CHARACTER, CONFLICT, AND STATEMENT IN THREE JESSE STUART NOVELS:
THE MOVEMENT TOWARD HOPE AND SALVATION

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Prologue

Jesse Stuart and the Mode of Synthesis

This study is not even slightly biographical, nor is it an attempt to trace the lines of intellectual or philosophical development in the life of Jesse Stuart. Nevertheless, it is necessary to look briefly at the man's life and origins, if only for the isolated purpose of identifying an approach to living, a particular position which a man can assume in order to rise above the dangers and frustrations which confront him.

In the three important novels with which this study is concerned, *Trees of Heaven*, *Taps For Private Tussie*, and *Daughter of the Legend*, Stuart has created believable human beings locked in dangerous and profound struggles. Essentially, the struggles are dialectical, and the protagonists find themselves, in diverse ways, representing an antithetical position, resisting a stubborn and narrow thesis-establishment whose vitality and growth potential are lost, a thesis that must be altered or overcome if individual and societal salvation is to be realized. The outcome of their conflicts is a synthesis, a fusion of cultures or views, and this synthesis is tantamount to hope and salvation. The novels present an intellectual progress in the minds of the protagonists, who in each novel are members of the younger generation. This progress
is what I term the "movement toward hope and salvation." And this progress is remarkable in that not only the antithetical youth, but also proponents of the corrupt thesis, share in the redemption.

We can understand the mode of this synthesis by looking briefly at the author. In the foreword to a new edition of Stuart's autobiographical work, Beyond Dark Hills, he writes: "Now Beyond Dark Hills . . . will be published again . . . And some readers will be American young people who seek to make their lives count, as I sought, from a ghetto of poverty, to make mine count." An underlying motif in Stuart's life and philosophy is struggle—struggle toward a better life, a bigger contribution. He learned that life is a struggle from his upbringing in the hills of Greenup County, Kentucky, where the people on the small farms in hills and hollows had to wrest their sustenance from the earth, and were engaged in a constant battle with the elements. It is a struggle and a world that Stuart knows well: he has done the work performed by Tarvin Bushman in Trees of Heaven and by Dave Stoneking in Daughter of the Legend. He has seen the same beauties and figures, thought the same thoughts as Sid Tussie Seagraves in Taps For Private Tussie. He knows his characters and their world, for each one is a part of Stuart himself.

The thesis with which Stuart has often found himself in opposition is the old world of the hills, narrow, restricted, clannish, starved for opportunity—a world holding fast to those born into it, a world very selfish with its bounty. Reflecting on the struggle of hill life, and how it tragically claimed the lives of his two younger brothers, Stuart writes:

Some of you will remember the heavy snow that fell in April that spring. My father and I were walking to the barn. I refused to step in his tracks any more, as I had done before when there came deep snows. I made a path of my own. I said to myself: "You are a man of the hills. You have let them hold you in. You were born among them—you'll die among them. You'll go to that pine grove... You will lie there forever in that soil. Your night will have come when man's work is over. Since you brought us into this world, isn't there some escape from fevers? Can't we move to a place where we can get a doctor easier? There two of my brothers are dead and sleeping over there by that pine grove... Life for them was a tragedy... I have had pneumonia twice and typhoid twice. I was able to survive them... because I was strong. Now these hills will not always hold me. I shall go beyond them someday."

This passage states the thesis of hardship and the antithetical opposition growing in the mind of the young Stuart, who is a youth much like the young people in his novels. It points up the dialectic in Stuart's own life experience as it relates to his knowledge of the hills. The hills confine and limit; they hold one in and stifle progress. They give nourishment stingily, and in the end

2Stuart, Beyond Dark Hills, p. 25.
they reclaim what they have given. The visionary youth determines to leave the hills someday. And indeed Jesse Stuart has left the hills in a very real sense. *Beyond Dark Hills* is the autobiographical chronicle of his struggle to transcend his environment: to the carnival, to the steel mills, to the classroom, to Lincoln Memorial College, and finally to Vanderbilt University. Stuart has left the hills in the sense that he has learned of the world beyond them while venturing frequently into the cosmopolitan world outside. Education, books, travel—these are the keys to the expansion of one's prospects, and these things belong to the world. Yet Stuart has centered his life among the hills, for there is a quality in the native fields and forests, in the wind and water, in the newground crops and the summer nights, that is inescapable and irresistible. So the hills will hold their own. "Once you get a drink of lonesome water you always come home."

Caught between these polarities of attraction and desire, what must a man choose? Shall he cast away his native soil, or shall he renounce the world and the cultural and economic advantages it affords? Or shall he strive to synthesize the two worlds he loves, and have the best of both? Indeed one can. When faced with the extremities of choice, the hazard lies in believing that one must take all or none. There are good things to be had, joys to be realized, from both sides of the dialectic,

3Stuart, *Beyond Dark Hills*, p. 179.
and the saved individual is one who can successfully combine the best aspects of all forces. Jesse Stuart has accomplished this mode of synthesis in his own fusion of cosmopolitan knowledge and native hill living. And his characters who reach a vision of hope and salvation find a similar theory of synthesis.

A pivotal event in the life of Jesse Stuart was his almost-fatal heart attack suffered at Murray State College in the autumn of 1954. Out of that experience came The Year of My Rebirth, a journalistic work that describes his recovery, a "rebirth" not only in the literal sense of regained health, but also an attitudinal rebirth, a reassertion of past values and a rediscovery of a wholesome synthesis. In the "Prologue" to this book Stuart narrates how hectic his life had become prior to the attack, and he examines his past life: "I read the landscape, the stream, the air, and the skies. I took my time about doing it. I had plenty of time to live and to think. I had plenty of time to grow up in a world that I loved more and more as I grew older. . . ." In contrast to this old way of life, Stuart proceeds to describe the pace of his life immediately prior to his heart attack, a change brought on by success after he had ventured forth from the hills and acquired traits of the outside world:

No longer did I work a day on my farm and then walk slowly five miles to the post office and back, stopping to sit along the way by wild phlox on the bank of a quiet stream and write poems. I'd lost that good feel of earth, its beauty and sounds, I once had. I didn't have time now. I'd made a road and owned a car, and I couldn't waste time walking five miles... I was teaching, writing, buying more hill acres and trying to farm them, and I was sought after as a lecturer.... Drive, drive, like the drive wheels on a big Mallet engine...  

Stuart is still located in the hills at this point, but he has lost the spirit of the old, relaxed way; in attempting to synthesize the old culture with the hectic new, he has allowed things to become unbalanced, permitting the artificial pressures and values of the outside world to displace the tranquility of his former existence. And this frantic activity, in Stuart's view, has helped bring him to the brink of physical disaster. While lying unconscious beneath an oxygen tent, he has a dream in which he returns to his childhood. The account of the dream is too long to quote entirely, but portions of it are very significant. As the dream begins, Stuart writes: "I entered a beautiful world long past, with sun I could not hold in the sky, flowers I could not keep fresh on their stems, and sumac leaves I could not keep from coloring and dying in an autumn season and blowing away on the wind of 1916." This is essentially the world Stuart once owned, but has allowed to drift away, obscured by the activity of

5Stuart, The Year of My Rebirth, pp. 4-5.
6Ibid, p. 11.
doing and getting. The simple, nature-loving youth has become a man of the mid-twentieth century, an era of prosperity and pressure. The dream is a vision of a lost age immediately characterized by its mutability. Stuart proceeds to tell of the little actions of the dream: how he and his mother hunt for Gypsy, the cow—a pleasant search during which young Jesse observes all the sights and sounds of the woodland pasture, familiar things that he had loved as a youngster. It is a lost time, a vision that is soon lost as well. The dream concludes:

I couldn't keep the pine seedlings from growing into saw-log timber. I couldn't stay the hunters' guns from pheasants, crows, hawks, and squirrels. I couldn't hold the wild rose and the blooming daisy beyond their seasons. I couldn't keep the young spring wind from blowing over me. I suddenly wanted Mom to finish milking. I listened to hear her say, "Jesse, let's be goin'." For I was waking from this dream world I couldn't hold.7

This "Angel In the Pasture" section from the "Prologue" to The Year of My Rebirth is a stricken man's vision of the ideal life he once led, a recall of the youthful outlook and joy once owned and lost, that loss tarnishing the world and contributing to a loss of health as well as a loss of elemental enjoyment. Stuart is reminded in this dream that he has let things become disproportioned. He has moved away from the ideal synthesis of simple life among the hills blended with the good things of the world beyond them. The Year of My Rebirth, viewed in its general...
scope, is the year-long account of a man's recovery from an almost fatal illness, and it is also a journal of how a man is reborn by attaining a synthesis of the best values of both worlds he knows and loves. At the conclusion of the work, Stuart writes:

So I shifted my entire way of living. Once my world had been the American skies, the long train rails that span the continent, the ribbon of highway across this vast and beautiful America. My world had been a thousand friends in a hundred cities, ten cups of coffee and loud talk until three in the morning. Now my world was reduced to my home, my farm, my hills. I lived more closely with my wife, my daughter, my animal friends. I thought more deeply of my God. My heart went back to these. 8

Survival for Jesse Stuart meant returning to the tranquility which he had forgotten, to ease the pace of his life. To be certain, Jesse Stuart has since gone beyond his hills and remained vitally active in the world. But his first love has never since been forgotten. He has held the two elements of his personal dialectic in harmony, and has continued to benefit from his own rebirth. This is the mode of synthesis in Stuart's philosophy.

The Year of My Rebirth presents a different sort of action requiring a different type of synthesis than do the actions in our subject novels, but the theory for attaining synthesis remains basically similar. None of the characters in these novels are struggling to escape from the hill world; they seek a better life within it. Yet in their own individual

8 Stuart, The Year of My Rebirth, p. 342.
dialectical struggles, they find themselves faced with similar type dangers, especially the danger of falling prey to extremity or imbalance. In Trees of Heaven, Tarvin and Subrinea are caught between the slave-driving materialism of the landed middle class and the decadent indigence of the squatters, either course being unredemptive. Sid Tussie Seagraves in Taps For Private Tussie, faces corruption by an even deeper indigence, yet he must find a means of rejecting it without losing his own sensitivity. Dave Stoneking, of Daughter of the Legend, rightly follows his heart and spurns racial bigotry and prejudice, but he is for a time corrupted by the hate which his struggle generates. The alternative to the extremes in all these cases is a synthesis in which men find a balance point, a means of having the best all can offer, of doing right without going too radically far. Tarvin and Subrinea will work and be prosperous, but they will also play and enjoy life. Sid will use his intelligence and industry in a productive manner; he will also retain his gift of tolerance for the ignorant and simple. Dave always will know the rightness of his struggle, and he will always acknowledge the equality of all men, but he will cast off his sin of hatred toward those who are not so enlightened.

In the ensuing chapters of this study we will examine the statements on the movement toward hope and salvation in these three works of fiction, as developed on the basis of
character and conflict. In Chapter I, "Trees of Heaven: Class Synthesis and the Triumph of Love," we will see how socio-economic classes can be brought together, with love crossing their lines victoriously. In Chapter II, "Taps For Private Tussie: Life Out of Death, Triumphant," we will see how hope rises out of the charnel of debauch and tragedy, out of corruption so great that it even debases and subverts art itself. In Chapter III, "Daughter of the Legend: Adam and the Typology of Redemption," we will see an awakening to the realities of evil and the redemption, along Christian lines, of individuals lost in hate and prejudice. And in our analysis, we will see the optimism of these novels transcend their Appalachian settings and speak with a universal voice, expounding a dictum of hope to humanity of all times and places.
Chapter I
Trees of Heaven: Class Synthesis and the Triumph of Love

Trees of Heaven, published in 1940, was Jesse Stuart's first novel, and its popularity was such that it underwent five printings during April and May of that year. The novel is composed entirely in the present tense and is divided into seven sections. The story begins in August of 1931, and concludes one year later. Hargis Westerfield observes that Stuart, "In just 329 pages ... turns the reader through a year on a mountain farm, and absorbs the reader in ploughing, harvesting, lovemaking, and an incipient feud. In just 329 pages, Stuart does what weaker writers might bumble into 650 pages." 2

The plot of Trees of Heaven is simple. Anse Bushman is an archetypal mountain landed patriarch whose hard work has enabled him to get ahead. In his struggle to become prosperous, he has worn out his wife, Fronnie, and driven away all of their eleven children except Tarvin, the youngest. Tarvin is deeply in love with the beautiful Subrinea Tussie, daughter of Bolliver Tussie, a degenerate squatter living on the large Sexton timber tract that borders the Bushman farm. Anse craves more land and has plans.

2 Westerfield, p. 13.
to buy the Sexton property and drive the squatters, a people he despises, from the land. Anse does not approve of Tarvin's courting Subrinea, nor does her father like the idea of his daughter's loving a man who is an outsider.

When the Sexton tract is sold for debts at a Master Commissioner's sale, Anse is successful at buying it. Tarvin, who has been meeting Subrinea against the will of both their fathers, persuades Anse to rent a portion of the Sexton tract to the Tussies. Anse, who has earlier been impressed by Bolliver's skill at butchering and sorghum making, reluctantly agrees, but he binds Bolliver strictly with a detailed rental contract. Intending to conquer the land and drive out the squatters, Anse evicts all the Sexton property residents except Bolliver's family.

The Tussies work hard and raise an excellent crop, but things soon turn sour as Anse realizes that Bolliver is not abiding by the terms of their "ar-tickle." Anse discovers that Bolliver has run up a huge store bill--over $400.--a bill for which Anse must stand good. The contract had forbidden the Tussies to drink or make moonshine on Anse's property, but the store bill shows that they have been buying chopped corn and sugar, even jugs and stoppers, in large amounts. They have pilfered tools and wild berries, even carried off all of Anse's turnips. The contract had even forbidden the Tussies from having a baby while on Anse's farm, and Bolliver's wife, Crissie, is
pregnant. Anse confronts the Tussies in the newground tobacco patch. Harsh words are exchanged and violence threatened. Anse is told by the Tussies that Subrinea is expecting a baby by Tarvin. Anse is dismayed but not surprised at this news, for the very night before this argument, while on one of his night-time rambles, Anse had almost caught the couple together in the tobacco patch.

Anse takes legal steps to evict Bolliver and take all his crop, but Bolliver, backed by the Moonshiners' Association, contests the move, and the matter goes to court. The first trial ends in a mistrial, but Anse, a powerful man with money and influence, is successful after a second trial.

Soon after his legal victory, Anse goes into the woods with Tarvin to cut tier poles for the tobacco barns, and a dead chestnut tops falls, striking Anse on the head. He is unconscious for three days, and when he awakens he declares that he has seen a vision of Hell, and people in Hell, the Tussies (except Subrinea) and himself among them. He proclaims himself to be a converted man. Fronnie is overjoyed, for she has been critical of Anse's greedy ways, and worried about the state of his soul. In evidence of his conversion, Anse casts off his rough, grasping ways and reinstates Bolliver as his tenant. Also he declares his unqualified faith in Subrinea as a good wife for Tarvin. The novel concludes with a harmony in the making.
In addition to the Anse-Bolliver plot, in which the landed class versus squatter class conflict forces the two families apart, there is the Tarvin-Subrinea plot, and their idyllic love will eventually prove to be the force that makes synthesis and unity possible. The lovers continue in their devotion in spite of the bitter animosity between their fathers. Their tyrsting place is the old squatter graveyard, burial plot of Subrinea's people, shaded by the ailanthus trees, the trees of Heaven, the only timber spared from the axe on Cat's Fork. It is asserted by both Westerfield and Lee Pennington that the trees of Heaven are the major symbol of the work. I agree in this evaluation of their significance. The trees reach down to the dust of the Tussie ancestors and upward to the transcendent hope of the future. As they furnish a meeting place for the youth and love which can eliminate strife and enhance the future, they come to symbolize the expansion of human possibility. As they are the last green things in a land made desolate by man's greed and improvidence, they point to a coming enlightenment. As living things in the midst of a dying world, they embleimize the life principle.

Let us now turn to the individual characters to see how each fulfills his respective role in the dialectical conflicts which are fused into an optimistic synthesis in *Trees of Heaven*.

Anse Bushman is a materialist whose passionate industry is directed toward acquiring land and taming it into a productive state. He is not, Pennington has quite correctly observed, a materialist "in the machine sense . . . ." but his mania is to own the biggest farm in the neighborhood and turn Ragweed-Hollow into a pastoral garden. With his own hard work and with the labor of his wife and family, he has amassed a nice farm and money ahead. But the toll of his prosperity is indeed weighty. Of the eleven children born to Anse and Fronnie, all are either dead or immigrated except Tarvin, and Tarvin must endure much. And Fronnie also has endured much. Early in the novel, mother and son converse:

"I'm all pooped out, Ma," says Tarvin. "I'm gettin tired. Pa has nearly worked me to death."

"I've worked this way all my life," says Fronnie, "to have what we have. The people here that have a little more than the rest air old long before their time to get old and they die before their time to die. The squatters and the rest of the no-count people don't work so hard and they enjoy life. They can't live as

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5 Pennington, p. 42.

6 I am referring to a "pastoral garden" in the mode that Leo Marx develops in his work *The Machine in the Garden*. 
long as they should live, for they don't have enough to live on. It's about the same either way you look at it, starve to death or die workin yourself to death. We have these two kinds of people among the hills."

This dialogue between his wife and his last son tells much about Anse and his world. It permits one to see and understand Anse in the context of his mountain environment. It points up the attitudinal opposition between people of the landed culture and the squatter culture. These cultures are co-habitants of a rugged land that demands much of its occupants, a land that is conservative in yielding its riches. But abundance can be coaxed from the soil if one is willing to pay the price of rapid aging and shorter life. Anse Bushman has elected to follow this option, and he has been materially rewarded. But the impact on his family has been ruinous. The other life style available among the hills is the indigent way, the way of the squatters, the way of the Tussies. Life is more enjoyable and is easier, yet also shorter, for indigence brings poverty and privation. Both ways are extreme, these dark choices posed by the old order. And it is ironic and tragic that for all their opposition to each other, both ways lead to death.

Anse, then, is a man conformed to the rudiments of an environment which he reads as offering few choices. He has

7 Jesse Stuart, Trees of Heaven (New York: Dutton, 1940), p. 55. Hereafter, all citations from this work will be documented in the text.
responded to the situation as he understands it. He has become rugged and brutish in some respects, driving himself and those around him to extreme physical limits. His physical characteristics—a large, squat, powerful body, huge hands, an immense red beard—type him as a forceful personage, a dynamo of determined energy. He is insensitive to much around him; though he cares for his farm animals with meticulous concern, though he expresses love for his stock and zeal for its well-being, this sensitivity stems from his concern for protecting his investments. His limited sensitivity is evident in Section 7 of Part II, when he is out inspecting the land he hopes to purchase:

Anse walks down the point toward Cat's Fork after Tarvin comes to stay at the barn for the night. Anse surveys the dark loamy earth on Cat's Fork. He picks up a handful of the loam and sifts it through his fingers. He smells at the handful of loam as a hound dog smells a possum track. "Now if I just owned this land," thinks Anse, "God Almighty, what corn it would fetch. . . . My dream would come true. I'd be the biggest landowner in these parts." (p. 129)

Anse loves the land and is sensitive to its worth. He is in harmony with the seasons and skilled at growing things. But Anse's love for the land is commercial and mercenary. He sees crops and profit in the land, while the Tussies love the land for its intrinsic sentimental value. Anse is aware of the worth of the soil, but he is insensitive to the transcendental attachments formed in the hearts of the squatter people. Just as Anse is blind to any other life style than his grasping, profit-seeking one, he is blind to
aesthetic considerations. Shortly after making this utterance, he comes in sight of the trees of Heaven, where he witnesses a strange sight: Subrinea beneath the trees, burying the bodies of Anse's dead lambs—lambs lost to the bitter winter cold at lambing time. She is singing and praying over them. Anse watches her from concealment, musing: "A funny gal... I jest wonder if she's a little off in the head... Squatters air funny people... Durned if I can understand 'em" (p. 131). This lack of understanding is evidence of Anse's lack of sensitivity. He is one attitude unable to comprehend another. The dialectical struggle between Bushman and Tussie, settler and squatter, is more than a social and economic clash. It is an intrinsic spiritual and aesthetic conflict as well.

Anse's callousness is evidenced in the ruthless, business-like manner in which he bids on and buys the Sexton land tract, outbidding Jad Sexton, the heir. Anse recognizes the human tragedy in these forced sales, so common during the depression era, but since he is a man with money, no sentimental considerations will stop him. This is a scene of great pathos, depicting the sale of land loved and held by generations of their owners' families. Misery erupts into anger as people face the loss of their farms. Anse sees the basis of their feelings and comments after the outburst from Buck Coonse: "He's a riled man... He loves that farm. I can understand why he don't want it sold. May be somethin
has happened--sickness and death!" (p. 153). In observing the sale of a farm in which he has no interest, Anse is capable of being objective, recognizing that failure can occur because of unforeseen tragedies, and that ruin is not always brought on by indigence. Indeed, Coonse has lost his farm because of poor market prices and untoward sentiment: he had mortgaged his farm in order to bury his parents nicely. Anse can understand a poor return for a good effort; that is the risk of mountain farming. But to go into ruinous debt for a funeral? Such is not the way of Anse Bushman, who lights his cigar from the lamp in order to save a match, who has not purchased decent furniture in years, who has never bought his wife a wedding ring. But unsentimental Anse has the cash and he buys the coveted land. It is a courage against the elements that has enabled him to prosper, and it is a physical courage which enables him to possess and hold the land against the threats of squatters like Bollie and Lonsey Beaver. When Anse and Tarvin back them down at the sale, it is an extension of Anse's power and success against nature to a victory over human foes as well.

Anse reluctantly consents to renting a portion of his new farm to Bolliver Tussie, and this is a dramatic concession on his part, a step that brings settler and squatter momentarily closer to a synthesis. But Anse is willing to make this move only on his own terms. Anse has an abiding passion for dominance, and nowhere does it appear
more overtly than in Part III, Section 4, where Anse and Bolliver discuss the terms of rental.

In their discussion of the rental terms, it is brought out that Bolliver is illiterate. This is offered in contrast to Anse, who has acquired a practical amount of basic "3-r" education, and wishes he could have received more. Anse, in respecting the value of education, shows that he has some capacity for enlightening, expansive views. His recollections of school days also trace the roots of his dominant, rugged character: "My class was called the Anse Bushman class. I was the biggest boy in the class..." (p. 170). His own toughness and the toughness of his generation is also described: "We'd git out and fight yaller-jackets' nests... We'd dig bumble-bee nests from the ground and burn hornets' nests from the trees... Sometimes we kilt ground squirrels with rocks..." (p. 171). Opposition to nature and struggle with its forces are basic to his personality; what had been wild play to the youthful Anse has become a serious business to the man.

In reply to Bolliver's description of the way of life previously enjoyed by his people, Anse tells of his own past actions and asserts the supremacy of his work:

"You've had a easy life and a good time," says Anse, "all your days... While you hunted in the woods, kicked up your heels and danced... while you squatters played your fiddles, picked your banjers and guitars and lived a easy keer-free life, I was over on this side of the valley workin like a brute-- cleanin land, farmin land and sowin grass. I was
savín my pennies. I knew the time would come when
the last of the charcoal timberland would disappear.
... and I had the money waitin to git it when it
was sold under the hammer. ..." (pp. 174-5)

Here is a direct working of the dialectic involving the
mountain middle class value opposed to that of the squatter
class. In the economic world, the way of Anse is indisputably
supreme. The economic system has indeed eliminated the
timberlands and the wilderness, destroying the squatter's
way of life along with the forests. Now the land has been
sold; Anse owns it, and the squatters must depart. One
phase of the old order has been overcome by the opposing
phase. Bolliver has no place to go. He too has an attachment
for the land. His only hope is to agree to Anse's dominance.
Anse is unequivocal in declaring his intention to rule.
Continuing his speech, he warns Bolliver:

"I hate to tell you, Bolliver, but your good days air
over and you must come under the yoke--jest like a
colt hast to be shod and go to work after the good
days of kickin up his heels air over--jest like young
bull calves in the pasture when their big hoofs air
trimmed down and iron shoes nailed on their feet.
Heavy yokes must go upon their necks and when the
drivers git through loggin with 'em . . . they sell
'em fer beef. I ain't goin to beef nobody after he
heits old--but he must come under my yoke if he stays
on my land." (p. 175)

Renting to the Tussies is a compromise of Anse's attitudes,
but it is a compromise on his own terms. The contract
Bolliver must sign, its terms dictated entirely by Anse,
is the squatter's tacit surrender. The contract is an
amazing document which goes far beyond the usual business
agreements necessary to such a pact. Basing its provisions
on what he has found to be solid living practices for the productive life, Anse places moral as well as business obligations upon the renters. They are forbidden to drink or make moonshine. Moonshining is illegal, and Anse is therefore correct in forbidding its manufacture on his land, but drinking it, a common mountain habit, is a matter of moral choice. The Tussies are not to have a baby on Anse's farm. They are not to fish during work season. They are not to attend religious meetings more than three nights out of the week. They are not to have dances or parties during cropping time. These terms denote a moral failure on Anse's part: he is attempting to regulate aspects of human lives over which he rightly has no authority. And this further depicts a poor knowledge of human nature on his part. Men are not farm animals. They do not adapt easily to a yoke. Anse is attempting to change too much, too soon. His speech to Bolliver is rife with false analogies, his "ar-tickle" full of uncompromising absurdities.

Part IV of the novel sees Anse involved in two great symbolic events: the fire which cleans the newground, and the season's first thunderstorm. Anse engineers the fire as a tool of conquest; the timber cutters have left the land in a devastation of chaos, the forest has been levelled, but nature, left to its own devices, can replace it in time. But Anse will utilize another natural force, fire, in order to conquer the wilderness once and for all, and
quickly restore the land as a productive, tamed garden.

The fire scene contains another drama of a great dialectical conflict in the novel, a conflict in which Anse is a prime actor, and he achieves paradoxical results. This dialectic involves the stigma of man's rape of the land, as accomplished by the lumbermen, opposed to the need to restore and conserve. Anse will finish the wilderness, whereas the lumber interests have only retarded it. Thus Anse, ardent lover of the land, becomes arch-enemy to the wilderness, and a ravenous destroyer. While observing the fire, Anse and Bolliver converse:

"It's shore poppin things," says Anse. "Listen down in them woods, won't you? It's great to see fire clean land like that...."

"It's killin a lot of wild game," says Bolliver.

"I hate to see that."

"We can't hep that," says Anse. "This land hast to be cleaned. It's the wild game's bad luck. It is our good luck." (p. 209)

Anse, in his drive to dominate all, even the land, is callous to the destruction of resources and to the suffering he causes. Paradoxically, however, his machinations eliminate the forest, but restore the productivity of the land itself. Nature has been so staggered by the lumbering that it will be generations before it can repair the desolation. But Anse will restore things quickly, turning the devastated woodlands into a valuable garden in just a season. The fire which he uses to accomplish this is ironic in that a natural force is used to subdue another natural force. The fire
kills, but it also cleans. It ultimately destroys the forest, but it helps create a garden. Indicative of the character of the man who employs it, the fire is a raw, consuming, passionate force, an intermediary between the verdant wilderness and the bare devastation, a destroyer and a creator at once. It smooths the path of synthesis between forest and farm. And so does Anse Bushman. Furthermore, the fire points to the visionary fire which Anse will see in Hell as he lies in a coma later in the novel. The connection is unmistakable. Fronnie, viewing the blazing hill, remarks: "Anse, that burnin' hill reminds me of what I think hell is goin' to be like ... Anse, you air a weaked man. You ain't a 'saved' man" (p. 209). Just as this literal fire cleans the land, the terrible fire of Anse's vision will cleanse his life.

The storm has not only profound symbolic significance, but also an important role in the dialectic. Anse represents two opposing forces: the force of restoration and the force of destruction, with their accompanying tendencies either to be at harmony with the elements or to contend with them. The storm is a harmonizing force, drawing the patriarch closer to natural rhythms, demonstrating his love for growth and regeneration.

The spring's first storm, significantly, comes at night. It breaks upon a dark winter world. The world of the old ways, the greedy settler way and the indigent squatter way,
is a dark world. Fronnie remarks: "This storm reminds me of the end of time. . ." (p. 216). But Anse sees it much differently:

"Lord, but this will be more like a resurrection," says Anse, "than it is the end of time. It is the resurrection of spring. Tomorrow there will be life among these hills where today life was asleep. Tomorrow you will see new life. . . . Spring is the awakenin of new life and the resurrection of old life among these hills. . . ." (p. 217)

Anse utters the true symbolic prophecy contained in the storm without grasping its full significance. This storm is a harbinger of a season of resurrection. It is a portent of the storm in human affairs that will soon flash upon Ragweed Hollow as the conflict between Tussie and Bushman erupts in bitter controversy. That storm will end in a birth and a rebirth: a birth of a new hopeful order in the union of Tarvin and Subrinea, and a rebirth—of the old culture, represented by Anse. It is noteworthy that Anse, adamantine as his character is, is receptive to the idea of resurrection. He loves the storm, for it is an expression of his personality in nature. He determines to go out into the raging night: "I can't see enough of this storm and sit in here . . . I love a storm. I jest got to git out in this resurrection of spring and see how I like a night of resurrection" (p. 217). Anse Bushman is the personification of a dialectical conflict, a character of subtle paradoxes. A hill warrior, he battles against the elements. The old ways are deeply rooted in his soul, and he resists change.
Yet he embraces the forces of nature and finds himself to be in harmony with them. And he finds himself sensitive to rebirth and resurrection. The storm heralds a new season, and in musing upon resurrection, Anse is aware of his own mortality: "If I could jest go on forever and forever like the snakes . . . Jest sleep the winter long and be resurrected every spring like the snake . . . with a new skin on my body . . . But I'm not cold-blooded like the snake and the frog. Maybe I will be resurrected like the snake. Jest so I git back to my farm, that's all I keer about" (pp. 225-6). . . . For all his receptivity to the idea of resurrection, Anse's soul is bound to his land. He is proof of the veracity of the scriptural dictum: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."  

Anse's venture in liberality seems to be working, for the Tussies prove to be hard workers and they are raising an excellent crop in Anse's newground. They seem to be under Anse's yoke. But the situation rapidly deteriorates in Part V, almost resulting in physical violence in the tobacco patch encounter. The conflict between Bushman and Tussie is a clash of divergent hill types, but when their battle goes to court, the town element becomes involved. In Part VI the hill culture proves almost too much for the civil authority, as evidenced by Sheriff Bradley's abortive

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8 See Matthew, 6:21.
attempt at getting Anse and Bolliver to compromise, and in 
the necessity for Judge Whittlecomb to declare the first 
court hearing a mistrial after tempers openly flare. The 
quality of Greenwood County justice is castigated; it is a 
system geared to the advantage of the man with influence 
and money, namely Anse, who is victorious in a second trial. 

It is in Part VI that we see Anse in his most unflattering 
light. Immediately after the meeting with Bolliver and the 
sheriff, Anse confronts Tarvin with Bolliver's allegation 
that Subrinea is carrying the young man's child. This 
passage of conversation is so important that it merits 
quoting at length. Tarvin has asked Anse what Anse had said 
in reply to Bolliver's claim:

"I didn't tell 'im anything," says Anse. "There 
ain't anything I can say to 'im before I talk with 
you, Tarvin. I jest want you to tell me the truth 
about all this talk. Is it the truth? Is Subrinea 
Tussie goin to have your baby?"

"I 'spect she is, Pa," says Tarvin. "I don't see 
anything to keep her from it."

"God Almighty," says Anse. "We air into it all the 
way around. I ain't goin to fight your battle jest 
now but I'm goin to fight my own battle. . . ."

"That is your fight, Pa," says Tarvin. "You jest 
leave my fight alone. There ain't goin to be no 
fight to it."

"I can git you out'n it, Tarvin," says Anse. "I 
can git four men to swear they monkeyed with her. 
That will make her a whore. . . ." \(p. 296\)

Anse can be without scruple when it comes to pressing 
advantage in a conflict. That he even makes this unthinkable 
proposition to Tarvin betrays a thorough misunderstanding 
of his son's nature. Self-righteous Anse is exposed as a
hypocrite later in the conversation when Tarvin reminds him of the old letters hidden away in an attic trunk, letters which show that Anse had had to marry Fronnie under similar circumstances. Anse, typical of the older generation's frequent underestimation of the young, is crushed by this revelation of Tarvin's knowledge. But in spite of Anse's unscrupulousness and hypocrisy, exposed in this scene, a hopeful trait shines through: Anse is receptive to dialogue. Previously, communication between Anse and Tarvin has been father to son, age to youth. But shocked by the point-blank words of the younger man, Anse suddenly comes to view Tarvin in a new light: "Son . . . you know too much about your Pa" (p. 300). And shortly thereafter, he adds: "Good Lord . . . Son, you skeer me the way you talk" (p. 300). Their talk has moved from the scope of father to son to one of man to man. It becomes a serious discussion of business, a vital working of the dialectic toward synthesis. We will later look further into this passage as we consider the character of Tarvin, but for Anse it marks a heightened awareness of his son's character and force, and though set in a strife-filled context in which the danger of bitter estrangement is great, it results in pulling father and son closer together. They come to terms: Tarvin has Anse's blessing to marry Subrinea and live on the farm, but Tarvin will wait until after the trial before marrying. Anse has recognized the worth of his son over and above his own
prejudices. He knows that Tarvin is his stay for the present, his hope for the future.

Part VII portrays Anse at the apex of his powers. Victorious in the second trial, he has evicted Bolliver and seized the squatter's crop. The added harvest work makes it necessary for Anse and Tarvin to cut more tobacco barn tier poles. They choose a dead chestnut, a tree dangerous and difficult to cut. But Anse vilely swears that he will force the tree to drop exactly where he wants it to fall. Anse has run roughshod over men who have opposed him. He has ridden in conquest over the wilderness, forcing the land by sheer brute power and strength of will to yield him its abundance. A dead tree cannot oppose him now. But what happens indicates that Anse has exercised his dominance over the elements long enough, and the natural forces finally strike back. The treetop breaks, falling sixty feet and striking Anse on the head, thus laying him low at the very moment his powers seem most un challengable. This is one of the masterful ironies of the novel, the instance wherein nature, always Anse's nemesis, asserts itself tellingly in the dialectic.

Deep in a coma, Anse lies for three days (a significant period of time in light of the Bible's accounts of the resurrections of Lazarus and Jesus) in a state of symbolic death. When he awakens, he has a dramatic declaration to make. He has seen a token in his dreams. In his dreams he
has been to the Methodist church at Plum Grove. Anse tells what the preacher there had said to him:

"Listen to this, Anse Bushman! Listen to the call of the Lord: Your kinfolks have died before you . . . your Pappie and Mammie have long gone back to the dust. The dust that put you here, Anse Bushman—a man in this world to work . . . to cuss and fight and save your little dollars. You air feastin at the Devil's table. . . . " (pp. 324-5)

At first Anse had resisted the message, he relates. His stubborn way had been very hard to overcome: "I was still the miser hoardin his gold. I was still the brute. . . . I still hated Bolliver Tussie in my heart. . . . Bolliver Tussie had done too much to me. . . ." (p. 327). Even in this singular vision, Anse had fought to maintain his old side of the dialectic. But he tells how his attitude had started to mellow: "Then I looked at the other side. I'd run the Tussies from their home. I'd run 'em away from that patch of trees of Heaven where their dust is buried . . . I'd run Bolliver away and took his crop. . . . I'd put him off'n my farm and took all he had and I didn't need it. That was my soul. I was losin my own life. I was losin my soul. . . ." (p. 327). In the vision, Anse relates, he had begun to realize that the way of greed is the way of death, a deeper death than the physical wearing away of which Fronnie complains early in the novel, a spiritual death without hope of rebirth. The dream also causes Anse to perceive the legitimacy of the squatters'
sentimental "ownership" of the land. He becomes sympathetic to the opposing dialectic. In his frightening vision of the Lake of Fire, he sees Judge Whittlecomb in torment, and also the Beavers and Tussies there as snakes. And he sees himself there. Soft, corrupt civilization, Bushman greed, and Tussie depravity, all lead to death.

Anse's description of the Lake of Fire echoes the scene of the burning woods: "And the smoke oozed from the earth, Fronnie. The ground was dry and parched. I could see big cracks in the land and I could see people down in the cracks... I could smell the brimstone and it was awful to smell..." (p.329). Anse's fire had cleaned the new-ground and made it productive; the fire of the theological Hell creates only sterility and misery. Ironically, the parched sterility of Hell symbolizes the world as the old ways have made it. But there is also a cleansing effect in this visionary fire of the Pit. These flames cleanse Anse of his greed and pride. They purge his soul. As they bring together the clashing participants of the dialectic in death and punishment; their admonitory message stimulates Anse and Bolliver's happier fusion in life.

After lying three days in a type of death, Anse experiences a type of resurrection. His industry, force of character, love of rebirth--these are traits which make him worthy of a second chance. Nature has been kind to him, giving him wealth and plenty. By almost taking his
life, nature has offered him the key to salvation. And he accepts it gladly: "I jest had a token and I aim to make things right the rest of my life..." (p. 334). As visible signs of his repentance, Anse reinstates Bolliver and concedes Subrinea's worth without qualification. Late in life, Anse accepts a synthesis of the best of both ways. The conversion of Anse Bushman is the most vital happening in the novel. The vehicle of this conversion is the conventional fundamentalist religious vision, but in the context of Anse's world, the vision is quite believable. Dialectical attitudes have been clashing in and around him throughout the narrative, and the vision mellowed him so that he no longer resists synthesis. We can project that Anse will continue to be prosperous and industrious. He will continue to love his farm. But materialism will no longer rule his passions, and he will be tolerant of his fellow men who have been portioned different gifts and life values.

Anse Bushman represents the prosperous middle class and its values. Conversely, Bolliver Tussie is typical of the squatter culture. It is profitable to compare and contrast the two men: both are narrow-minded and set in their ways; both oppose their children's marrying into the other class. both love the land; both are competent at the hill culture skills; both are strong-willed, determined men who do not concede without struggle. But though they share
these similarities, there are marked differences: Anse is frugal and saving, but Bolliver does not plan for the future, working only to spend his wages on a Saturday drunk; Anse is literate and respects the value of education, while Bolliver is illiterate and content to be so; Anse loves the land for its potential productivity, whereas Bolliver loves it for its wildness and beauty; Anse covets the legal ownership of land, but Bolliver holds a deeper heart-attachment.

Bolliver's ancestors have lived on the slopes of Ragweed Hollow and Cat's Fork for generations, though they have never held a deed for a foot of the land there. They have existed off the land by hunting, berry-picking, root-digging, timber-cutting and farming. They have frolicked and enjoyed a free life. But time and economics have wiped out the wilderness, and their old way of life is no longer possible. Bolliver laments to Anse as they discuss the rental: "We don't have nothin now only what we've raised on the clearin patches back of the shack. All that we have left on that big timber tract is a place to hold our dead. Our dead air buried in that land— that land we love" (p. 174).

It is the melancholy end of an era. The squatter side of the mountain dialectic is facing extinction. All that is left of the Tussie past is the grove of ailanthus trees. Stuart describes them thus:
The grove of trees stands deep-rooted in a loamy ravine on the left-hand side of Cat's Fork when you come down the creek. In the twilight of evening, their long branches... look like the long green-robed arms of ghosts... They stand silently under the evening sky, save for a light rustle of the evening wind and a whippoorwill that alights in one of the limbs to sing... They are the green oasis of timber amid the vast desert of broken bodies, wreckage, and stumps. (pp. 31-2)

The ailanthus trees are symbolic of the position held by Bolliver and his people. Shielding the graves and unfit for timber, the trees of Heaven have been spared the axe. Their lowly place among the ranks of trees has contributed to their survival. Among men the squatters are weeds, yet with the tenacity of weeds, they survive. The ailanthus tree is difficult to eradicate; cut it down and the stump will sprout. The roots will put out shoots which grow into new trees. The ailanthus is lowly, but it is prolific. And the Tussies are a prolific people among the race of men. Many squatters are degenerate because of intermarriage and inbreeding, but Bolliver's family is an exception. Crissie is not a Tussie by blood, and their children are sound in body and mind. Contrasted with Bolliver's thriving brood, Anse, with but one son left out of eleven children, seems barren indeed. Bolliver has thrived like an ailanthus weed tree, surviving, like the trees, to find himself an anacronism, a culture with no place left, a remnant of the past in a desolate world. When Tarvin asks Subrinea what the ailanthus tree is good for, she replies:
"Nothin, but it is good to smell and pretty to look at. (p. 32). She has expressed here the justification for her people and their way of life. Human beings, like trees, should be tolerated for what they are, not for the practical extent of their use; humankind need not meet the approval of all proper mores in order to be worthwhile. This is a philosophy of life for life's sake, a vitalistic philosophy, and it is the life credo of the Tussie culture. But it is a path that if followed absolutely, will lead only to decay.

On earth the squatter ethic will be overcome by that of the middle class, for the higher class has an economic and political advantage. Ultimately, however, the two extreme positions are equalized, for both lead to spiritual ruin, as clearly illuminated in Anse's vision of Hell. The squatters' depiction as snakes in Hell, hissing at Anse, is the supreme degradation of both cultures. A glint of hope for Bolliver is contained in the conversion experience of Anse; Anse becomes receptive to synthesis, and is willing to educate Bolliver about more urbane ways. If Bolliver willingly responds to Anse's change, he will have real hope. The text of the novel does not project this, developing only the means of enlightenment for Bolliver.

The squatter culture, personified in Bolliver Tussie, is at once poetic and profane, attractive and repulsive. It occupies the conflicting position to that of the middle
class in the dialectic. Together, both systems represent the old, narrow viewpoint, and comprise an establishment at odds with itself. For all their differences, they run parallel courses to one tragic point, death.

Now let us look briefly at the older women in the novel. Frannie Bushman and Crissie Tussie are types of their respective classes. They share in common their opposition to their husbands' ways. Frannie castigates Anse for his wickedness; Crissie objects to Bolliver's drinking and coarseness, and especially to his illogical opposition to Subrinea's love for Tarvin. Crissie wants to see their daughter better her lot in life by marrying into the landed class.

Their opposition often expresses the archetypal male-female rivalry in the comic mold. Nevertheless, it serves a serious function in the novel by pointing up the defects in the men's attitudes. Indicative of Frannie's criticism of Anse, apart from her frequent admonitions about the state of his soul, is her complaint about her rickety furniture: "My furniture ain't no good ... It is rotten. My dishes air all broken up. I've lost nearly all the knives, forks, and spoons I've got. I guess the rats hast carried 'em under the floor. Aint got enough dishes to set the table when company comes; yit Anse buys more land. Anse wants more land and more land" (p. 243): Frannie is disgusted with Anse for his stingy ways, even to the point of saying she would
leave if it were not for Tarvin and her farm animals.
Nevertheless, she has her little moments of triumph, for she
convinces Anse to buy new furniture and dishes. In spite
of her disapproval of Anse's ways, she has generally abetted
him in his way of life, having been a frugal manager of the
household and an ingenious banker. Anse appreciates her
for this, and she in turn respects his ability as a provider.
As Anse and Fronnie are gathering money for Anse's trip into
Greenwood to the Master Commissioner's sale, the spouses
discuss their partnership:

"You see what a savin' wife means, Son," says Anse.
"If it hadn't been fer Fronnie I couldn't a-done it, Son. It takes a savin' wife to hep a man among these
hills."
"You've made it, Anse," says Fronnie. "I've hepped,
but I aint done much."
"I've made and you've saved," says Anse..." (p. 145)

Even in the harsh patriarchal mountain world, success and
survival is a co-operative effort between man and woman.
Fronnie has the mythic feminine desire for gentility and
grace in living; she shows the feminine disapproval of rough,
callous ways in men. Yet she has acquired some of Anse's
stingy ways, doing well what he considers the duty of a good
mountain wife. Tarvin muses: "Ma will lay back a few pennies
from every dozen of eggs she sells... Ma has looked
ahead for the dry seasons, the cropless years, the hard days
to come... Pa and Ma have worked shoulder to shoulder to
turn the hard wheel of life..." (pp. 143-4). Fronnie's
angry reaction to the Tussies' asking for her old furniture,
and her bitter response to Anse's story of the two strange Tussie women who proposition him, prove that she too is capable of traditional settler resistance to any encroachment brought on by the squatter culture.

Crissie Tussie disapproves of the lower elements of squatter ways, elements which her husband perpetuates. She objects to Bolliver's opposition to Tarvin's courtship of Subrinea. She expresses bitterness about the quality of life Bolliver's squatter means have provided: "Sometimes I think I'll take the axe . . . when Bolliver gits on his week-end drunk . . . and split his goddamn head wide open. I git so tired of this life. I've allus wanted to escape it and live as other people live." (.p. 24). Crissie has no chance of effecting change, but there is a chance that Subrinea's future might improve, and her mother sees this potential in Subrinea's dating Tarvin, scion of the landed class. In spite of her objections to Bolliver's way of life, she is bound to it in a supportive role, just as Frommie is subordinate to Anse. When the classes openly clash, Crissie sides with her own.

The older women of Trees of Heaven are both in opposition to and support of the male figures in their respective cultures, and they contribute to the dying mountain establishment. They are more flexible to change and sympathetic to synthesis than their men. But though they are not silent, servile automatons, they are generally
impotent in bringing about synthesis. Younger, fresher hearts must accomplish that task, as we will see in the discussion to follow.

Because they share a distinctive role in the plot of *Trees of Heaven*, and because they symbolize the force of synthesis in the novel, it is my intention to consider Tarvin and Subrinea more or less simultaneously. While the opposing elements of the old, radical order, their fathers, Anse and Bolliver, are colliding, Tarvin and Subrinea manage to carry on their burgeoning love against the opposition of their sires. Thus to the intra-generational conflict is added an inter-generational struggle as well. It is a clash that goes deeper than youth versus age or squatter versus settler. The opposition encountered by the young lovers from their respective fathers is in reality a warring, doomed establishment's resistance to synthesis, and is thereby the opposition of death to life. The young couple fill the positive antithetical role in the dialectic of the novel. Pennington maintains that Tarvin and Subrinea are "symbolic rebirths, living rebirths..."9 Indeed they personify the movement toward hope and salvation in the story.

Tarvin shares many of the admirable traits of his sire: he has inherited his father's sagacity, strength, industry, and physical courage, but his drive for land and prosperity

9Pennington, p. 57.
is moderate compared to that of his father. He does not see the need for incessant, brutish labor. Tarvin tells his mother: "I like to have a little fun. If I'd listen to Pa, I wouldn't do anything in my life but work. That is all he does. I never intend to kill myself workin like Pa has."

Tarvin's life has been under the constant influence of his father, but now another source of influence has encroached upon his thinking. He has met the comely squatter maiden, Subrinea Tussie, at a dance, and, supposedly squirrel hunting, he is slipping to Cat's Fork to visit her.

Tarvin has found love and pleasure among the squatters; however, there is no danger of his becoming totally enthralled by their irresponsible life style. Tarvin feels that there should be a better way of living than the stingy drudgery espoused by Anse, yet the degeneracy of Bolliver, marked by filth, drunkenness, incest, and inbreeding, disgusts him, and he is validly concerned about how he could tolerate such ways if he marries Subrinea. Looking at the flies coming in and out of the Tussie's shack, he thinks: "It is a lot as Pa says. The squatters air a dirty lot and they air a triflin lot. They live like hogs. But amongst families that live like hogs there is often a purty gal. And when you love a girl you don't haf to love the family, and when you marry a girl you don't haf to marry the family" (p. 22).

Tarvin is a product of the prosperous middle class, and its values are ingrained permanently within him, yet not to the
extent of precluding all liberality and tolerance; he is willing to follow the dictates of his heart and love a squatter girl despite the repulsive mores of her people.

Against the backdrop of their families' opposition, Tarvin and Subrinea continue to meet, the squatter cemetery and the trees of Heaven their trysting place. With a bountiful harvest gathered, Tarvin persuades Anse to host a dance celebrating the harvest. This mountain bacchanal depicts the high point of rustic social life and brings the classes together for one night of fun, a brief moment of synthesis which prefigures a longer lasting unity to come. Tarvin encounters and defeats Bollie Beaver, thus proving his physical prowess and declaring his love for Subrinea unabashedly before the community.

Autumn moves into winter; January brings snow and cold, and also lambing time. Tarvin takes the night shift at the sheep shanty, and while journeying to the sheep barn, he becomes lost in a frost storm. Tarvin's storm is a symbolic counterpart to the storm in which his father wanders. Anse's storm is a spring thundershower, a storm that heralds resurrection and life, the sort of storm an old man craves when he is caught up tightly in death and dying ways. But Tarvin, the lusty youth at the epitome of his powers, finds in the frost storm his bitter nemesis, death. Tarvin is in danger of death and dying ways, beset by the old cultures about him. Subrinea rescues Tarvin from certain
freezing death in the winter night. He survives the storm, and with Subrinea, he helps save the lambs. And that same night in the sheep shanty, their virgin love is first consummated. The scene is a classic of its sort:

They lie limb to limb, lip to lip, and breath to breath; the twitch of each body muscle is dear one to another. Sweat breaks from Tarvin's face and runs in little streams onto her face and into her eyes. It runs across her face to the pillow and dampens her cornsilk hair. . . . Subrinea and Tarvin lie embraced in their first fulfillment of joy, beauty, and quickened powers of their strong youthful bodies. Seconds are minutes and minutes are hours while this God-given ecstasy of youthful love is first consummated. (p. 118)

Stuart has successfully communicated all the elements of physical love in this passage: the erotic, the emotional, and the spiritual. Guided by Subrinea out of the storm, Tarvin has been saved to life and love. The love consummation, in the eyes of society, would be regarded as sinful, yet their act is not depicted as a guilty thing, and they regard themselves as married according to the laws of God (p. 297). This union of body and heart is the act of synthesis; the child which they conceive is the child of synthesis. Theirs is a positive act, and juxtaposed with the death extant all about them, it is a redemptive act.

Tarvin's growing awareness and sensitivity are evidenced in the scene where he watches his mother gathering money for Anse, as the old farmer prepares to go into Greenwood and buy the Sexton land tract. Tarvin meditates upon the melancholy state of progression and succession in the cycle
of life, seeing in the worn person of Fronnie what Subrinea might become: "Her golden hair, too, will turn to the color of flyin frost someday. The land will do Subrinea like it has done Ma. It will break Subrinea...." (p. 143).

Tarvin admits a reality which Anse seemingly has repressed: material possessions exact their ironic toll; land will break its holders, reclaiming their dust, and after falling to younger hands, begins the process all over again. On the night of the spring storm, after Anse has gone out, Tarvin again looks at his mother and broods upon what is and what might be: "Ma shouldn't be like that... Ma is gittin old before her time... Time has been unkind to Ma. Time and hard work hast changed Ma. I never want time, hard work, and childbearin to change Subrinea like they've changed Ma". (p. 219). This is Tarvin's ultimate rejection of the cruel extremes offered by the old order, and his resolve not to see its dissipation perpetuated upon the woman he loves.

And what of the winsome squatter maiden? She is an archetypal character, a fair lady of virtue who enjoys physical fulfillment without losing that virtue. In his vision, Anse does not see her with the other Tussies in Hell. Anse, after his conversion, readily admits her worth. He tells Tarvin: "I think you air gittin a real gal. She'll be good to stick by you in the time of need..."). (p. 336). She is the hope of her people, the only member of her class
with the qualities necessary for fusion with the middle class culture and the resulting attainment of synthesis. She is a good worker, a trait common to both settler and squatter, but she does not indulge in the vices of the squatters' life: alcohol, tobacco, swearing, and promiscuity. She retains the sentimental, heart-oriented love of the land fundamental to her people, as evidenced by her respect for the graves of her dead forebears beneath the trees of Heaven. She tells Tarvin: "I feel like I had to decorate my people's graves... Who on this earth that aint a squatter by blood would stoop to decorate one of our graves..." (p. 231). She boasts traits commendable to both sections of the hill establishment. But she has deeper mythic, archetypal roles. She has characteristics of the saviour: she rescues Tarvin on the night of the frost storm, and her care also saves the lambs from freezing. And by educating Tarvin to the finer sensitivities of life's pleasures, she helps save him from becoming the materialistic drudge his father has become. Let us note Tarvin's recollections as their eyes meet in the hostile atmosphere of the courtroom:

Tarvin remembers life with Subrinea. He cannot forget. Subrinea is a part of him just as the earth is a part of him; the earth that he has known and never lost. He is part of Subrinea. He has become part of the wild flower that Subrinea is. He has learned to laugh; to work and play from Subrinea—that volcanic outburst of Nature that she is. (p. 309)

This passage is rife with illumination concerning the nature of Subrinea and her effect on Tarvin. Her function in the
process of synthesis is to educate Tarvin in the art of living the balanced life. His years with Anse have taught him the value of work and prosperity, real values to be sure. But he has also recognized that work, land, and money are not all of life; the Tussie way, a foil for Anse's way, has showed him that life can be fun without the world's goods. But Tussie degeneracy at its worst is not a viable road to salvation either. By exhibiting all the valuable qualities dear to settler and squatter alike, without their companion vices, Subrinea has taught her lover how to combine the best of both, how to enjoy life in all its aspects, both at work and at play. Subrinea is pure, elemental, natural energy, an embodiment of life and spirit. The capitalization of "Nature" in this passage is important. By making "Nature" a personification, an entity, and identifying Subrinea with it, Stuart makes her into a manifestation of a mythic personage. Let us look backward in the text at this point to Tarvin's driving alone past the trees of Heaven as he goes to move the Tussies from Cat's Fork. He is recollecting his times with Subrinea:

He remembers the moonlit nights when he has held her tall ghost-like body close against his own—when he has looked into her green eyes and has seen the color of green leaves in her eyes. He remembers nights when he has seen the petals of the bloodroot in her teeth. He remembers the nights when he has felt the torrents of snow-melted waters rushing in her veins. Subrinea is the forest, earth, flowers, water, and everything on the land. Subrinea is made of the earth. She is more beautiful than the earth. (p. 192)
From this passage we recognize that Subrinea is a type of the Earth Mother, a primal feminine deity, a source of fecundity and of the life force. Her beauty is the beauty of natural things, even to the degree of transcending the beauty of nature itself. Her motherly concern for the lambs, even the dead ones, which she tenderly returns to the earth, her reverence for the earthy heritage that is hers—these facts support her Earth Mother image. The earth is enduring and eternal and will ultimately triumph over farmers' fire and squatters' axe. The earth is the fertile thread that connects past, present, and future. The earth shelters the Tussie dead and sends forth the trees of Heaven. The earth has made Subrinea; she is a human figure of earth, a living force of earth. In such a medium as Subrinea, earth can act to heal old scars and ease old hostilities. Men can be taught to respect one another across class lines. Forever young herself, the earth can hold up the view of youth as an example for an inert race. And it is through Subrinea and Tarvin, both of the earth, one clearly in consort with it, and the other zealous for rediscovery of the primal vision, young people with a dream of love in their hearts, that conflicts can be settled and salvation found for both their respective cultures. In his study, Lee Pennington perceptively calls attention to references in the novel to both Tarvin and Subrinea as ghosts.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{10} Pennington, pp. 52-3.
Indeed they are "ghosts"—spirits, emanations of better people in a better world to come.

The end of the novel sees Anse—a converted man, Bolliver about to be reinstated, and Tarvin at peace with the world and in love. He is on his way to Greenwood to bring the Tussies home. He will soon marry Subrinea according to the laws of men. Again he passes the trees of Heaven. He bursts into a soliloquy about the squatters: "Not a nickel, not a penny, not a quarter, and not a dollar . . . and they lived life and loved life. They hunted over the land and they lived and loved and they enjoyed the comin springs with the burst of herbs, flowers, and leaves . . ." (p. 338). Happiness in life is not bound inseparably to getting and having. There is a basic elemental love that is higher than the love of things: "They loved the earth and the smells of spring earth-wind, clean and sweet to smell with the flowers of spring . . ." (p. 338). And there is a higher order than mere civilization: "What were laws to them? The laws of Nature were their laws..." (p. 339). But even this carefree happiness can end:

"Now they are dust under the trees of Heaven and the strings on their fiddles air mute and cold and the toes that stepped briskly on the puncheon floor do not dance and the guitar strings and the banjo strings air as silent as the dust. "And the trees that fed 'em nuts . . . air gone . . . and the game that they hunted has gone—gone as they have gone . . ." (p. 339)

This is a poignant lament for an idyllic past, for the lost
raptures of an easier age. Despite the melancholy truth, Tarvin voices clear optimism for the continuity of the life principle, which he sees as preserved in Subrinea. She embodies the richest of the idyllic past, a past which she and Tarvin will preserve together. He has accepted fusion with the past by accepting her and the rich heritage of loving the earth for its intrinsic richness. His reverie continues: "Subrinea loves them [earth's beauties] and I love them, and I am married to Subrinea. When I married her in the sheep shanty, I married all this" (p. 339).

Tarvin is not totally rejecting Anse's wealth and values; he is merely placing them in their rightful framework. He has made it clear in Section 2 of Part IV that he and Subrinea wish to live on the farm and raise crops and sheep, just as Tarvin's parents have done. But we can safely project that Tarvin will never be the ruthless, intolerant man that Anse has been, working wife and offspring to the brink of their endurance. He and Subrinea will enjoy life more and take more time to notice the beauty of the land. Nor will they be wasteful and indigent like Bolliver. This is the synthesis which Tarvin attains, and for the sublime simplicity of his expression of it, he emerges as the poet of the novel.

In conclusion, Trees of Heaven presents a complex of struggles set in a mountain world. The thesis, or establishment, is represented by two polarities: the landed settler
and the indigent squatter. Both factions are narrow-minded and degenerate; both ways are the ways of ruin and death. The antithesis is represented by two young people, Tarvin and Subrinea, who, in attempting to liberalize and harmonize the two cultures, meet the resistance of both. Their love perseveres and overcomes; they achieve and become unity, synthesis, thus teaching the way to harmony and life, not only for themselves, but for their elders as well. *Trees of Heaven* is a beautiful book, a hopeful book which states that humanity can find salvation by objectively looking at the options, and by using the head and following the heart toward a moderate way.
Chapter II
Taps For Private Tussie: Life Out of Death, Triumphant

Taps For Private Tussie, first published in 1943, was Jesse Stuart's second novel, and it claimed a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, and the Thomas Jefferson Southern Award.¹ Of the significance of this novel Lee Pennington writes: "With Taps For Private Tussie, Stuart became recognized as a major American humorist."²

In Taps, the dialectical conflicts are unmistakable, and the action is presented through the eyes and thoughts of the young narrator-protagonist, Sid Tussie Seagraves. It will be helpful to summarize the plot.

Private Kim Tussie, drafted into World War II, has been killed in action, and his body returned to the Kentucky hills for burial. On the day of the funeral, Sid introduces most of the major figures in the book: Grandpa Press Tussie, Kim's father; Grandma Arimithy Tussie, Press Tussie's wife and Kim's mother; Uncle Mott, Kim's older brother, a bachelor; and Aunt Vittie, Kim's young widow. The Tussies are living in the Six Hickories Schoolhouse, and are in imminent danger of being evicted by the law. Many of the Tussie clan have gathered for the burial of their slain kinsman. At Grandpa's request Mott goes alone

¹ See the back of the dust jacket, Jesse Stuart, Taps For Private Tussie (New York: World Publishing, 1969).
² Pennington, p. 62.
into the coalhouse to open the coffin. He tells the others that he is positive that the decomposed body is indeed that of Kim, for it has two gold and two missing teeth, and a missing finger—features that Kim Tussie had. This question resolved, the coffin is carried to a high mountain, and the interment is made there. Sid observes that Aunt Vittie is the only one of Kim's family who is crying. Upon their return from the burial, the Tussies find Sheriff Whiteapple awaiting them at the schoolhouse, and the officer gives them orders to vacate the premises.

The following day, the Tussies go into town. It is relief day and old age pension day. Also, Aunt Vittie receives the $10,000 G.I. life insurance payment for her dead husband. Sid relates how Grandpa is the oldest Tussie, and therefore is head of one branch of the family, the relief Tussies. Grandpa can get relief for himself and others because he controls the many Tussie votes.

With the insurance money in Vittie's hands and Vittie under the influence of Grandpa Tussie, the family rents the large George Rayburn house, the finest house in the county. Sid notices that now Uncle Mott is very considerate toward Aunt Vittie. And he now observes that the money had been the reason few tears were shed at the funeral. He thinks often about Kim. Aunt Vittie buys sixteen rooms of furniture and furnishes the entire house, and she also buys new clothes for everyone.
Soon after the Tussies are moved into their fine new home, George Tussie, Grandpa's younger brother, arrives and asks for shelter and a meal. Grandpa had refused to get relief for Uncle George, who as second oldest in the family, heads the other branch of the Tussies, the branch that does not draw relief. Uncle George is a fiddle player. Uncle George is welcomed into the home, and Vittie also buys clothes for him. Grandma warns that other Tussies, those not on relief, will, in keeping with the Tussie habit, come asking to live with them until everything is gone.

And they do come. Family by family, the Tussies arrive and demand to be sheltered. Grandpa consents until there are forty-six people in the house. Extra table settings are necessary. In addition to the relief food, Aunt Vittie must open a store account. There is a dance every night, with Uncle George's fiddle and Uncle Mott's banjo making the music. It is now clear to Sid that George and Mott are courting Aunt Vittie, who has bought more new clothes, put on make-up, and gotten her hair fixed. She is pretty again. Uncle Mott seems to be losing the courtship. Sid continues to muse on Uncle Kim and what he would think about all that is happening because of the money paid for his life.

In September, the landlord, George Rayburn, dismayed at all the damage being done to his house, evicts the Tussies and attaches all their furniture to pay for the damages. Windows have been broken, the finish worn off the floors,
the wallpaper marked up, and the fences and shade trees burned for firewood. In the meantime Grandpa has lost his relief, having been reported for living in a fine home by his nephews, Young Ben and Dee Tussie, men who were staying at the Rayburn house under Grandpa's hospitality. They did it because they were angry at Grandpa for making them carry the relief food home from town. So once again the Sheriff sets the Tussies on the road. But Grandpa has used Vittie's last $300.00 to buy the old Turner Place way up in Higgins Hollow, fifty acres of timber with a shack. Grandpa, proud to own land, has dreams of farming in the next season.

The Tussies had left all their old dishes and pans in the gully behind the school when they knew they were moving to the Rayburn house and would soon have new items. Sid goes to retrieve these things. He is seen and chased by pupils at the school. Uncle Mott goes hunting and brings home wild game. Uncle Mott and Uncle George compete in the building of makeshift furniture. They are, by this time, in hot rivalry.

As autumn progresses, other developments arise. A county attendance officer pays them a visit, and orders that Sid attend school, the same school in which the Tussies had once lived. Someone reports Grandpa for owning land, and this causes him to lose his old age pension. Uncle Mott and Uncle George are angry at one another over Aunt
Vittie; Uncle George wins the courtship and marries her. Grandma and Vittie begin to quarrel over the land. Grandpa attempts to keep peace in the household. Mott has been given the timber, and he is drinking up the timber money as fast as he gets his monthly payments.

Sid learns to hunt and trap, taught by Uncle Mott. He starts to school, likes it, and does well in his studies. Everyone is proud of Sid. But Sid must sleep upstairs in the same big room with Vittie and Uncle George. Their lovemaking keeps him awake. As tensions grow in the shack, a solution is agreed upon: George and Vittie will take five acres of land, and Mott will contribute some of his timber money toward building a shack on it for them.

February comes and brings deep snow. Grandpa begins to hear voices, have dreams, and get tokens. He falls ill and tells everyone he is going to die. There is little food in the shack. Mott gets his timber money and rushes off to town one cold day. He promises to send home some groceries, but night falls and no groceries come, and Sid knows that Mott has met Toodle Powell, the moonshiner, immediately upon his arrival in town. Grandpa Tussie grows weaker, and he craves red apples to eat. Vittie goes into town and begs apples for him. Days pass, and still Mott does not return. Vittie again goes into town, and while she is away, George comes to stay at the shack with Grandpa, Grandma, and Sid. Grandpa says that his dead
ancestors will come for him at midnight. Late in the afternoon, Mott returns. He tells them that Sheriff Whiteapple will soon come to arrest him, for he has killed Young Ben and Dee Tussie. When Uncle George plays a note upon his fiddle, Mott shoots the fiddle into splinters, then the bow. Uncle George then kills Mott. Sid is watching out the window for the sheriff when he sees Aunt Vittie coming, accompanied by a soldier. The soldier is Kim, the man believed dead and buried on the mountaintop. Uncle George flees out the back window into the winter hills.

Kim tells them that Mott had not wanted to reveal that the dead soldier was not Kim, for Mott had wanted the money and Vittie. He says that justice has been done on Mott, and will soon be done on Uncle George. Sheriff Whiteapple and his deputies arrive, and they go after Uncle George, who has left a clear trail through the snow.

Kim reveals to Sid that Aunt Vittie is really his mother. A wealthy mine owner's son named Seagraves had fathered Sid, and had paid Kim to marry Vittie. Kim apologizes for the way he has treated Sid in the past, and states intentions of doing better in the future. The novel ends with Sid's observation of the dying and loving taking place in the room about him.

From looking at the plot it can be observed that the Tussies are engaged in conflict on two fronts: they are at
odds with a society that expects its members to be productive and self-sustaining, and they are also at variance among themselves, as evidenced in the treachery of Young Ben and Dee Tussie, and in the conflict between George and Mott. These conflicts result in ruin and tragedy. Grandpa's loss of his pension and relief marks his defeat by the system, and the intra-family squabble ends in violent death for those involved. No hope of salvation comes out of these struggles.

There is another and profounder conflict present throughout the entire novel, a more subtle conflict. This is the quiet struggle of young Sid to escape seduction to the indigent, dependent, self-devouring life style of the Tussies. It is inherent to Sid's nature that he hold to the old ethic of self-help and industry so prized by the mountaineer before New Deal welfare programs lured many of that hardy breed into dependence. Indeed, Stuart's depiction of the mountaineer takes a different turn in *Taps*; in *Trees of Heaven*, set a decade earlier, the Tussie class had truly been degenerate, but they had worked and made their own way. Mary W. Clarke, in her study relating hill culture to Stuart's fiction, writes:

Stuart's basic portrait of the hill man during his own youth showed him to be hard-working, self-respecting, and self-sustaining; only toward the end of the era did some of the less energetic hill men deteriorate under the influence of government
work and relief programs—a phase of hill life that Stuart has treated humorously, but with tragic overtones, in *Taps For Private Tussie*.

The Tussie way is the way of death and disgrace, a way quite rightly disdained by society. It is Sid's struggle to overcome the tarnish of the Tussie way. The Tussies represent an antithetical position to the accepted ethics of society, yet they also comprise the corrupt thesis, or establishment, in which Sid finds himself inserted, and against which he must struggle. Victory for Sid will be a fusion with the older, honorable ethic of industry and personal pride.

Grandpa Press, Uncle George, Uncle Mott, and Uncle Kim characterize the Tussie life style and philosophy. Theirs is a worry-free existence in the early part of the novel, as long as the pension, relief, and insurance flow in. But it is a useless existence without socially redeeming features. Rather than being contributors to society, Grandpa Press and his kin prey off it as they laugh its most vital values to scorn. Sid says of them:

I'd seen people come and ask Grandpa to work; but he'd always tell them he was down in his back... And Grandpa wouldn't work for anybody... Uncle Mott wouldn't work either. He'd send me to the woods to find sticks for kindlin to start

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... while he lay in the shade ... and picked his banjer. Uncle Mott was a good banjer picker, so everybody said when he played at the square dances. But everybody said he ought to be a good banjer picker since he hadn't done a day's work in his life.

The Tussie attitude is sharply contrasted to that of working society. While on their way to the relief office, the Tussies pass the Crumps, who are busy working in their tobacco patch. The farmers gaze at the Tussies, their looks betraying disapproval. Uncle Mott and Grandpa discuss the Crumps' attitude. Sid reports their conversation:

"Did you notice the look them polecats give me?" Uncle Mott asked me.
"I thought they's a-lookin awful hard at us about somethin," Grandpa said.
"They tried to get me to help 'em in their terbacker," Uncle Mott said. "I told 'em nothin a-shakin. Told 'em I wouldn't work fer two bucks a day!"
"They even tried to get me to help 'em," Grandpa said. I told 'em I wasn't a-goin to lose what I's a-gettin. Told 'em I's too old to work and was pensioned."

Grandpa laughed a wild laugh ... Then Grandpa slapped his overall knees ... (p. 41)

The Tussies, for their lazy ways, receive the scorn of industrious society. Mott tends to resent this contempt, and is blind to the ethic of work. Grandpa is also scornful of the work ethic, but his attitude toward society is a good-natured disdain. He does not resent the system; he defrauds it. He laughs at the system which he is bilking: "It's like gettin money from home without workin for it" (p. 45), he says as he gets his pension check.

Press Tussie does have a redeeming quality: he is a naturally charitable man. He has a large heart, but little material for his large heart to distribute. His and Grandma's adoption of Sid, a child not any blood relation to them, is the firmest showing of his generosity. His opening of the Rayburn house to the sponging relatives is further proof of his largesse. True, he has not been willing or able to exert influence in favor of all his relations, and he has made enemies because of this, yet when he gains control of Vittie's money, his bounty is such that he shares the prosperity as long as it lasts. His generosity leads to a fault, for it leads to a greater poverty and ruin, and gets him little thanks from those benefitted. The only kindness his generosity earns for him is Vittie's condescending to beg apples for him as he lies on his death-bed. Vittie expresses her feeling for him touchingly: "The road will never be too long nor too full of muddy ruts and the night will never get too dark for me to do anything for you, Pa Tussie." (p. 260).

The novel commences with death and depravity, and immediately leaps to the hope of better things with the payment of the insurance money and the ensuing move into the Rayburn house. The action rises with the Tussies' prosperity, levels off with the arrival of the first moochers. The slothful days and wild nights there mark a level course moving toward a fall. The loss of Grandpa's relief signifies a change of fortune, after which matters rush
irrevocably toward tragedy. All the misfortunes center about Grandpa; he is the focal point around which Sid observes everyone else in movement. Grandpa's foresight in spending the last of the money for land does not stay the tide of ruin, for it leads directly to the loss of the pension and quarreling among members of the family.

Grandpa's life to this point is highlighted by his experiences in Michigan, where he had wandered and worked as a younger man. Possibly this outside experience could have redeemed him from the indigence characteristic of his clan, but nevertheless it failed to do so. All that is left of these days are a few tall tales and meaningless reminiscences. He has wasted his life. Acquiring land gives him a new perspective and possibility. He says: "It's wonderful to know that this land is mine... It's the first time in my life I've ever had a deed for land. This land is mine. I raised Kim, and Vittie married 'im. Now he's dead and for his death Vittie bought this land with her last money and give it to me. I'm a proud man to own land" (p. 182). But this newly discovered pride is, ironically, not an earned pride; his rationale is faulty. The symbolic implication of this passage is that life and hope can rise out of death. They certainly can and will, but not through the dreams and efforts of Press Tussie. If land can indeed regenerate the Tussie thesis, someone besides the old and fallen Press must be the working agent.
of the redemption. The retreat from the Rayburn house heralds the end of Grandpa's fortunes. It is a touching and pathetic, yet comic scene, a type of mock epic exodus, comically suggestive of the great flights of literature and history such as the scattering of the Arcadians, the flight of the Nez Perces, or the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. It is the Tussie retreat from a civilization that has rejected them, the defeat of their aspirations to polite living. It is a return to the earth, to the wilderness, to the primitive. It is a return to death. Owning land affords no rise in fortune for Grandpa and the others, for it ironically leads to greater privations. The black virgin soil and timberland of Higgins Hollow hold only a place for them to die. Grandpa's statement, "I'd try farmin in my old days. I'd farm corn and terbacker. Take my time. Live here happy as a coon in a holler log the rest of my days," (p. 182), is met with derision by Mott and George. It is as if they comprehend the truth and foresee the common fate of all, that they are inescapably trapped in an unfolding of irony and pathos, the payloads of wasted talent and time, the tragedy of good resolutions formed too late.

In one of Grandpa's tokens, he dreams of walking over burned newground. We read:

"I've been a-dreamin of burnt newground," Grandpa said. "That's the sign of a hard death. Every night I dream of burnt newground. I can see piles
of white and brown ashes; I can see black charred stumps. And I keep on a-walkin through the deep piles of ashes- a tryin to find a mountain path until my feet get so heavy I can hardly lift them and I get tired enough to fall in my tracks.... (p. 258)

Grandpa's dream symbolizes the life he and his people have led, a life consumed in the celebration of the senses, a life sterile and sere, like the burned earth itself. But there is a duality in this image. From the burned newground, industry and intelligence can reap productivity. Grandpa sees himself wearily plodding through the desolation of his expended life, unable to find the pathway to a better existence. But ironically, the sere land over which he trudges in his dreams can and does hold life, a life and hope upon which others can capitalize. Grandpa's way is the way of death, and his dreams are signs of that doom. They are also harbingers of a better way, a way of dignity and life. But not for Press Tussie.

As his health deteriorates, Grandpa feels the frustration of his late-blooming and thwarted plans, admitting that they have indeed come too late:

"I hate to leave land that has never been farmed... Land with rot-leaf loam as black as the land in Michigan. I'll tell you, Sid, we could raise some big ears of corn on this land. It would look like livin to be able to walk through the corn in September when the fodder blades start a-turnin and see the big ears of corn a-hangin down from the stalks- to see the ripe cornfield beans a-hangin down in long pods and big yaller pumpkins scattered over the ground like cornfield rocks.......

"When you raise your own corn, beans, taters, and pumpkins, you don't haf to depend on relief... Farmin's the only sure way... (p. 271)
Press Tussie has formed his resolution too late in life; his owning land in his old age gives him only a frustrated death. His dreams of harvest must be surrendered to others. He has exhalted indigence and sloth all his life, setting himself in comic variance with an established thesis which prizes work and self-sufficiency. At the end, inspired by the ownership of land, he rejects his antithetical position and embraces society's way. His life, best characterized as one of benign indigence, is too far spent to be salvaged. But in dying he does achieve a sort of attitudinal synthesis, and at least escapes the delusion that his way has been wise. He will die as a fallen but enlightened man.

Grandma Arimithy Tussie and Aunt Vittie, her daughter-in-law, Kim's widow, are the principal female characters in the novel. Other Tussie women appear, but they are merely part of the population at the Rayburn house. They are like Grandma and Vittie, whose roles in the novel make them representative of the Tussie women. The only other woman character is Miss Clark, the schoolteacher. No details are given for the development of her character, but she is a part of the established society's thesis, and thus she aids Sid in his struggle toward hope by contributing to his educational development.

Grandma is more quarrelsome and bitter than her husband, and therefore is not as appealing. She does have a rustic
sagacity which enables her to see straight into the ills of the Tussie predicament, and she speaks her mind thereof. Let us note a passage of conversation spoken as the Tussies pass the campfires of other scattered members of their family:

"Notice every fire we've seen is near a cornfield," Grandpa said. "I guess they'll eat parched corn tonight."
"It won't be as good as the grub they had at our house," Grandma said. "The fare will be a little harder."
"But a Tussie can stand anything when he has to," Uncle Mott said.
"He can stand anything before he'll work to make it better," Grandma said. (p. 168)

Bitterness at the way of life she has been given is evidenced in these words. As their trek continues, the men make optimistic observations: Grandpa notes that the law cannot drive them from their new home; George and Mott remark that fish and game will be plentiful there. "It will be a lonesome place" (p. 169), Grandma counters. They arrive at the shack, and in reply to a hopeful statement of Grandpa's, she says: "When can we do better?" (p. 170). And to Grandpa's subsequent declaration that he feels right at home in Higgins Hollow, Grandma, sadly recalling her lost luxury, asserts: "I don't feel more at home here...." (p. 175). These pithy remarks not only depict Grandma's womanish tendency to desire pretty things and nice living, but also they prove her to be the realist among the older Tussies, a realist who counters the unrealistic excuses and rationalizations of the men.
Grandma also has the archetypal mother's blindness to the faults of her offspring. When Mott gets drunk on his timber money and leaves them with no food in the shack, she is quick to excuse her son and lay the blame on Vittie: "Poor little Mott has let the bottle get 'im since your Aunt Vittie jilted 'im." (p. 266). She betrays frailty and incomprehension in this area, even though her understanding is so cogent in other aspects. Her quarrel with Vittie after Vittie's marriage to Uncle George smacks of the mythic friction between mothers and the women romantically involved with their sons. In summary, Grandma is a defeated individual who is able to see what is wrong with her narrow society, who would like to improve, but who is totally impotent at effecting any change. Hers is the same frustration of defeat as her husband's, the recognition of life and time wasted. In answer to his talk of farming, she moans: "Don't talk about farmin now, Press ... I've been a-listenin and it hurts me to hear you talk. We ought to've done it long ago." (p. 271).

Vittie, the younger woman in the novel, is somewhere in the vicinity of thirty years old, but she has passed the youthful ideal which Stuart so frequently endows with visionary qualities. After her return from Greenwood one day, where she has been to a beauty parlor, Sid describes her thus: "Aunt Vittie had been made over. She was a pretty woman. ... Aunt Vittie's curled brown hair, her
red lips and painted nails kept Uncle Mott's eyes strained toward her while Uncle George laughed and talked with her. She has had herself made comely, at Uncle George's insistence, by the art of cosmetology. Her attractiveness is described by Sid as an artificial beauty.

In looking at two other young Stuart heroines under scrutiny in this study, Subrinea-Tussie in *Trees of Heaven*, and Deutsia Huntoon in *Daughter of the Legend*, and comparing Vittie with them, it is noticeable that Subrinea and Deutsia radiate a natural, earth-like beauty, not the rouge-and-polish prettiness of Vittie. Additionally, in this description of Vittie's sensuous appeal, we see a rivalry developing between Mott and George. Vittie becomes the object of their conflict, a conflict that ends in tragedy.

Vittie is the archetypal fallen woman. Her sexual career had begun at an early age when she had been impregnated by the son of a wealthy mine owner. Kim had married her as a business arrangement, but in time they had grown to love one another, and she, Sid relates, had endured Kim's abuse. After Kim's supposed death, true to Grandma's prediction, Vittie had made herself available for marriage, and the result is her marriage to Uncle George, a man old enough to be her grandfather. Their courtship and lovemaking are viewed in comic light through the eyes of Sid. It is hard to be very admiring of Vittie, for she has little depth of character or complexity of nature, her chief trait being
her sacrifice of pride in begging apples for Grandpa Tussie. She is very much governed by her sexual desires, responding quickly to Uncle George's overtures, and at the novel's fatal conclusion she is oblivious to the tragedy around her--tragedy which she has helped generate--and intent only on making love to her returned husband.

Vittie's beauty is not the beauty of nature, we have said. She has no quality that can inspire or regenerate those about her. She is a source of conflict, an elemental struggle between men for an object of erotic gratification. She is a part of the degenerate Tussie thesis, and she helps stimulate the thesis in its self-destruction. She is a passive, vapid figure, a sex object, but as such she creates dangerous confrontation. She is not, like Subrinea, an example of the Earth Mother; she is in fact Sid's natural mother, but she displays none of the traits of motherhood toward Sid. Even after being informed that she is his mother, Sid thinks: "I'll never be able to call her mother" (p. 296). She is certainly not a saviour. Among literary and mythic feminine types, she is the femme fatale. She, like Grandma, is a defeated character totally impotent at exerting positive influence in her society, able to do nothing toward moving herself or her men on the upward course toward salvation. Vittie and Grandma both have the possibility of a better life as the novel ends, but their chance is brought on through Sid and Kim, and by no quality or force of their own.
Mott and George Tussie are firmly entrenched within the Tussie establishment, and therefore find themselves at variance with polite society. Their open wooing of Vittie, who though not related to them by blood, is related by marriage, is regarded as dangerously close to incest by outsiders, but the men have only disdain for the common standard. Like Grandpa, they regard the Law as their natural foe. Mott’s killing of Young Ben and Dee Tussie, and George’s subsequent killing of Mott set each man in ultimate opposition to acceptable morality, highlighting both central conflicts: Tussie against society and Tussie against Tussie.

The object of their opposition is Vittie, for whom each has a raw, earthy type of love. But the seat of their conflict is artistic as well as sexual. They are rival lovers to be sure, but rival artists as well. Whether their erotic motives subjugate the artistic, or whether the opposite is true, is a subtle and difficult distinction to make. Actually, the artistic and the erotic are closely bound and identified each to each, making the conflict dual in nature.

Mott is a man of middle age who has done nothing with his life. A bachelor, he has never left the household of his parents. He has never worked. He is too old for the war. Mott’s life is characterized by living off his father’s relief and pension, eager for the arrival of relief or pension day when he can bum a dollar from Grandpa or trade
the relief for a couple of beers. Mott has acquired the taste for rotgut moonshine, and whenever he has the money, he drinks. Mott is wasteful, as evidenced by his sale and squandering of the timber. He is inconsiderate of his parents' needs. He is physically violent. His ability as a hunter has practical value to the family, but his one real distinction is his ability to play the banjo. This is a skill that serves no really useful end other than entertainment, but this is an important contribution to the Tussie life style.

Uncle George has done little more than Mott as far as social contributions are concerned. Personally, however, his life has had considerably more action and sparkle. He has been married five times prior to his marriage to Vittie. He has wandered over the western half of the nation. Grandma remarks concerning him: "He must've had a man's nature to have planted sons all over the West . . ." (p. 85). But this wandering indicates shiftlessness and irresponsibility. His fifth wife has fled from him like one flees from a pestilence, leaving him without means, and he comes to the Rayburn house from Lost Creek in search of charity. The name "Lost Creek" is significant; it names the Tussie condition aptly and ironically, for George, in leaving it in search of hope, remains lost. His only redeeming quality is his "magic" fiddle. The perfection of his art is described by Sid:
As Uncle George slowly drew his bow across the strings, I could hear the lull of the beetles, that drowsy lull that makes one want to cry when he walks across a dewy cornfield on an August evening. It was wonderful to hear Uncle George mock the beetles and the katydids on his fiddle. And he would put the sound of the night wind—a-rustling the corn blades with the sound of the beetles and the katydids. (p. 103)

The quality of Mott's art is not stated in such elaborate terms; he is merely asserted to be a good banjo player capable of playing the tunes popular among the hills, whereas George, as shown in this passage just quoted, is an original artist, one who can imitate natural rhythms and sounds. His fiddle is poetic, while Mott's banjo merely makes music. The quality of the instruments themselves figures in this difference. Both the banjo and the fiddle ("violin" in highbrow circles) are prized parts of folk music, but the banjo is associated primarily with the country and popular music scenes, while the violin is often found in classical circles. Mott and his banjo belong only to the square dance and the honky-tonk, but George and his fiddle capture the mood of concert hall and orchestra.

Let us note another of Sid's descriptions of George's art:

It was the tune of the dyin grass, the leaves and the flowers and the chirrupy notes of the grasshoppers, the September wind in the dyin grass and fodder blades, the wailin notes of the cicadas. It was a tune that would almost make you cry when Uncle George snapped the scissory notes of the grasshoppers. (p. 128)

George has mastered the reproduction of the sounds of nature, and is a true artist in the mimetic mode. He has learned
this art by study. When asked how he has mastered this, he replies: "By a-goin out in the cornfield on an August night and a-listenin . . ." (p. 103). He can make his audience hear and visualize the scenes he renders. He can evoke emotional and sentimental empathy. Remarkable is his great spontaneous composition on the exodus from the Rayburn house:

Uncle George made music on his fiddle that would make you mad. You could almost hear the Sheriff's words and Grandpa's answers. And you could almost hear George Rayburn a-cryin about his house. . . . And you could hear the gate click as we left everything behind us and closed the gate. . . . And you could hear our steps as we marched away. . . . And then you could hear tramp, tramp, tramp on the dusty road and our groans beneath our loads. . . . And then you could tell . . . that we were a-gettin tired. . . . When we reached the path beneath the pines Uncle George fiddled the moan of the wind in the pine boughs and the rustle of the pine needles beneath our feet. . . . And you could hear the hoot-hoots of the hoot owls. Then his fiddle got slower and finally there was loud happy music. We had reached the shack. . . . He ended with soft music--sleep music--as the fire was burnin low and the room was gettin dark. . . . (pp. 176-7)

Uncle George is capable of producing more than tunes, more than the sounds of nature. He can fiddle scenes, emotions, drama. He is a lyric artist and a narrative artist as well. This fiddle piece as it is rendered in a prose description is operatic, rife with classical musical drama.

The consummate performance George makes occurs one night at the shack while Mott is away in town. George announces that he intends to play a tune of winter. Sid describes the effort as he states his own reaction:
How could he get such pretty music from the winter world? You could hear the fallin of the snowflakes as they preened against the oak leaves. You could hear the hungry snowbirds chirrumin as they found ragweed seeds upon the snow and picked them up and filled their craws. You could hear the bird's tiny bills peckin against the hard crust of snow and after a while you could hear their satisfied chirrupin. Then you heard 'em flyin to the fodder shocks, through the icy winter wind. And it was lonesome to hear the high wind in the leafless oak tops and to hear it blow among the thick pine needles. (p. 248)

Uncle George's art is not only polished and splendid; it is prophetic and symbolic as well: "I've played summers for you . . . I've played autumn for you . . . Now I'm a-goin to play winter for you . . . " (p. 247). His art has made the summer and its prosperity gay. It has made the darkening autumn more bearable. Now it will play winter, the season of death. George's fiddle makes an orchestral progression toward the tragedy at the novel's end. It heralds a fate ordained by the way of the Tussies' lives, a fate that art cannot circumvent, and in which art, no matter how beautiful, must share.

Mott and George and their rivalry as artists take on a comic aura in their competition for Vittie's affections. At the dances in the Rayburn house, the rivalry is pointed up as one plays and the other dances with her. The affair is really no contest; George clearly has the situation mastered. He is more a man of the world, more experienced at courtship, and though he is not necessarily the better man of the pair, he is the greater artist. As Mott is out
in the woods with Sid, instructing the boy in the skills of trapping, he concedes his defeat and inferiority:

"I'm a good hunter, Sid," Uncle Mott said. "I'm a good trapper. But I'm not a good lover."

"And my banjer won't come up to Uncle George's fiddle... I can't get as much music from it as Uncle George can get from his fiddle. Take that fiddle away from 'im and I'd stand a chance with the woman we love.... It's that fiddle of Uncle George's that's opened the hearts of women to 'im." (p. 206)

Mott feels that it is George the artist rather than George the man who has defeated him at love. The fiddle that Uncle George has carried with him through the West is the one symbol of expansion and romance in the drab Tussie existence. It is his one claim to vitality and respect.

Sid thinks: "It's the way you play your fiddle, Uncle George... is the reason I love you..." (p. 128).

George is profound and sensitive compared to the coarse and unromantic Mott. Truly he wins Vittie with his fiddle. Mott's rendition of "Careless Love" is the apex of his artistic attainment. In expressing his hurt and frustration via art, he reaches his optimum of sensitivity. But George's answering performance moves all to extreme emotional expression, even Mott, who suppresses any compliment, though Sid wonders "if he didn't want to tell him that he liked the song, but he couldn't do it" (p. 203).

The shooting scene marks the beginning of fast dramatic action leading to the conclusion, and is the culmination of the Tussie versus Tussie, artist versus artist love
rivalry. If there has been any doubt about the nature of their struggle, it should be eliminated by a reading of the scene:

While Uncle Mott broke the double-barrel at the breech to see if it was loaded, Uncle George pulled his bow across his fiddle. It made a low mournful sound. . . . He played a note of death.

"That's the son of a bitch that's caused all my trouble," Uncle Mott yelled, aimed his double-barrel at the fiddle . . . and pulled the trigger . . .

The fiddle fell from Uncle George's hand and shoulder to the floor. There wasn't enough splinters left of it to start a fire. . . .

"I've blewed that son of a bitch to smithereens," Uncle Mott yelled fiercely. "It'll never steal any more women!"

Uncle George sat shakin like a tough-butted white oak leaf in the winter wind. . . . I knew that Uncle George felt like he had lost the best friend he . . . had . . . (pp. 284-6)

The fiddle is the instrument of Mott's defeat and the source of George's power. In the struggle for Vittie's favor, the fiddle has been the decisive factor. Art and the erotic are drawn together. Mott's defeat as an artist is also his defeat as a lover, as a man. George's fiddle has symbolically emasculated Mott. This is why he destroys it instead of George. George's subsequent killing of Mott is an unjustifiable and futile act of frustration. Since Mott uses his second barrel on the bow, the danger to George's life is past. Mott has "killed" the object that has unmanned him; in fact, he has killed his rival's art. The effect on George is traumatic. He has lost his fiddle, his friend, his power, his art, his manhood. Psychologically, the loss of the fiddle has castrated him. His reaction is the killing
of the man who has stripped him of his power. As Mott
damns himself with his futile destruction of George's art,
George seals his own doom with the equally vain slaying of
Mott. The loss of the fiddle marks an immediate fall in
his fortunes. Soon Kim is seen returning with Vittie, a
dramatic surprise, and George can only flee in terror into
the snowy hills, an old man cast to the elements, alone,
to be hunted like an animal by the establishment with which
he has so long been at odds.

Since we have identified an artistic conflict as being
a major part of the intra-family dialectical struggle among
the Tussies, we must look for implications of this conflict.
Also we must look for a statement on the function of art
in the novel's dialectic.

In \textit{Taps For Private Tussie}, art, as it is practiced
by Mott and George, is not a redeeming force. Rather it
is a destructive force. But this negative influence cannot
be charged to art itself. Mott and George have the gift
of entertaining people and making them happy. At the
elementary level on which the unsophisticated Tussies
appreciate their art, the men make a valuable contribution
to their culture. Thus their art is good on the pragmatic
level. Technically, both men are as competent as is
necessary; George is inspired and gifted. So on the objective
level, their art is also good. George is skilled at
imitating the world with his fiddle, and Mott can render
his banjo songs of hill life in an accurate and realistic manner. Thus both are successful at the mimetic level, and this function is also good. But the moral undertones, the motives beneath their use of art, are ethically suspect. We must pose questions about the propriety of their use of art: Should art be subordinated to the gratification of fleshly passions? Should it be a point of bitter strife among its practitioners? Should it be employed for ulterior ends, specifically for the wooing of a woman into what society might term an incestuous relationship? Should art be incorporated as a part of an attitude and life style that is self-defeating and socially decadent? The tragedy of blood to which this artistic clash, marred by all these elements, leads implies a positive "No!" in reply to these questions. Mott and George are guilty of these transgressions. They corrupt their art as they corrupt themselves. On the didactic, or moral level, their art fails, not because the art itself is flawed, but because the practitioners prostitute its uses and ends. Corrupted art is non-redemptive and leads only to death. Thus both artists are destroyed, and their art along with them.

Young Sid is the narrator and protagonist of the novel. It is through his eyes that we see the rise and fall of the Tussie fortunes. Of Sid, Lee Pennington writes: "Caught in the middle of a living-dead culture is one of Stuart's
symbolic youths--Sid Tussie Seagraves." The Pennington also sees symbolic implications in Sid's name, "Seagraves," namely that Sid is "the living rebirth, coming directly from death." Indeed he is the hope of the novel, and the story presents his struggle against the decadent Tussie thesis, a heroic and quiet effort to cast off the indigence and corruption that lead to death.

Besides serving as protagonist and commentator, Sid is also the vehicle which keeps the absent and supposedly dead Uncle Kim alive and before the reader. Sid's frequent observations and reminiscences about Kim keep the "dead" man near the action and prepare the reader for his dramatic return, even to the point of prefiguring that return. Also, he develops the character of Kim through his observations.

Sid is intelligent and sensitive, possessing a talent for quickly seeing to the core of things. He is quick to recognize the incongruities and delusions of the Tussie attitudes. Sid's reaction to the funeral sermon is an example of his acute analytical power, a gift that creates a comic tone throughout the novel. Sid's comments on the sermon are the beginning of the presentation of Kim's character:

But I wondered if Uncle Kim would be happy walkin on streets of gold in the starry skies. I remembered Uncle Kim how he used to come home drunk

5 Pennington, p. 69.
6 Ibid, p. 70.
and throw the few pieces of furniture out of the house, break the dishes and winders... and run Aunt Vittle off... I remember how Uncle Kim used to fight and hunt and drink—how he carried two big pistols with 'im and slept with 'em under his pillow at night... I remember how the Law used to threaten Uncle Kim because he wouldn't pay his debts... I didn't think that heaven with golden streets and good people would suit Uncle Kim. (p. 18)

Kim has been a proponent of the Tussie way, a way of rebellion, debauchery, and fraud. Sid sees the illogic of the funeral message when compared to the reality of the man's character. Yet Kim's deportment has had an attractiveness to Sid in spite of its roughness and in spite of the maltreatment Sid often received at Kim's hands. Sid says: "No matter what Uncle Kim did to me I liked him... And he cussed and shot his pistols around the house. He'd shoot at the crows... and he'd shoot... any kind of birds on the wing or alighted in trees. And he'd laugh when he saw one fall. That was Uncle Kim. He loved to kill..." (p. 62).

Kim has been a negative force socially and morally, yet even the memory of his raw earthy power instills the image of vitality: "He was a man you couldn't forget in life and now it was hard for me to forget him in death. I couldn't keep from thinkin' about holdin' a man like 'im in a big black box. I just wondered if a coffin could hold Uncle Kim. I wondered if the mountain could hold him forever" (p. 63). Kim's ways have been the ways of death, but his physical power had been of the sort that perpetuates life. This passage foreshadows his resurrection to come.
The striking irony of the novel is the emergence of life out of death, and this irony is pointed up early in the work when a sort of pseudo-life quickly comes from the "death" of Uncle Kim. I am referring to the luxury and plenty which this brings for the rest of the family. This is a life of plenty that is pathetically squandered, thus negating the life principle and rendering Kim's loss more meaningless. Sid's recognition of this makes him the conscience of the novel, the moral umpire and ethical critic of the family. Sid thinks: "It was the money from Uncle Kim's blood and dust. It was a bullet--just a little bullet through Uncle Kim's brain or through his heart that was a-puttin us in this mansion. I thought about Uncle Kim, I didn't want to think about him but I couldn't help it" (pp. 61-2). Of course all the Tussies are intellectually cognizant of the source of their sudden wealth; they are just not bothered by it. Kim is dead, so they will enjoy the plenty his death affords them. Even Vittie soon sheds her grief. New furniture, a big house, fine clothes, frolicksome dances, and Uncle George help her forget. But Sid, the sensitive, critical youth, remembers.

One of the most significant sections of the novel is the closing paragraphs of Chapter IX. In order to escape from the dazzling noise and activity in the Rayburn house, Sid locks himself in his room and withdraws into a reverie in which he looks at present circumstances in an honest
and objective analysis. The reverie is too long to quote in its entirety, but we will consider it in part. In reflecting on current happenings, Sid muses "what if Uncle Kim could come back to this earth a livin man! What if he could see all that was a-goin on in the big Rayburn house! What would he think?" (p. 124). Sid wonders what Kim would have wanted Aunt Vittie to do with the money. He wonders what Kim would think of her courting Uncle George and Uncle Mott. He muses upon what Kim would think of Aunt Vittie's change. But Sid is ever the realist, and in his realism he is a poignant tragic poet of common dreams:

But there was no use to have these thoughts, for I knew Uncle Kim could not come back for he was planted on the mountaintop with mountain clay and mountain rocks above him.... His dreams of Aunt Vittie and his life with her.... the touch of her lips, their nights of love together, the words she had spoken to him.... the joys, sorrows and the happenins of the little life they had known were all planted with Uncle Kim. And the shack where Uncle Kim had lived, the furniture he had used, the color of the hills in spring, and the shape of these hills, their colors in autumn and their ugly shapes in winter were planted there with Uncle Kim.... (p. 125)

Sid perceives and expresses the realistic pathos of their small lives and how their basic earthy values end in death, death that eliminates a man's loves and dreams with him. Sid can present even the life of a Tussie as having a kind of beauty. He too is an artist. We will elaborate further on Sid as an artist a little later on. His reverie continues; he thinks of how he always wanted to be a man like Kim, "a
huntin man, a rough-and-tumble fightin man . . . " (p. 126).
In looking at present affairs, Sid concludes that it is best if "dead men couldn't remember anything when they couldn't do anything about all that was a-goin on . . ." (p. 126).
He receives illumination as to why Grandpa and Grandma had not wept at Kim's funeral: "It was because they knew Aunt Vittie would get all this money . . ." (p. 127). Sid is not duped by their hypocrisy; he is the searing conscience, the moral judge, the archetypal wise babe, quickly losing his innocence. These thoughts are purgative and redemptive; they will help make Sid triumphant in his moral struggle. Yet they are weighty and depressing thoughts for a youth, and after a time he must escape his reverie by returning to the ribald reality of the Tussie world, so he emerges from his sanctum "to be refreshed by their wild screams" (p. 127).
Sid is not at this point ready for the ultimate break with life as he has been reared to know it. He has not yet arrived at the higher plane, but he is on his way.

Sid is also acutely aware of the transience of things, especially human emotions: "I had thought so much about him [Uncle Kim]--that hot day in July that we had carried him up the mountain, and how fast things had happened since he had died. I thought about how Aunt Vittie cried and how she kissed his coffin and how she danced now. . . ." (p. 152).
The rapid speed of change in circumstances is the momentum
of tragedy and ruin. The happy days at Rayburn house do not last, and the Tussies will face even greater want than ever before. After the change in fortune, Sid appears in his clearest role as moral commentator, speculating that their plight fits into the pattern of divine chastisement: "Maybe it's a sin that God has sent upon us. Maybe it's a sin to take the money that Aunt Vittie got for Uncle Kim and spend it . . . and then Uncle Kim's wife go to town and have her toenails and fingernails polished and her face worked over and her hair curled . . . and kiss Uncle Kim's brother, Uncle Mott, and kiss Uncle Kim's father's brother, Uncle George . . ." (p. 178). These observations depict a rising movement in Sid's moral awareness as the plot progresses. This rise in awareness is his great redeeming weapon in his struggle to transcend Tussie decay.

Sid is set apart from the older Tussies by his innate wit and industry. The scene on page 181 in which the men discuss burning fence palings and the old smokehouse, and Sid politely opposes them by proposing salvage of these items, only to have each of his suggestions parried by an excuse, is one of the best comic dialogues in the novel. But on a serious plane, it underlies Sid's struggle. Sid's initiative and self-reliance in recovering the dishes is an indicator of his consciousness of group and societal co-operation. Sid is actually in some danger of being seduced by the Tussie attitude. Examples of this are his
admiration for Kim's free way of life, his temporary thrill at hunting when he and Uncle Mott are drawn most closely together, and his blind justification of Uncle George on the merit of the older man's art.

Formal education is the experience which assists Sid in utilizing his innate abilities in overcoming the influence of the doomed Tussie thesis. School is an enjoyable task, and he succeeds at it admirably. This is in harmony with the author's recurrent philosophy that education is the key to a better society. Sid's entering school is a direct result of society's intervention into Tussie affairs, a helping arm used to bolster one of its own. Sid attends class at the end of Chapter XVIII, and the commencement of Chapter XIV witnesses his growing sensitivity to the natural world and his expanding power at poetic description. Let us look at the passage in which he describes the trees on Grandpa's farm:

Then I would look at the thick timber on the place that Grandpa owned that bordered my path. I thought the tall gray limbless poplar trees looked like frozen-stiff possums' tails a-standin in the frosty air; the gray, bushy hazlenut bushes looked like gray squirrels' tails ... the red sumacs with their pods of berries looked like roosters' red combs. And the dark bushy pine tops ... looked like black bushy polecats' tails. ... And I could see dogs, mules, schoolhouses, trees, and big mountains with deep gullies ... among the white clouds that rolled across the sky over these mountains. When I saw these things I'd forget the trouble at our shack. And I was larnin to read so that I could read many books. (p. 229)

Sid is developing the power to see and express natural
similes and metaphors. He is learning to see the symbol behind the object. He is becoming aware of the harmony, the "unity in variety;" to borrow an Emersonian phrase, of all natural forms. He is seeing synthesis in the world, the compliment of nature's work and man's work. The Tussies have exploited both nature and society; Sid is learning to unite productively with both. This is in direct contrast to Mott, who remorselessly sells off and drinks up Sid's poetic timber, and to the others who consent to the waste. Sid is also discovering the Wordsworthian principle of nature's healing power, and concurrently he is expanding his bookish knowledge in order to reach other realms of vicarious experience. Sid reacts strongly against the destruction of the timber, and ultimately casts off the urge to hunt, trap, and kill. By the end of Chapter XX. His battle is virtually won at this point, but his revulsion is consummated in his condemnation of Uncle George after the killing of Uncle Mott. Sid knows what is right and what is wrong, and he judges with honesty and compassion. His triumph is really Christian in tone: he reaches a moderation in which he can love the unlovely.

Sid's descriptive sketches of nature and his poignant appreciation and analysis of the viscissitudes of small lives, his ability to arrange little joys and events within an ontological frame, make him a philosopher-poet-artist. Sid's use of art is contrasted to that of Mott and George. While their art is corrupted by their subjecting it to base
ends, Sid's poetry is used to evoke love of nature's beauty and of man's beauty. This is a moral function, a legitimate function of art. Thus Sid's art is redemptive, while that of the older men is not. In Sid, art finds a place in the struggle toward hope and salvation.

Sid is the regenerated hope of the Tussie clan, a personality injected among them by a personal wrong, who not only survives, but also provides a recurrent hope. Sid is quite similar to Tarvin and Subrinea in Trees of Heaven. But the movement toward hope and salvation in Taps shares another feature in common with the earlier work: regeneration is not confined solely to the antithetical youth. Individuals belonging to the decadent thesis can also be redeemed. As Anse Bushman is converted in Trees, Kim Tussie is reborn in Taps. Kim, believed killed in the war because of government error and Mott's deceit, is supposedly buried as a rotting corpse on the mountaintop, but he appears alive at the novel's end. He has emerged, like Anse, from a type of death; he has experienced a type of resurrection. And the resurrection marks positive changes for the better. The reader has been prepared for Kim's return by many of Sid's references to him; he has always been present in the story through Kim's thoughts. And Sid's meditations on what Kim would think of the goings-on prove to be correct. Kim expresses in disgust: "Fightin over the land that was bought with some poor soldier's dead body. It's hell to think
about it..." (p. 295). This is a drastic change from the Kim Sid has described earlier, a great shift from the Tussie attitude, a condemnation of the Tussie thesis from one of its own. Kim makes the revelation concerning Sid’s parenthood, confessing his wrong in having mistreated the boy, and promising to do better. Sid says of him: "He had changed and didn't act like the same person. He had changed or I had changed. I thought that it was the war that had changed him or that it was my growin older that had changed me" (p. 297). Actually it is both. Sid's maturing gifts and Kim's exposure to the outside world as a contributor to the social effort draw the two together, enabling them to achieve synthesis with society and gain the vision of salvation and hope. Amidst death and dying, life comes. The Tussie way has meant death for Grandpa, Mott, and George. But life and love go on, and it is Sid who articulates the juxtaposition of life and death: "Uncle Mott was dead, Grandpa was dyin and Uncle Mott was lovin, all in the same room..." (p. 303). The room is a microcosom of the world, wherein all significant human actions are played, dream-like, yet ever so real, and young Sid is the poet-seer who separates dream from reality: "It seemed like a dream, but it wasn't a dream for I felt life surge through my body and I felt warmth from the big fire" (p. 303). The dream becomes the glad reality: life can emerge out of death, hope out of despair. Both youth and age can move toward
hope and salvation. For all its comic pathos and bloody
tragedy and grotesque decadence, Taps For Private Tussie
states clearly that human beings are capable of transcending
these ageless maladies.
Chapter III

*Daughter of the Legend*: Adam and the Typology of Redemption

*Daughter of the Legend*, published in 1965, is Jesse Stuart's contribution to the literature of inter-racial tolerance, a theme extremely important in the twentieth century. The setting is typical Jesse Stuart Appalachia; he has merely removed from his native Greenup County, Kentucky mountains to the hills of Tennessee. He has introduced the element of snake-handling into the hill religion of his fiction, and substituted the timber rattle-snake for the copperhead, but otherwise the world of *Daughter* is the same world as that of *Trees* and *Taps*. But there is a deeper and more profound struggle taking place in Cantwell County than ever raged in Ragweed Hollow or Greenwood, a racial issue fitted to the mountain setting, but speaking universally as the acting out of the great shame so painful to America in this century.

According to Pennington, Cantwell County is actually Hancock County, Tennessee, and the Sanctuary Mountain of the novel is really Newman's Ridge.¹ The plot is rapid-paced and can be quickly summarized.

Dave Stoneking, a native of the Virginia mountains, relates the tragic story of his loving, winning, and losing

¹Pennington, p. 115.
the beautiful Melungeon maiden, Deutsia Huntoon. Dave, as an old man, relates how as a young man he had come into the town of Oak Hill in Cantwell County. He tells how he had been accompanied by his friend, Ben Dewberry, and their partners, Mort Higgins and Hezzy Blair. They were to cut timber in the Big Woods timber tract. Ben meets and falls in love with Fern Hailston, a valley girl who is County Health Nurse, and Dave meets and falls in love with Deutsia, who lives on Sanctuary Mountain.

The friends soon become enemies as Ben, having heard about Deutsia's Melungeon ancestry, attempts to dissuade Dave from dating her. The Melungeons are a strange race of mountain-eers with many legends and theories about their origin. They may be the descendants of Raleigh's Lost Colony. They may be the progeny of Spanish or Portuguese explorers. They may be the less exotic mixture of poor whites, Indians, and Negroes, or of whites and Negroes alone. But whatever their ancestry, they are regarded as inferior by the residents of Oak Hill and the Clinch River valley. They have their own side of town near the courthouse, where they congregate on Saturdays and sell their homemade sandwiches and wines. The Melungeons are usually denied equal justice in the local courts. They are deprived of adequate educational opportunity. They are barred from patronizing Oak Hill restaurants such as the Little Tavern. The laws forbidding inter-racial marriage proscribe an outsider's marriage to a Melungeon. Such is the valley's
attitude that Don Praytor, Deutsia's friend from the mountain, tells Dave: "But we do know that we are human beings. We know we are here even if we don't know how we got here. And whatever we are and whoever we are we know we're a race hated and despised. We know it's hell to be a Melungeon."

And what is so different about the Melungeons? They practice a somewhat primitive mode of life. They hunt, trap, fish, and gather herbs for a living. They use folk medicines to treat ailments and follow signs, especially the moon, in planting. They handle snakes in their worship. They live close to nature and know it intimately. And frequently a dark child will be born into a Melungeon family, thus pointing up the most despised aspect of the legends surrounding them.

These are the things Dave Stoneking learns about his sweetheart and her people, things he observes for himself and things he hears from Ben, as Ben has heard them from Fern Hailston, who is a valley blue-blood. Ben's interference in Dave's personal affairs finally results in open conflict, almost in violence, and Dave quits the timber crew and moves to Sanctuary Mountain.

Dave and Deutsia apply for a marriage license in Oak Hill but are denied one on the authority of a law forbidding inter-racial marriages. Despite this, Deutsia's father,

Bass, arranges a lavish feast and ceremony, and the lovers are married by the Melungeon preacher, Brother Dusty Tackett. Dave is determined to battle for the rights of his wife and her people. He builds their cabin and makes furniture. His skills are greatly admired on Sanctuary Mountain, and Dave introduces many aspects of the outside world to the mountain. He is readily accepted by all the Melungeons.

Not long after their autumn wedding, Deutsia tells Dave that she is expecting a child. As winter progresses into spring, Deutsia becomes more moody and depressed. On a spring night during a fierce storm, her labor pains begin. Dave had been unable to find a doctor willing to climb the mountain, so Don Praytor fetches Fern to Deutsia's bedside. Despite her talk against the Melungeons, Fern has always been willing to come deliver their babies. Ben, now married to Fern, comes with her. He admits to Dave that he had been wrong in his attitude. Deutsia gives birth to a son, but the birth costs her her life. All present are grief-stricken by the death of the lovely young woman who had been so angel-like in life, especially her husband, who after naming their son "Huntoo" gives the lad to Deutsia's parents, packs his clothes and toolkit, and leaves for his parents' farm in Virginia, a grief-ridden man who has lost his only great love, never again to return to Sanctuary Mountain.

This is only a bare synopsis of the story, given to
familiarize the reader with the book's narrative structure, which moves chronologically from September to the following May or June, and spatially back and forth between Sanctuary Mountain and Oak Hill in the Clinch River Valley. Other incidents of plot and details of character will be looked at in connection with thematic and symbolic aspects of the novel.

A distinct dialectical conflict is observable in Daughter of the Legend. The attitude of the valley and town is the general attitude of the South toward the Negro: an attitude of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice, more prevalent prior to civil rights legislation and the liberalization of the past decade. But in Daughter, the specific nature and drama of this attitude is more localized. Rather than the classic white race versus black race issue, the Oak Hill establishment is prejudiced against a people whose origin is obscure; rather than knowing fully the victims of their oppression, the people of Oak Hill are bigoted against a legend, a mere theory, thus adding to the irrationality of their bias. Ben Dewberry betrays the untenable illogic of the Oak Hill position when Dave asks him why Fern is so prejudiced, and all Ben can say in reply is "They're not our equals ... I don't care if they are a strong, good-looking race of people" (p. 76). The town and valley, characterized by Fern and Ben, Judge Palmer, Spooly Holderby, and the rest of Oak Hill, represent the
old way, the way of prejudice and wrong, of unenlightenment and injustice. This is the corrupt thesis. Deutsia Huntoon is the spirit and the embodiment of the best of the Melungeon culture; Dave Stoneking, by birth an outsider, but whose Anglo-Saxon ancestry makes him readily admissible into the thesis culture, rejects that world for love and chooses to join with the Melungeons. Together Dave and Deutsia accent the wrong done to the Melungeons and generate a more direct confrontation. They are the antithesis, locked in a poignant struggle with the bigoted establishment that would deny them the freedom to love.

The older Melungeons, characterized by Bass and Daid Huntoon (Deutsia's parents) and Don Praytor, simply accept and quietly resent the injustice of which they are the victims. They are incapable of doing anything to change their situation, and are resigned to isolating themselves on Sanctuary Mountain among their own. They do not, however, oppose the efforts of the younger generation in moving in the direction of synthesis, as shown by their readily accepting Dave and his innovations into their culture and family. But among their number, Deutsia alone is imbued with the vital force capable of working change and making synthesis. If any older Melungeon is near such capability, it is Sylvania, who has won the respect of many valley people, even office holders, during the days of prohibition, for her excellent moonshine whiskey. Sylvania, vastly
obese, is a comic character, and her story, even the humorous details of her funeral, provide a comic relief from the serious theme of the novel and its tragic resolution. Sylvania, so fat that she cannot get out of her shack, is able to exercise great liberty, even flout the law, because she cannot be removed from the shack or hauled off the mountain. Yet she is physically a prisoner in her own home, just as her fellow Melungeons are prisoners on the mountain, and thus her predicament symbolizes the Melungeon condition. Sylvania has the dark features characteristic of many of the Melungeons. She is in reality a foil for fair-featured Deutsia, whose free spirit transcends even the bounds of the mountain culture. Sylvania's death and funeral prefigure those of Deutsia; as Sylvania is liberated from the confines of her shack-world in death, Deutsia is liberated from the fetters of prejudice in her death. Sylvania's life and death bring people of valley and mountain together for a comic, yet touching expiation of grief; on a vastly more profound level, Deutsia's life and death will draw people together on the moral plane of brotherly recognition, giving all affected the universal bond of catharsis.

There are villains in the novel, valley people who are insensitive to liberality and tolerance. Among these must be numbered Jailer Jarvis Henthorne, Circuit Judge Palmer, the clerk, and Spool Holderby. And for a time Ben
Dewberry, once Dave's friend, appears to be the consummate one of the lot. Ben, an outsider like Dave, is accepted into the valley culture, marries Fern Hailston and quickly assumes an active and malevolent role in the dialectic. He immediately turns anti-Melungeon, and when Dave insists on continuing his courtship of Deutsia, Ben forgets their friendship of a lifetime. Dave describes the scene as he is leaving the timber shack for the last time: "Ben Dewberry didn't come out of the shanty to say goodbye and wish me luck. He wasn't that kind. Our years of friendship didn't mean anything to him now ..." (p. 106).

Ben's attitude is derived from the influence of Fern Hailston. She is County Health Nurse and a member of one of the valley's aristocratic families. She is responsible for feeding Ben all his prejudicial information about Deutsia and the Melungeons. She is another foil for Deutsia as she occupies the opposite place to Deutsia as Ben's girl, a member of the younger generation, and as a part of the valley thesis. Contrasted with the striking natural beauty of Deutsia, Fern is described thus: "She was short and buxom with sparkling brown eyes that slanted downward toward the corners of her lips. She had thick brown curly hair that did not reach her shoulders, for it had been bobbed. Her hands were heavy and her fingers were short ..." (p. 7). Dave immediately senses Fern's negative attitude toward the Melungeons at his first meeting.
with her. Fern is seen very little in the novel, appearing personally only in the scene just quoted, briefly at the Melungeon revival, and again at Deutsia’s death-bed. Most of our knowledge of her comes second hand from what Ben relays of her anti-Melungeon sentiments. Her influence causes bitter polarization in the novel and is active in stimulating the dialectic.

But we see a contradiction in Fern’s character through what Ben and even the Melungeons say about her. She is the source of prejudicial talk against the Melungeons, yet she helps them; the doctors will not climb the mountain to treat the Melungeon sick or deliver their babies. But Fern, according to Ben, “knows just about every Melungeon family on that mountain. She’s caught enough of their babies ... She’s not only caught their babies but she’s doctored 'em for the last five years ... ” (p. 75). Fern talks the rhetoric of intolerance, yet in her professional capacity she is liberal and humanitarian. When she and Ben respond to Deutsia's need, Ben explains Fern's past attitude and position. He and Dave converse:

"The Melungeons love your Fern, Ben. She’s the only one who will help us up here. Look, tonight, getting up here through this storm. I just can’t understand why she hasn’t been friendly in Oak Hill. She's good at heart."

"She's outnumbered down in Oak Hill," he said. "Put yourself in her place: what would you do, Dave?" He spoke softly. "Fern’s never been against the Melungeons. If she had, do you think she would have delivered the babies and doctored the chills, fevers, bellyaches and snakebites on Sanctuary Mountain?" (p. 239)
So Fern has always been a liberal at heart, openly practicing her skill for the benefit of the Melungeons within the scope of her duties as Health Nurse, while talking the language of prejudice. According to Ben, her gossip, the very talk that first prejudiced him against Deutsia, thus leading to the bitter rift between him and Dave, had been mere lip service for the benefit of the Oak Hill establishment. Recalling the intolerant attitude displayed by Ben earlier in the novel, an attitude learned entirely from Fern, and also recalling Fern's behavior in Little Tavern when she first had heard of Dave's interest in Deutsia, it is difficult to believe that she has only been role playing in order to conform to the standards of her peers in the valley. Nevertheless, deeds are more glaring than words, and her acts have endeared her to the mountain people. She and Ben have been undergoing a period of quiet re-thinking, a moral conflict of their own. Ben says of their future intentions: "Now let me tell you something ... Fern and I have talked this over. We're going to let our hearts guide us from now on. We're a-goin to act the way we feel; we're a-goin to be as strong-willed as you have been. Maybe we'll leave the valley and build a house up here and live beside you". (pp. 239-40). Ben and Fern have reached a resolution in their conflict. They have become liberal, tolerant, humanitarian. Though members of the valley thesis, they intend to reject that
thesis and work for change, embracing the concepts of heart-guidance and personal liberty in life and love. In these resolutions is contained the certainty of their personal salvation, and the broader potential for the eventual salvation of the entire thesis. From their place of influence, perhaps they can do something to initiate a broader synthesis and understanding. And the force which has generated this newly-found moral and social courage is the resolve of Dave and Deutsia to follow their hearts despite all barriers erected by a narrow society. The moral conversion of Ben and Fern Dewberry is an important statement, namely that the evil thesis can itself change and be redeemed. Ben and Fern achieve synthesis and salvation in much the same manner as do Anse Bushman and Kim Tussie in the other works we have examined, by allowing themselves to be changed for the better through the example of the antithetical forces present in the dialectics in all three novels.

Dave Stoneking is the narrator of the story, and he is the active element that creates change, the creator of dialectic. The Oak Hill-Sanctuary Mountain clash is a fact of life in Cantwell County long before Dave comes there, but it is Dave's stubborn stand against intolerance that draws the struggle into definite conflicting polarities. There is symbolic significance in Dave's name, "David Stoneking," for it recalls both the biblical giant killer, later
to be a mighty monarch over the Isrealites, and it also implies that he will be firm and resolute in the face of trial, and that there is a royal quality in his nature. Dave is essentially the protagonist of the novel who fights for the equality of his wife's people and for his own personal liberty as well.

Before his arrival in Cantwell County and his meeting Deutsia, Dave has lived a carefree existence, ranging over wide areas of the mountain world, working as a timber cutter. Dave characterizes his previous condition after a heated conversation with his partners in the timber shanty. His friends, except Hezzy, have been trying to dissuade him from pursuing the Melungeon girl, whereupon he affirms his love for her. Then Dave relates:

Then I got up from the smoke-filled room and walked out into the yard to breathe deeply of the clean sunlit morning air. I'd heard so much about Deutsia's people that I wanted to think. I wasn't anything but a lumberjack with a strong body filled with knots of muscles and with at least an average brain, but to me my problem was as great as any problem could be to a man, for it concerned the destiny of my life and my happiness and the destiny and the happiness of the woman I loved. (p. 79)

Dave is facing a perplexing situation of paramount importance to him, a dilemma made more perplexing by his relative innocence. Indeed, he has been an Adamic figure, earthy, hard-working, simple, drifting through life, engaging no barriers nor facing any profound traumas. But upon coming to Cantwell County and becoming romantically involved with
Deutsia Huntoon, a child of an outcast race, he faces something new and sinister. He has become subtly but helplessly trapped in this new experience, and his love drives Dave deeper and deeper into the conflict, whetting his curiosity about the situation of the Melungeons.

One Saturday afternoon Dave walks onto the ridge of Sanctuary Mountain to look for Deutsia's home, and upon finding it, he gazes upon it, musing, "I thought about the mountain world that I had seen and how, like a fly snared in a spider's web, I'd been snared into this world. I'd found something I couldn't escape, something I must stand and face, something I'd never had to face before" (p. 73). Dave is a prisoner of love, but the sweetness of that love is soured by the prejudice that the world feels toward his lover. Don Praytor has already told Dave: "If you marry Deutsia you will be a Melungeon . . . You will be one of us. And you'll always regret it. You're different. You have life and freedom before you. And you'd better hold to it" (p. 71). Yet Dave will not, cannot heed this admonition. He will let his heart guide him. He must pursue his love; he must face the prejudice felt toward Deutsia's people and even share in their oppression and ostracism. It will be a painful process, but also a growing and saving process. It will mean a fall from innocence, but the redemption to follow will make him a better man.
Much of the novel chronicles Dave's growing awareness and sensitivity regarding the human condition, especially as it is in the Clinch River area. In describing the country, he observes: "The river changed its course north, east, west and south. It followed the way of least resistance, as the people that had inhabited its narrow fertile valley and the hollows and high rugged slopes had done for more than a century" (p. 4). Dave characterizes the people both of valley and mountain in this passage. The vicinity is trapped in a stasis; the valley thesis holds to its traditions and prejudices, and the mountain people who are victimized do not have the force or spirit to resist. Things are just sliding along and not changing. Fern Hailston is a prime example of this. And Dave has also followed the way of non-confrontation in his previous wanderings. But love will inspire him to change.

Dave feels the truth of what Don Praytor had told him when he and Deutsia are denied a marriage license, and then Dave personally and alone feels discrimination upon his return to Oak Hill for supplies when he is denied service at Little Tavern. Upon that same trip Dave asserts the antithetical position when he confronts Judge Palmer on the issue of equal justice for the Melungeons. If the establishment has been shocked at the dogged resistance of one of its own turned against it because of Dave's insistence on marrying Deutsia, the news of this meeting will disturb
it even more.

Dave's conflict does not involve only confronting and
flouting the valley thesis; it also involves the introduction
of more modern ways of life to the Melungeon culture itself.
Dave's skill at woodworking is admired on the mountain,
and the better methods of construction he employs on his
cabin will encourage better building practices there. The
Melungeons prove to be quite liberal-minded and flexible.
Though they hold to their folk traditions and superstitions,
planting and working according to signs, holding the natural
elements in a reverential awe, they are receptive to modern
advancements. They had eagerly accepted the educational
offerings of Miss Rose, and gradually they had softened
to Fern's medical advice. And they are quick to recognize
Dave, the agent and personification of synthesis, a child
of the outside world willing to cast his destiny with them.
The Melungeons are worthy of salvation and synthesis, and
Dave is eager to help them find it:

I would not only fight for the woman I loved and
her right to live and be respected, but I would
fight for all the Melungeons. I would fight against
the barriers that encircled us to the bitter end. I
would fight to break the barriers, for soon we would
bring a child into the world, and I wanted him to have
the freedom that I had enjoyed in my youth. (p. 214)

His struggle becomes famous, admired by all the Melungeon
race. It is the result of a bitter educational process,
the transition of a simple, carefree lumberjack into a
crusading reformer, a moral and social iconoclast who hazards
all for the sake of love. Dave, born into the readily franchised majority, totally empathizes with an oppressed people, assuming a full share of their sorrows. But in the process, the once Adamic youth loses his original innocence, becoming a fallen, yet more vital man. This is not to say that Dave had been an innocent prior to meeting Deutsia in the sense that he lacked experience, for in his previous travels he has lived a rich, earthy life. But before encountering the situation in Cantwell County, he had been unbaptized to the searing personal tragedies of life, unaware of how badly human beings often treat their fellows. This is the experience he gains in meeting Deutsia; this is the dark knowledge that routs his innocence. The result is that he becomes a man full of hatred toward the Oak Hill establishment, an emotion Deutsia attempts to discourage, for hatred is an unredemptive quality.

So Dave is Adam innocent, then Adam fallen. His moral redemption will come only after the sacrifice of Deutsia, a matter which will be treated in detail later in the study. It is Dave's tolerant, free-thinking nature that makes him receptive to salvation. His is a nature that wants only peace and freedom for himself and all others. His is also an angry, fighting spirit, yet one quick to forgive. As the crisis of Deutsia's death draws near, he asks himself:

If anything happened to her, could I ever forgive the people in Oak Hill? Yes. I'd forgiven my old friend Ben. . . . And there was Fern. I'd once hated
her. But I didn't hate her now; I'd never hate her again. . . .
I couldn't let myself hate as I'd hated. I'd hated until I could have fought any man, over my wife. Our Creator had made us all of one blood, I had to believe. I knew the blood was life itself, and without blood there would be no life. . . . Yes, God forgave! I had to forgive too. (pp. 243-4)

Dave progresses toward a Christian concept of forgiveness and brotherhood, recognizing the blood kinship of all men as fellow mortals and sufferers, as the children of one Creator. His thoughts about the blood concept are of great importance, an importance we will look into more fully in connection with the role of Deutsia herself. Dave realizes that forgiveness is a divine attribute, a quality which it is his duty to emulate. Upon realizing that Deutsia is gone, he purges himself of his sin of hatred in a gush of prostrate compassion: "God, forgive them . . . I know you're forgiving and you have already forgiven them . . . ." (p. 244). This marks Dave's elevation from the exercise of his personal option to forgive (redemptive for Dave, but ineffectual for those forgiven) to an appeal to God, the ultimate source of forgiveness. Dave's grief over the loss of Deutsia will be endless, but his moral crisis is past, and therein he is triumphant. He emerges as a broken but redeemed man.

Deutsia Huntoon is the vitalistic force in the novel, and as a daughter of the Melungeon legend, she is the title character. She shares similar traits with Subrinea in Trees of Heaven, occupying a function in the dialectic much like
that of Subrinea, but her role is much more profound and tragic. Of Deutsia, Lee Pennington writes:

To begin with, Deutsia Huntoon is by far the best example of Stuart's symbolic woman; she is, in effect, the symbol personified. She is spirit and is youth and she is the only force which can bring rebirth to a culture which is not only dying, but one which has been lost already somewhere in a legend. . . .

Deutsia shares the traits of natural beauty and fresh youth with Subrinea. The description of Deutsia is noteworthy:

Her hair was as golden as a poplar leaf ripened by early October's sun. It fell loosely down her back almost to her knees. . . . Her eyes were as blue as the petals of mountain violets. Her sun-tanned face had the smoothness and color of a rope [sic]—hickory nut stripped of its shell. She was tall and slender, straight as a sapling, with slim ankles and shapely nut-brown legs. (p. 3)

Her beauty is the beauty of nature; Dave describes her poetically, drawing all his similes from the objects of the mountain landscape. Her knowledge of the woods, her ability to find food on the mountain, her agility at walking mountain trails, her keen sight for coursing bees—these traits depict her total communion with the natural world. Combining these qualities of nature with the physical attributes of a beautiful woman in her prime, we see unmistakable earmarks of the Earth Mother. Her hair is blonde, her eyes blue, yet her skin has assumed a dark hue from its long exposure to the sun. Considering this in light of the frequent Melungeon instance of a dark child's being born, we

Pennington, p. 115.
see in Deutsia the clashing polarities of light and dark. She is radiant and vital, yet in her nature lurk mystery and melancholy, a grief for the evil her people suffer. This paradoxical combination of light and dark enables her to be two archetypal feminine types: the fair lady of virtue and the dark lady of passion. Deutsia is angelic, but she is also a lover. Other outsiders have been involved with Deutsia, but have forsaken her because of her race. When she and Dave first consummate their love while sheltered from the storm beneath a rockcliff, there is no reason to believe that either had been a virgin prior to that experience, especially if we remember the clear detail that Stuart employs in bringing out that Tarvin and Subrinea are both virginal before their love is consummated in the sheep shanty scene in *Trees*. The love of Dave and Deutsia is not a first youthful love; it is a love of slightly older youths who have experienced the joys and disappointments of love with other partners. Remarkable it is that Deutsia can be a lover fulfilled, even outside marriage, and still retain her virtue. Both conditions are natural to her, that is virtue and passion, for they are embodied by the light-dark hues of her ancestry and nature.

Deutsia has a redemptive mission, a ministry of concern and love for the sufferings of her people. We see this developing early in the novel when she takes Dave with her into the jail where Don Praytor is a prisoner. She takes
Don some of the good food and wine sold by the mountain people. Don reacts: "Deutsia, you're an angel . . . Never did a girl live that has a heart better than you have" (p. 13). Not only is this an act of kindness toward Don, but also it is an educational experience for Dave, whom she will transform into a fierce champion of her people. And though Deutsia works to ease the suffering inflicted upon her kind by the valley establishment, she works this work without hatred toward those guilty of the wrongs. Her philosophy echoes the Sermon on the Mount: "You must forgive people their prejudices. When someone smites your cheek, turn your other cheek and let them smite it" (p. 19). Deutsia lives in the imitation of Christ: she is angelic, she is kind, and she is forgiving. Her life is an example for moral education, especially to Dave, who at her feet learns the reality of injustice and suffering, and also the way of love and meekness that overcomes evil.

Deutsia is a free entity embracing the temperament and ideologies of the Christian ethic, while remaining aloof from its institutional confines. When she takes Dave to the revival meeting where her people are handling snakes as a test of their faith, she undergoes the test of the serpent, and passes it. This scene is worth examination:

Deutsia . . . with her soft hand . . . stroked the rattler's head.
"That snake acts as if it knows you," I said to her. I got up from the seat and began to back away.
"It won't bite," she said.
"They ain't no devil in this pretty girl,"
Brother Dusty [the Melungeon preacher] said. (pp. 91-2)
The snake's response indicates the benign character of
Deutsia's nature and the spirit of natural empathy within
her. She is its fellow creature of nature, the Earth Mother.
And we are reminded of the demons' knowing and respecting
the authority of Christ when He confronts them in the gospel
narratives. However, she soon tells Dave: "I don't belong
to any church" (p. 92). Her virtue is that of the Melungeon
orthodoxy, yet it is independent of it, transcending the
forms of organized faith. Her goodness is rooted more
deeply in her nature, a mythic goodness existent in itself.
Her religion is of the universe, of fusing oneself into
absolute sympathy with nature. Her religion, she tells
Dave later in the novel, "is to be out under the moon, and
stars at night, and to hear the wind blow. Religion to me
is terrapins, mating snakes, and wildflowers blooming on
the mountain" (p. 221). Hers is a faith in the beauty of
the world, a simple dogma of reverencing God by reverencing
His creation. It is a faith non-institutionalized and
unorthodox, yet redemptive.

Throughout the novel Deutsia is depicted as having
Christ-like characteristics. Her fate and mission add to
such a development. Pennington also notes this element
when he writes of her: "She is saviour in a real sense--one
who [sic] sacrifice gains her existential freedom and leaves
others more free." Pennington observes the saviour quality but does not develop it to any detail. Indeed Deutsia is a saviour, even a type of Christ—not in the narrowly defined sense of "type" in biblical interpretation, in which the type is seen as a person, event, or thing prefiguring a later ultimate development important to Christianity—but she is a literary type of saviour, a character who generates regeneration in others and in whose development exist lucid parallels and similarities to the mission and experience of Jesus. She is a "type of Christ" in the same sense that Tennyson's King Arthur is such a type, or in the sense that Cooper's Leatherstocking is a type of Adam. Consciously or unconsciously, Stuart has worked out this typology to amazing detail.

Her love of mankind and her work to alleviate human suffering, her spirit of forgiveness—these are personality parallels with those of Christ. In a sense, Dave becomes her disciple in love, learning from her the reality of prejudice and the spirit in which injustice should be met. She influences Dave to become a warrior for social right. Yet in his so becoming, as we have earlier pointed out, Dave acquires hatred for the oppressors and is morally tainted by this hatred. A truly redeemed man cannot hate. This is a sin in Dave's life that absolutely must be eliminated, and

\[ \text{Pennington, p. 118.} \]
Additionally, there is the broader societal sin of injustice perpetuated against the Melungeons by the valley thesis. There is much sin to be overcome if salvation is to be attained. It is Deutsia's role in the purgation of these sins which defines her most unmistakably as a saviour, even as a type of Christ. She is indeed a sacrifice offered within the total typology of the doctrine of substitutionary blood atonement. Let us look at the circumstances and setting in which she attains the crown of saviourhood.

Deutsia's home is on top of Sanctuary Mountain; her life is bound to the mountain inextricably. Her only intrusions into the valley are by necessity, for the valley is hostile to her. The mountain is her element. It is there her love is consummated. It is there her death and saviourhood are perfected. Early in the novel, Dave describes the mountain thus: "Sanctuary Mountain was a giant pillar of earth with a sun going down behind its rugged backbone, dragging a shirttail of red sky behind it..." (p. 15). The mountain is literally and symbolically transcendent over the valley and its concerns. Shouldering the sky, reaching even above the clouds, its top aspires to heaven. As Dave sees it in this scene, the setting sun gives it the aura of transfiguration. Sanctuary Mountain is indeed the refuge of an oppressed people. It recalls the high places of both Christian and pagan religious history and myth: Moses on Horeb, Abraham and Issac on the mount of sacrifice, Jesus
on the Mount of Olives and on the Mount of Transfiguration, the Greek gods assembled in the hall on Olympus. It is a fitting place for Deutsia's drama of inspirational life and redeeming death. A sanctuary against a cruel society for its inhabitants, it soars into the skies, becoming a type of holy place, a place of sacrifice and worship. If Deutsia recognizes any "church;" that "church is Sanctuary Mountain.

High on this mountain's top, Dave Stoneking builds a cabin for his bride. In a level, pretty spot with fertile garden land, a good spring, and plenty of timber for building, their little home arises under Dave's skilled hands. This cabin, so giftedly and lovingly built and furnished by Dave, is a shrine to their love, and when Deutsia suffers her death in it, the cabin becomes a type of altar. In constructing it, Dave is much like the Hebrew craftsmen who fashioned the ark of the covenant and the holy objects of Israel's temple.

There are more similarities in Deutsia's experience which recall the sacrifice of Christ. She undergoes a type of Passion as the child grows within her, a mood characterized by shyness, depression, and personality change. These are common side effects of pregnancy, but set within the typological and symbolic milieu of the circumstances, these signs have deep import. Dave relates that Deutsia, "as the days passed and our baby grew . . . became as somber as the mood of winter's dark trees that stood leafless and barren
in the wind" (p. 190). This is an emergence of the dark quality in her nature, a foreshadowing of her death in childbirth. Feminine vanity about the change of her shape, sadness at the confinement and loss of freedom she faces—these point to the real, typal reason for her consternation. Earlier, it has been stated that the funeral of Sylvania is prefigurative of Deutsia's, and Deutsia refuses to attend it. Despite her bold talk to ease Dave's fears, it can be said that Deutsia senses the physical danger involved in what she is facing, and that she dreads the ordeal, perhaps even fears that death will be the result. On the typological level, her mood is the fear of the ordeal of sacrifice, and it recalls the Passion of Christ in Gethsemanae as He agonized over the suffering which He faced. Deutsia is not really a willing sacrifice, but she is an appropriate one, chosen for her purity of spirit.

Huntoon's birth and Deutsia's death occur during a fierce storm at night on the mountain, a storm appropriately symbolic of the stormy condition raging in the hearts of the actors in this drama of sin and redemption. As the earlier storm from which Dave and Deutsia had hidden in the cliff had washed the earth clean, so will this storm be cleansing, for the end of this tragic night will see lives cleansed of prejudices and moving toward salvation. Dave describes the storm as being so awesome that the "heavy wind carrying great sheets of rain shook our shack.
down to its foundation..." (p. 237). This great upheaval in the natural world also re-creates the experience of Christ, for the darkened skies and the tremors as He hung on the cross are pointed up in the storm that shakes Sanctuary Mountain as Deutsia is sacrificed for the sake of life and love.

Dave describes the death-bed scene:

Fern, Ben, Bass, and Daid were gathered around her bed.
I stood at the door. I looked in. They didn't have to tell me. I knew. She was hemorrhaging. The bed was red. Deutsia was lying pale and lifeless on the bed.
... Her blood—once so highly condemned, was spilled in childbirth. (p. 243)

This scene is one of penitents gathered before the altar of atonement, gazing upon the sacrifice, an offering of blood. Dave says: "I knew the blood was life itself, and without blood there would be no life" (p. 244). Deutsia's blood is shed not only in the birth of a new physical life, but to regenerate spiritual life as well. This blood symbolism is in direct conformity to the soteriological dogma of the New Testament. For example, in Hebrews 9:22 we read: "And almost all things are by law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." In this context Deutsia is indeed a sacrifice, a saviour, a type of Christ who dies in order that those around her might be shrieved of the sins of hate and prejudice. Dave sheds his hate; Ben and Fern renounce their bigotry. This idea
of atonement is closely relatable to the Judeo-Christian redemptive process, and is absolutely essential to the movement toward hope and salvation in the novel. Dave's personal repentance is sealed when he calls upon God to forgive the sins of the valley bigots, and his utterance is really the utterance Deutsia herself would have made, the benediction of a dying redeemer upon her persecutors. Blood, important symbolically to the theme of racial equality in Daughter, assumes profounder import as the bath of salvation. Blood is indeed life; its loss means the end of Deutsia. But the spilling of her blood redeems others and renews physical life in the person of the child, Huntoon.

Pennington says that Huntoon is the real symbol of the novel, "the very essence of Stuart's symbolic youth," and "a rebirth of Dave and Deutsia, a rebirth of human beings which society's prejudices tried to kill but could not." Keeping in view the circumstance of Huntoon's birth, that he is the living product of a sacrificial and atoning death,

5 Scriptural development along these lines can be found in Hebrews 9: 12-14. Most strikingly similar to Dave's observation that "blood was life itself . . ." is Genesis 9:4, which reads: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." (Underlining mine)

6 Pennington, p. 129.

7 Ibid, p. 130.
we can see that he is a type of resurrection of Deutsia, as well as a continuation of Dave's vision and vitality, which are lost by Dave in the trauma of grief over Deutsia's death. Dave is saved in that he is purged of hate, but his dreams of an idyllic life there on Sanctuary Mountain and his plans to struggle for the rights of the Melungeons die with his wife, and all he can do is flee from his responsibilities and return to his parents' home. Let us not quarrel with Dave's motives for leaving the child with the Huntoons, nor with Pennington's contention that the child is dark. These considerations in no way refute or support Huntoon's symbolic value; he is the union of Melungeon and outside world, the personification, the birth of synthesis. Thus he is the seed of hope and salvation. However, his potential as such a force is lessened because his father does not directly participate in his rearing. Huntoon would be thirty-six years old at the time Dave narrates the story, but Dave knows nothing of him. Obviously Huntoon has been reared as a Melungeon by Melungeons, and any of his sire's qualities which he might enjoy are his only by genetic transmission, not by cognitive example. We can only speculate concerning Huntoon's success in changing things, just as we can only guess as to the later contributions of Ben and Fern. Dave lives among the Melungeons only long enough to inject

8Pennington, p. 8.
his ideas into their culture, but he leaves before the results are in. Personal salvation and continuing social contribution are not always synonymous.

The hope in *Daughter of the Legend* lies with the child Huntoon, and also with Ben and Fern Dewberry. In her death, Deutsia mounts to the plane of martyrdom and saviourhood, thus escaping the mutability of her beauty and spirit. She defeats prejudice and time by merging her soul with the spiritual and timeless. In her redemptive death she achieves synthesis with the natural universe she loves. She leads others to cast off their narrow, extreme philosophies of hatred and prejudice, inspiring them to embrace the ways of love and moderation. The novel ends optimistically with the hope that redeemed individuals will be able to redeem their society. This is essentially the same movement toward hope and salvation we have identified in *Trees of Heaven* and *Taps For Private Tussie*, but it is gained at a more costly price: the death of an angelic innocent. Within the deeply ingrained mythic and symbolic recurrence of the typology of redemption, the love versus prejudice dialectic works itself out to a synthesis and a hope of salvation.
Epilogue

From the Mountains to the World: a Preachment of Hope

J.R. LeMaster, in his introduction to Jesse Stuart's latest book, a collection of poetry, The World of Jesse Stuart, writes of the personae speaking in the poems: "The poet creates them and sustains them in order to stage not the life of a single man who happens to live in Appalachia, but rather the lives of all men. Thus, the journey of the poet . . . is the journey of Everyman." What is true of Stuart the poet is true of Stuart the novelist as well. Stuart has set his novels in the hills of Appalachia, and has presented characters who are a part of that world. But the dilemmas and dangers faced in the hills by hill people are typical of the experiences of all men, thus Stuart's mountain world becomes a microcosm of the world as a whole.

Emerging as types of humanity from the three novels we have considered are visionary youths who share in common many traits. They are young men and women who always follow their hearts. They are in love with youth and in love with life, and desire more from their lives than mere meat and bread. They are independent and industrious, willing to work and face hazards in order to make their lives better.

Their most striking shared experience is a struggle to improve conditions around them; they are menaced by thesis-establishments which present them with extreme choices, choices which limit development and point to individual and societal disaster. In resolving their respective dialectics they are able to blend the good qualities offered by all sides and discard the bad. They win a place for themselves and a concept of themselves, and move toward the promise of a better world, a promise synonymous with social and spiritual salvation. Most wonderfully of all, not only do these antithetical youth triumph personally, but also they generate and influence an upward movement toward hope and salvation for members of the theses which they oppose. In being antithetical rebels, they save themselves and they also change the "system."

These young people share much in common with the Jesse Stuart of Beyond Dark Hills, and are embodiments of the vision to which Stuart returns in The Year of My Rebirth. In giving them characterization, locality, and action, Stuart is in effect writing out or dramatizing his own optimistic philosophy, an optimism born out of struggle. He constructs dialectical situations in order to frame the struggles, situations which, in a teleological view, can be thus described:

(1) In Trees of Heaven, a thesis represented by members of the older generation, divided within itself by class hostility, resists the younger generation who desire liberality and peace. Love is the medium of synthesis as the young lovers unite their own lives
and also unite their respective classes.

(2) In *Taps For Private Tussie*, we see a decadent antithesis, represented by the Tussie family, in opposition to an establishment that regards work and self-sufficiency as mandatory virtues. The Tussies are also at strife among themselves, and this clash hastens their decay. To the visionary youth, Sid, the older Tussies are themselves a corrupt thesis, an establishment of ruin he must struggle to overcome. Synthesis for Sid is the affirmation of mountain society's ethic of work and pride, while maintaining the attitude of simplicity and tolerance learned during his years with the Tussies. Hope for the Tussie thesis itself is seen in the change in Uncle Kim.

(3) In *Daughter of the Legend*, the thesis is the Oak Hill establishment, a thesis fostering intolerance and injustice of a racial nature toward the Melungeons. Deutsia Huntoon, a Melungeon, and Dave Stoneking, a part of the world's fortunate majority, become the forces of antithesis. Synthesis for Deutsia is in death, by which she becomes the atonement for humanity's evils, and is elevated to the glory of saviourhood. For Ben and Fern Dewberry it is the arrival at a tolerant love for humankind and the courage to express it. For Dave, synthesis is an abiding conviction that people are worthy despite their racial origins, and his ability to hate evil without hating those who do it.

The optimism lies in the fact that all these conflicts end in a triumphant resolution. These novels, through their varied types of dialectic, make a single statement: Man is able to overcome the obstacles before him; he can realize his hopeful vision, and he can help redeem others while doing so. Man's endurance carries him in an upward motion, a progress from darkness into light, from poverty to self-sufficiency, from ignorance to enlightenment. The key to this motion is aspiration bolstered with effort.

In the poem "The Builder and the Dream," Stuart writes: "To build, to live, the substantial and the good, / To build,
and also their respective shares.
and live, and never to destroy . . . .² This is the essence of a man's contribution to his world, the formula for personal and race advancement. All of Stuart's hopeful heroes and heroines are builders and dreamers who enrich their mountain world. But their victories are the victories of all men, for their trials are the universal trials of love, prejudice, action, and death. These novels transcend the regionalism of their characters and settings, exhorting men everywhere to aspire and build. The lives of Tarvin and Subrinea, Anse Bushman, Sid Tussie Seagraves, Dave Stoneking and Deutsia Huntoon shine among our important literary preachments as lights of hope and salvation pulsing universeward from the walls of the dark hills.

Bibliography


Character, Conflict, and Statement

In Three Jesse Stuart Novels:
The Movement Toward Hope and Salvation

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Little critical work has been done toward the analysis and interpretation of the fiction of Jesse Stuart, who is not only the pre-eminent Kentucky novelist, but also a figure recognized internationally. In planning this thesis, it was the intention of the writer to contribute to this limited body of work. A search of the literature revealed that very little has been published in this area; Lee Pennington's The Dark Hills of Jesse Stuart, published in 1965, being the only such book length work in existence, and a short article by Hargis Westerfield, on Trees of Heaven adding a meager contribution to the published material. Stuart has not been totally ignored by scholars, but he has primarily been studied by folklorists and students of
dialect and mountain culture. Noteworthy as a work of this sort is Mary W. Clarke's *Jesse Stuart's Kentucky*, a fine work relating elements of hill life to the fiction of Stuart. Critical work has been primarily centered upon Stuart's poetry, and the doctoral dissertation of J.R. LeMaster, "Jesse Stuart: Kentucky's Chronicler Poet," is the most ambitious example of such an effort. Further proof of the open opportunity for original work in the area was found in Frank Leavell's doctoral thesis of 1966, "The Literary Career of Jesse Stuart". (DA 26, 6045), in which Dr. Leavell concludes that little critical writing on Stuart has been done, and that the field is indeed a fruitful one for such endeavor. A search of the MLA indexes far beyond this time revealed only the works previously mentioned.

The primary method of approaching the problem was to read and analyze carefully the original works of Stuart. It was decided that the study be limited to three major novels: *Trees of Heaven*, *Taps For Private Tussie*, and *Daughter of the Legend* as representative of the best of Stuart's fictional production. With no secondary sources to consider other than Pennington's book and Westerfield's article, the procedure followed was a careful reading of each novel as to the development of character and conflict and thematic statements. Additionally, two autobiographical works of Stuart's—*Beyond Dark Hills* and *The Year of My
Rebirth were examined for the purpose of identifying a philosophical mode prevalent in the novels.

It was concluded that these three novels present dialectical situations which find characters struggling to rise above narrow thesis-establishments which present limited options and restrict growth. The prognosis for the corrupt thesis in each novel is decay and death. But stimulated by the antithetical characters (always visionary young people much like the Jesse Stuart of Beyond Dark Hills), a synthesis is reached in each novel. Through synthesis, the blending of the best of all cultures, the movement toward hope and salvation is comprehended.

In Trees of Heaven, the thesis is characterized as two polarized classes, the landed middle class and the landless, indigent squatter class, each postulating an extreme, narrow, non-redemptive view. Out of each class rises an antithetical young person, and the love of these young people for each other becomes the synthesizing force in the novel. Tarvin and Subrinea espouse love, peace, and tolerance, but they will not hold altogether to either of the extremes perpetuated by their elders: they will moderate the extreme materialism of Tarvin's father, and they will also moderate the squatter life style of care-free indigence. Tarvin and Subrinea will be prosperous and industrious people, but they will not allow land and money to dominate their lives to the point that they will never take time to enjoy the pleasures of life. The end
of the novel projects their happy balance of the best of both worlds, and in the conversion of Anse Bushman, the materialist who comes to see that land and cash are not all, a hope is developed for the older generation as well.

In Taps For Private Tussie, the antithetical youth, Sid, finds himself struggling in the midst of a decadent thesis. This thesis constitutes the totally indigent, dependent attitude of the Tussie family. It is a thesis wholly corrupt and at war within itself. It will be Sid's salvation to achieve synthesis by asserting his innate industry and intelligence, while maintaining the simplicity and generosity he has learned in his years with the Tussies. Part of the intra-Tussie conflict is an artistic struggle, as seen in the rivalry between Mott and George, a struggle that concludes in ruin. Hope for the Tussie family lies with Sid, and also in the positive change seen in the "resurrected" Kim Tussie.

Daughter of the Legend presents a dialectical action on the racial prejudice theme. Davi, of the majority class, and Deutsia, one of an oppressed minority, strive to overcome prejudice and realize acceptance of their love by an intolerant thesis. They succeed in making inroads on the prejudiced thesis, thus injecting life and hope to both cultures of divided Cantwell County. Redemption is tragically accomplished through the sacrifice of Deutsia, cast in the Judeo-Christian typal mold.

Stuart's view of life as presented in these novels is
dialectical and essentially optimistic, for these novels state that corrupt theses can be overcome by youth and vision, and that more happily, the theses can even be changed.

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