere. His hands were not made for such trifles as trays, and yet this trifle enhanced his dignity . . . a devoted man . . . his devotion was to the Cree establishment. To him the house and lands must represent the permanence of things and his own self-esteem thrrove on maintaining, within the confines of his place in it, this order (p. 236).

This Rhears, a free and proud man, who—though obviously his self-respect would never permit him to suffer abuse—would never challenge the order of his world, as does the Rhears of an earlier generation in "Mr. MacGregor." Of course, from what we learn of the stewardship of the quiet-spoken but firm Joe Cree from his survivors, a challenge like that of the earlier Rhears would be unthinkable on the Cree place.

Jack, concerned about Legrand's presence, wonders if
he should follow him into the house: "He [Legrand] was no kin to be shown in to Julia, and too close kin to Lucius to claim it, and Lucius would be with his mother" (p. 238). At this point in the action Jack still believes Legrand to be the father of the fair-complexioned Lucius.

There is a meeting between Legrand and the Cropleigh brothers in Julia's chamber (pp. 242-46). The discussion becomes explicit. Alluding to Legrand's scar, Jack says: "Folks here have seen only the common woods variety of deer, with horns that make an awful jagged wound, and mostly on dogs." He follows this ironic statement with: "That miraculous deer . . . You know us Methodists and Baptists and Campbellites, we don't believe in miracles any more. It drained us to believe in just one miracle, and that took place so long ago it looks almost like history. And the Presbyterians don't even believe in history. But they've got a mighty strong hold on a belief in money. They know it don't change hands for nothing." When Legrand says that people will say Julia's sins have found her out if, dispossessed, she has to go to Jack, Julia cries out in pain. Then she quietly says: "I will try to preserve the work of Captain Cree and his son's memory of him"; and, excusing herself, she leaves the room (pp. 244-45).

Jack goes outside, encounters Slowns, and goes with him to the office, where they drink and talk. After referring to Legrand as "the old intruder," Jack expatiates on the great mystery of the transmutation of grain to bourbon:
"In this mug is corn come to its miracle. . . ." After his apotheosis of bourbon, reminiscent of Falstaff's apotheosis of sack, Jack says: "If an ear of corn can be so full of mystery, how can we meddle with a mystery like man? And yet we do it every day." When Slowns says that "man is made in God's image," Jack counters with: "Man is dirt come to its miracle"; and Jack, arguing with Slowns about Eden and free will and light, becomes rather drunk. He concludes his assessment of man, somewhat less sanguine than Hamlet's, with:

If God had only slung our hearts about our necks, what a paradise this dirt would grow, the heart streaming light, the light beat all a-dazzle with love. But the heart's under the rib bars, sucking blood in the dark.

Then he swings to his feet, gains his balance, and says:
"Let's go visit the world, Slowns. It's all here tonight, eating to keep its strength up and drinking a little for comfort's sake against that miracle all boxed in, and sun up"
(pp. 248-49).

At the barbecue, Jack, his sardonic wit sharpened by the whiskey, sees an acquaintance and pretends he sees a ghost: "... the body's not there. Just starved to death in front of our eyes, Slowns." When the man protests: "Jack, you know me," Jack says: "The voice of Sam Applebury, died of a belly wound." The man named Applebury, addressed by Jack as "Voice Applebury," is persuaded to bring charges of murder by starvation against Suds Pilcher, the barbecuer, in a kanga­roo court presided over by old Judge Ewing. The cross-exami-
nation, concerning as it does both flesh and spirit, echoes Jack's more serious statements on the subject of the Word made flesh (pp. 250-55). The symbolic coincidence involved in the name "Applebury" does not seem necessary to the success of the scene, a fine example of frontier humor, which reinforces the action at this point in the novel.

Realizing that he has had too much to drink, Jack decides to "walk a spell back of the barn and restore the muscles in his legs." There is a flash of lightning which illuminates the barn for an instant (p. 256). He continues to walk and becomes confused as to where he is. He hears footsteps approaching (perhaps an animal's, perhaps John Greer's) and is frightened. A clap of thunder seems to be the sounding of doom:

He was standing upright before the lightning horn, piercing earth and firmament together. The ground shuddered slowly. Before him a plot of trees swayed apart. In the instant of illumination he felt he stood at a place, witnessing the world turn on its axis; but his eyes . . . showed him the horn upright among the parted trees, harder than granite, glistening like a shaft of salt. His eyeballs burned with a cold green light, in which faintly the horn still glowed, as out of the forehead of some fabulous beast . . . he took a step forward . . . took another and tumbled down (p. 259).

This is the beginning of Jack Cropleigh's vision, one of the finest renditions of the vision in twentieth-century American literature. Joe Cree's granite tombstone, the single horn, the horn of the unicorn ("some fabulous beast") is symbolic not only of the controlling image, incest, but also
of Christ. 38 Jack, of course, is a secular surrogate for Christ: he is "the victim-redeemer." The tombstone, which in Jack's eyes glistens "like a shaft of salt," is also symbolic of Sodom and Gomorrah and, therefore, of the sins of man.

Jack has fallen into Joe Cree's open grave. The green light revolves and shows him

... the faces now of Julia and now of Duncan but with his body ... her arms moved across him [Jack], wavering like water, into Duncan's which were flames. ... The fiery hands fumbling burnt the doeskin which clothed her. Their charred ashes sank down as she moved into Duncan with the stilled motion of a waterfall. For an instant the flame of him [Duncan] turned from red to blue. He saw the terrible suction drawing them together, as the ashes sank into the green of his vision and put it out (p. 260).

In his vision, Jack, "the spiritual hermaphrodite," sees the act of incest between his brother and his sister. He sees the doeskin garment, the fire of passion which removes it, and Duncan's flame of passion as it turns from red to blue. Lytle's color symbolism is appropriate: red symbolizes sublimation, as well as blood and wounds and physical passion; and blue symbolizes the sky and the night and the stormy sea. 39 The final part of the novel, entitled "The Night Sea Journey," is concerned primarily with the testing of Lucius Cree, who, though he finally believes himself to be the bastard of Pete Legrand, may be an incestuous bastard. Lucius, who may be the product of the union of Duncan and Julia that Jack sees

38 Jung, 419-27. 39 Cirlot, p. 51.
in his vision, will undergo his test; and Jack, "the victim-redeemer," will give up his life.

Jack is rescued from Cree's grave by John Greer and three white men. Jack wonders if the footsteps he heard were John's but decides not to ask: "... what answer does the literal fact supply?" (pp. 261-62)

At the end of "The Wake" the rain comes. Like the snow in Joyce's *The Dead*, it falls upon the living and the dead:

... it beat upon the metal roof with a low light drumming, the uneven tempo of sudden downpouring and the short withholdings of a cloud short of water, thinning into a steady gentle patter, which by its sound told those who listened it could not last. And yet they scarcely seemed to hear, Judge Ewing and his companions, who had taken the last watch for the dead (p. 264).

Water, in the form of rain, memorializes and baptizes. Appropriately, "The Wake" ends with an ironic confrontation between Legrand and Lucius. Legrand offers to back Lucius financially:

Tears were rolling ... down the boy's cheeks. Angrily he wiped them away. He seemed not to know when Legrand hesitantly raised his arm and, tentatively, put it on his shoulder, nor feel the firm pressure which set him in motion. Together, in slow step, they walked out of the room, Legrand a little behind and masking Lucius (p. 271).

In Part V, "The Night Sea Journey" (pp. 275-373), Lytle renders the final testing of Lucius and Jack Cropleigh's self-sacrificial act which allows Lucius the opportunity to carry on the Cropleigh name and tradition. At the beginning of the section Lucius avoids "that one spot in the woods" where the
tree killed his legal father: "When he took charge at the sawmill, he had had Sol Leatherbury point it out . . . and Sol had looked out of his blank face, had nodded" (p. 275). By the end of the section, however, Lucius has decided to have the great oak tree, which has lain where it fell, sawed into lumber which he will use to build a house for himself and his new wife, Ada Belle. By all of the action of Part V, Lytle shows how this great change in Lucius comes about: in brief, he shows Lucius's transformation from boy to man.

Lucius has only two weeks to complete the cutting of the timber under the contract Joe Cree made with Amelie. At first Sol Leatherbury and Old Peter, the Negro sawyer, take "a superior fatherly attitude" toward Lucius, "going their way, not paying too much attention to his orders." One day, after a thundershower, the crew lingers under shelter too long, and Lucius gives Old Peter an ultimatum: "...You go tell that crew if they aint here in five minutes not to come at all" (p. 278). Old Peter reluctantly gets his crew started within the five minutes. And when Leatherbury threatens to quit because Legrand has sent him incompetent hands, Lucius tells him to hire men himself if he does not like the ones Legrand has sent. Leatherbury stays on the job. In keeping the talented, but crusty, old woods boss, Lucius wins another victory. Afterwards he reflects that Sol regards him as hirer not as a friend; and, remembering Legrand's favorite aphorism (The hand that gives is above the hand that receives), he thinks of how much he owes Legrand (p. 280). Later, at the
farm, Legrand, visiting Julia, approves of Lucius's firing of the men Legrand had sent, though he adds: "But, Lucius, it's well to remember that no man is indispensable, not even your Leatherbury" (p. 283).

In this part of the novel, Landess says: "... Lytle's preoccupation with the matter of business may seem curious on the surface, though it is amply prepared for in earlier sections." The archetypal paradigm "demands such conduct of Lucius [the carrying out, after his initiation, of his masculine responsibilities as provider]; and one sees the full measure of Lytle's control of his material in the financial intricacies that surround the cutting and selling of timber—activities which form an integral part of the action in the novel."40

Lytle's title for the concluding part of his novel, "The Night Sea Journey," is itself a metaphor which, Joycean in its inclusiveness, represents the concluding action of the novel. Lytle, Landess notes, uses in The Velvet Horn "certain myths in other cultures which are identical in their essential nature [with traditional Christian mythology] and of which Mr. Lytle is obviously aware."41 The Christ-Dionysus imagery in Part I is an excellent example of what Landess is talking about, as is the Christ-Unicorn imagery so important in Part IV. Jung, in his treatment of the myth of the hero in Psychology and Alchemy, including the twelfth labor of

40 Landess, 359. 41 Ibid., 351.
Hercules (we recall that the great stag in the velvet that Beverly and Jack saw was a twelve-pointer [p. 111]), says: "The purpose of the descent as universally exemplified in the myth of the hero is to show that only in the region of danger (watery abyss, cavern, forest, island, castle, etc.) can one find the 'treasure hard to attain' (jewel, virgin, life-potion, victory over death). . . ."\(^{42}\) And Jung reproduces a diptych from a fifteenth-century manuscript, the "Speculum humanae salvationis," of Jonah emerging from the whale and of two workers, a man and a woman, setting the cornerstone for a building. Under the illustration, Jung comments: "The goal of the night sea journey is equivalent to the \textit{lapis angularis} or cornerstone."\(^{43}\) The \textit{lapis angularis} is the alchemical symbol for Christ.\(^{44}\)

Lucius, then, returns to the forest, where he repeated the sin of his mother, the surrender to sexual appetite; but this time he "goes to the woods" on his night sea journey. By entering the forest to "earn his inheritance," Lucius achieves a new understanding of Ada Belle Rutter and his relationship to her and ultimately a new understanding of his place in life as husband and father.\(^{45}\)

Jack Cropleigh, "the victim-redeemer," of course rep-

\(^{42}\) Jung, p. 322. \(^{43}\) Ibid. \(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 35, 407.

resents the *lapis angularis*; but Jack, to save his sister and nephew from ruin, leaves his farm and travels in South Alabama and Georgia trading mules.\(^{46}\) And so, Jack who has already experienced one "night sea journey," the fall into Joe Cree's grave, experiences another, the trip through Alabama and Georgia (during which he suffers the indignity of having to dress in a widow's clothes to bring a temperamental jack he has bought from the widow to perform his amatory duties [pp. 353-56]). Jack Cropleigh, then, represents both questing hero and goal. And when, at the end of the novel, he steps in front of the mentally defective Othel Rutter's pistol to protect the pregnant Ada Belle, who has stepped in front of her new husband, Lucius, he is following the example of the Anglo-Saxon hero-Christ, who gladly ascends the Rood.

The young man for whom Jack Cropleigh will sacrifice his life at the end of the novel rides away from the mill through farmlands (p. 287). He realizes for the first time that only the people who live on the land and work it really own it. He thinks of his friend Jeff, who has married Ruthy and moved into the old family house on the Peaks of Laurel. Jeff, he remembers, warned him to quit visiting Ada Belle, who now lives with her family at the tollgate house, because he did not intend to marry her. And, remembering erotic details of the occasion of his ignoring Jeff's warning, he resolves to hurry home, bathe, and change clothes, so that he

\(^{46}\) Landess, 360.
can go to town, finish his business with his Aunt Amelie, and visit Ada Belle again (pp. 288-92).

Lucius finds the Cree home completed and richly furnished. Julia looks at him appraisingly and says: "You are all Cropleigh. It was quite a shock to see you so . . . so grown" (p. 297). By this remark, of course, Lytle adds to the ambiguity of Lucius's paternity: Duncan was, and Pete Legrand is, blond.

When Lucius, resentful of Legrand's largess, tells his mother that their debts have only been shifted to Legrand and that he is on his way to town to ask Amelie for an extension of time, she at first forbids him to go: "You must ask nothing of that woman" (p. 299). Then, when she learns that Lucius is now his own man and will go, she forlornly tells him to go. At the door, he hears her irrepressible groan (p. 303).

After Lucius completes his purchase in town (Rhears has told him: "We need plowlines and plowpoints" [p. 302]), he goes to his Uncle Dickie's boarding house, where, though his uncle is out of town on a call, he spends the night (p. 304). It is significant, of course, that Jack and Dickie Cropleigh have remained bachelors and that Beverly died a bachelor in the explosion that he set off at the entrance to Parcher's Cove during the war, the same explosion that maimed Dickie and killed Duncan. Blasphemously attempting to regain man's original condition of wholeness in Eden, Duncan had suffered an agonized death-in-life before his violent death.47

47 See Lytle, Hero, pp. 184-86.
Lytle continues to add to the ambiguity of Lucius's paternity in the scene in which Lucius is received by Amelie, the wealthy widow of Duncan. Amelie, who is now a huge fat woman, wearing diamonds on fingers which Lucius notices are dirty, greets Lucius with: "It's too bad we are not kissing kin. You are so like my Duncan" (p. 306). And, after a facetious remark about the blackberry wine and cake she serves to the "girls" of the UDC, she pours from a teapot a cup of what proves to be hot toddy and advises Lucius to take a gulp, then to sip.

When Lucius asks Amelie if his father asked her for more time, she answers that he didn't have to, that she told him "to take as long as he liked." Lucius now knows that Joe Cree did not commit suicide because of financial difficulties. He ejaculates: "Then why... Then what?" Amelie says: "Of course it could have been an accident"; and then she directs him to the secretary, in which, she says, he will find a document that will settle his doubts (pp. 309-10). Looking through the papers on the secretary, Lucius notices, in the alcove in front of him, a small marble Mercury, with "the caduceus held up high in front as its twin serpents inter-twining made an oval in the air" (p. 311). With a symbol, Lytle re-emphasizes his controlling image (incest) at a most important point in the action.

The document Lucius finds is a deed to him of the timber land. Amelie calls his attention to the date on the deed, tells him that she had her lawyer draw it up when she learned
he had decided to fill Captain Cree's contract, and adds that she said: "If he comes to me, he shall have it, for I'll know he is a man and not just a tool of Pete Legrand's." And she tells him that by giving him the deed she is trying to make amends to Duncan for her failure. "How that Pete Legrand hated him!" she adds. "Pete knows the one thing Duncan could not have stood was for him to marry your mother" (p. 311).

When Amelie responds to Lucius's exclamation "Marry my mother!" by telling Lucius that the whole county knows Legrand intends to marry Julia, Lucius realizes that he has not been earning his inheritance, as he had believed, but that his mother's intention to sacrifice herself for his welfare has been responsible for his opportunity. Determined to save his mother, he thanks Amelie and hurries away. As he steps over the threshold, he hears a "whoosh," sees a flash, and realizes that, though Amelie touched cups with him, she did not drink to his success but rather tossed her whiskey into the fire. Directing him out, the Negro maid says: "This way, Mr. Cropleigh" (p. 312). Lucius looks so much like the Cropleighs that even the Negro servants think of him as a Cropleigh.

Lytle shifts the point of view to Pete Legrand for a while. Legrand, concerned about his property (heavy rains have caused the river to rise rapidly), watches the flood destroy his grist mill and gin. In a short time only the barouche in which he and Slown rode to Joe Cree's wake remains.
He guides it down from its place on a knoll and, pushing it into the water, says: "You go too, damn you" . . . (p. 314).

The first part of the scene is a borrowing by Lytle from Lytle. The rest of the scene, particularly its linking to the action of the novel, serves as a measure of Lytle's development as an artist during a quarter of a century of teaching and writing fiction. In the original version of the incident, the oath ends a scene and is followed by a time-break; but in the novel, as Legrand pushes the carriage into the water and shouts the imprecation, his foot slips, and Rhears, who has been sent by Julia for Legrand, helps him from the water (p. 314). Rhears tells Legrand that Miss Julia has also sent for Mr. Jack ("He off trading.") and for Dr. Cropleigh ("He . . . tending Mr. Meek's daughter. . . .") for help because "Mr. Lucius went calling on Mr. Duncan's widow" (pp. 314-15).

Legrand orders Slown to go to town to get a marriage license and a preacher and bring both to Julia Cree's; then he jumps into a buggy and drives toward the Cree place:

He saw it all, half listening to the muted clop of the hooves; he had been circling the center of his want; now he would aim for the bull's-eye. It took the loss of the gin and mill to show him, a power he had never felt, blind and merciless, before which he had so blasphemously rebelled. Blind? Merciless? He blessed it now. At the very moment of his loss, Rhears had brought him the word. That was no acci-

48 See Lytle's "Old Scratch in the Valley," in which Micajah Searcy, who has lost his mill to the flood, pushes his barouche into the water, saying "You go too, damn you!" (pp. 241-42)
dent. He was appalled to think he had expected to gain his all at no cost (pp. 315-16). [Italics supplied]

Legrand will no longer "circle the center of his want" (we recall Henry Brent's mandala symbol of solipsism in A Name for Evil): Providence has shown him that he must save the ones he loves--Julia and the son whose father he believes himself to be.

After Legrand has arrived at the Cree place and has taken Julia into his arms, Julia leads him into the house and talks with him regarding Lucius. Very nervous, she repeatedly likens Lucius to Duncan (e.g., "He's so headstrong like . . . like Duncan" [p. 317]). And then she tells Legrand that "She [Amelie] will tell him [Lucius]"); and when Legrand says she cannot be sure of that, she says: "She told Cousin Joe." Julia now describes Joe Cree's distraught appearance on his return from Amelie's house and repeats his words:

"Is Lucius Legrand's bastard?" (p. 318)

Legrand tells Julia she must marry him at once and says: "I am come home. To my wife, to my son." Julia answers with the question: "How do you know he is your son?" (p. 319) And now she reminds Legrand of the tight-fitting doeskin suit that Duncan made for her and tells him that she wore it the night before the hunt (on which Legrand received his knife-wound), when she was with Duncan. Under the blanket she slipped it off:

His [Duncan's] arm pressed me down like a vise. How shall I say it? The knowledge that I was to be taken from him had brought him to such desperation?
Did he think what he did to me would never part us? [Cf. Quentin Compson's statement to his father in *The Sound and the Fury*] Did he think [i.e., or did he blindly respond to instinct]? (pp. 320-21)

Legrand, incredulous, whispers: "What are you telling me?"

She answers: "What I told my husband that day . . . ," and adds: ". . . I never saw him alive again" (p. 321). She then tells Legrand to go away for she is cursed, but he tells her that he will not and takes her in his arms.

When Lucius comes in from Amelie's, with "purpose" showing "in his firm sound face, his direct glance," Legrand feels "a leap of pride and then distress at what he must now accept, the knowledge that the boy whom he had for so long in secret regarded as his son might be, almost surely was, another's" (p. 322). At the end of the novel Legrand comes to feel that Lucius may be his son after all, but at this point, in a state of shock, he is almost certain that Lucius is Duncan's son, an incestuous bastard.

Legrand, thinking that Amelie has told Lucius of the fight between him and Duncan and the reason for it, tells Lucius what Amelie, in fact, has not told him. He sees "Lucius's face go all to pieces" and realizes that Amelie has tricked him into confessing. Lucius rushes out (pp. 323-24).

Outside it is raining. All Lucius can think of is water: the word *water* reverberates in his mind. Water, of course, is Lytle's symbol for baptism (initiation) and resurrection (into the new life) in Part I, "The Peaks of Laurel."
Lucius drives the phaeton to the Cropleigh place ("He had a right here at least. This was Cropleigh house" [p. 325]). Lytle employs a fine touch of dramatic irony here, for Lucius does not know and never knows—at least, in the confines of The Velvet Horn—of the incest between Duncan and Julia.

John Greer greets Lucius, who asks for his Uncle Jack. John at first does not answer but remarks that Lucius is "chillen" and says he will bring him a toddy. Lucius thinks: "Who am I? What am I? I'm nothing. Lucius Cree is a lie . . ." (p. 326). And John Greer, who has brought the drink, tells Lucius that his uncle will "be in" and adds: "He strange to me," . . . "He aint been the same since he fell into your pa's grave" (p. 327). Indeed, Jack has changed, for he has experienced his night sea journey: he has had his vision, which (like Gabriel Conroy's epiphany in Joyce's "The Dead") has changed his outlook on life drastically.

The Negro servant's "... words reamed [Lucius] like a knife. He had buried his father in the rain [We recall the lightning that helped bring about the vision of Jack, "The Water-Witch"]). He must bury him again, and this time forever. Bury memory, too" (p. 327).

John Greer tells Lucius that, since falling into the open grave, Jack Cropleigh has been a diligent businessman: "He fell in a jackass man. He come out a trader . . ." (p. 49 See Lytle's "A Reading of Joyce's 'The Dead,'" Sewanee Review, 27 (Spring 1969), 193-216.
When Lucius asks: "Why doesn't he come, John?" the Negro answers that Jack is "Way off in Souf Alabama." Lucius concludes that Jack has ". . . foreseen and was ashamed or afraid" and, remembering a story Jack once told him about the initiation rites of Indian boys in the West (pp. 221-22), he decides to escape to the West. He departs, after leaving with John Greer this word for Jack: "Tell him that when I see him again, it will be for the last time" (p. 329).

The message for Jack is filled with dramatic irony, for, though Lucius does not go West, he sees his uncle one more time. Tortured by the thought that he is a "woods colt," the Shakespearean line "Under the greenwood tree" and a ballad stanza on whoredom running through his head, Lucius drives the phaeton to the tollgate house (pp. 330-34), where he finds from Ada Rutter that Ada Belle is being courted by a young harelipped farmer named Luke Nobles (p. 337). Ada Belle is at the Nobles place, preparing supper for Luke and his widower-father. Hurt by Ada Rutter's remarks, Lucius gives her a coin for his lodging; and she retaliates viciously by saying: "This will buy a play-pretty for Ada Belle's chap, when it comes" (p. 338).

Lucius at first thinks of the "chap" as a reproduction of the harelipped Luke; and he concludes, after Ada tells him that Rutter, incapacitated by a stroke, is ailing ("Bedrid and eats no more than a bird" [p. 340]), that Ada is planning to marry Luke's well-to-do father. Preparing to leave, he hears the wheels of the buggy that brings Ada Belle home.
The scene that Lytle renders of the reunion of Lucius and Ada Belle is a poignant one:

Her cool rough hands lay on each side of his face gently but firmly lifting it. . . .
"I'm a bastard. I just found out, Pete Legrand's bastard," He paused, looking at her to rectify the inadequacy of language. . . .
"Hush," she said and took him by the hand. She led him to the far corner. . . . "Mommy aint liable to hear so far" (p. 342).

And, as they sit on the edge of the bed, he tells her that he has to go away: "Out West. Anywhere. Far away" (p. 342).

Slowly, reluctantly almost, she unfolds her secret about the child she is carrying: "I taken no care on the Peaks for what I did. I was such when you come on me. A maid is so natured." She continues: "It is soft underfoot on the Peaks of Laurel," . . . "and a hiding place anywheres you step. I stepped out of my clothes with no more care than I stepped out the door. . . . I coupled, then swung on to the next. I was jolly and could not abide a man to sull. When one would grow jealous-hearted, I laughed and jeered that he could think he'd found me, because we had twined in the green. . . . I thought I took no care. . . . And then I learned different" (p. 344). Ada Belle's Edenic statement, of course, links her instinctive acts to those of Julia's.

Ada Belle tells Lucius that her mother gave her "pennyroyal tea to knock it [i.e., to effect an abortion]" and that she threw the tea out the door. Suddenly the words "Ada Belle's chap when it comes" return to Lucius's mind
with new meaning, and he promises to give the child a name, although he "... can't even give him a real name." Ada Belle replies that "What his daddy calls him will suit him for a name," ... (p. 345). When Lucius tells Ada Belle they must elope and get married, she replies that she will not use her pregnancy to trap him. Angrily he asks her if she will marry him; mountain-woman-like, she says: "I will not so vex an innocent babe"; and he tells her he knows what he is doing (p. 346). By this exchange, of course, Lytle renders Lucius's search for identity. Lucius has decided that, whoever he is, he will be his own man.

After slipping away and finding a preacher to marry them, Lucius and Ada Belle spend their first night as a married couple at "the trader's inn at Macon," where, to the amusement of the leering clerk, she follows him "like a mountain woman" (p. 350). Lucius is beginning to realize something the foolish clerk probably will never realize— that some "mountain women" have natural dignity.

When Lucius, on Jack Cropleigh's porch, sees Jack walk up dressed in a calico dress and a sunbonnet, he recognizes his uncle immediately: "Nothing could disguise that stride and that carriage." Ironically, he asks: "Old woman, can you tell me where Jack Cropleigh is?" Jack answers: "Where a man always hopes to find himself. Inside a woman's plack-ets." Although Jack has become a basically serious man since his fall into Joe Cree's grave, as shown by his intensified business activities in the Cropleigh-Cree interests, he still
retains his sense of humor and appreciation of wit; and so,
when Lucius asks Jack if he can kiss his own lips, too, Jack
brings the stichomythic exchange to an end with a bow and
says: "The scholar at last is worthy of his teacher" (p.
353).

Lucius, the initiate in the Bildungsroman part of the
novel, does talk like his Uncle Jack, tutor and "victim-redeem-
er," who escorts his nephew into the house and lectures him
on "that old Christian, the jackass." And pointing out that
the jackass restores meaning to the ritual of the sex act,
Jack Cropleigh expatiates on the public and private aspects
of the marriage ceremony. Jack tells how he bought a fine
jackass, but found he could get the animal to breed only by
wearing the clothes of the former owner (pp. 354-56).

At the end of the seriocomic lecture on the virtues
of the jackass Lucius tells his uncle that he has to go away.
Jack tells him that he cannot run away from himself and adds
that his mother and Legrand are married. When Lucius states
that he, Lucius Cree, is a bastard, Jack answers "We are all
bastards" and points out that "We've been bastards since we
first ran into the bushes to hide and heard that voice, that
terrible voice, Who told thee that thou wast naked?" (pp.
356-57).

When Lucius insists he must go away, Jack continues
the peroration, which has changed from a lecture on human
mores suggested by the decorum exhibited by a jackass to a
sermon suggested by the example of Job, who endured an in-
ordinate amount of suffering. Jack asks Lucius if, like Job, he has lost sons or money or if he has boils or a wife? And when Lucius admits that he is "not alone," Jack says: "... God amighty, you've married a Rutter. And I thought you were a man..." Then Lucius says: "Uncle Jack, my child is going to have its father's name." Jack, the man of words, for a few moments says nothing; he finds a snuff can filled with double eagles behind a book on a bookshelf, pours the coins out and then calmly asks: "Where is your wife?" (pp. 357-59).

Continuing his sermon, which, like "The Parson's Tale," functions to tie together and sum up the meaning of what has gone before, Jack tells Lucius and Ada Belle, whom Jack has greeted with the decorum due a new bride in the family (p. 359):

"Don't ever fall into an open grave. It gives you visions, I know what I can never tell. God said before the world was, I am. And somewhere in Proverbs that love is a divine play. Brought to earth, it's a mighty rough game. ... You play here, but the score is settled elsewhere. And then it ceases being a game. Open the side and out pours blood and water; blood that ever thirsts; water that never quenches. Oh, those words ... I thirst. It is better in the French, J'ai soif. Agape all agape. And up swings the sponge and the lips fasten upon the one drink that quenches, matter brought to its essence, and the ghost gives up on that, all the world upon the tip of God's tongue ..." (p. 362).

Ada Belle tells "Mr. Jack" that she "don't rightly understand" what he is saying; and Jack, looking out the windows on two sides, answers that she has not time to understand, for Lucius's mother is arriving on a horse in the
backyard and old Ada is coming up the drive in a buggy. Jack says that he will invite old Ada into the parlor, the adjoining room, and suggests that after Ada and Julia have been seated Lucius and Ada Belle come in. He leaves the room. Ada Belle, who has looked out, says: "I mislike it, Lucius. Mommy's done brought little Othel, and he aint got right good sense" (p. 363).

During the confrontation between the poor white Ada, who, her pride stung by what she considers the haughty attitude of Julia, alludes to the repetition of Julia's misconduct in the woods by Julia's son: "The boy come by it natural enough, Miss Jule" (p. 365). Even Ada is shaken by the pain her remark causes Julia, though Julia tries to show nothing. To break the silence and dull the pain that all are suffering, Jack says:

"Once upon a time, long ago in a far country it began, the story, and the protagonists were heroes, and the gods their adversaries. Then the Furies turned into Eumenides and the tale tragic and death purged us. Now we only suffer anticlimax, the common whine which was there all along, sometimes called the way of the world" (p. 366).

Othel interrupts his mother's whining speech about her daughter and Lucius and the prospective bridegroom, Luke Nobles: "Mommy, whar's the son of a bitch? ... You said we'd jump him here" (p. 366). Lucius and Ada Belle enter; Othel fires his pistol; the bullet strikes Jack, as he steps in front of Ada Belle and Lucius (p. 367).

To Lucius, "on his knees before the long body," the remorseful Julia says: "Go away. ... Haven't you done
enough?" Jack speaks to Julia: "There, little sister, now don't you cry. . . ." The statement is, of course, an echo of John 20, 15: "Jesus saith to her, Woman why weepest thou? . . ." And, echoing John 20, 19 and 20, Jack speaks in free verse:

See the words run out of my side!
Why was I not put to sleep to dream this?
Bleeding breath, . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
It will leave a stain worth all the books.
Look at it sometimes, girl, when you sweep
And remember Jack Cropleigh
Who learned life by heart.
Learning is a surfeit.
Let it spill.

Christ! This cannibal world (p. 368).

And then Jack passes from time into timelessness: "... from his eyes there sped a light, in a perfect focus upon some point above . . ." Julia looks up, and John Greer tiptoes to the body and says: "I take him now," . . . (p. 369).

Regarding Jack Cropleigh's death, Lytle says:

As archetype of victim-savior, Jack, I'm afraid, denies the efficacy of the Mass. His death implies that for heroes, at any rate, the sacrifice must be forever repeated, actually as well as symbolically.

And Lytle adds this comment on fiction based on myth:

This perhaps is theological heresy but mythical truth, and certainly fictional truth. The feeling and knowledge he [Jack] suffers throughout pass progressively through the three phases of the Garden's drama, renewing through the nephew, the inheritor, the same perpetual cycle.

Legrand tells Lucius that Jack's death will bring the survivors together: "Your mother mentioned it might be well
for your Cousin Charles to teach Ada Belle her letters. I think that's a good sign, don't you?" (p. 371). And then, accepting the ambiguity with which he must live the rest of his life, Legrand says: "I kept with me for years the thought that you were my son, and who can tell when it comes so close together and it's all in the dark? Don't be offended. What I'm saying is that I have my small sorrow too. To know and not to know . . . You and Joe Cree were father and son for eighteen years. Don't give that up." And, he adds: "One more thing. Money can help. I'm always behind you." Lucius thanks Legrand, and Legrand drives away in his buggy (pp. 372-73).

Sol Leatherbury, speaker of the prologue, who, ironically (though his given name is Solomon) does not understand the full meaning of what he reports, delivers the epilogue:

The tree
It won't be no tree long
The tree what killed Captain Cree.
Lucius let it lay, but he seen his mistake.
Hit is damaged some . . .

But the tree will make sound boards.

They'll make a tight shelter.
Tight enough to hold a Rutter.
A Rutter aint used to much.

The boards is sound
Sound enough for him
Aer a Rutter.
The boards is (p. 373).

Lucius Cree, who through the greater part of the action that takes place in time present (1879) searches for his identity, must continue to live without being certain
whose son he is, though he feels that he must be Legrand's. Manfully, he accepts his predicament, even having the great oak, which he has been unable to look at, sawed into boards for the house he will build for himself and his pregnant wife.

The ambiguity which Lucius accepts is, of course, different from that which Legrand accepts. With beautiful dramatic irony Lytle makes it clear that, although Lucius believes he probably is a bastard, he has no idea that he may be an incestuous bastard. Legrand, however, knows that Lucius may be Duncan's son rather than his: Julia has told him of her incestuous union with her brother. These ambiguities at the end of the novel, like the finely wrought ambiguities of Hawthorne and Henry James, add richness to The Velvet Horn, causing us to wonder about the later lives of its surviving characters, particularly of Lucius Cree and Pete Legrand.

Lytle achieves unity in The Velvet Horn by using progression d'effet to integrate secular representations of the Edenic myth and Christ's Passion. Landess, commenting on Legrand's statement that "Jack's death will bring us all together," says:

And so the family—which in its broadest meaning represents the larger community, the family of mankind—is humbled and reunited, just as man after the fall is first humbled by suffering and death and then redeemed by Christ, whose sacrifice makes possible a reunion in God of all who admit their sins and seek the benefits of that sacrifice. Thus man—initiated into knowledge at the fall—may transcend
the consequences of his own initiation through love.\textsuperscript{51}

To bring about this reunion, Jack Cropleigh, Lytle's victim-redeemer, apprehends "the point of intersection of the timeless/With time" and, giving himself in "a lifetime's death in love," finds his life as he loses it.

\textsuperscript{51} Landess, p. 361.
CHAPTER VI

FROM OLD SCRATCH'S CANNIBAL WORLD TO PARADISE

Andrew Lytle has said that a writer of fiction has one thing to say and that he says it over and over until at last he has finished. Of course, this statement is an oversimplification and, like all oversimplifications on important matters, calls for careful examination. But reading Lytle's fiction from "Old Scratch in the Valley" through The Velvet Horn, we note a high degree of consistency in thematic representation. Lytle, we recall, published "Old Scratch" in 1932, at the age of thirty. He had already published his biography of Bedford Forrest and his essay "The Hind Tit" in I'll Take My Stand.

Lytle, in Bedford Forrest and in "The Hind Tit," exhibits the characteristic that Tate refers to as "the peculiar historical consciousness of the Southern writer." In these works and in his first story, "Old Scratch," we find the seeds of Lytle's mature fiction: all three show his predilection for "Jamesian rendering" (even "The Hind Tit" contains a dramatic story of President Van Buren's encounter with a yeoman-farmer during his visit to Murfreesboro, Ten-

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nessee); and all three stress the Southern Agrarian concern over the loss in the citizenry of this country of a sense of tradition, i.e., of a sense of history and of religion.

This historical consciousness is basic in The Long Night and The Velvet Horn. Both novels cover a period extending from pre-Civil War times to Reconstruction; the sense of history is also fundamental in Alchemy and At the Moon's Inn, stories of the Spanish struggle to conquer the New World. The protagonists of these four works are depicted as fallible individuals living in a specific time and place. Like Macbeth, although they are influenced by inscrutable fate, they exercise free will (even Pleasant McIvor abandons his "Providence-directed" quest for vengeance): they are not the victims of society or "chemisms."

In a special way historical consciousness is also present in A Name for Evil, Lytle's only novel with a twentieth-century protagonist. The psychotic protagonist, who lives in a specific milieu (even though it is not identified by place-names), in effect rejects history by attempting to re-create it. Although his psychosis denies him the role of moral agent capable of exercising free will, the fatal effects of his perverted view of tradition serve as a warning to modern man that one attempts to relive the past at the risk of one's sanity.

Closely allied to this concern over the loss of a sense of history implicit in Lytle's fiction is a concern over the loss of a sense of religion. In the statement of
principles that serves as introduction to *I'll Take My Stand*, we find this dictum:

Religion can hardly expect to flourish in an industrial society. Religion is our submission to the general intention of a nature that is fairly inscrutable; it is the sense of our role as creatures within it. But nature industrialized, transformed into cities and artificial habitations, manufactured into commodities, is no longer nature but a highly simplified picture of nature. We receive the illusion of having power over nature, and lose the sense of nature as something mysterious and contingent. The God of nature under these conditions is merely an amiable expression, a superfluity, and the philosophical understanding ordinarily carried in the religious experience is not there for us to have.

For Lytle, as for his co-authors of the Southern Agrarian manifesto of 1930, concomitant with the material progress brought about by the Industrial Revolution there is the danger of the replacement in Western society of a belief in an inscrutable God by a concept of an amiable anthropomorphic God or by a sort of modern gnosticism in which positivist man becomes his own God.

Although Lytle does not commit "the heresy of the didactic" in his fiction (with the exception of the remark about "the dry rot of an aggravated materialism" in his first short story, "Old Scratch in the Valley"), the Southern Agrarian novelist's convictions about man's proper attitude toward history and religion are reiterated in the form of images

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throughout his fiction. These images, as we have seen in the
foregoing chapters, are, for the most part, images of archetypal human experiences, e.g., Pleasant McIvor's quest for
vengeance in *The Long Night*, Hernando de Soto's striving
toward self-anointed godhead in *Alchemy* and *At the Moon's
Inn*, Henry Brent's search for order through an attempt to re-
create history in *A Name for Evil*, and Jack Cropleigh's
Tiresias-like encompassing of all of the aspects of his
brothers' and sister's and nephew's searches for wholeness
and identity in *The Velvet Horn*. All of these quests or
searchings—with the exception of Lucius Cree's search for
identity—are directly opposed to generally accepted con-
cepts of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Pleasant McIvor has
no more justification for murdering his father's killers in
cold blood than De Soto has for "pacifying" the Indians for
his own aggrandizement, than Henry Brent has for attempting
to re-create the past, than the Cropleighs have for attempt-
ing to recover Eden through exile or incest. All of these
actions, of course, are blasphemous; and so Lytle clearly
presents them.

Lytle presents these archetypal human experiences
through fiction that is regional. Even *Alchemy*, though it
takes place in Peru, is related to the other works in that
it originally served as prologue to *At the Moon's Inn*, Lytle's
novel of De Soto's expedition through what is now the south-
eastern part of the United States. Flannery O'Connor, who
studied fiction under Lytle at the University of Iowa, ob-
serves that the best American fiction has been regional (passing from New England to the Midwest to the South). Miss O'Connor reports that Walker Percy, on receiving the National Book Award, answered the question of why there were so many good Southern writers by saying "Because we lost the War."

She explains his statement as follows:

He didn't mean by that simply that a lost war makes good subject matter. What he was saying was that we [the writers of the South] have had our Fall. We have gone into the modern world with an inburnt knowledge of human limitations and with a sense of mystery which could not have developed in our first state of innocence—as it has not sufficiently developed in the rest of our country.

Lytle demonstrates in his fiction that he has this "inburnt knowledge of human limitations" and that he has what Miss O'Connor calls "anagogical vision, . . . the kind of vision that is able to see different levels of reality in one image or one situation." In *At the Moon's Inn*, De Soto, "the man of will," because of his pride cannot abandon his monomaniacal quest for gold, though regard for the welfare of his men obviously demands the quitting of Florida after the Battle of Mauvilla. Tovar, De Soto's lieutenant, "the man of sensibility," can forsake neither sensuality (as witness his bigamous, albeit pagan, marriage) nor his monomaniacal Adelantado (as witness his massacre of the Nilco In-
dians), though the recurring vision of the wilderness growing out of the altar warns him of the disastrous consequences the sacrilegious expedition inevitably will bring.

The "anagogical vision" that Lytle exhibits so well in At the Moon's Inn and The Velvet Horn is perhaps the factor that most clearly sets his fiction apart from that of writers whose techniques have probably influenced him more than have the techniques of any others. Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce—these writers influenced Lytle in his fiction writing; yet not one of them can properly be termed a religious writer in the Christian sense. Indeed, Lytle's fiction, from "Old Scratch" to The Velvet Horn, with the possible exception of A Name for Evil, is informed with the idea of God, specifically the triune God of the later T. S. Eliot.

George Steiner, in his Tolstoy or Dostoevsky: An Essay in the Old Criticism, after pointing out that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky were "religious artists in the sense of the cathedral-builders or of Michelangelo when he wrought his image of eternity in the Sistine Chapel," says:

The cosmology of Anna Karenina and The Brothers Karamazov, like that portrayed on the antique and medieval stage, is open on either hand to the peril of damnation and the ministry of grace. We cannot say the same of the world of Eugenie Grandet, The Ambassadors, or Madame Bovary. This is a statement not of value but of fact. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky demand from us habits of sensibility and forms of understanding which had, on the whole, lapsed from European literature after the mid-seventeenth cen-
Examining Jacques Riviere's defense of the European novel against the Russian in Riviere's essay on "Dostoevsky and the Unfathomable" ("Nothing will persuade me," Riviere says, "that, given sufficient intuition, one may not endow a character with both profundity and logical coherence,"), Steiner comments:

In the absence of it [the religious element], certain reaches of poetic achievement would appear to be unattainable. We define these reaches by virtue of Greek and Elizabethan tragedy, of the lineage of the serious epic, and, I submit, in reference to the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Where European fiction falls short of the notion of supremacy which we associate with War and Peace, Anna Karenina, The Idiot, The Possessed, and The Brothers Karamazov, it does so in the range and inclusiveness of its mythologies.

And Steiner advances his argument by making a very important distinction: "The craft of the novel, as practised by Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, and James, bears on the middle part of the spectrum of reality." He cites as a twentieth-century example of the novel on "this middle domain, primarily the social order of things," Proust's A la recherche du temps perdu, which "bears witness to the longest recorded flight of the secular imagination, and concludes:

Substantiality of technique nearly makes up for thinness of metaphysics. But in the final analysis, the work sets its own limits within a narrower scope than either Tolstoy or Dostoevsky. The betraying instance is the sullied and reduced manner in which Proust dismisses from the scene his noblest figure,

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Robert de Saint-Loup (his military cross is found lying on the floor of a maison de passe). In their tragic hours Proust's characters, like Emma Bovary before them, stoop a little as if the ceilings were too low. Even in dirty socks—a particularly harsh symbol of abasement—Dimitri Karamazov stands before us with contrasting grandeur; even then he directs our imaginings to the thought that God may, after all, have created man in His own image.

Like Dimitri Karamazov, Lytle's protagonists, from the relatively simple first story, "Old Scratch," to the highly complex last novel, The Velvet Horn, are concerned with the co-existence of good and evil in the world according to a Christian context. In Lytle's theodicy, man, by attempting to regain the condition in which he existed before the Fall (e.g., by exiling himself or by committing incest, as in The Velvet Horn), in effect attempts to assume the godhead and, of course, can only come to a tragic end through his Faustian exercise of free will. For man born after the Fall, as Jack Cropleigh realizes, the flaming sword stands in the way of a recovery of Eden. The loss of primal innocence must be accepted.

"The Christian novelist," Flannery O'Connor writes, "is distinguished from his pagan colleagues by recognizing sin as sin. According to his heritage he sees it not as sickness or an accident of environment, but as a responsible choice of offense against God which involves his eternal future. Either one is serious about salvation or one is not." Lytle's onetime student adds:

And it is well to realize that the maximum amount of

7 Ibid., pp. 319-20.
seriousness admits the maximum amount of comedy. Only if we are secure in our beliefs can we see the comical side of the universe.

Lytle obviously intersperses humorous scenes and anecdotes throughout his fiction because humor is a part of life and because humor is necessary to define tragedy as well as to relieve it (e.g., the drunken Botterall's stabling of his mare in the house in The Long Night and the stichomythic exchange between Henry and Ellen Brent that is reminiscent of Shakespearean bawdry in A Name for Evil). However, Lytle makes Jack Cropleigh not only his most complex protagonist but also his most humorous character: the earthy, intellectual, spiritual Jack, a sort of combined Dimitri-Ivan-Alyosha Karamazov, who sometimes smells of whiskey and sweat, is at once the most serious and the most humorous of all of Lytle's characters for the reason that, of all the characters, he is the most secure in his beliefs. As Lytle says of him, "He alone could suffer the entire myth." 9

When Jack, the sufferer of "the entire myth," is only moments from the fulfillment of his role as "victim-redeemer," he jokes. After Lucius has told him he has married Ada Belle, Jack looks out of his parlor windows, sees Julia Cree approaching from one direction and Ada Rutter from another, and comments: "There's your mother, Lucius. . . . And old Ada coming up the drive in Frankie's buggy behind a horse stuffed with sawdust that must have springs to move him, for he'll just

8 O'Connor, p. 168. 9 Lytle, Hero, p. 189.
about make it to the horse block." Then, directing his
nephew to conceal himself temporarily in the adjoining dining-
room, he says: "And rub a little color in your cheeks. . . .
I just don't want it to get around that I can raise the dead.
I still can't live it down that I've resurrected myself"
(i.e., fallen in Joe Cree's grave and come out [with knowl-
edge that can never be revealed to anyone] pp. 362-63).

Only a novelist very secure in his own beliefs and very
sure of his protagonist's beliefs (we recall that Lytle lived
with Jack Cropleigh for nine years after creating him) could
risk such a synthesis of the serious and the comic as the
above remarks represent. The synthesis succeeds, not only
because Lytle has carefully developed Jack as a serious
jester, but also because it is functional: Jack's remarks
intensify the dramatic irony, for at first he does not even
notice that the demented Othel is in the buggy with his mother.
This dramatic irony, of course, emphasizes Jack's humanity;
though he is "victim-redeemer," his self-sacrificial act is
unpremeditated.

Lytle, as we have noted, presents Jack Cropleigh's
last words in a free-verse paraphrase from the Book of John.
We can accept Jack's poetic departure from "This cannibal
world" without cavil because, having listened to Jack as he
paraphrased other Biblical passages (e.g., passages from Gen-
esis and Ecclesiastes), we know him to be something of a Bib-
lical scholar. Considering Dostoevsky's taking of his con-
trolling image for The Possessed from the New Testament par-
able of the Gadarene swine, Steiner comments:

It might be argued that Dostoevsky infringed "the rules of the game," that he amplified and solemnized the impact of his novels through the use of Biblical citations and analogues. But in fact he heightened the risks of artistic failure. A strong quotation can destroy a weak text; in order to incorporate a scriptural passage and give it pertinence, a narrative design must per se be of great firmness and nobility. The quotation brings with it a train of echoes and is overlaid with previous interpretations and usages. These will obscure or corrode the effect which the novelist is aiming at unless this effect is inherently spacious and dynamic. . . .

Steiner adds:

Dostoevsky did not always quote directly. At times the narrative, through its rhythm and tonality, points towards a Biblical or liturgical resolution as we say that a musical chord points toward the dominant. 10

These comments, of course, are applicable to The Velvet Horn. It is a mark of Lytle's artistry that he is able to blend Biblical allusions and paraphrases into the action of his novel so skilfully that the non-Biblical matrix is hardly distinguishable from the Biblical verses or allusions it contains.

It is also a mark of Lytle's artistry that he can represent—to use Steiner's terminology—the lower part of the spectrum of reality as well as the higher. Not all of Lytle's characters achieve union with the Word, as presumably the man of words, Jack Cropleigh, does. Certainly the demoniac Tyson Lovell, when last we see him, is headed straight for damnation. For the greater part of Lytle's important

10 Steiner, pp. 303-304.
characters, however, it is not so easy to play God by passing judgment. Should we take the "Spanish puritan" De Soto's monomania into consideration and relegate him to a special part of the Paradise of Fools? How should we treat the other Spaniards who slaughtered Indians, including Lytle's protagonist, Tovar? How treat Pleasant McIvor, the murderer? What of yet another practitioner-of-gnosticism-without-realizing-it, the psychotic Henry Brent? What of "the man-fetus," Othel? And the dying, yet still prideful and avaricious, old woman who hears voices singing of Joshua and Jericho? Such characters, existing as they do between the extremes represented by Jack Cropleigh and Lovell, define many of the nuances of the fallen state of man as Lytle depicts it.

Randall Stewart, in his little book entitled *American Literature & Christian Doctrine*, describes the predicament of the citizens of Lytle's world:

Man is a moral agent, and a tragic figure. The tragic aspect is brought out with special power in Hawthorne, Melville, and Faulkner [Stewart could well have included such names as Lytle, O'Connor, and Warren] . . . . . . man is an imperfect, nonperfectible being. He cannot be improved by technology. He is not a machine, but a very fallible human. Poor wayward creature, he appears even now to be plotting, with all ingenuity and speed, his own destruction. But his state, unless by his own perverse wilfulness, is not beyond the reach of God's redeeming grace. This is the essence of the human condition, and the Christian hope. And this is the meaning of the dramatizations of human experience by the greatest American writers.  

Lytle, inscribing a copy of *The Velvet Horn*, in a phrase tells a great deal about how a true artist renders human experience:

This sweat and blood transmuted, one hopes, by form, out of that sacred place, the imagination.

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12 Lytle, Aug. 3, 1971, in the present writer's copy of *The Velvet Horn*. 
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VITA

Charles Chester Clark was born in Coleman County, Texas, November 2, 1919. After receiving a public-school education in Shreveport, Louisiana, he attended the University of Oklahoma, where he received his B.S. degree in geology in 1940. After service in the Air Force as a weather officer and work as a petroleum geologist, he attended Northwestern State College of Louisiana, where he received his M.A. degree in English, in 1966. He was an instructor of English at Louisiana Polytechnic Institute for three years and has been an instructor of English at Louisiana State University during the past two years.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Charles Chester Clark

Major Field: English

Title of Thesis: The Novels of Andrew Lytle: A Study in the Artistry of Fiction

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: May 11, 1972