

WORLD ENOUGH AND TIME: A VISION OF MAN

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CONTENTS

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Introduction: The Kentucky Tragedy 1

The Education of Jeremiah Beaumont 7

WORLD ENOUGH and TIME: A Critical Evaluation 15

Selected Bibliography 25

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CONTENTS

In November 7, 1825, a young lawyer of southern Kentucky, Jacobson
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Introduction: The Kentucky Tragedy 1
The Education of Jeremiah Beaumont 7
WORLD ENOUGH and TIME: A Critical Evaluation 24
A Selected Bibliography 38

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was Executed at Frankfort, Ky. on the 7th of July, 1825 for the Murder
of Col. Robinson P. Sharp,"¹ which was written by the murderer in his
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the *Blountfield, Kentucky*.

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a member of the society balls, by Colonel Sharp. Jacobson searched out Miss
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first pitied, then admired, and finally came to love her. After a
courtship of three or four months he asked her to marry him. She replied

¹ Reprinted in its entirety in *The Kentucky Tragedy: A Problem
of Jealous Attitudes* edited by Loran J. Ballou (New York, 1903),
pp. 1-10.

INTRODUCTION: THE KENTUCKY TRAGEDY

On November 7, 1825, a young lawyer of southern Kentucky, Jereboam O. Beauchamp, stabbed to death the Attorney General of the state, Colonel Solomon P. Sharp, in the doorway of Sharp's Frankfort home. The murder and the trial were sensational, but the appeal of the incident to writers from then until the present lies in the events leading up to the homicide. The primary source for the literary treatments of the tragedy has been "The Confession of Jereboam O. Beauchamp, Who was Executed at Frankfort, Ky. on the 7th of July, 1826 for the Murder of Col. Solomon P. Sharp,"¹ which was written by the murderer in his cell as he awaited his execution and was published posthumously in 1826 in Bloomfield, Kentucky.

The instigating incident was the seduction of Miss Ann Cooke, a southern society belle, by Colonel Sharp. Jereboam searched out Miss Cook because his roommate had told him of the affair and had spoken so violently against Sharp's treatment of the defenseless maiden. Jereboam first pitied, then admired, and finally came to love her. After a courtship of three or four months he asked her to marry him. She replied

¹ Reprinted in its entirety in The Kentucky Tragedy: A Problem in Romantic Attitudes edited by Loren J. Kallsen (New York, 1963), pp. 2-105.

that she would like to marry him, but that first he must avenge her dishonor. Beauchamp said that he had always assumed that Sharp's murder would be a pleasant prerequisite to their marriage. Although he and Ann planned to murder Sharp before they were married, it seemed impossible because Sharp, one of the most prominent men in the state, refused to accept Beauchamp's challenge. Furthermore he was away much of the time during his campaign for election to the state House of Representatives. Beauchamp and Ann Cooke were soon married, the resolve to kill Sharp apparently forgotten.

An incident occurred some months later which brought the plan back to Beauchamp's attention. He allegedly received a letter from an unnamed friend who told him that Sharp had been spreading rumors about Ann in order to clear himself of the charge of seduction. According to the writer of the letter, Sharp had stated that Ann Cooke's still-born child had been the son of her Negro coachman.

Beauchamp then resolved to fulfill his earlier promise to his wife by killing Sharp in Frankfort immediately after the bitterly-fought election of Sharp. Beauchamp carefully planned the murder (he says "assassination") knowing that he, having publicly threatened Sharp previously, would be the logical suspect. He planned to use a

current political dispute² to his own advantage, hoping that Sharp's friends might be led to believe that Sharp had been killed by assassins of the opposing Old Court political faction.

Beauchamp was arrested and tried for Sharp's murder. Public and political feelings ran high during the trial because the murder was used by the New Court party of Col. Sharp to discredit the Old Court Party. The result was a tissue of lies. Beauchamp says in his confession, "the world never witnessed more misrepresentation, flowing from prejudice or worse motives, than were upon my trial."³

Sentenced to die upon the gallows, he spent the last days of his life writing his apologia in the cell which his wife voluntarily shared with him. The night before his execution the Beauchamps attempted suicide, drinking a vial of laudanum which proved to be an ineffective poison. Having failed suicide by poison, Beauchamp stabbed himself, and his wife followed his example. Unlike Ann he lived until the next day (July 7, 1826), when he was hanged.

² Politics of Kentucky during this period centered on the struggle between the New Court and Old Court factions which grew out of the financial instability of the period. Much of the population had gone into debt through speculating in the nearly worthless currency that flooded Kentucky. The Legislature passed laws giving debtors forms of relief from their creditors. The relief laws were held unconstitutional by the Kentucky Court of Appeals. The New Court wanted to reorganize the Court of Appeals by legislative action, and fill the bench with judges who would be favorable to the relief laws. The Old Court faction wanted to retain the incumbent bench. Therefore the New Court party was also called the Relief party and the Old Court party the Anti-relief group. For more detail of the struggle, see Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (New York, 1937), pp. 198-222.

³ "The Confession . . .," p. 58. See footnote 1.

The friends of law, order, and Col. Sharp deplored the outrage of Sharp's murder, and the newspaper circulations increased. As the Beauchamp-Sharp case gained national attention, it became known popularly as "The Kentucky Tragedy." In great demand were the "Confession . . ."; the alleged Letters of Ann Cooke (Washington, D.C., 1826); and Beauchamp's Trial, the publication of the shorthand notes of the trial taken by J. G. Dana and R. S. Thomas. In 1827 Dr. Leonard Sharp released his booklet, Vindication of Solomon P. Sharp.

The human conflicts and dramatic possibilities were soon recognized and utilized by nineteenth-century writers. Thomas Holley Chivers' play, Conrad and Eudora, based on the tragedy, appeared in 1843. Five years later Chivers again used the tragedy in his play Leoni - - - The Orphan of Venice. In 1835 Edgar Allan Poe's tragedy in blank verse, Politian, was published. Two years later Charlotte Connor Barnes used the incident as the basis of her play Octavia Bragaldi. Two other playwrights used the theme: John Savage in Sybil (1858) and Clifton W. Tayleure in an untitled melodrama written before the close of the Civil War.

The Beauchamp-Sharp tragedy provided the basis for two poems: "Epitaph" (written by Ann Cooke Beauchamp in the cell) and "Beauchamp" (by Isaac Starr Clason, M.S., New York, 1833). No less than three anonymous ballads ("Colonel Sharp," "Beauchamp's Confession," and "Jereboam Beauchamp") have been noted by Willard R. Jillson.⁴

⁴For a more detailed bibliography of works based on the tragedy, see Willard Rouse Jillson, "The Beauchamp-Sharp Tragedy in American Literature," Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society XXXVI (January, 1938), 54--60. A more up to date list is given in Kallsen's casebook. See footnote 1.

The only short story based on the incident is "The Kentucky Tragedy" by Mary E. MacMichael (Burton's Gentlemen's Magazine II, 1938).

Novels dealing with the tragedy are: Charles Fenno Hoffman's Greyslayer (New York, 1840); William Gilmore Simms' Beauchampe (Philadelphia, 1842), republished with revisions in two parts in 1856 as Charlemont and Beauchampe;⁵ Hannah Daveiss Pittman's The Heart of Kentucky (New York, 1908); Robert Penn Warren's World Enough and Time (New York, 1950); and Joseph Shearing's To Bed at Noon (London, 1951).

The list of graduate theses, critical essays, historical articles, and other publications dealing with the tragedy grows longer every year.⁶

I chose to study Warren's World Enough and Time because, unlike so many of the other treatments, Warren recognizes the human conflicts and tensions inherent in the Kentucky incident. It is his realization of the universality of such conflicts and his artistry which make his novel a masterful and complex treatment of the Kentucky Tragedy.

Warren tells the story through a modern historian who evaluates and questions the significance of the ideas and actions involved in the nineteenth-century tale as he sifts through the faded documents. The historian-narrator's major source of information is the journal fabricated by Warren but modeled after the confession of Jereboam O. Beauchamp.

⁵The revision is explained further by Arthur Hobson Quinn, American Fiction: An Historical and Critical Survey (New York and London, 1936), pp. 121-122.

⁶Excellent bibliographies are included in Kallsen's casebook and in Leonard Casper, Robert Penn Warren: Dark and Bloody Ground (Seattle, 1960). Jillson also lists some theses, biographies, and newspaper accounts not included in the later bibliographies.

There are parallels in the characters and actions of Warren's fictitious journal and the authentic document.⁷

Warren, however, has exercised the author's prerogative to alter the original material in constructing his novel. For instance, Warren has transferred the great desire for revenge of the original Ann Cooke to her suitor in World Enough and Time, Jeremiah Beaumont. The author has also chosen for the purposes of his theme to place Beaumont directly under the fatherly patronage of Col. Fort, while the original Beauchamp did not know Sharp so well. Warren also introduces important characters whose roles in the "Confession . . ." were minor or nonexistent. The "intimate friend and roommate" of Beauchamp becomes Wilkie Barron in Beaumont's world. Perhaps the major deviation from the original plot occurs when the Beaumonts do not die in Frankfort but escape to the swamp domain of La Grand' Bosse, where the then insane Rachel commits suicide and where Jeremiah comes to a final understanding of man's place in the universe.

World Enough and Time is complex, as critics have recognized, and deserves closer study. It is an index of Warren's skill that he could so transform the raw materials of the Kentucky Tragedy into such a complex and controversial novel.

⁷The parallels between Warren's major characters and the authentic persons mentioned by Beauchamp may be diagrammed as follows:

Warren's Characters
 Jeremiah Beaumont
 Rachel Jordan
 Col. Cassius Fort
 Dr. Burnham
 Wilkie Barron

The Original Persons
 Jereboam O. Beauchamp
 Ann Cooke
 Col. Solomon P. Sharp
 Dr. Thurston
 unnamed roommate and close
 friend of Beauchamp

THE EDUCATION OF JEREMIAH BEAUMONT

World Enough and Time is the story of Jeremiah Beaumont's search to understand himself. Again and again he reaches a decision as to how man should live and how he should regard his world, tests this decision, recognizes its flaws, and rejects the decision. Upon the basis of such an experience he reconstructs his view of life and of himself, only to repeat again the cycle of formulation, testing, and rejection.

His first testing occurs when he is only thirteen years old. While on a hunting trip in an unexplored region he realizes that as men grow older they come to "'know the burden of time and things.'"¹ At this point he believes that if he could stay in the forest uncontaminated by civilization, he would never grow old or learn these unpleasant things. But the hunting trip ends and he must return to the world of men. Several years later he again voices his dissatisfaction with the world in which he lives and his determination to find his own rational alternative to such a life:

"I had seen," he wrote, "my good father die in the bitterness of worldly failure and sick hope, and I had seen my grandfather Marcher live bitterly in the midst of wealth and great place,

¹Robert Penn Warren, World Enough and Time (New York, 1965), p. 16. All subsequent quotations in this paper are taken from this edition and will be incorporated into the text.

- and I came to see, though in my own boyish way, that both were bound to the grossness of nature and the vanity of the world. As time passed, it came to me that I would not wish to live and die thus, and that there must be another way to live and die. Therefore, I searched my books for what truth might be beyond the bustle of the hour and the empty lusts of time." (p. 26).

When his books seem to withhold the truth he seeks, he tries to find this truth in the frontier religion as preached by Brother McClardy. Beaumont sees the physical manifestations of the salvation of others: some fall on the ground, some are taken with the hysterical holy laugh, and some experience holy seizures. At first he feels that he cannot attain salvation for he has nothing to offer God for His mercy. When McClardy says that no man can buy God's gratuitous mercy, Jeremiah feels a "great fullness" within him. For a year he reads the Bible and prays, rejoicing in what he sees as an alternative to the "grossness of nature and the vanity of the world." (p. 26)

He records moments of pantheistic communion with all living things in which his frontier religion and his earlier feeling of union with the untamed forest merge. Brother Trotter, however, warns Jeremiah that "he should not enter into nature, for the kingdom is not of this world." (p. 32) As a result of this advice, Jeremiah loses the peace and joy of his religion. In an effort to recapture what he has lost, he travels to another of McClardy's meetings. In a hypnotic state of religious fervor he rushes into the woods and copulates with "another creature" whom he later discovers is an old hag of mixed breed. The youth is repulsed and disgusted when he sees that what he felt was outside the world [his religious fervor] has resulted in intimate contact

with the unpleasantness of worldly experience. The historian-narrator comments upon Beaumont's sense of disillusionment and betrayal after his attempt to find an answer outside the world: "He was still Jeremiah Beaumont, coming back to the three-room cabin, to the work in the field and in the schoolhouse, to the world as it was, with which, if he was to live, he would have to make terms." (p. 35)

Rejecting religion as the answer to his search for the good life, Beaumont returns to his studies under his school-master and mentor, Dr. Burnham. Dr. Burnham introduces him to the "ideal of the Romans" --- the concept of manly courage and honor --- which fitted so well into the chivalric code duello of the Southerner. Beaumont, who earlier speculated upon "the vanity of the world" and "the empty lusts of time," readily accepts the Roman idea that the individual must maintain his honor against the physical world and its violence. For a great part of his life he bases all action upon the assumption that this idea of the importance of the ideal and individual honor is the accurate view of life. It is Dr. Burnham, who has nurtured this romantic idealism in Beaumont, who introduces him to an old friend, Col. Fort.

Upon the recommendation of Dr. Burnham, Col. Fort invites Beaumont into his law office in Bowling Green, but Beaumont replies that he must stay at home to care for his mother. After her death he readily accepts Fort's offer; it is typical of Beaumont that he instantly feels guilty because he is glad that his new life in Bowling Green has thus been made possible. From Col. Fort he learns that even a man who is successful in the political and social spheres may question himself about the meaning of life.

This question issues from Fort's involvement in the struggle between the New Court and Old Court factions over the question of repayment of debts. The debate also involves the larger question of the nature and purpose of public and government and embodies the two views between which Beaumont vacillates:

Old Court and New Court, each thought it was the world,
and justice.

Justice.

The Old Court said: The law exists. The Constitution exists. They exist by the sanction of Nature and Society. They are not Justice, for Justice is a spirit never seen, but only through them can Justice speak. Untune them and all is jangle.

The New Court Said: The Law exists. The Constitution exists. But they exist only by the decision of man and what man can make he can unmake. As for Justice, that is the name for the needs of man. Justice is man's Goddess but is also his slave. Let man seize her naked and make her speak.
(pp. 312-332)

Coming from a family that had fled privation in the East only to find more hardship and poverty in Kentucky, Col. Fort sympathizes with the debtors and is one of the leading figures in the Relief or New Court Party. He also understands the view of the Old Court party when he says that man cannot "'fiddle in plowtime and get fat at first frost and corn-pulling.'" (p. 48) Torn between recognition of the truths of both sides of the issue, Col. Fort tells Beaumont, "We live in the world, boy, and when the sun is down it is a place of darkness where the foot knoweth not the way." (p. 48) Beaumont, however, does not wish to recognize a double truth. He sees life as a choice between Old Court (permanent laws made and executed by society as a whole in

accordance with nature and adherence to this society) and New Court (man's laws determined by private needs and ideas). He believes that a man can, by listening to the whisper of Justice, find a definite way through the darkness of the world.

When not studying law under Col. Fort's direction, Beaumont spends his time with the distinguished persons he has met in Bowling Green. Wilkie Barron, his roommate, attempts to draw the moody, serious youth into the gay and exciting life of the town. "You will find you live in the world," he tells Beaumont. (p. 156) Wilkie tries to interest Jeremiah in meeting Silly Sal, the ignorant but physically desirable girl enjoyed by the local youths. Jeremiah rejects this dishonorable idea, but is further disturbed by his reaction to the suggestion:

The thought was horrible to me, and then . . . I felt lonely and how I could not take the world as other men for the brightness of the moment and the tickle of the flesh, and how they found what they were seeking but I did not know what I sought. I took no credit for virtue, for my desire was what was common to men, and even as I lay there I suffered a carnal lust and saw Silly Sal as though her naked flesh were bright in the room like light. (pp. 45-46)

Beaumont's vacillation between the private, self-formulated ideal and the total amoral acceptance of the physical parallels in his mind the more comprehensive question of whether man will be guided by a private code or by the authority of society's decisions. Beaumont has rejected the public world (physical unpleasantness, anything finite and transient, the society of men) for the private world (the Absolute Beauty and Ideal, a permanent standard with the ring of the infinite, the individual honor and ethics).

Wilkie Barron, who has chosen to follow society in the respect that he interacts freely with other men and the physical world, is aware of the struggle in Beaumont and of Beaumont's tendency to reject the public in favor of the private. With this knowledge of his companion, Wilkie arranges for Beaumont's meeting Percival Skrogg, who impresses Beaumont because he scorns the physical world inasmuch as it does not relate to the pure Ideal of Justice. Thus Wilkie Barron is able to embroil the idealistic Beaumont in a brawl during a county election when Skrogg's life is threatened because he is there to vote for the New Court candidate. Also because Wilkie knows how to appeal to Jeremiah's sense of the ideal, he tells him of Rachel Jordan, a young woman who has been "dishonored" by Col. Fort. Wilkie senses what Beaumont does not --- that Fort is beginning to desert the ideas of the New Court Party in favor of the more conservative Old Court Party. By playing upon Beaumont's subconscious feeling of guilt in having previously revered Fort and having accepted him as a surrogate father, Wilkie is responsible for Beaumont's alienation from Fort.

Thinking of how his trust in Fort has been betrayed, Beaumont again wonders, "Ah, where [is] the greatness of life? Could a man not come to some moment when, all dross and meanness of life consumed, he could live in the pure idea?" (p. 62) Wilkie, skillfully planning to add to Beaumont's anger towards Fort, arranges for him to visit his uncle, old Mr. Thomas Bartlett Barron, whose farm is conveniently near the Jordan estate. Envisaging Rachel Jordan as the undefended victim of a villain's dishonorable intentions, Beaumont sees her as the answer to his quest.

By avenging the dishonor of a person unrelated to him, he will be committing the act "'uninterested and pure' and apart from the world's judgement." (p. 126) Thus he can live by the private code and yet receive the commendation of his society. Beaumont visits Rachel, who after a long courtship becomes dependent upon his company. Realizing his importance in her life, Beaumont forces from her the story of her affair with Fort and the subsequent still-born child and wrings from her the command to kill Fort before marrying her. He then goes to Frankfort.

Unsuccessful in his attempts to challenge Fort to a duel because Fort cannot be found, Beaumont tries to enlist Wilkie Barron in the search for the "villain." New Court campaigner Barron, however, attempts to discourage him from carrying out his plan to harm the man who is still the leader of the Relief Party. Unable to locate Fort, Beaumont returns to the Jordan farm where he and Rachel are married.

Rachel, like Jeremiah, wants to find another way to live other than that of the world. She blames the world for her loneliness and the death of her illegitimate son. Jeremiah offers her a solution: "We will make the world what we will," he tells Rachel (p. 79). Determining upon withdrawing from the world which he cannot understand into a private winter sleep world of his own, Beaumont busies himself with the repairing of the estate and even dreams of becoming richer than Fort.

Outraged that Fort is becoming an Anti-Relief candidate for the state legislature, Wilkie Barron visits Beaumont and while there expresses his "relief" that Beaumont has forgotten his vow to kill Fort. "You could turn your back with good conscience and seek your private gain," Wilkie tells Beaumont (p. 211). Beaumont feels that he is being accused of following the world, so he searches out Fort. He finds him in Frankfort

in the midst of election plans and challenges him to a duel. Fort refuses to risk hurting anyone who fights for "Miss Jordan's" honor, and Beaumont finds that he cannot bring himself to kill the unarmed man who has been like a father to him. He returns to the Jordan estate, where Rachel tells him they are to have a child. As a result of her announcement, they are lost in a private happiness undisturbed except by rumors of his having married her for the Jordan estate. Only when a broadside apparently sent by Fort and naming the Jordan coachman as the father of Rachel's child upsets Rachel so that she has a miscarriage does Beaumont remember his "Great Purpose." He sits by her bed as she convalesces, feeling as if every courtesy he does her is part of "a ritual of expiation. For he [feels] guilty for all." (p. 226) In her illness and unhappiness Rachel confuses Beaumont with Fort and cries out that both have filled her womb with emptiness. Repressing the guilt he feels upon being identified with Fort, Beaumont decides that his guilt is due to his forgetting the vow to murder Fort. If he had killed Fort earlier, he rationalizes, his own child would be alive now. He wants to justify himself, especially to Rachel, by killing Fort immediately and openly. When Rachel taunts him with the remark that he wants to be caught for the murder in order to leave her as she has always been left, he feels that he must murder Fort in darkness to avoid arrest. Frustrated in his desire to have the world live by the Ideal, he now sees his plan to murder Fort secretly as a way to use the means of the public world to gain the end of the Idea. In other words, he decides to achieve the idea of Justice by the violent method of the world, murder. That the ideal cannot redeem the way of

the world he later learns.

During the time between his decision to murder Fort secretly and the date of the controversial political election (the time he has chosen for the "execution"), he visits old Mr. Barron. From the old man's account of his life, Jeremiah senses that there is more to Mr. Barron than just the faded picture he sees. He questions Mr. Barron's calm acceptance of life. Beaumont says:

"I was sick at heart with the doubleness of life and with the thought how a man does not know on which path his foot is set. So without premeditation, I asked him "But you are old and you have made many crops and does it please you to make another? Just like all the rest?" (p. 153)

Mr. Barron hesitates and then answers:

"Son, I made me many a crop But I aim, under God's hand, to make me one more And this one -- it may be the best I ever made.

"Son,' he said, having looked at me slow, 'you are learned, and in the wisdom of dead tongues and in the law, and I am nigh unlettered but for reading the Word and ciphering, and I can only say what come to me on the way. It come to me long back that all for a man like me was to set his strength to whatever come to his hand. . . . I done things would shame a man, in wrath and meanness of heart, and I have seen days I cried out against God for the grief laid on me. But what I learned, I learned, and we taken this land and it is ours And son, I aim to make me one more crop. It may be the best I ever made. Under God's hand.'" (p. 153)

Momentarily Beaumont senses the deeper significance in Mr. Barron's acceptance of man's guilt, in his continuing attempt to improve, and in his realization of a higher and irreproachable power. But he cannot so easily reject his early belief in the power of the individual to make his own world.

Again Mr. Barron speaks to Beaumont on family and society: "I cared for them [my children] and they cared for me, but I knew they had to go forth and lay hand on the world I got good niggers here. I done them right, and they done me right.'" (p. 161) Mr. Barron gives the young man a cup which his deceased wife had taken great joy and comfort in owning. Rachel rightly sees it as a symbol of the old man's wish that the younger couple may share the human joys the Barrons had experienced, but Jeremiah sees no more than an old cup. He is too concerned with the impending trip to murder Fort.

Beaumont returns from Frankfort with a red scarf flying from his saddle, a symbol of victory used by chivalrous knights of old. Within hours men arrive to take him back to the capital to face the accusation of murder.

He is formally charged with Fort's murder. As a result of the large rewards for evidence against Fort's murderer offered by Fort's family and his party, several men are enticed into "remembering" things Beaumont knows they cannot possibly know. At this time he is offered a lesson in the relationship of the ideal and the real by the two men who become his lawyers. Mr. Madison, a man accused of betraying his own wealthy class when he becomes a prominent leader of the New Court faction in Kentucky, believes justice should be above parties. He proves this by risking his political career in defending Beaumont. Hilton Hawgood, although a staunch Old Court man, feels that Jeremiah is being falsely accused and asks him to accept his services for "no pay but a good conscience." (p. 311) The two men together represent a merging of the idealism of the individual

(Old Court Hawgood) and the reality of society (New Court Madison).

One incident reveals how unwilling Beaumont is to accept the full implication of the merging of the real and the ideal. When the press begins to say that New Court conspirators, not Beaumont, are responsible for Fort's death, Mr. Madison's own party is damaged, and certain of its members accuse Mr. Madison of betraying the party by defending Beaumont. Mr. Madison, however, tells the young man not to worry about his party or himself and places his hand on Jeremiah's shoulder. The younger man feels the hand "like a crushing weight that would bow him to the ground." Beaumont is still too much the Byronic hero in his own mirror to be able to accept the weight of man's obligation to man symbolized by the weight of Madison's hand on his shoulder.

As the trial progresses, Beaumont is outraged by the lies of witnesses against him. Exposing the lies, however, would mean telling the truth, which would result in his death. Thus frustrated, he often wishes to escape into darkness or to flee West (a deceptive symbol of innocence). As he is discussing his false accusers with the jailer, Munn Short, he receives a chilling "reassurance" from Short which foreshadows the actual course of events: "'You get so many lies and hit jist biles down to truth. Lak rendering lard.'" (p. 370)

Throughout most of his life Jeremiah Beaumont had acted on the assumption that one may choose either the way of the public world or that of the individual's inner and private world. But Wilkie Barron's surprising appearance as a witness for the state and his testimony supplying Jeremiah's motivation for the murder, as well as the lies of witnesses who honestly believe they are telling the truth, reveal a

horrible truth to Beaumont:

. . . he was torn between that secret world and the public world. Where did he belong? He belonged in both.

The problem, however, was more than a problem of doubleness. If the worlds has been entirely different, . . . then all might have been easy.

But it was not so. The two worlds impinged, overlay and lapped, blurred and absorbed, twisted together and dissolved like mist. That was the trouble. You never knew when the doubleness you embraced might become simplicity, or when the single might divide like smoke, or to what strange corner the familiar street down which you walked might lead. (pp. 333-334)

His nightmare is now that of the two worlds overlapping and fusing. He begins to question his own Truth, his own certainty that he could distinguish between the false and the true. When he believes there is no longer hope of being freed, he confesses to his lawyers that he lied in telling them that he did not kill Fort. Hawgood palliates Madison's quick anger towards the deceiving client and simultaneously echoes Fort's earlier enunciated belief that man never knows the dark destination of his life:

"We've come a long way, and by paths not all of our own choosing. But when you go on a journey, you never know the end. . . . And he has come a long way, part of that way with us, and no man knows at what point on the road darkness may fall." (p. 400)

Beaumont explains his actions to the lawyers: "You must try to believe - - - that I clung to a hope of inward innocence - - - for all men - - - I believe that all men must cling to innocence to live - - - that is all a man can have to live for - - - innocence . . ." (p. 399) After the lawyers leave the cell, Jeremiah waits for the peace he has anticipated, but the

confession does not bring peace. When Hawgood and Madison visit him for the last time, he asks them if innocence is impossible. Hawgood tells him that man should not search for innocence, which is an accident in man, but for truth, which is higher and more enduring than innocence. Still Jeremiah is not satisfied, for at this point he sees truth as an illusive and relative matter.

Still questioning, Beaumont searches out Short and asks him about innocence. After telling Beaumont of a young girl who had denied that she was dancing, even though the questioning minister had seen her feet moving in time to the fiddler's music, Munn Short gives his own definition of innocence:

"Innocent. Hit aint the crossin of feet or the sound of fiddles. Hit is the kind of music in his heart a man steps to. Hit must be the music thar, fer the steppin is always mortal steppin and there ain't no innocence to hit. Innocent is only the heart music, be hit that kind.

"Ain't no man . . . kin ast what kind of music is in his heart. No man kin tell him. He has to hear hit hissef, and know it in his heart." (p. 406)

Jeremiah, however, is not yet capable of Short's explanation of human guilt. He does not see that a man by nature is not innocent.

Deprived of his former belief in his "Great Purpose" and of any hope of social approbation or even personal peace, Beaumont turns to Rachel, who voluntarily has come to share his cell with him. They attempt to live in a period of sexual orgy, "without memory or expectation." (p. 413) With their passion comes Jeremiah's frantic urge to record his story. As time speeds toward the date of his execution his pen races backward in an attempt to recapture the past and to understand

his life. He learns that it is as difficult to recapture the past as it is to live in the timeless present of sexual intercourse.

One day during this period the jailer tells the condemned prisoner that dying is not difficult and is nothing to fear if one knows how to "come to hit." When Jeremiah starts to turn away from what he believes will be another religious sermon, Short explains quickly that he once died. He says that he had "done all the meanness of man. But a man comes along and he falls in the world and the mud lak a man will. Ain't nuthin to tell him, if he don't harken soft, fer the world, hit is a quagmire and don't hang out no sign." (p. 420) Short explains that he had been in the frontier during an Indian uprising and had gone to the safety of the small fort which settlers had built for such an emergency. While there during the winter, he "fancied" the young wife of an old man. In the spring she told him she was to have his child, although her jubilant husband believed it was his own. While lying with her in the thicket one afternoon he heard the alarm horn from the station warning of an Indian attack. During their attempted escape, the woman was killed by an arrow and Short was hit. He was being scalped when the woman's husband pulled him to safety. The old man not only saved his life but nursed him back to health. Then Short learned that the old man knew of his wife's adultery. Short is haunted by the old man's parting words: "'You done kilt her, but I caint do to you lak I aimed, and go your way, but never fergit you air mine, and my name and my mark, they air on you, fer I saved you and brung you in, and you air mine.'" (p. 424) This incident which changed or renewed Short's life

led him to say this:

"Body-dyin was easy when I laid on the ground, but dyin ever day when you walk in the sun, hit is hard, and I cried out for the mercy. Long time, and hit come how I did not have to be Perk's and his mark on me. I could be Jesus', and the mark plum washed away I found the way and the promise, and Jesus come into my heart."(p. 425)

Angered by this sermon, Jeremiah says he can strike down Short and escape; the jailer laughs at the idea of physical death as a threat. Beaumont does not yet realize as has Munn Short that physical death can be accepted, but that without some recognition of guilt and a way to accept this guilt, man cannot endure life in his world. Jeremiah is inspired by the jailer's words in one respect: he confesses again his crime in an attempt to achieve the peace Short has received. He does not yet know that grace or peace is not bargained for. Unable to find peace, without any hope, and facing for the first time the stark reality of death, he longs to escape - - to return to pre-natal darkness, to the pre-civilization innocence of the West, to fuse with nature. His wish now is to flee the loneliness of the idea and to hold nature as all. He has tried to rise above the humanity by making his own laws and justice; now he wants to reject all distinctions of right and wrong by sinking to the animal-innocence of guilt. The novel thus weaves an early thread into the final section. Again Jeremiah wishes he were in the untamed forest and without the painful knowledge of human limitation.

His wish to flee his society is fulfilled. Wilkie Barron now deems it politically expedient for Beaumont to escape death, so he executes a brilliant plan whereby the Beaumonts escape from jail at the

eleventh hour. Making his way into the swampland along the Mississippi River, Beaumont finds himself in a group of amoral persons who are under the command of the degenerate river pirate, La Grand' Bosse. These people are not burdened by distinctions of guilt or innocence; the swamp people are ruled only by the ebbing power of La Grand' Bosse. Here Jeremiah not only attempts to reject society and guilt but also time. He believes that if he can become one with the swamp people he "should reach the end of a journey and nothing more would matter." (p. 486) He tries to achieve this union through sexual relations with an available woman, but a "cankorous sore" disturbs this peace. The result is his renewed attempts to understand himself.

With the arrival of a henchman of Wilkie's who will sell out his employer for revenge, the novel as far as Beaumont is concerned draws swiftly to a close. The henchman offers Jeremiah the handbill with Fort's signature forged by Skrogg and Wilkie Barron which may be the basis for Beaumont's pardon from the governor. Jeremiah protests that he does not want to return to society when he hears that Wilkie has been his great betrayer. He says that everyone has betrayed him, even Rachel for whom he did all. It takes a final statement from his now insane wife for Jeremiah to see himself as he really is. Rachel tells him that he has used and ruined her as he has everyone he has encountered. Yet, as she plunges the knife in her breast in an re-enactment and in expiation for her part in Fort's murder, she says she can pity and forgive Jeremiah.

With this traumatic event of her death as a catalyst, Beaumont proceeds to reform his image of himself and of his world. He can even pity

Wilkie Barron now, just as Rachel had been able to forgive her betrayer. He says he has achieved "the kind of knowledge that is identity." (p. 502) His knowledge is a vision of experience achieved by his realization that in sharing the common guilt of mankind he can also share in the peace and glory of the human effort. He now begins his flight from the wilderness, and from his renunciation of society, time, and guilt. He realizes that he cannot achieve redemption, but can seek only expiation for the crime of self in his recognition of his previous self-imposed exile from mankind. He wants to "shake the hangman's hand and . . . call him my brother, at last." (p. 506) He now realizes that he can neither live as a man by sinking to a condition of guiltless animalism nor by attempting to set up his own code without regard for his society. He is neither animal nor god, but a man; he goes to Frankfort to demonstrate his knowledge of this and his acceptance of human guilt and limitation by shaking the hand of a fellow man, the hangman.

and by shaking his hand as a man and not as a hangman. He tells us that he is going to shake his hand with the hangman, but it is only an attempt at a reconciliation. He gives his own account of the scene. He tells us that he is going to shake his hand with the hangman, but it is only an attempt at a reconciliation. He gives his own account of the scene. He tells us that he is going to shake his hand with the hangman, but it is only an attempt at a reconciliation. He gives his own account of the scene.

The impression of his approach is that his hand is shaking. . . . We are willing to believe that these things happened but we don't feel that they happened in the way that we think they did.

Dr. Barron's choice of words leaves one wondering. . . . It is not that we need the eyes changed with today, the eyes changed, the mind changed. What?

WORLD ENOUGH AND TIME: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

Because of its difficulty, World Enough and Time has elicited varying responses from critics. Although critics agree that the novel is complex, there is some disagreement as to what the novel finally says.

A. B. Guthrie, Jr., believes the novel is basically a tale of blood and thunder in nineteenth-century Kentucky; therefore he questions and criticizes the use of the historian-narrator and his allusions to the modern world. Guthrie says:

Every time . . . [a novelist] enters the scene it is at the cost of belief in his story.

Mr. Warren, . . . of course is entirely familiar with this method. Yet . . . he has chosen to disregard it. He keeps reminding us that at this distance from the scene we cannot be sure of this point or that one. And by reminding us he keeps pulling us a century and more away from his story; he tells us this is about something over and done with, this is only an attempt at a re-creation; he gives his novel something of the odor of a biography He editorializes. At the end he adds a page and a half of critical comment about present-day Kentucky. The comment is pointed and good and perhaps is an aid to focus, but it is still difficult to see that it belongs in a story of the early nineteenth century.

The consequences of his approach is that his book lacks immediacy. . . . We are willing to believe that these things happened but we don't feel that they happened to us or anyone we know.

Mr. Warren's choice of method leaves ~~one~~ wondering. . . . Did he think we needed the open contrast with today, the open comment, the naked author? Why?¹

¹ A. B. Guthrie, Jr., "Virtue Plundered in Kentucky," Saturday Review of Literature XXXIII (June 24, 1950), pp. 11-12.

Mr. Guthrie's conclusions are based upon an erroneous equation: the narrator-historian [hereafter referred to as the historian] equals the writer Warren. Mr. Guthrie, however, is not the only critic who has failed to see the historian as a character distinct and separate from the author.

Harry Modean Campbell in his essay, "Warren as Philosopher in World Enough and Time," says that the purpose of the historian is to "bring out the nature and significance of the life drama in which Jeremiah is the main actor,"² but he objects to the historian's contradictory remarks. Campbell quotes the historian's later statement that "Jeremiah Beaumont had to create his own world or be the victim of a world he did not create" as indicating either Warren's uncertainty about the responsibility for Beaumont's tragedy or his uncertainty of whether Beaumont has "the choice of being the author of his own drama or acting in one he did not create."³ Campbell concludes his essay:

World Enough and Time remains a good novel in spite of Warren's philosophizing --- it is a profoundly moving story both in the narrative and descriptive (and historical) sections and in the moral and philosophical comments of Jeremiah, wrung from him by his agonized efforts to "justify" himself and to understand why he has suffered as he has. Let us hope that in the future Warren will let his characters do all (or almost all) the philosophizing, as he did in his earlier novels. Their contradictions at least can, and no doubt will, be dramatized in the story.⁴

²Harry Modean Campbell, "Warren as Philosopher in World Enough and Time" in Southern Renaissance, Louis D. Rubin, Jr., and Robert D. Jacobs, editors (Baltimore, 1953), p. 228.

³Campbell, p. 229.

⁴Campbell, p. 235.

Campbell, like Guthrie, fails to see that the historian, although he is the narrator, is not the author.

In discussing the novel in terms of the polarities of violence and order, Charles Anderson also makes no distinction between the historian and the author, but still comes nearer a valid reading of the novel than do Campbell and Guthrie. Anderson lists the deeds of violence in the world of Beaumont but disagrees with Guthrie, who believes it is a story of violence in the past century. Anderson says:

This sensational sequence of events on the frontier reproduces convincingly the violent growth from which modern America has come but in summary it reduces the novel unjustly to a tale of blood and thunder. Further, though the surface action may seem obvious, the meanings Warren draws from it are not. For example, to assume that America has progressed to better times by policing all this physical violence into law and order is to be brought up short with the implications of the end of La Grand' Bosse's career. It is the advance of "civilization" itself, we are told, that put the river pirate out of business, by inventing methods of making profits too subtle and complicated for him to understand and or cope with: "He was simply the victim of technological unemployment." And we are not spared the ironical conjecture that some of his bastard descendants, masquerading in the world as respectable leaders and business men, "still carry under their pink scrubbed hides and double-breasted sack suits the mire-thick blood of his veins and the old coiling darkness of his heart" - - - thus linking this pioneer incarnation with the Murdocks and Tiny Duffys of his modern fictions The profuse display of physical violence in early Kentucky makes vividly dramatic Jerry Beaumont's struggle toward a concept of order.

The author's meanings are made most explicit by the allegorical cast of the hero's mind, as he spells out the events and characters of his story in a diary. But one cannot always be certain of them because of his excessive ambition to corner the ultimate truth; for the defect of this novel lies in too many unresolved

ambiguities, the failure to clarify some of its immensely complex significances.⁵

Although Anderson believes that too many important issues are left unclarified and unsettled, he concludes that it is still possible, by probing beneath the living tissue of the text with Warren's preceding novels in mind, to define Beaumont's conclusion:

Man must live in the world of violence, by whatever principles of order he can formulate and believe in. The man who makes up personal rules as expediency dictates or abstract ideals based on imperfect knowledge of the world falls into violence, moral or physical, almost as surely as the materialist who denies the validity of morals in a naturalistic universe. They all act against, not with, the ethical currents of their society. A didactic novelist unconcerned with tragedy might well have opposed to them the formalist, who rigidly adheres to the accepted civil and religious codes; but he can only function as a preserver of law and order in an established society. Instead, the heroic figure in these fictions is the man of principles whose beliefs are founded upon a full knowledge of the ethos of his civilization, including its unwritten laws and modes of behavior, so that his actions have a frame of reference more ample and human than any rationale of conduct arbitrarily devised. Never fully embodied in any one character, this hero is implied throughout as the exemplary Southern gentleman of tradition. But Warren is not guilty in this of any nostalgic retreat into a romantic conception of the Old South: he is searching for modern meaning in its civilization, especially in its frontier strivings and its efforts to avert collapse today. As he says elsewhere (in an essay on Faulkner): "The old order in the South . . . allowed the traditional man to define himself as human by setting up codes, concepts of virtue, obligations, and by accepting the risks of his humanity. Within the traditional order was a notion of truth, even if man in the flow of things did not succeed in realizing that truth." With full recognition of all his imperfections, such a man could still be heroic. What counted was human effort.⁶

⁵Charles Anderson, "Violence and Order in the Novels of Robert Penn Warren," in A.W. Litz, editor, Modern American Fiction (New York, 1963), p. 292.

⁶Anderson, pp. 294-295.

Anderson is an example of the many critics who refute Guthrie's contention that World Enough and Time is simply a historical novel dealing with a violent period in American history by citing the numerous instances and ways in which the historian draws significances for the modern man from Beaumont's story. But Anderson (with Campbell and others) fails to perceive the double function of the historian as both narrator and character, seeing him rather as Warren himself, an obtrusive author. Such lack of perception on the part of these critics results in their belief that there are too many ambiguities in the novel, especially in the historian's confused comments. For such critics, this confusion is a lapse in artistry, since Warren as author cannot plead to confusion.

There are two explanations for the historian's apparent confusion. John M. Bradbury admirably treats the first reason, Warren's use of tension as his basic method, in the space allowed in his essay. He writes:

The conceptual method is that of the poetic drama conceived both as "metaphysical" poem and as "romantic" tragedy. . . . Like Shakespeare and many of his contemporaries, Warren derives his plots largely from historical events of a violent nature. . . . Warren is able to indulge in earthy humor and salty wit. At the same time, he can introduce bold soliloquies and scenes of high emotional stress. Yoking together such opposites, he preserves unity through the control and extension of the major symbolism. . . . Each of the novels, premised on dualism of fact and idea, probes human experience in both of its aspects (physical and platonic, intensive and extensive, naturalistic and symbolic) in order to "earn" its insights or tensions.⁷

⁷John M. Bradbury, "Robert Penn Warren's Novels: The Symbolic and Textural Patterns" in Robert Penn Warren: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by John L. Longley, Jr. (New York, 1965), p. 4.

Bradbury's concluding remarks in the essay refute Campbell's belief that Warren attempts paradox but succeeds in confusion⁸; Bradbury says:

Warren's normal prose style derives from the Ransomic dualism which underlies his own theory of "impure" poetry. To do justice to the "complexities and contradictions of experience," language must, he feels, reflect in a constant counterpoint both the ideal-romantic aspect of man's dual nature and the crude fact-animalism. To disallow either of these aspects of Warren's writing . . . is to rule out Warren's philosophic and literary premise. These stylistic extremes are not what the critics imply . . . but technique, and technique that has been fully integrated with conception.⁹

But to explain the historian's confusion simply by saying that Warren uses paradox and tension is insufficient. Style and technique also serve another specific purpose, and that purpose in World Enough and Time is to show the historian not only as narrator but also as character. Such a structure is not new to Warren,¹⁰ who used it in All the King's Men where Jack Burden is both narrator and character. In fact, the germ of the narrative and thematic structure of World Enough and Time is in the Cass Mastern section of the earlier novel. Although not so obviously dominant in All the King's Men, the ideas of a modern character-narrator trying to understand himself by understanding the life of a man in the

⁸ Campbell, p. 235.

⁹ Bradbury, p. 14.

¹⁰ H. M. Campbell, who expresses the hope that in the future Warren will let his characters do most of the philosophizing as he did in the earlier novels, obviously fails to see that the historian in World Enough and Time is a development of narrator-character Jack Burden in the earlier novel All the King's Men.

past was used by Warren in All the King's Men before he fully developed it in World Enough and Time.

One critic, Leonard Casper, understands that the historian in World Enough and Time is as confused as Beaumont and is in himself a focal character for the understanding of the novel. Casper writes:

The literal line of action . . . is recorded by Beaumont in his journal. Then the anonymous historian makes comments (often misleading) on that journal. Not only is Jerry committed through most of his twenty-five years to the belief that life follows a fortuitous pattern of delusion and justification, but the historian-narrator himself maintains that truth about the past always eludes even the most careful study.¹¹

The historian's confusion is caused by the change in man's attitude toward his world which has taken place since the nineteenth-century world of Beaumont. The historian realizes that the whole tenor of twentieth-century man precludes his immediately understanding the significance of Beaumont. Yet what the historian does not realize is that he, too, is blind to the full significance of Jeremiah Beaumont; the historian, as a man of the modern world, also lacks the proper background to understand fully Beaumont. It is this "double vision" of the historian --- his recognition of some of the values of Beaumont's world and his modern inability to evaluate properly other values of the earlier man, which is one cause of his confusion. He realizes that Beaumont's journal "is talking to us" (p. 1) of the modern world, yet cannot readily decide what Beaumont says or means to the twentieth-century. At one point he says that Beaumont's whole life was a "high stage" drama which Beaumont, being the idealistic individual that he was, had to prepare. Soon the historian speculates that perhaps Beaumont's

¹¹Leonard, Casper, Robert Penn Warren: Dark and Bloody Ground (Seattle, 1960), p. 148.

life was not of his own making; rather, Beaumont's world determined his life. Again, the historian says that Beaumont was "a chip on the tides," but he immediately says, "he was a thinking and suffering chip." (p. 312)

In many instances the historian's "confusion" results from his attempt to maintain the state of detachment necessary for modern scientific observation. Thus, when he quotes from the journal where Jeremiah Beaumont tells of how he first heard of Rachel Jordan and Col. Fort through Wilkie Barron, the historian must add a note of caution for the reader, reminding him that we cannot be certain of the facts:

That was the story he heard. We cannot be entirely sure of the story he did not hear, for the diary of Rachel Jordan is silent, and Jeremiah's account of what she was to tell him later of that period is relatively meager. Furthermore, what Jeremiah Beaumont believed, and what Rachel Jordan had come to believe may be distorted by the intervening events. The experience had been exposed to the light of time and the corrosive influence of a change in the chemistry of Rachel Jordan's own being. (p. 63)

It is the historian who tells us of the end of Percival Skrogg, for Jeremiah died before Skrogg's change was evident. Idealistic Skrogg, who fought for the Relief measures with his pen as ministers do for the souls of men with their prayers, one day accepted a challenge from a man who had been insulted by an article in Skrogg's New Court (Relief Party) newspaper. Skrogg had heretofore refused challenges, saying that he was "'no fool to brawl with fools.'" The historian's interest in Skrogg's reversal is not idle curiosity; he further questions the facts and unknown motives of Skrogg's change:

Why did he accept now? Did he recognize that the world was still the world, that chaos still reigned,

and that to submit himself to the world and take the bullet would be the last bitter triumph over the world and over his own crazy body which was not himself but merely part of the world? (p. 92)

However, as the historian tells us, Skrogg was not killed. Skrogg discovered that his tubercular frame could go surprisingly firm and that his eye could fix on a man's heart as well as on the printed page. Skrogg continues to duel, even giving the challenges himself. Eight years after his first duel, Skrogg was killed by a man he had insulted. At his death, it was learned that he had worn a vest of chain mail under his plain coat, that he had slept in a locked room with barred windows, and that two pistols were always beside his pillow. Even this the historian concludes, "At some point he had discovered that he was part of the world, after all, and that the pitiful body he wore was part of himself and precious. More precious than any idea." (p. 94) To the historian, Skrogg represents the corruption of an idealist who finds he likes the power of the world. On the basis of this conclusion the historian implies another conclusion, that Beaumont's idealism fails in the world because man is inevitably corrupted by contact with the world. [The modern reader cannot smugly believe that such idealism cannot concern the materialistic and superior twentieth-century, however, for the historian shows that distorted idealism is evident today in fanaticism: ". . . in the more than a century since Percival Skrogg died on the stairway of the hotel in Frankfort . . . his race has multiplied and become the glory and the horror of our time." (p. 86)

The historian reveals his modern vision when he debunks Beaumont's romantic belief that he must challenge Fort to avenge Rachel's dishonor:

This [challenge and potential duel] happens because one of the two men, the older, had done something perfectly natural. He had been in a lonely house with a handsome, young, neurotic, desperate woman, had brought her sympathy, and had, finally, tugged her in a dark parlor. . . . Hecuba [Rachel] and her honor had been nothing to him [Beaumont] and he nothing to Hecuba. (p. 128)

The historian then cites a nineteenth-century editor who had spoken out against duelling. He then adds: "We congratulate the newspaper editor in old Frankfort for being so much like ourselves [in recognizing the folly of duels]." (p. 128) The historian next reveals his double vision, his ability to also see in true perspective the value of the past and its true relation to today, by neatly debunking his former debunking of duelling:

But, on second thought, we may be like the dunces We lie in a scooped-out hole in a tropical jungle and rot in the rain and wait for the steel pellet whipping through the fronds. . . . At five thousand feet in the air we ride a snarling motor into the veil of flak. For [idealism] . . . may be something to us, after all. (p. 128)

Campbell is correct in saying that the historian vacillates and shows confusion in his comments. Yet the historian is a character; and it is precisely his confusion and eventual conclusions which reveal his growth and should therefore receive more critical attention.

The historian's double vision of the truth of the values of both modern and earlier societies results in his increasing realization that the gap between the two societies, rather than being a permanent obstacle to an understanding of Beaumont, is actually an illusion. He shows how the two ages are undivided by showing how human nature is unchanged. According to the historian, there was some doubt as to the legitimacy of the "son"

presented to the old Marcher (Beaumont's grandfather) by his young wife, but heirless Marcher, who was tired of sleeping with his mulatto slaves and of drinking alone, accepted the child as his heir. From this line came a Confederate hero, a governor, then a prosperous banker, and finally a student who was discharged from his position as professor in a mid-Western college under suspicion of pederasty. Thus the modern descendant of old Marcher is not as forceful as Marcher but parallels his degeneracy. Also, as Anderson has explained, modern man cannot dismiss the spectacle of the old hump-backed river pirate, La Grand' Bosse, for his descendants may not be aware of their lineage but nevertheless carry the "mire-thick blood of his veins and the old coiling darkness of his heart."

The historian's increasing understanding is seen in his relation of and comments on Wilkie Barron's death. Wilkie's part in Beaumont's murder of Fort and in the decapitation of Beaumont is not discovered by Barron's contemporaries. "Wilkie's luck always held," says the historian. Wilkie married a rich, handsome widow. Without even planning it, he made a fortune by using old maps and plans Jeremiah had once made for western lands. "But the Wilkies of the world never have to plan. They need only to be themselves, to be Wilkie, and the world plans for them," says the historian. Wilkie had fine sons and daughters, sexual pleasure outside his marriage without his wife's knowledge, thriving herds, solid investments, and a place in the Senate. At the prime of his life he "stepped into his bath, in his Washington house, and shot himself tidily through the heart, without a single spatter of blood on the floor." (p. 509) "Why?" the historian asks, and then he realizes that Barron had carried

Beaumont's secret manuscript with him since Beaumont's death. The Wilkie Barron who has been revealed to Beaumont and to the reader before this point in the novel would have destroyed the journal, knowing that its truth would ruin him. Evidently Wilkie concealed it, but "something in him prevented him from destroying it," concludes the historian. "Something in him made him keep that truth and carry it, year after year. He destroyed himself, not it, in the end." Implicit in the historian's remarks is his awareness now that the truth of Wilkie's guilt and Wilkie's inability to cope with this truth led to his suicide. Just as Skrogg's private idealism could not withstand the pressure of the lure of worldly power, neither can Barron's pragmatic worldliness withstand the pressure of the knowledge of his guilt. Neither idealism nor worldliness can stand alone.

Paralleling this disastrous dichotomy between private ideals and public actions is the split between Kentuckians of Beaumont's day over New Court (with its insistence on man's right to remake laws according to his need of the moment) and Old Court (with its insistence on the authority of society and a firm Justice under which laws were administered). Col. Fort, the historian reminds us, allegedly had a plan to reconcile the opposing parties. But Fort did not disclose his plans before Beaumont murdered him, and "things went on their way as though he had never lived."

It is the immediately following italicized epilogue about modern Kentucky where the historian reveals his understanding of present world and past world, of Beaumont's vision, and of what he has learned from reviewing Beaumont's life. "Things went on their way," he begins the

epilogue, and the fragmented way in which they have gone --- according to the implications of the epilogue --- is not an improvement over Beaumont's world:

Even the President of the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Louisville is a slave, but he probably doesn't care whether he is a slave or not . . . and the teeth of the stalwart children of the hills tend to rot out by the age of thirty-five, but things are improving as all statistics show and civilization is making strides, and we can look forward to a great future for our state (if we accept the challenge, if we carry on our great tradition, if we pass the torch), for it is a fair land and some people who live in it are happy, and many have the strength to endure without happiness and do not even think of the word, and only a few are so weak and miserable that they give up before their time, and in this fair land there is little enough justice yet, heart-justice or belly-justice, but that does not make Kentucky different from other places. (pp.510-511)

The epilogue ends, however, with the historian's statement that "men still long for justice" just as Beaumont had "'longed for some nobility.'" Beaumont had asked, "Was all for naught?" In answering, the historian merely repeats the rhetorical question. The reader must decide for himself. Warren's subtleness results in the reader's confusion and partially justifiable charge that Warren should have more explicitly indicated the answer to the final question through the historian's comments. It is a failing of some critics, however, that they do not see that the confusion of the narrator-historian is due to his position as a character who tries to understand the significance of Beaumont's life.

The answer to the final question ("Was all for naught?"), as Anderson has seen, may be gleaned from Warren's philosophy in his total writing. However, as Anderson has failed to see, the implications of the historian's comments is that he does experience a growth of understanding

and that what Anderson states as Warren's total vision of man is implied by the historian: Man has not really changed in the past century except that he has been blinded by modern ideas of rigid law, impartial investigation, and man's inability to create an orderly concept of the world and of himself. He is still human, however, for he may sink to bestiality or attempt to rise to the status of god; indeed, it is this dualism of god and beast and the tension it generates in man which defines both human limitation and hope. Man must accept both aspects of animalism and deity as part of his nature. The one burden man must bear, knowledge of his guilt, may become an index of his superiority if he can accept it, if he can embrace it as did Beaumont.

Certainly this is a complex and controversial theme to present to a twentieth-century audience in view of the current emphasis on and belief in the fragmented sensibilities of modern man. Because of the nature of the theme and of the contemporary audience, the complexity which should call forth critical acclaim instead elicits puzzlement and the erroneous conclusion that it is Warren who is confused. That Robert Penn Warren has attempted to embody such a controversial and complex theme in a single novel and that he has succeeded as well as he has reveals his technical skill and supports his high position among modern American writers.

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