
Ronda Cabot Tentarelli

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THE SOUTHERN REVIEW: AN EPISODE
IN SOUTHERN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY, 1935-1942

A Dissertation

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

in

The Department of History

by
Ronda Cabot Tentarelli
B.A., Reed College, 1974
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1976
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not have been however good it is without my colleagues' encouragement.

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Of all the people I might mention I owe the most to my grandmother, Lillian Feldman, and my husband, Vincent Michael Tentarelli. My grandmother has long dreamed of a granddaughter with a doctorate, and I am happy if only because I was somehow able to make that dream come true. As for Vincent, his sarcastic (I trust) remarks regarding the value, or lack thereof, of history, his incessant nagging at me to do my work, and his refusal to invest his entire person in my academic career, mean more to me than anything else.
PREFACE

In the spring of 1935 a new type of literary magazine appeared. Unlike the old literary quarterlies such as the Dial and the Hound and the Horn, it discussed political and economic matters. Unlike the more political magazines such as the New Republic and the New Masses, it discussed literature outside of a political context. Unlike older journals of the South such as the Sewanee Review and the Virginia Quarterly Magazine, this new journal self-consciously related poetry and politics to the twentieth-century South. This new literary magazine was the Southern Review, published by Louisiana State University from 1935 to 1942.

If for no other reason, the Southern Review is important in the history of American literary magazines. The Review merits consideration on other grounds as well. To begin with, it was a significant part of the so-called Southern Renascence, that apparently sudden and sustained literary activity that began in the late 1920s and ended sometime after World War II. The same forces that produced the Renascence in general brought forth the Southern Review in particular. Thus we can examine the Review in the same way we might examine Absalom! Absalom! or "Ode to the Confederate Dead," as a product of certain non-literary forces acting upon Southern thinkers in the first part
of the twentieth century.

In addition to being another of the literary commodities of the period, the Southern Review actively participated in the Southern Renascence. It published the fiction, poetry, and criticism of several major Southern writers. It evaluated these works in critical articles. And it introduced several new Southern authors to American readers.

The magazine also shared with the Southern Renascence a point of view. The important writers of this period found the material promises of the "New South" neither real nor desirable. Instead, these people and the editors of the Review regarded the relationships between past and present, tradition and change, individual and community as central to modern literature and society. They felt that exchanging a traditional past for modern conveniences and a higher standard of living was a bad bargain. They had sincere doubts about the advantages of industrialism and capitalism, and they resented the control that cities of the northeast had over the literary marketplace.

This distrust of the American economic and social system brings the Review out of a strictly Southern arena and places it in the midst of American intellectual history in the 1930s. Throughout the decade writers analyzed American society and found it lacking in one way or another. Most historians agree, however, that intellectuals in the 1930s generally drifted toward the left of the political spectrum, the left ranging from the more socialistic aspects of the New Deal to communism.
Although the Southern Review did not present only one opinion on the matter, and in fact published articles by socialist Norman Thomas, Marxist Frederic Schuman, and leftist Sidney Hook, its perspective lay definitely to the right of most American thought in the period. In this way the Review serves as an interesting counterpoint to the mainstream of American intellectual activity in the thirties.

In order to substantiate these claims of the Southern Review's importance, I will examine the magazine's historical context and its contents. I do not intend to present an account of the history of the Southern Review -- that has been done. Rather, I want to put the Southern Review in the context of American and Southern intellectual history in the 1930s and to analyze its contents as an expression of the specific themes and points of view of the Southern Renascence. This will include the examination of what appear to be strictly literary matters, but, as I trust will be made clear, strictly literary matters often have extra-literary implications, even for New Critics.
ABSTRACT

This is a study of the Southern Review, a cultural quarterly published at Louisiana State University from 1935 to 1942, and edited by Charles Pipkin, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren. The Review is shown to be an important part of American intellectual history in the thirties and forties, of the Southern Renascence in literature, the history of LSU, and the careers of its editors and contributors.

That the Review was more than a literary quarterly (thus the label "cultural quarterly") is evident in its contents. Besides fiction, poetry, and literary criticism, the magazine published Southern, political, and philosophical articles. As varied as these topics are, a general cultural point of view emerges from the pages of the Southern Review. This point of view can be characterized as traditional, opposed to finance-capitalism, and concerned about the fate of the arts, especially literature, in the modern world. Both the magazine's scope and its point of view are delineated in chapters on the Review's fiction, poetry, literary criticism, its articles on the South, and its political and philosophical essays.

The Southern Review's reputation rests largely on its literary pieces, and its view of literature, usually asso-
ciated with the New Criticism, is generally regarded as narrow. An examination of the Review's contents shows that the magazine's assessment of literature is anything but narrow, that it is, rather, an essential part of the quarterly's view of culture. Because of this view of culture, the Southern Review is a significant example of American and Southern intellectual history between the wars.
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CHAPTER I: LIFE IN THE SAHARA

In the spring of 1935 Louisiana State University celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. While the rest of the world suffered the contractions of the Great Depression, LSU experienced pains of another sort -- growing pains. The university established its school of music, began publication of the Journal of Southern History, founded its own press, and awarded its first doctorates all in 1935. As part of the Diamond Jubilee festivities in honor of its anniversary, and as if to announce its emergence as one of the premier Southern schools, LSU sponsored two conferences, one for educators and one for writers.

The Writers' Conference, although significant in its own right, promised more than a lively discussion of modern Southern literature. On the second day of the conference, four young men announced that they would be editing a new quarterly to be published by LSU. Charles Pipkin, dean of the Graduate School, and Robert Penn Warren, Cleanth Brooks, and Albert Erskine, all of the English department, said that the first issue of the new quarterly, titled the Southern Review, would appear in June, 1935.

The Review turned out to be more than another component of LSU's expansion. Although it was published under the
university's auspices and brought the university considerable prestige in literary circles, the Southern Review was also a manifestation of the cultural and intellectual ferment of the nation and the South in the mid-thirties. Like the novels and the poems of the period, the Review was a product of the cultural awakening that has come to be known as the Southern Renaissance.

Neither the renascence nor the Review appeared on the intellectual scene by spontaneous generation. Both, although appearing to come about accidentally and suddenly, were the results of forces long gathering in the South. By the time the first issue of the Southern Review appeared, many intellectuals, articulate critics of society and culture,¹ had

¹ As many have before me, I am relying most heavily on Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York, 1963), for my definition of an intellectual. Hofstadter says that by virtue of their willingness to examine ideas for their own sakes, intellectuals become critics of the societies in which they live. It would seem that for Hofstadter this means intellectuals are necessarily liberal in their political persuasions. I think there is such a thing as a conservative critic, one who articulates the ideas of a culture he likes for the most part, or, more generally, one who looks to the ideas of the past in his critique of the present. There are several such intellectuals that one could name as examples. In this case, I think it would be most appropriate to refer to the Nash­ville Agrarians.

I would include as intellectual certain philosophers, some academicians, journalists (such as Walter Lippman, H. L. Mencken, and Edmund Wilson), and literary figures, persons who, in one way or another, seriously analyze the societies in which they live and make their living by such analyses. Another, more old-fashioned way of referring to intellectuals is by calling them men (people) of letters.
been responding to these forces for a long time, ever since the turn of the century. Most of the critical activity took place in the Northeast, but other sections contributed as well. Chicago and San Francisco enjoyed short periods of intellectual significance in the first decade of the century, whereas the South waited until after the Scopes trial to gain an audience for its brand of criticism. And many of those who had been important in the cultural flowering of the West and Mid-West, such as Floyd Dell and Theodore Dreiser, left the provinces for the intellectual mecca of the United States, New York City.

Beginning in the Progressive period, and increasingly after the First World War, many intellectuals in the North became disillusioned with American life. By World War I industrialism, capitalism, and progress had, overnight it seemed, turned America into one big urban market place. The ideals people depended on to make sense of their lives, according to these intellectuals, were as outdated as the passing agrarian life to which the values were attached, but these ideals hung on with amazing tenacity. Rural, small-town values still held sway. In an era of corporations and widespread poverty,

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2 For general discussions of intellectual activity in America from around 1890 through the 1930s, see: Morton White, Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism (New York, 1976) which deals with the period 1880 to 1930; Henry F. May, The End of American Innocence, A Study of the First Years of Our Own Time, 1912-1917 (Chicago, 1964); Roderick Nash, The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930 (Chicago, 1970); and Richard Pells, Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years (New York, 1973).
Americans still applauded decentralization and pioneer individualism. Perhaps the most telling example of the retention of agrarian values is the growth of the Ku Klux Klan between 1915 and 1926. Besides promoting white supremacy, the second Klan resisted ideas and activities that supposedly came from the city and Europe—adultery and evolution, for example.3

Around the turn of the century, several American intellectuals began to think that Americans needed a new outlook on their society. According to Charles Peirce and William James, for example, timeless absolutes do not exist. Peirce and James thought that values change with time and people have to adapt their ideas to situations as they arise. Institutions, societies, and cultures evolve; like biological species they change and must adapt to their environments. Law can no longer rely on precedents and principles handed down from the Romans or eighteenth-century Englishmen, because what was appropriate in the sixth and eighteenth centuries did not necessarily apply to nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. Educational goals in the 1900s should differ from those of the 1870s too, the intellectuals said. They pointed out that seventy-five per cent of the nation's chil-

3 George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945 (Baton Rouge, 1967), Chapter VI. Tindall discusses this phenomenon primarily in reference to the South in the twenties, but he gives some attention to national responses. His discussion of the second Klan and the Scopes trial describes the defensiveness and fear felt by many people in this period of change. See also Nash, The Nervous Generation.
dren no longer lived in rural areas or in semi-isolation, that Greek and Latin no longer applied to all the professions an educated person might enter. For many people in the first years of the twentieth century, generally identified as Progressives, society's problems were caused by lack of adjustment to new circumstances and could be solved by making the proper changes.4

Progressives had great confidence in their ability to make the necessary adjustments and to do so in accord with moral values to which they were still, their pragmatism notwithstanding, attached. While many people followed the lead of William James in the attestation that there were no moral absolutes, this did not mean that Progressives were amoral. In fact, quite the opposite was true. The ills of American society were, first and foremost, matters of moral concern. Those who would deprive the average American of equal opportunity in the marketplace, those who would control the political machinery for their own ends, and those who would use submarine warfare, could not not excuse themselves by claiming that economics, politics, or war were amoral. All human activity took place within a moral framework and had to be judged by standards of goodness and fairness.5

By means of legislation, education, community programs,

4 This is the main thesis of White, Social Thought in America. See also May, The End of American Innocence, especially Chapter 2, Part Two and Chapter 1, Part Three.
5 Ibid., Part One, Chapter 2.
and self-improvement, Progressives held, problems could be solved and society made better. Progressives meant to take an active part in the evolution of civilization toward per­fectibility. Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Dewey, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson all believed that American was capable of perfection and that she could point the way for other nations. But the necessary moral adjustments were not to be effected simply by a return to the older ways; rather, new programs -- New Nationalism, New Freedom, New Education, New History -- would enable America to move purposefully into the future.6

But in regard to culture, by which they meant the arts, Progressives were rather old-fashioned. When the "custodians of culture" looked to America's cultural past for touchstones, they found Longfellow, Whittier, and Lowell instead of Hawthorne, Melville, and Twain. When they viewed the contem­porary literary scene, they admired Winston Churchill (the novelist) and Booth Tarkington. The naturalism of Norris and Dreiser shocked and outraged most Progressives, as did the paintings of the Ash Can school and the famous Armory Show of 1913. Social realism held no socially redeeming qualities as far as many Progressives were concerned. The arts were supposed to uplift, not degrade, to lead people to improve themselves and help out their neighbors.7

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., Part One, Chapters 4 and 6.
The First World War knocked the props out from under a lot of Progressives. Western civilization now appeared to have more wrong with it than a few feats of social engineering could handle. America's moral fervor had been spent by the war and the chores of peacemaking, and the new prosperity of the 1920s blinded the general populace to the fundamental problems of the economy. Writers such as Randolph Bourne, Floyd Dell, and Ezra Pound had voiced their concerns for the state of Western civilization before the war; now they were joined by many others. Some critics, such as George Soule, Stuart Chase, and John Dewey, continued to operate in the Progressive mode and proposed a planned society. Others felt that such planning dealt with the symptoms and not the illness, which was an inappropriate value system.

Among those who believed that America needed to alter its value system was H. L. Mencken. Mencken made a career out of verbally flailing the American "booboisie" and applauded such satirists of American "puritanism" as Sinclair Lewis and James Branch Cabell. Mencken had little patience with the genteel tradition or mass societies; instead he hoped for a vital new aristocracy composed of powerful individuals such as those described by Frederich Neitzsche. Mencken believed that critics and artists need to be freed from the constraints that would keep them from telling society what they thought of it. In fact, for Mencken, artists were critics by definition, and, as such, were a society's most
important citizens.®

Others who were disillusioned with America and its way of life were those who left the country (at least temporarily) in the twenties, young men such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, E. E. Cummings, and Malcolm Cowley. These persons felt that the America of the 1920s had nothing to offer them and was too caught up in the search for fast money to be seriously concerned with the arts. Malcolm Cowley has described the eagerness of the young writers and artists in France to try anything because it was new, to do anything that expressed their own personalities and experiences. According to Cowley, though, the members of the Lost Generation were not tossing aside all standards, but looking for values that would show them how to live and create.9

The young expatriates emulated creative artists whom they admired as heroes and saw them as providing a link between the pre-war rebellion of the Young Intellectuals and the post-war disillusionment of the Lost Generation. Chief among the heroes was T. S. Eliot, who, in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917), "Gerontion" (1920), and The Waste

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8 Among the biographies of Mencken are William Manchester, Disturber of the Peace: The Life of H. L. Mencken (New York, 1951), and Charles Angoff, H. L. Mencken (New York, 1956). A more specific study of Mencken's relationship with the American South is Fred C. Hobson, Jr., Serpent in Eden: H. L. Mencken and the South (Baton Rouge, 1974). Of course, Mencken can be read in the Smart Set, the American Mercury, and the six series of his Prejudices.

Land (1922), expressed despair for Western civilization and modern man in a new poetic form. Both the form and content (if these two are distinguishable) of The Waste Land influenced a generation of English and American poets. The apparently disconnected episodes and sections, the obscure allusions to personal experience and reading, the description of Western society as a desert in need of rebirth, appeared in poems and stories throughout the twenties, thirties, and forties.¹⁰

By the 1930s the idea that what the United States needed was not only a change of values but a changed society permeated American thought. And the distaste for things as they were was not limited to the Left. Marxists Michael Gold and Granville Hicks, fellow-traveler Edmund Wilson, New Humanists Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, and Nashville Agrarians John Crowe Ransom and Donald Davidson all articulated a desire to repudiate the status quo.¹¹ If they had been hesitant

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¹¹ Michael Gold was one of the editors of the New Masses in the 1930s and Granville Hicks was its literary editor. Hicks's major work is The Great Tradition (New York, 1933 and 1935). For Edmund Wilson, see The American Jitters (New York, 1932). Paul Elmer More edited the Nation before World War I and he and Babbitt contributed frequently to it and the Atlantic.
before, many writers were convinced by the onslaught of the Great Depression that the mores of the market place could not deal with contemporary economic and social problems. Men had to learn to feel responsibility for their communities, to subordinate personal needs to the needs of the group. This meant a reorganization of American politics and economics as well as American society, and this would require a change in the way America looked at life and civilization.\textsuperscript{12}

Conflict arose in the 1930s as to which should happen first, the reorganization of the American polity, economy, and society, or the change in the American outlook. Holdovers from the Progressive era and several Marxists maintained that the structure had to be altered before the outlook could be altered. Americans would be unlikely to act in a collective, non-capitalistic fashion unless that action were somehow dictated by overt political and economic exigencies. Michael


Gold, Sidney Hook, John Dewey, and others said that American patterns of thought would not change until they were forced to by changes in the social structure.\(^{13}\)

The young Edmund Wilson, among others, disagreed. He felt that it would be impossible to rearrange the political, economic, and social structures before people's minds were changed. The collectivization of property, services, and goods could not be effected until people's minds would assent to that collectivization. Such a rearrangement was to come about through education and literature, both of which would convince people of the futility of the old ways and the desirability of the new.\(^{14}\)

The struggle in the 1930s over which came first, politics or culture, was very much the result of differing ideas about the function of intellectuals. Progressives and inheritors of the Progressive tradition, many of whom had joined the Communist party, persons like Dewey, Soule, and Chase, very strongly believed that intellectuals should be directly in-

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\(^{13}\) Pells, Radical Visions and American Dreams, pp. 21-32 and Chapter II; Lawson, The Failure of Independent Liberalism, especially the chapter on the pragmatic rationalists; and Aaron, Writers on the Left.

\(^{14}\) Wilson is a central figure in this period, not only in importance, but also in the fact that his criticism lies somewhere between the Marxists and the formalists. Wilson's The Triple Thinkers: Twelve Essays on Literary Subjects (New York, 1948) is the book most to the point in this matter. On Wilson, see Sherman Paul, Edmund Wilson: A Study of Literary Vocation in Our Time (Urbana, Ill., 1965). Also see Pells, Radical Visions, p. 23 and Chapter III.
olved in the reshaping of American society. Intellectuals would be the highly trained experts and advisors. Their education and their disciplined minds would enable them to perceive the problems that needed to be solved and to develop the programs that would solve the problems. Presidents, governors, and all other political leaders would look to the intellectuals to find out what the people needed and wanted.\textsuperscript{15} To the extent that Franklin D. Roosevelt's Brain Trust consisted of intellectuals, these writers were correct.

Other intellectuals were more realistic about their role in society. Not since Woodrow Wilson had a so-called intellectual been in any position of leadership, and Wilson's advisors had been other politicians, not university-trained experts. Skeptical of the intellectuals' ability to gain political power or to make their influence felt in political circles, writers like Edmund Wilson, Lewis Mumford, and Allen Tate concluded that their business was to disseminate new values through their writing -- fiction, poetry, drama, literary and social criticism, as opposed to political and economic tracts. Through their works people would come to know what changes were required and what their responsibilities were.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., Chapter I and Sections I and 2 of Chapter II; Lawson, \textit{The Failure of Independent Liberalism}, chapters on pragmatic rationalists.
\item Pells, \textit{Radical Visions}, p. 23 and Chapter IV; Lawson, \textit{The Failure of Independent Liberalism}, chapters on liberal traditionalists; and Allen Tate, \textit{Essays of Four Decades} (Chicago, 1968).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
But the dichotomy of politics and culture in the role of intellectuals was hardly this simple. The role of art itself aroused much debate within literary and artistic circles. On one side were the champions of proletarian literature and social commentary. Good art was that art which applauded class consciousness and the rising of the laboring classes against those who would keep them down. Only art which conveyed messages of collectivization and proletarian revolution could be considered good art.¹⁷ Although not a strictly proletarian novel, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* is an example of a work which depicts the struggle of the lower classes, in this case migrant farmers, and the book became well known as a book with a social conscience.

Literary critics agreed that *The Grapes of Wrath* was an excellent novel, but they disagreed as to why. For every Michael Gold maintaining that content was the determining factor, there was a Kenneth Burke saying it was form. The formalists asserted that a good message did not guarantee good literature. For them much of the proletarian literature failed because the author did not know how to convey his message -- his technique, his symbolism, his structure, made it hard to figure out what he said, or

¹⁷ Pells, *Radical Visions*, Chapter IV, especially Sections 3-5; Aaron, *Writers on the Left*. 
failed to make his message compelling. And the artist had to be a craftsman, not a propagandist.18

All these debates over the state of society, the function of the intellectual, and the role of art had their Southern manifestations. Before 1930, such discussions did not get as much attention as similar activities in the North did. Earlier authors such as George Washington Cable, Ellen Glasgow, and James Branch Cabell, had written various versions of what was wrong with the South. Groups of young writers in Chapel Hill, New Orleans, and Nashville had also criticized the South of the 1920s from various vantage points. Cable's fiction challenged the South's racial views; Glasgow's brought attention to yeoman farmers and sharecroppers; and Cabell's satirized the Southern gentry.19 The young writers in Chapel Hill, Paul Green, Julia Peterkin, and Gerald Johnson, for example, followed the leads of H. L. Mencken and Howard Odum in their chastisement of the South for not having as many museums and symphonies as the Northeast. In New Orleans, the persons involved with the Double

18 John Crowe Ransom, The New Criticism (Norfolk, Conn., 1941); Pells, Radical Visions, p. 34 and Chapter IV, Secton 4.

Dealer, including William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and Sherwood Anderson, concerned themselves more with literary matters, but also showed their displeasure with the South as it was. The Fugitive poets in Nashville, Ransom, Tate, Davidson, and others, concentrated solely on poetry, but in doing so, harshly criticized the "moonlight and magnolia" school of Southern literature. 20

These discussions appeared to become more common and more important in the 1930s. Agrarians argued with Regionalists, New Critics with historicists; but the members of these groups tended to have one thing in common -- an awareness of and an attachment to their Southerness. Southerners of the 1930s were perhaps more self-conscious than Southerners had been since Reconstruction. Right around 1930, only a few years after Mencken had described the region as a Sahara of the Bozart (read Beaux Arts), there was an outpouring of novels, poetry, histories, monographs, and articles on the South by Southerners such as the country had never seen. In the midst of the national intellectual ferment that has been called an American renascence, Southerners has a renascence of their own.

Some people gave Mencken credit for having started the Southern Renascence single-handedly -- out of pride, Southern

20 Hobson, Serpent in Eden; Louise Cowan, The Fugitive Group: A Literary History (Baton Rouge, 1959); and Tindall, Emergence of the New South, Chapter XIX.
writers responded to his jibes. But the South was subject to things besides the caustic wit of H. L. Mencken. The same economic, political, and social forces affecting the rest of the nation in the twentieth century affected the South. But these forces had regional variations. The Southern Renascence was not the result of the peculiar ability of educated Southerners to write excellent literature and history, as Donald Davidson would have one believe. To be sure, it cannot be mere coincidence that Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, and all the others appeared at the same time. Yet all these writers had experienced and were responding to the same things as intellectuals outside the South had: World War I, industrialization, and the Roaring Twenties. These events raised some of the same questions for Southerners as they had for those from other sections, and Southerners, like other Americans, came up with several answers. But the answers Southerners arrived at had Southern variations, as did the events themselves. Therefore a brief examination of those events as they affected the South should precede an analysis of the elements of Southern thought in the thirties.

Compared to the rest of the nation, the South felt the impact of industrialization late. Oil was not discovered in great quantities until after the turn of the century, and it became truly significant in the American economy only with the

21 Hobson very nearly says just this in *Serpent in Eden*. 
advent of the automobile and assembly-line production. The tobacco industry in the South came into its own after World War I as a result of wartime popularity and a massive advertising campaign in the twenties. The textile industry experienced its biggest boom during World War I.\textsuperscript{22} The North had grown up with the railroads, textiles, and mines in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For the South, full-scale industrialization was a twentieth-century phenomenon.\textsuperscript{23}

Urbanization, mechanization, and fragmentation were also twentieth-century phenomena for the South. People left the farm and the country for "new" cities like Miami, Atlanta, and Houston in large numbers after the First World War. A large segment of the black population deserted the countryside for the metropolises of the North and the South. Many World War I veterans found the rural South incredibly stifling after having seen London and Paris. As a result of agricultural education in the twenties and thirties, the hydroelectric power provided by the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the spread of the internal combustion engine, crops were planted, hoed, and harvested by machines. A neighbor could

\textsuperscript{22} Tindall, Emergence of the New South, Chapter III. The oil industry is discussed on pp. 89-94, tobacco, pp. 78-80, and textiles, pp. 75-78. Tindall also mentions utilities, lumber, chemicals, and Coca-Cola. In addition, he discusses the effects of industrialization on life in the South.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 70.
be reached by telephone. A family could get to church in its truck. This is not to say that every farmer had electricity and a tractor, but more farms than ever before were mechanized, and the small town or single farm was not as isolated as it had been before. The shift in population and labor-saving devices led to a disintegration of extended families. Children had gone to live in the city and had their own families there. Cousins were scattered all over the state rather than being all in one county. The South in the twenties and thirties was beginning to look like the rest of the country.24

The South's experience was beginning to look like the rest of the nation's, too. Southern boys had gone to fight the Spaniards in 1898 and they went to fight the Germans in 1917. Both the Spanish-American War and World War I had been nationalizing experiences for the South, but the administration of Woodrow Wilson and World War I really signalled the re-entry of the South into the Union.25 Wilson was the first Southern-born president since Andrew Johnson, and he took several Southerners to Washington with him. Southerners served as Cabinet members, Congressional leaders, and important advisors. World War I threw people from all sections together on a large scale. Westerners and Northerners trained

24 Ibid., Chapters I, II, XI, and XII.
25 Ibid., Chapters I and II.
at army and navy bases in the South. Tennesseans served with Iowans and Pennsylvanians in Europe. South Carolinians and New Yorkers wore similar uniforms, ate similar rations, fought the same enemy.

If the war had a nationalizing, homogenizing effect, it also made perceptive observers increasingly aware of sectional differences. The South was more rural and more agricultural that the Northeast and the Old Northwest. Most Southern novelists who began to write in the late twenties and early thirties had been born and raised in small towns. Asheville, North Carolina; Oxford, Mississippi; and Guthrie, Kentucky, were not bustling metropolises in the 1890s and the first decade of the 1900s, when most of the writers of the Southern Renascence were born. These communities were just beginning to change from small, self-contained, agricultural towns in which everyone had a sense of his place and knew everyone else, into urban and suburban centers that tended to be disordered.

Literary historian Louis D. Rubin says that Southern writers themselves are symbols of the disintegration of the small community in the early twentieth century.26 Men who had been raised on stories of the Civil War and Reconstruction left the South in the early twenties. William Faulkner, John Crowe Ransom, and Donald Davidson went to Europe during

the First World War. Robert Penn Warren, Cleanth Brooks, John Gould Fletcher, and Allen Tate went to school or worked in the North and in Europe. But their experiences of expatriation were different from those of Fitzgerald, Hemingway, or Cowley. The Southerners became aware of the differences between their section and the rest of the country. Men as disparate as Thomas Wolfe and Donald Davidson discovered their country, their region, when they were away from it.

When they returned, they found a different South. This two-edged detachment from the South gave rise to the Southern literature of the thirties. It can be called two-edged because these individuals were now somewhat deracinated, having left the South for a time, and because the South they came back to was not the South they had left. The changes in the South and in themselves led Southern writers to create their own Souths in their work. Allen Tate has said that the reasons for the Southern Renascence were the changes in Southern society and the change in Southern expression from the rhetorical mode (as in politics, with one listening silently

at the other end) to the dialectical mode which involves the
give and take between two minds. Along this line, he quotes
a famous statement of Yeats: "Out of the quarrel with others,
we make rhetoric; out of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry."29

The struggle between the old and new orders in the South
and in the minds of Southerners is exemplified by two specific
occurrences: the Scopes trial and the exchange between the
Chapel Hill Regionalists and the Nashville Agrarians. Both
had important effects on Southern literature: the "monkey"
trial in Dayton, Tennessee, helped to turn the Fugitive poets
of Vanderbilt in the 1920s into the Nashville Agrarians of the
1930s and thus brought together a groups of thinkers and ideas
that would have profound effects on literature; and the Agrar-
ian-Regionalist debate of the thirties clearly distinguished
opposing views of the South and made more people aware of what
was happening in the South.

The Scopes trial in 1925 exposed the South at its benighted
worst and brought forth some of Mencken's cleverest invective.
The conflict between embattled traditionalism, in the form of
the defense of fundamentalism, and smug modernism, in the form

29 Allen Tate, "A Southern Mode of the Imagination," in Essays
of Four Decades, pp. 591-92. See also Richard Gray, The Literature of Memory: Modern Writers of the American South (Balti-
Davidson says, "I prefer to describe the South of the past three decades [1920-1950] as, on the whole, a traditional so-
ciety which had arrived at a moment of self-consciousness fa-
vorable to the production of great literary works. . . ."
of support for evolution, resulted in visitors pouring in from other sections of the country, mostly the Northeast, to examine this backward land and to explain all of its maladies to the folks back home. For the most part, South-watchers laughed and Mencken was the court-jester. It is hard to decide which is more ludicrous -- Mencken's description of the South as "the bung-hole of the United States, a cesspool of Baptists, a miasma of Methodism, snake-charmers, phoney real-estate operators, and syphilitic evangelists," or defensive Southern editors' description of Mencken as "This brachycephalous Caliban! The Black Knight of Slander! An intellectual Houyhnhnm!"³⁰

The trial and the resulting publicity aroused a more thoughtful defense from the Fugitive poets who were on their way to becoming Nashville Agrarians. Donald Davidson wrote in the 1950s that "for John Ransom and myself, surely, the Dayton episode dramatized, more ominously than any other event easily could, how difficult it was to be a Southerner in the twentieth century, and how much more difficult to be a Southerner and also a writer."³¹ More than one literary

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historian has suggested that the Scopes trial led the rebellious young Fugitives to a new concern for their region and directly contributed to their transformation from poets without a cause other than poetry into Nashville Agrarians, poets on an extra-literary crusade. 32

By the 1930s, sensitive Southerners were ready to do battle with self-satisfied Northerners and imitative Southerners. Donald Davidson, in a 1938 book devoted entirely to a defense of the South and an attack on the North (a theme to which he devoted most of the rest of his career), described the view of the South in the Northeast:

The legend of the barbarism of the South . . . for a good many years . . . governed the approach to the metropolitan East to the phenomena of life in the so-called hinterland. . . . The South -- so the tale runs -- is a region full of little else but lynchings, shooting, chain gangs, poor whites, Ku Kluxers, hookworm, pellagra, and a few decayed patricians whose chief intent is to deprive the uncontaminated spiritual-singing Negro of his life and liberty. But what is more shocking, it is inhabited by believers in God, who pass anti-evolution laws; and more shocking still, it is in thought and deed studiously backward and anti-progressive. . . . Over such pictures the East stormed, or shed crocodile tears, in the clever nineteen-twenties. 33


33 Quoted in Tindall, Emergence of the New South, pp. 215-16.
Davidson's *The Attack on Leviathan*, John Crowe Ransom's *God Without Thunder*, and the Twelve Southerners' *I'll Take My Stand* demonstrated that there were several articulate Southerners who were willing to defend Southern traditions and who refused to put up with the patronizing attitudes from other quarters.

Of these responses, *I'll Take My Stand* is easily and justly the most famous. The Twelve Southerners, mostly literary men associated with Vanderbilt, but including an historian, an economist, a psychologist, and a journalist, roundly criticized the Industrial way of life and enthusiastically applauded the Agrarian way of life. The Industrial mode, according to these men, was embodied by the Northeast and characterized by such attributes as personal and social fragmentation, ill-considered pragmatism, unthinking respect for science, materialism, consumerism, disrespect for tradition, and rootlessness, among other failings. Conversely, the South, especially the antebellum South, typified the Agrarian mode and represented such things as personal and social wholeness, regard for things other than material goods, respect for tradition and religion, distrust of science, settledness in a particular community, and so forth.

The appearance of *I'll Take My Stand* is one of the most significant events in the Southern Renascence. It expressed
the extra-literary concerns of several of the region's most important men of letters and showed that not everyone enjoyed life in the industrial era. Most importantly for the intellectual history of the region, the twelve essayists used themes and images in their socio-political tract that would become part of the fiction and poetry of the period. Their interest in the past, in tradition, in the relationship between the individual and the community, and their critique of liberalism all became consequential parts of twentieth-century Southern literature.\(^{35}\)

Reactions to the Scopes trial and pictures of the benighted South were not limited to the Agrarians and their compatriots. While the poets in Nashville castigated the rest of the country for its way of life, sociologists in Chapel Hill asserted that the South's problem was that it had not caught up with the nation. The South lagged behind in education, industry, material and social well-being, to the point of being by 1937 the nation's "number one economic problem," as President Franklin D. Roosevelt expressed it. The way to put an end to the region's backwardness was for

\(^{34}\) Many historians and critics have dealt with I'll Take My Stand and its importance at great length, but the best works on the subject by far are Rock, "The Making and Meaning of I'll Take My Stand," and Rubin, The Wary Fugitives.

it to become like the rest of the country through social and economic engineering. Howard Odum, Rupert Vance, and other scholars at Chapel Hill thought that the South should strive to follow the national pattern in such matters. Sounding similar to the New Southerners of the postbellum period, the Chapel Hill Regionalists suggested that the South invite Northern capital and industry into the area to build up the economy and finance the social changes they proposed.  

The Regionalists, however, did not have the distaste for the South that men such as Grady and Watterson had expressed. Instead of hoping to remake the South in the exact image of the North, Odum and his colleagues wanted the region to keep its distinctive character and to enter the twentieth century as a unique part of a heterogeneous America, not as an exact duplicate of the predominant Northeast. The South definitely needed to offer its inhabitants a better life than was then available, but it did not need to surrender all those things that set it apart from other regions. While the Regionalists did not propose that the South hold on to its racial practices or its class structure, they did hope that the region would maintain its less harmful traditions.

Even so, the Agrarians and Regionalists were poles apart. Throughout the thirties they engaged in debates before live

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36 Tindall, Emergence of the New South, Chapter XVII, and Karanikas, Tillers of a Myth, pp. 17-18.
audiences and in print. John Crowe Ransom and Stringfellow Barr of the University of Virginia debated shortly before *I'll Take My Stand* was published. Allen Tate and Donald Davidson wrote several articles taking issue with the Regionalists. But each group spoke mostly to its own colleagues. Economically and sociologically, the South followed the lead of the Regionalists, while writers and literary critics took their cue from the Agrarians in their dissatisfaction with industrial society and their contemplation of the Southern tradition.

Both Nashville Agrarianism and Chapel Hill Regionalism were part of a national trend in regionalism. This trend began, perhaps, with the emergence of local color writers at the end of the nineteenth century. The person who gave regionalism its real impetus, however, was Frederick Jackson Turner with his claim that America owed more to its frontier than to the Northeast and Europe. The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of such writers from the provinces as Theodore Dreiser, Carl Sandburg, and Robert Frost, in addition to the Southerners under discussion. Regionalism was not limited to literature. Historians such as Charles Beard, V. L. Parrington, Carl Becker, and William E. Dodd came from the Midwest, the Far West, and the South. Others such as Turner, Walter Prescott Webb, and U. B. Phillips not only came from the hinterland, but wrote about their native
Thus out of a convergence of Southern history and national intellectual and literary trends, arose the Southern Renascence -- usually dated from the mid-twenties with the appearance of the *Fugitive*. The renascence is characterized by the traits that characterize such groups as the Nashville Agrarians, themselves part of the South's intellectual rebirth, that is, a sense of tradition and an historical consciousness. Although several authors drew gruesome pictures of Southern life, all of them wrote of characters who were struggling to come to terms with their pasts, which always meant coming to terms with the South and its way of life. Faulkner's Quentin Compson (*The Sound and the Fury*) was driven to suicide by his inability to accept his life. In contrast, Warren's Jack Burden (*All the King's Men*) came to the point where he could accept his responsibility for the deaths of his boss, his childhood friend, and his father, and understand his involvement with history.

The Southern Renascence involves more than the fiction of Faulkner, Warren, Eudora Welty, and others, although that is its most important component. It includes the poetry of the Fugitives, the more mature efforts of poets like Ransom,

Tate, Davidson, and Warren, and the work of younger poets like Randall Jarrell. Literary criticism by Tate, Ransom, Stark Young, and Cleanth Brooks not only discussed the literary merits of pieces of poetry and fiction, but examined the cultural concerns that lay behind the renascence. Personal statements such as I'll Take My Stand, God Without Thunder, and The Attack on Leviathan are also part of the renascence. The histories written by such Southerners as Frank Owsley, Avery Craven, and C. Vann Woodward are part of the renascence as well.

In the 1930s for the first time on a broad basis, the South was examining itself. In books like Absalom! Absalom!, Modern Poetry and the Tradition, and Plain Folk of the Old South, Southerners analyzed their own society, literature, and history. No longer would they allow outlanders to poke and prescribe -- non-Southerners tended to be smug and to offer simplistic solutions. Perhaps only a native, for all his subjectivity, had a feeling for the complexities of the Southern scene. In the thirties Southerners explained and defended themselves ably and, because of the crises in the minds of non-Southern intellectuals, received more of a response. If people still misunderstood Southern motives and meanings, they did so less often and they respected Southern perspectives more than before.

Literary historians generally agree that the writing
that characterized the Southern Renascence stopped shortly after World War II. Even though Faulkner, Warren, and others continued writing, historians have said that All the King's Men, published in 1946, is the swan song of the literary activity of the thirties and forties.\textsuperscript{38} The major themes and images of the period changed subtly, but enough that more recent authors such as Flannery O'Connor, William Styron, and Ralph Ellison belong to a different literary group from that of the earlier authors. The later work of the older writers changed, too. Many critics think that Faulkner had lost his tragic vision by the time he wrote The Reivers. Warren became less certain that a man could redeem himself through his understanding of himself. The protagonist of Flood, Brad Tolliver, resembles Jack Burden in many ways, but least of all in his ability to march into history and the awful responsibility of Time.

We are dealing, then, with the period from the middle 1920s to World War II. And we are dealing with a particular set of themes and approaches, revolving around the tension in a traditional society confronted with modernism. These themes and approaches along with the groups and individuals that have been mentioned were all part of the major quarterly

to come out of the region in the period, the Southern Review. The Southern Review that was published between 1935 and 1942 reflects the intellectual history of the South in the period, as do the novels and the poems of the Southern Renascence. The authors of the literature, criticism, and history of the Southern Renascence appeared and were discussed by others in the Review. Brooks and Warren, of course, Ransom, Tate, Davidson, Welty, Porter, Jarrell, Owsley, Woodward, and other Southern writers contributed to the magazine and discussed several of the issues that interested the South. In this manner, the Southern Review was a manifestation of the Southern Renascence, which itself was part of the general intellectual activity in the thirties and forties.
CHAPTER II: THE BURDEN OF THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

"I met Faulkner for the first time the other day and he spoke of you and the Southern Review."

Thomas Wolfe to Robert Penn Warren, October 14, 1935

The struggle between old and new, agriculture and industry, stability and change, was taking place in Louisiana in the 1930s. Oil was discovered in the state in 1901 and Standard Oil built its refinery at Baton Rouge in 1906. Between 1897 and 1914 Calcasieu parish produced seventy-five per cent of the nation's sulphur. The lumber industry, begun in the 1880s, reached its height after the turn of the century. In the 1920s, Louisiana-style Progressives tried to take the state government out of the hands of the Bourbons, those fiscally conservative, racist, and backward-looking men who had been running Louisiana since 1879 and who were now represented by the New Orleans Choctaw Club, also known as the "Old Regulars." Some of the poor whites, who had lost their votes as a result of the Bourbons' fear of Populism in the late 1890s, were restored to the voting rolls in 1906 and 1924. Progressives raised taxes and built roads but concerned themselves mostly with the cities and new industries. They offered little help to the farmers, the blacks, or the rural
poor.¹

It was those poor whites, their desperate economic position, the mildness of Progressive reform, and his own enormous capabilities that elected Huey Pierce Long governor in 1928. This political iconoclast furthered Louisiana's tradition of open corruption in government, but he accomplished a great deal of good for the mass of the people. Among his monuments to the state and himself were a number of roads and bridges, the tallest state capitol building in the United States, and a rejuvenated Louisiana State University.

Huey Long did not discover LSU until midway through his term as governor. According to his biographer, Long realized the university's potential when he observed that his opponents controlled the president of the university and the board of supervisors.² In 1930 the president of the university, Thomas W. Atkinson, resigned because of health problems, and the board of supervisors had to select a new president. The members of the board were appointed by the governor and each governor had a certain number of appointments. The terms of a majority of the members overlapped gubernatorial elections by two years, so a new governor could not make the desired


changes until midway in his term. In 1930 Long had the opportunity of changing the character of the university's administration.

The board practically went out of its way to challenge Long -- they nominated a political enemy of his, Colonel Campbell B. Hodges. (Although Hodges did not become president in 1930, he did take office after the scandals of 1939, and it was his decision that brought the *Southern Review* to an end.) Other events served to focus Long's attention on LSU and the board. According to T. Harry Williams, "[Long] suspected that the board of supervisors and possibly the administration were encouraging anti-Longism. He also had begun to think that the people who were running LSU were bound too much by antiquated educational traditions."\(^4\)

The man who became president, James Monroe Smith, had been recommended to Long by associates and interviewed by Long himself. Smith's qualifications were eminent enough: he had been a professor and dean at Southwestern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette, Louisiana; he had a Ph.D. in educational administration from Columbia; and he came from Long's home parish, Winn. Long had no problem in getting approval from the board; several members' terms had expired and Long filled their places with his supporters.\(^5\)

President Smith and Governor Long soon established an effective working relationship. Smith was an able administrator who matched Long for educational boldness and innovation. More importantly, Smith knew how to deal with his boss. Each time Long burst into Smith's office or called Smith into his with some new idea, Smith listened. If Long wanted to spend great sums on the band or the football team, Smith supported him knowing that Long would make additional amounts of money available to Smith to use as he saw fit. It should be made clear that Long had no real educational policy. As long as teachers and students made no anti-Long statements, Long let them make their own decisions as to what was best for a particular class or department or the whole university. As a result of this support, 1930 to 1935 was a time of astounding growth for LSU.6

One of the prime movers in LSU's academic growth was Charles W. Pipkin, professor of government and dean of the Graduate School. Pipkin, a native of Arkansas, came to LSU in 1925 after completing studies at Vanderbilt, Harvard, and at Oxford as a Rhodes scholar. Pipkin was something of a twentieth-century philosophe and resembled that other intellectual Progressive, Woodrow Wilson, in his faith in education.7 As professor of government, Pipkin established

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6 Ibid., p. 529.
himself as an intellectual and administrative leader. When LSU started its Graduate School in 1931, Pipkin, then only thirty-two, was named as dean. As dean, Pipkin took advantage of the funds at LSU's disposal. He worked to build up various departments of the university, primarily by inviting outstanding scholars to be members of the faculty.  

Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, and Albert Erskine all came to Baton Rouge on Pipkin's invitation. Brooks arrived in 1932 upon his return from Oxford where he had also been a Rhodes scholar. (Warren and John Palmer, who would take Erskine's place as business manager in 1941, had been Rhodes scholars as well.) Brooks came from middle Tennessee and had studied at Vanderbilt where he met Warren (in Warren's last year as a student there) and others who were to be Nashville Agrarians. He met Warren again at Oxford in 1929 while Warren was finishing his studies as a Rhodes scholar and Brooks was starting his. By the time Brooks left LSU, he had made a reputation as an outstanding critic. In a review of Brooks's book, *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*, John Crowe Ransom, who disagreed with Brooks on the nature of poetry, wrote, "He is, very likely, the most expert

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Simpson calls Pipkin a Jeffersonian, but, given the time period and Pipkin's other interests, it may be more accurate to refer to Pipkin as a Wilsonian.

living 'reader' or interpreter of difficult verse. A very great service performed by his book consists in the plain exposition of passages, and attribution to the authors of what, we will nearly always have to concede, must have been their 'intention.' The intellectualist poets of our time have had no champion his equal." 

While Brooks was beginning his career at LSU, Warren and Erskine were at Vanderbilt, Warren as a professor and Erskine as his student. By the spring of 1934, Vanderbilt was feeling the burden of the Depression and elected to release several of its faculty, one of whom was Warren. Warren was already known as a poet because of his experience as a Fugitive poet and a Nashville Agrarian, so it was not unusual that Pipkin visited him in the summer of 1934 with the ostensible purpose of soliciting poetry for the Southwest Review (which LSU published with Southern Methodist University from 1933 to 1935) and of inviting Warren to LSU to give an informal lecture. Warren accepted the invitation and after the lecture Pipkin asked him to become a member of LSU's English department. Warren accepted. Later in the year Warren and Pipkin arranged an assistantship for Erskine, who arrived in the winter of 1935. By the spring of 1935, then, as a result of Huey Long's largesse, all the principals

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involved with the Southern Review were at LSU.  

The beginning of the Southern Review took its editors quite by surprise. Brooks and Warren's account eighteen years later conveys the casual and unexpected nature of the event:

On a bright Sunday afternoon in late February, 1935, the President of Louisiana State University drove up to the door of Robert Penn Warren's residence on the outskirts of Baton Rouge and asked him, his wife, and a guest, Albert Erskine, to go for a drive. While the official black Cadillac crunched the gravel of the back roads, President James Monroe Smith revealed the motive of his invitation. Was it possible, he wanted to know, to have a good literary and critical quarterly at the university. Yes, was the answer he got -- yes, if you paid a fair rate for contributions, gave writers decent company between the covers, and concentrated editorial authority sufficiently for the magazine to have its own distinctive character and quality. There was one more stipulation: that quality must not be diluted or contravened by the interference of academic committees or officials. How much would it cost? Toward $10,000 a year.

Warren and Erskine spoke to Smith about this project from experience. They, along with Pipkin and Brooks, had worked with the Southwest Review when LSU had joined Southern Methodist University to support the magazine in 1933.

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Before the collaboration, the *Southwest Review* had established a policy that staunchly supported the Regionalism of Howard Odum. This was manifested by an emphasis on sociology and geography and on art that was "local, rural, and colloquial." With the merger of 1933, the editorial board was drawn from both universities and thus was larger and more heterogeneous. This resulted in a "certain amount of drift and confusion" and led to the conviction of all the members of the editorial board, including Pipkin, Brooks, and Warren, that such confusion would lead to the demise of the magazine. So the collaboration was ended.

Smith's visit was prompted by his interest in establishing LSU's own quarterly, and after hearing Warren and Erskine out, he suggested that they discuss the idea with Brooks and Pipkin and prepare a statement. If they could get the statement to him the next day, Smith would sign an authorization. This is precisely what happened. The editors planned to issue the first number in June, and at the Writers' Conference in April the editors announced that LSU would be publishing the *Southern Review*.

A few days after the conference, the *Reveille*, LSU's student newspaper, printed the prospectus of the magazine:

The magazine will include essays on social, economic, political, and literary topics, fiction, poetry, and reviews of current books. It will aim at presenting and interpreting Southern problems to a national audience and at relating national issues to the Southern scene.

Contributors will not be confined to the South but will be drawn from other sections of the country and from abroad. Since the criterion [sic] of selection will be significance and artistic excellence, the list of contributors will include young writers as well as established authors.

To define large issues, to attempt interpretation of the contemporary scene, will be the chief aim of the quarterly. Through the "Southern Review" the University hopes to make a major contribution to the life and the thought of the nation. Economic and governmental problems will be the basis for many important articles.

The essays of the magazine will be, in general, extended discussions of issues of contemporary importance, and matters of purely technical or academic interest. Each number of the quarterly will contain a large exhibit of fiction, short stories, and occasionally, short novels and sections of forthcoming novels.

With regard to poetry, the general policy of the Review will be to furnish a larger and more consistent display than do most magazines with full critical and biographical notes on authors included. A special feature will be the publication of long poems and of groups of poems of individual writers. The reviewing section will be devoted largely to extended studies of a carefully selected list of current books, with emphasis on analysis and criticism rather than on mere description.14

The prospectus of the magazine belies the Southern Review's reputation as strictly a literary quarterly and

Brooks's and Warren's reputations as critics who look at literature in a vacuum. On the most obvious level, one of the editors, Pipkin, was not a literary man, but a political scientist. The Review, however, involved more than one editor handling non-literary topics and the others dealing with the literary matters. Brooks and Warren were always interested in politics, Southern history, and Southern culture. With such friends as Donald Davidson and Allen Tate, the editors shared a concern for the general cultural scene. Brooks has said that representing the editors, especially himself, as interested only in literature is unfair, for what Southerner is not interested in history and politics?  

Brooks has gone on to say that the strictly literary reputation of the Southern Review is gratuitous, especially in light of the fact that the editors envisioned a general magazine of culture. Even in the numbers given over entirely to considerations of Thomas Hardy (Volume VI, Number 1) and William Butler Yeats (Volume VII, Number 2), more general concerns come out. The contributors to these numbers discussed Yeats's interest in Irish culture and history, and Hardy's interest in a particular traditional society that was being threatened by economic changes.

15 Interview with Cleanth Brooks, February 27, 1979.
16 Ibid.
The concern for the general culture on the part of the editors reflects the impact of the Agrarian experience. Warren had written an essay for *I'll Take My Stand* during his last year in England and had been involved in a squabble regarding the book's title.¹⁷ Brooks knew many of the individuals involved in the symposium and contributed to *Who Owns America?*, a book by Agrarians and Distributists and edited by Allen Tate and Herbert Agar.

The Agrarian experience affected others besides those personally involved in the enterprise. As mentioned in the previous chapter, *I'll Take My Stand* had a great effect on Southern literature in the thirties and forties. Brooks says that the "intellectual ripples of Agrarianism" were part of the *Southern Review* from the beginning because of the way *I'll Take My Stand* raised questions about the nature of civilization and culture.¹⁸

The Agrarians themselves were very conscious of the implication of *I'll Take My Stand*. At the Fugitives' Reunion at Vanderbilt in 1956, Donald Davidson said, "The symposium

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¹⁷ Davidson proposed the title *I'll Take My Stand*, a line from "Dixie." John Crowe Ransom said that that was fine with him. Tate and Warren, however, feared that a title that deliberately invoked feelings of Southern patriotism would be misunderstood by the reading public. They proposed that the book be called *Tracts Against Communism*. But Tate was in New York and Warren was at Oxford, and those in Nashville decided to go with *I'll Take My Stand*, partly because of publishing deadlines. Rubin, *The Wary Fugitives*, pp. 213-14.

¹⁸ Interview with Cleanth Brooks, February 27, 1979.
I'll Take My Stand can be taken just as much as a defense of poetry as it can be taken as a defense of the South . . . or of any particular politics, or economics, or anything. The general point is . . . that in the order of life that we would defend or seek to establish, these things are not to be separated if life is to be healthy at all . . ."¹⁹ Allen Tate agreed with Davidson and added, "the thing that gave the book value to me, and still gives it value . . . is what I call the reaffirmation of religious humanism, and this is very intimately connected with poetry."²⁰ Warren believed that he and his colleagues were using the agrarian past to rebuke the industrial present.²¹

Although not an Agrarian journal, despite was Alexander Karanikas and Virginia Rock say, the Southern Review shared this point of view. A student of the American literary review says that the Southern Review's importance rests precisely "in its critical attitudes toward literature and society." After indentifying the antitheses that make up these critical attitudes, such as Agrarian vs. Industrial, G. A. M. Janssens says that these antitheses gave the magazine a

²⁰ Ibid., p. 106.
²¹ Rubin, The Wary Fugitives, p. 244.
unified point of view which was reflected in its articles on its three major interests, the South, contemporary politics, and literature.\(^{22}\)

This is not to say that the *Southern Review* had a deliberate Southern program. The editors were interested in non-Southern topics and wanted the *Review* to be considered as something other than a sectional magazine. According to Brooks, a conscious Southern program was unnecessary because "we thought we were so Southern that that would take care of itself. A great deal of what happened was instinctive, not programmatic."\(^{23}\)

An examination of the contents will reflect the editors' many interests and will demonstrate that, for the most part, Pipkin, Brooks, Warren, and Erskine kept to the particulars of their editorial policy as laid out in the prospectus. The first two or three essays of each number usually dealt with political, economic, and diplomatic topics. This was Pipkin's special province until the last year of his life, when he was gravely ill (he died in 1941), and he had enough connections to ensure quality contributions. Norman Thomas, Sidney Hook, John Dewey, and Aldous Huxley


\(^{23}\) Interview with Cleanth Brooks, August 20, 1975.
discussed the New Deal, Leon Trotsky, and, as World War II approached, foreign policy and armament. No one particular viewpoint was solicited, as the list of contributors suggests, and interested and qualified readers could respond either in the correspondence section or in essays of their own. Frederick Schuman, Sidney Hook, and some of the Review's readers got into a fairly heated exchange regarding Leon Trotsky through essays and letters to the editors.

During Pipkin's illness and after his death, the Review published fewer political articles. Brooks and Warren did not intentionally attempt to squeeze out the political essays, but, in their concern for the general culture, they did have a natural bias toward literature. Even so, they very much wanted to keep the non-literary essays in the Review. Brooks believes that if the old Southern Review had continued unbroken to the present day, the editors would have insisted on keeping the political articles. They did not want a purely literary magazine.  

The fiction usually followed the economic and political essays. Much of the Review's fame was a result of the quality of its fiction. Every year several of its stories were singled out for special praise. The policy of the editors

Interview with Cleanth Brooks, February 27, 1979.

Montesi discusses this at great length. As an index of the quality of the Review's fiction, he refers to the yearly editions of Edward J. O'Brien's Best Short Stories
had a great deal to do with this. All four editors read most potential contributions and judged them according to their quality and not the reputations of their authors. Brooks and Warren recall rejecting the work of a Nobel prize winner and accepting that of a college sophomore. 26

Among the more notable then-unknowns published by the Southern Review are Eudora Welty, Peter Taylor, and Mary McCarthy. In the final analysis, the editors' taste and critical judgment were responsible for the quality of the Review's fiction. Two of Katherine Anne Porter's contributions, "Old Mortality" and "Pale Horse, Pale Rider," by themselves are evidence of that quality. Many short stories -- whose publication was not limited by considerations of period or setting of the story itself, or of the style or origins of the author -- were of such excellence as to merit the collection of the best of them in Stories from the Southern Review in 1953. Issues usually had three or four pieces of fiction; occasionally, as in the case of "Pale Horse, Pale Rider," a longer piece would be the only fiction in a particular number.

Following the fiction would be one or two more political essays and articles specifically on the South. All the

series (Boston, 1936-1943) which contained fourteen stories from the Southern Review.

editors solicited essays on Southern topics, but it appears that Brooks and Warren had more to do with this feature of the Review than Pipkin. Donald Davidson was the most frequent contributor of articles on the South. In fact, he wrote more non-literary pieces for the magazine than literary essays. Other contributors included Frank Owsley, Benjamin Kendrick, John Donald Wade, Rupert Vance, Avery Craven, and C. Vann Woodward.

In most issues, the longer critical articles were interspersed with the political and Southern articles that followed the fiction. The Review acquired regular contributors both in fiction and literary criticism, but this was especially the case with criticism. Howard Baker, Kenneth Burke, Malcolm Cowley, F. O. Mathiessen, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and M. D. Zabel all wrote several articles for the Review. What distinguished the Review's criticism besides its astuteness was its point of view. The magazine soon became a testing ground and forum for the New Criticism, which emphasized a close reading of the work itself over consideration of social message and the historical and psychological background of the work.

Poetry usually succeeded criticism and was of the same high quality as the fiction. The Review published the work of such poets as Randall Jarrell, W. H. Auden, John Peale Bishop, and, of course, Robert Penn Warren. The editors
generally published a long poem or a group of shorter poems by a single author. They believed that this arrangement conveyed a poet's work much more effectively that did restricting him to one or two pieces scattered among the poems of other writers. Occasionally, the type of material on hand necessitated printing the work of several poets instead of only one. The practice of accompanying the poetry with a critical article was discontinued after the Winter, 1937, issue for unknown reasons.

Issues normally ended with book reviews and shorter pieces of criticism. One of the innovations instituted in the Review was the omnibus review in which the quarter's fiction and poetry were discussed. In such reviews critics tried to discern trends and characteristics in a large body of literature. This effort soon proved extremely difficult, however, because of the volume of material to be covered -- reading twenty or thirty novels and commenting intelligently on all of them could never be easy. Yet, the practice was never completely abandoned; omnibus reviews did appear occasionally in later volumes.

Pipkin, Brooks, Warren, Erskine, and later John Palmer (who replaced Erskine as business manager in 1941) were never trapped by their own format. Like President Smith and the recently elected Senator Long, they were willing to try different things. In the second volume, the Southern Review had a poetry contest which Randall Jarrell won. In the
last two volumes, the editors published two special issues and two symposia. The special issues were particularly successful -- bookstores made the issues available, and the circulation of the magazine increased in both instances.

The special issues and symposia will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, but it seems appropriate to mention them here. The Thomas Hardy Centennial issue appeared in June, 1940, as Number 1 of Volume VI. The entire number was given to the analysis of Hardy's novels and poetry, mostly his poetry. The more noteworthy contributors were W. H. Auden, Jacques Barzun, Donald Davidson, Katherine Anne Porter, John Crowe Ransom, and Allen Tate. The Hardy issue was enough of a success that the editors devoted a number to William Butler Yeats the following year. In addition to discussing Yeats's poetry, critics from America and England commented upon the implication of Yeats's construction of his own mythology and his own world.27

Successful as the special issues were, the symposia are

27 Yeats is a cultural and literary hero for the editors. Besides being one of the major poets of the twentieth century, Yeats is an example of a man who kept his roots in a particular and traditional culture (Ireland) and yet did not give up an awareness of international literary trends and modes of thought. Hardy exemplified the same thing, but to a lesser extent. The editors hoped to maintain this balance between provincialism and internationalism in the Review and in their work as critics, poets, and novelists. Interview with Cleanth Brooks, August 20, 1975.
much more provocative for what they suggest about the points of view and the future work of the editors. The Southern Review and the year-old Kenyon Review joined together for the first symposium in the fall of 1940. Its title was "Literature and the Professors." Ten writers, five in each magazine, concluded that contemporary colleges taught history, sociology, and psychology in English courses, not literature. In other words, the symposium supported the New Criticism in its emphasis on the work itself rather than on its background or its effect on the reader, and the symposium pointed to the work Brooks and Warren would do regarding English in the university. The second symposium discussed another topic dear to the hearts of the editors, American culture. Appearing in the spring of 1941, the issue responded to the meeting of the American Philosophical Society of that year. The session of the Society had purported to deal with culture, but the contributors to the symposium held that the real subject had been politics; clearly, American culture was in more trouble than the American Philosophical Society seemed to think.

The symposia, the special issues, and the quality of the conventional numbers brought much praise to the Southern Review. Baton Rouge was called the center of literary criticism, and more than one person said that the Review was the best literary quarterly ever published in the United States.
Even it cover and print received compliments. Nevertheless, in the winter of 1942 the editors announced:

... that the magazine faces suspension of publication with the spring issue of 1942 unless arrangements not now foreseen can be made before that date. The editors wish to express their appreciation to the Louisiana State University and the officers of its administration for the generous support accorded to The Southern Review during the past seven years, not only in financial matters but in an understanding of the ends to which the Review has attempted to dedicate itself. The editors are confident that the magazine's contributors and readers will share with them this feeling of gratitude, but they are also confident that the contributors and readers will agree with the administration and with the editors that the pursuit of these ends, in times such as these, be curtailed.

Indeed, the Second World War did cut short the life of the Review, but local politics were involved to an important extent. In 1939 a New Orleans newspaper discovered that LSU was doing work for private individuals. This discovery led to uncovering of President Smith's use of university funds for personal gain and of Governor Richard Leche's knowledge of these activities. Other state and university officials were involved as well. Leche resigned as governor and Smith

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29 SoR, Vol. VII, No. 3 (Winter, 1942), n.p. The sarcasm of this notice should be evident.
attempted to escape to Canada. Both men came under state and federal investigation. Smith and several state and university officials were tried and convicted on both state and federal charges, and in October, 1939, Smith began serving his term at the Louisiana state penitentiary at Angola.

LSU now had to select a new president. With Long's death in 1935, the board of supervisors had slipped from the control of his machine. Many members of the board, in addition, had resigned as a result of the scandals. A new "clean" board came and a concerted effort "to clean up the university" was inaugurated. The board named E. S. Richardson and then Paul M. Hebert as acting president. President Hebert thought it wise under the circumstances to emphasize LSU's positive accomplishments, one of which was the Review.  

The new board wanted to economize as the war approached, and many members felt that a critical quarterly was a luxury item. The board brought pressure to bear on the new president, General Campbell B. Hodges, who postponed making a final decision due to the significance of the magazine and to the protest launched by rumor that it would be discontinued. Brooks corresponded with Hodges, the Reveille started a campaign to retain the quarterly, and contributors, newspapers, magazines,

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30 For accounts of the scandals, see the New Orleans Times-Picayune and the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate from June 10, 1939 to November 1, 1939. See also, Montesi, "The Southern Review," p. 206.
readers, and organizations wrote letters to the university. There were offers of mergers with other quarterlies, most notably the Kenyon Review, but LSU refused to continue to support the Southern Review in any way.

The Review was not the only LSU-supported journal that was the victim of the move to economize -- both the Journal of Southern History and the National Mathematics Magazine were threatened. All of this may have been the result of a change of emphasis on the part of the board from support of "esoteric" journals to more "practical" programs because of the war and perhaps a lingering desire to divest the university of any holdovers from the Smith and Long eras.

There have been other explanations for the end of the Review. In a dissertation on the quarterly, Albert J. Montesi says, "The reason for the magazine's folding was simply that the anti-Southern Review faction was in control, and it was determined that the magazine stop." Louis Rubin has suggested that it is in the nature of a literary quarterly to last only a short time. The Southern Review had been a launching pad for a number of important young writers and the need for that kind of support had passed. Had the reputations of contributors as well as their own

31 Ibid., p. 306.
32 Ibid., p. 313.
not been established at this point, the editors might have fought harder to keep the Review going. 33

Whatever the reason was, in the Spring, 1942, issue, Volume VII, Number 4, the editors announced the end of the Southern Review. But the Review's significance transcends the years it was published. During those seven years it had consistently been regarded as the country's finest literary quarterly, which is evident in the protests sent to LSU when the magazine was discontinued. Literary quarterlies published since are measured up against the Review for quality of format, content, and for their distinctiveness. All of this is to say that the life of the Southern Review was not a passing episode in Southern intellectual history -- indeed, it left a legacy that is still very much a part of Southern letters.

In the first place, at least two other quarterlies adopted some of the Southern Review's policies and published many of the same authors. The Kenyon Review, which began publication in 1939, made no attempt to hide the source of its inspiration. Its editor, John Crowe Ransom, close friend and com-patriot of Brooks and Warren, even expressed concern that the Kenyon would be accused of stealing from the Southern. 34

33 Interview with Louis D. Rubin, Jr., March 1, 1979. The editors have thus far been unwilling to state directly what they think is the reason for the Review's end at that particular time.

Another kindred literary spirit, Allen Tate, became the editor of the Sewanee Review in 1944, at which time he rearranged the magazine in order to give it some of the same quality the Southern Review had had. And in the sixties a new series of the Southern Review was begun, again at LSU, and that quarterly, considered one of the finest in the country, openly acknowledges its debts to its predecessor.\textsuperscript{35}

The Review's influence can also be traced to the outstanding pieces it published. Few other quarterlies can boast of the fiction and the poetry that were printed in the Review, or of the intelligence and perception of its criticism. A list of the Review's contributors is enough to excite any literary scholar; names such as Porter, Welty, Jarrell, Stevens, Valéry, Davidson, Tate, Ransom, Burke, and Auden, not to mention Brooks and Warren, indicate the quality of the magazine's contents.

But these things alone do not account for the impact of the Southern Review. Explanation for that is to be found in the character of the Review, in the way it reflects the Southern Renascence and a particular literary community. The magazine was in a unique position -- it was the journal of

the renascence. One can look at the Southern Review and become familiar with the renascence, its style, content, quality, and aesthetics. Its contributors wrote the fiction, poetry, and criticism that is the Southern Renascence, and they reviewed and discussed it. They evaluated the nation and the profession of letters from the viewpoint that is distinctively associated with this period in Southern culture -- the dehumanization of society under industrialism, the consciousness of the past, the concern for form, the ambivalence towards the South. As has been stated earlier, these sentiments are as much a part of the Southern Review as they are of The Sound and the Fury and I'll Take My Stand.

The Review also enabled participants and observers of the Southern Renascence to examine and assess the work they were doing. This was accomplished in two ways. First, and most obviously, specific books, poems, and authors were reviewed and discussed. Critics expressed, explained, and evaluated the philosophy of art, the aesthetics of this critical resurgence. Second, and more subtly, viewpoints outside of this mode of Southern literary thinking were given, and they enabled the reader and the contributor to compare their ideas with those of political scientists and sociologists, with pragmatists, Regionalists, and Marxists. In fact, Louis Rubin and Lewis Simpson think that part of the Review's success lies in the fact that it did not hold to a rigidly
Southern conservative line such as could be found in *I'll Take My Stand*.  

The *Review* had no deliberate literary or Southern program, but it did reflect a point of view, one that was instinctive rather than programmatic. Brooks has called this point of view conservative in terms of being traditional and provincial. The editors shared a general attitude toward reality that includes a basic faith in the people and a veneration of the folk, a distrust of finance-capitalism and large corporations, and a suspicion of teachers' colleges and social scientists. These views, along with their sympathy for traditional cultures, enabled Brooks and Warren to establish a literary community within the pages of the *Southern Review*, a group of writers who shared a basic outlook on culture and literature. Thus, the *Review* is important as an expression of a fairly cohesive literary community with a particular point of view.

In the chapters that follow, I will examine these and

36 Conversation with Louis D. Rubin and Lewis P. Simpson, April 8, 1975.

37 By provincial, Brooks does not mean parochial, unconcerned with occurrences outside the province. He means a tie to a particular area and its way of seeing things, a standard to which to compare what goes on in and out of that particular area. Interview with Cleanth Brooks, August 20, 1975.

38 Ibid.
other aspects of the Southern Review in detail. Through an analysis of its fiction, poetry, literary criticism, pieces on the South, and political articles, the character of the Review and its connections to the Southern Renascence and the American intellectual history of the period will emerge. That the Southern Review is an important part, not only of the careers of its editors, especially Brooks and Warren, but of the literature of twentieth-century America and the critique of American culture, will be made evident.
CHAPTER III: FICTION HARVEST:
STORIES IN THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

When Robert Penn Warren arrived at LSU in 1934, he
was best known as a Fugitive poet and Nashville Agrarian.
At age twenty-nine he had had some poems and one short
story anthologized and one book published, a seemingly
irrelevant biography of John Brown. By the time he left
eight years later, Warren had published two volumes of poetry
and his first novel, Night Rider, and had collected the
material that would go into his next two novels, At Heaven's
Gate and All the King's Men. He had also published several
short stories which were collected shortly after he left
Baton Rouge. Thus it was during his tenure as editor of the
Southern Review that Robert Penn Warren emerged as a major
creative artist.

In Warren -- who has written history, fiction, poetry,
social criticism, and literary criticism, and has done them
all well -- all the interests of the Southern Renascence and

1 The one story is "Prime Leaf" which Warren later developed
into his first novel, Night Rider (1939). Actually, John
Brown: The Making of a Martyr (New York, 1929) was hardly ir-
relevant to Warren's concerns as an Agrarian or his develop-
ment as a novelist and poet. Cf. Charles Böhner, Robert Penn
the concerns of the *Southern Review* are combined. He is most widely known, however, for his fiction, even though he has won two Pulitzer prizes and various other awards for his poetry. In this respect, he again reflects the reputation of the Southern Renaissance, which is also best recognized for its fiction. This is also the case for the *Southern Review*: the magazine became well known, to a great extent, because of the consistently high quality of its stories and short novels.

In the course of its seven-year existence, the *Southern Review* presented some of the best short fiction of the 1930s. One of the reasons that this work gained so much attention was that most short stories in the thirties were published in magazines such as *Scribner's*, *Collier's*, and *Harper's*, not in academic quarterlies such as the *Southern Review*. At the same time, the magazine enunciated its criteria for good fiction, long and short. The values of the editors and contributors were reflected in omnibus reviews, reviews of specific works, and in the stories themselves. This is not to say that Brooks and Warren had a specific program for fiction or for the criticism of fiction. They did not solicit a certain type of story or critical article. But some generalizations can be made regarding what writers in the *Review* said about fiction and about how the stories in the magazine reflected their views. The editors, according to the
quarterly's prospectus, primarily intended to encourage good writing, whether by established or aspiring authors, and to provide a forum for thoughtful criticism. They reached both goals.

In discussing the Southern Review's attitudes toward fiction, it is impossible to examine all the stories or all the pertinent articles. Instead, I intend first to describe in general terms what the Review looked for; then to examine more specifically the magazine's opinions of the literary debate between Marxists and regionalist writers; and finally to see how critical values are reflected in the stories themselves. Perhaps the most helpful way to approach the stories would be through the work of those who appeared most often in the Review as fiction writers -- Caroline Gordon, Katherine Anne Porter, Peter Taylor, Robert Penn Warren, and Eudora Welty. By this method, I intend to suggest the basic point of view held by the quarterly in regard to fiction. The editors and contributors did have their disagreements, and this point of view was by no means rigid, but there was a general consensus as to what made good fiction.

Those connected with the Southern Review sought to distinguish clearly between "good" fiction and "popular" fiction. In a series of lectures given in 1962, but in accord with his long-standing opinions on the matter, Cleanth Brooks called popular art a mass-produced, machine-made narcotic,
pain killing but not nourishing. Unfortunately, according to Brooks, popular fiction is the only sort that exists for over half our citizens. The demands of popularity mean that the pressure of popular art increases our inability to recognize truly great literature: "We confuse a William Faulkner and a Tennessee Williams, for do they not both emphasize sex and violence? We can see no real difference between a novel by Robert Penn Warren and Frank Yerby or Mrs. [Frances Parkinson] Keyes, for all of them are historical novelists, aren't they?"^2

The Southern Review demanded that the short story and all fiction be taken seriously as art. Short stories are not meant only to entertain refined ladies or young boys with fine sentiments and surprise endings. Howard Baker, the magazine's most frequent reviewer of fiction, says "that each story should be as much a new act of creation as a poem, that it should be granted a wholeness in itself, an indestructible, unparaphrasable, and essentially unanalyzable character like that of a good poem."^3 Good stories do not only entertain, they

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^2 Cleanth Brooks, The Hidden God: Studies in Hemingway, Faulkner, Yeats, Eliot, and Warren (New York, 1963), pp. 2-3. This rather snooty approach to popular culture is shared by other former Agrarians, most notably Donald Davidson. See Davidson's "Mirror for Artists" in I'll Take My Stand and Still Rebels, Still Yankees. Both Brooks and Davidson make a distinction between twentieth-century popular culture, which is mass-produced, and genuine folk culture, which arises out of the experience of the folk.

communicate values in an appropriate structure with appropriate language. Baker says, "everything that I feel is worth saying about the short story bears in one way or another on the point that writing must be built up from a sub-structure of ideas. The short story, I am proposing, ought to be made deliberately much more intellectual than it usually is, or is recognized as being."\(^4\)

A short story, and all literature, was important to the Review because it communicates values, it reflects human experience, and it helps us learn about living. This does not mean that literature should be didactic or have an overt political or social message, but that the author should have a philosophy that subtly reveals itself in the structure of the story. Mark Van Doren writes in one of the omnibus reviews:

\[\ldots\text{the success of a novel is inversely proportional to the clarity with which the author has held a view of human life susceptible to simple statement, particularly when the statement tells us that human life is otherwise unknowable and until now has not been known.}\ldots\text{the success of a novel is inversely proportional to the vehemence with which it "corrects" our experience and prophecies a world with which we are so far unfamiliar.}\]  

\(^4\) Ibid., P. 579.

Brooks and Warren, as they say in the preface to their textbook *Understanding Fiction* (1938), agree "that to be good, a piece of fiction must involve an idea of some real significance for mature and thoughtful human beings." An idea of some real significance" is one that is worthy of study and that tries to explain the human predicament. One does not have to agree with the author in order to appreciate the depth of his understanding or his struggle to understand. An idea is not important, however, unless it is part of the total structure of the story and unless it is subject to the modifications made by that structure -- by the plot, characters, style, and other structural elements. The admirable individual, whether the hero in a story or the author himself, is the one who struggles with the contradiction in life, and who has "mastered a self-consciousness, a form or a harmony which embraces his mental and physical life." This self-consciousness, this form

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7 Howard Baker, "Some Notes on New Fiction," *SoR*, Vol. I, No. 1 (July, 1935), pp. 180-82. Baker was discussing Thomas Mann's *Young Joseph* and why he thinks Mann is one of the world's great writers. This notion of the reconciliation
or harmony, may come from any number of things -- a profound meditation on the past, on a bull fight, or on the plight of itinerant farmers -- but it has to inform all aspects of the story.

The editors and the contributors were firmly convinced that values are necessary. Although they decried the way values were expressed in much of the Marxist literature of the period, they agreed with the Marxists that modern society could not survive or offer anything to its members without some moral and social order. The editors' values arose out of their own experience in a traditional culture, that is, the South, out of their concern for the vitality of art, and out of their individual experiences. Writers on the left, to the contrary, looked for worthwhile values to come out of social engineering or the perfected socialist order of the future.

Much of this concern for values on the part of the Review was part of an attack on positivism and technology or "science." Many of the Review's contributors felt that the applied and

of opposites is a major preoccupation of many critics and writers of this period and will show up again in my discussions of the Southern Review's poetry and criticism. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, I. A. Richards, T. S. Eliot, and W. B. Yeats are among those who have worked with this idea in their prose and their poetry and who have influenced Brooks and Warren. For an important statement regarding the reader's response to the author's ideas, see T. S. Eliot, "Dante," in Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot, ed. by Frank Kermode (New York, 1975).
social sciences may have improved people's material well-being or may have alleviated superficial forms of social dislocation, but they could not help a person understand himself or other people. In one of his Selected Essays (1958), Warren asks, "Is the kind of instruction expected of fiction in direct competition, at the same level, with the kind of instruction offered in Political Science I or Economics II? If that is the case, then out with Shakespeare and Keats and in with Upton Sinclair." For this kind of understanding one needs the self-consciousness and harmony that Howard Baker found in the work of Thomas Mann, for example, and that were not found in Upton Sinclair or "science." On these grounds writers in the Southern Review criticized the Regionalists of Chapel Hill, social engineers such as John Dewey, and novelists such as Sinclair and Aldous Huxley.  

John Bradbury and Richard Pells, among others, have proposed that the concern of the Review and other writers


9 See Ransom's response to Huxley's novel Eyeless in Gaza in "Fiction Harvest," SoR, Vol. II, No. 2 (Fall, 1936), pp. 402-403. Ransom was the most vehement of all the Review's contributors in regard to the sins of science. See especially his The World's Body (Baton Rouge, 1968).
for order in society was reflected not only in the values they cherished but also in their insistence that literature be ordered, that it have a form. In an article for the Review on André Gide, Carlos Lynes says, "the important thing is that the novelist, no less than the poet, is an imaginative artist whose task and privilege it is to create for each subject a form that will fuse so inseparably with the matter that a work of art in all its specific objectivity comes into being." And John Crowe Ransom writes, "A novel may be many things, but what it must be is a piece of architectural composition."¹⁰

Fiction had to have form. But Brooks and Warren were unwilling to tell authors what kind of form their stories should have. They made no rules for length, plot, character, style, imagery, or anything else. The only requirement was that the structure be molded to suit the subject and the author's perception of the subject. It had to be appropriate. The editors selected too many different kinds of stories for them to have had precise formulas in mind. The characters range from English nobility to poor whites in Mississippi, the length from four pages to short novels, the nature of

of the plot from meditative to violent, the timespan from an hour to an entire lifetime, the style from straightforward narrative to flashbacks and impressionistic sketches.

Within the structure of his story, the author had to reconcile or balance the discordant elements. Howard Baker admired Mann's *Young Joseph* because it is the finest example of Mann's ability to overcome the contradictions of realism and fable, the sacred and the profane, science and religion, fact and miracle. Robert Penn Warren thought that the strength of Katherine Anne Porter's fiction is the way she balances myth and reality and the claims of past and present.\(^{11}\)

Baker put it in more general terms in another omnibus review:

> To realize the interdependence of thinking and feeling is . . . the goal of many other kinds of human activity [besides philosophy]. All art may be described as a process of clarifying what is felt by what is known, and what is known by what is felt. The novel is capable of such clarifications . . . [To] the novelist, the problem of the relation of intellect and emotion in his medium is not only acute but must also enter into the conscious deliberations with which he shapes his book. . . . he knows that his greatest success will lie in a perfect fusion of these divergent aspects, so that neither can finally be separated out from the other.\(^{12}\)

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Such a combination of opposites obviously leads to a complexity of structure and of all the elements of a story. A story that poses difficult questions and presents such tensions is unlikely to be as straightforward as it may appear on the surface. There is definitely more than the memories of a young girl or of an old man in Porter's "Old Mortality" and Warren's "How Willie Proudfit Came Home"; the authors use these recollections to deal with past and present, man and nature, myth and reality, family and home. Characters, like real people, have the same complexity. Mark Van Doren says that the story exists for and through the characters, and that they are revealed as individuals through the story. The style, too, is more complex than one might think. Porter has a simple and facile prose which holds many things that a careless reader would miss.13

The insistence on important ideas and complexity put the Review in the mainstream of literary thought as it had progressed from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth. The subtlety and complexity the magazine admired

13 Van Doren, "Fiction of the Quarter," pp. 159-60; Warren, "Katherine Anne Porter." Warren's essays shows many of the things that the Southern Review's editors admire; it also depicts Porter as the perfect example of complexity masqued by simplicity. Another piece of fiction greatly admired by the Southern Review for these reasons is Allen Tate's The Fathers. Warren also praises some of Hemingway's work on this basis.
were also admired by other major writers in this tradition, such as Henry James, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and William Faulkner. But the *Southern Review's* contributors did not use some of the techniques used by writers in the early twentieth century. None of the short stories in the *Review* employs stream-of-consciousness. This is not the result of any dislike of that style; Brooks and Warren, certainly, held the work of Joyce and Faulkner in high esteem. It may have been a coincidence, a matter of no good stories using stream-of-consciousness crossing the editors' desks.

In the case of the other major stylistic development of the turn of the century, naturalism, the neglect may have been more conscious. The editors had great regard for the fiction of Thomas Hardy, a writer who has some connection with the naturalists, but they insisted that naturalism be greatly tempered by the powers of the imagination. The *Review* thought that Hardy did just this but that Huxley and Sinclair, for example, relied too heavily on "science." This reliance was precisely the problem with naturalism as far as the *Review* was concerned -- naturalism is tied to the influence of technology and industrialism.\(^{14}\)

The disdain for naturalism, the rejection of didacticism, and the insistence on complexity, although placing the

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Review within the literary tradition of the period, put it in opposition to much of the literary thinking in the United States in the 1930s. The *Southern Review's* standards for fiction contrasted sharply with the principles of the very vocal leftist literary community. The differences between the two were not ignored by either side. Throughout the thirties, a lively debate between the Marxists and the Formalists occupied the literary circles.

Neither side presented a united front. There were Formalists, and then there were Formalists; there were Marxists, and then there were Marxists. The Formalists included such critics as Brooks and Warren; T. S. Eliot, and Yvor Winters, who had major disagreements with each other; and Kenneth Burke, a self-proclaimed Marxist. Among the Marxists were such writers as Michael Gold and Granville Hicks, officially affiliated with the Soviet Communist Party; James T. Farrell, unofficially affiliated with it; and Philip Rahv and Wendell Phillips, who were disowned by Gold and Hicks and who later severed their ties with the Communist Party. Ranging the ground at various points between the Marxists and Formalists were Malcolm Cowley, a member of the Writers' Congress, and Edmund Wilson, a somewhat disillusioned fellow-traveler.

Several journals took part in the discussion of the uses of art. The *New Masses*, edited by Michael Gold and
with Granville Hicks as its literary editor, represented the Communist Party in America and reflected the literary viewpoint of the Comintern. Gold and Hicks believed that art was subordinate to politics. The Partisan Review, another leftist journal, shared the New Masses' concern for the revolution but disagreed with its definition of art. The editors of the Partisan, Philip Rahv and Wendell Phillips, thought that art must not be subordinate to politics, but that good art would contribute to the revolution. In the middle, that is to say, committed to neither the Marxist nor the Formalist point of view, stood the New Republic which proposed a reformed society and artistic independence.15

The Southern Review has always been associated with Formalism, but the nature of the Review's formalism has generally been misrepresented. Critics such as Alfred Kazin and Wilson, as well as Hicks and Gold, have accused the Formalists in general and the Southern Review in particular of proposing a refined aestheticism, art for art's sake.

15 As will be evident, I will be focusing on the discussion between the proponents of "proletarian literature," i.e., Hicks and Gold, and the regionalists, that is, those who discuss this issue in the Southern Review. For discussions of the other viewpoints held on the left, see Aaron, Writers on the Left; Cowley, And I Worked at the Writer's Trade; Gilbert, Writers and Partisans; and Joel N. Wingard, "Toward a Worker's America: The Theory and Practice of the American Proletarian Novel, Based upon Four Selected Works" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1979).
Although the Review demanded that art not be used to promulgate well-defined points of view and that art has to be judged on artistic rather than political grounds, it never proposed that art has nothing to say about society or is unconnected to ideas. As has been shown, the editors and contributors believed that good fiction has to have ideas, but that the ideas, to reflect reality accurately, must have complex. If the form is to embody the ideas appropriately, it, too, will have to be complex. Literature does have a special function, but that function is not to teach. The Review's formalism, then, is not to be equated with aestheticism. The Review's insistence on ideas takes its formalism out of the realm of a refined aestheticism.

Robert Penn Warren addressed himself to the literary debate in an omnibus review of the quarter's fiction for the Winter, 1936, number of the Southern Review. In this article, Warren sets up a series of oppositions between proletarian and regional fiction. The regional novel has a relation with the past; the proletarian novel has a relation with the future. The regional novel has heroes; the proletarian novel does not. The regional novel presents no dogma; the proletarian novel does. The regional novel uses and admires tradition; the proletarian novel discards it. The regional novel is based upon a sense of place; the proletarian novel has no feeling for a specific
place because it proposes a new order that is to be international. The regional novel asserts the organic nature of society and the importance of the individual; the proletarian novel divides society into parts and relies upon the concept of class. The regional novel approves of personal property, largely because it ties one to a place; the proletarian novel approves of property owned by the state. The regional novel has an agrarian bias; the proletarian novel an industrial one. Finally, the regional novel has no relation to politics; the proletarian novel is tied to a political party and propaganda.16

Both these views of literature have something in common, as well, according to Warren: "both are revolutionary." Both the proletarian writer and the regional writer are dissatisfied with the present state of society. Both are opposed to finance-capitalism which, they believe, has denigrated the creative impulse, has estranged the artist from society, and has made it impossible for the artist to perform his function as "as a man speaking to men." Both the proletarian writer and the regional writer are searching for ways to heal the rupture between artist and society.17

Warren and other contributors feel that regionalism is

17 Ibid., p. 633.
more viable than proletarian literature. In another omni-
bus review, Mark Van Doren says that a theory in art "blunts
the perceptions, coarsens the imagination, and falsifies
that surface of life which art is so profoundly concerned
with." Henry Nash Smith and Kenneth Burke worry about the
effect of subordination character to classes and to propa-
ganda situations. Proletarianism in art discourages the
artist's creativity.\(^{18}\)

Writers such as Yvor Winters and Edmund Wilson agreed
with the Review's criticism of the Marxist view of human
experience -- its hostility to artistic independence, its
distortion of the truth about human nature, and its faith
in secular progress.\(^{19}\) These critics attacked the theory
of proletarian literature formulated by Mike Gold and Gran-
vilie Hicks in the New Masses which represented the other

in its conclusions, must always defeat its own artistic ends,
for this very reason: the political-sociological case is
general, the artistic instance is particular." See also
Philip Rahv, "Proletarian Literature: A Political Autopsy,"
SoR, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Winter, 1939).

\(^{19}\) Pells, Radical Visions, pp. 184-87.
side of the literary debate. Gold, the general editor of the magazine, was more partisan, more opinionated, more insistent that art represent the proletariat, than Hicks, the literary editor. Gold, the son of Jewish immigrants and New York proletarians, contended that "Art is the tenement pouring out its soul through us, its most sensitive and articulate sons and daughters." Unlike Gold, who rejected all previous literature as bourgeois and useless, Hicks appreciated fiction more on literary terms, albeit with a pronounced Marxist bias. For example, one may contrast their attitudes toward Proust. Gold calls the novelist "the master-masturbator of bourgeois literature"; Hicks says that he would not recommend The Rememberance of Things Past to a mechanic or a longshoreman, but that he would make it required reading for the revolutionary intellectual because Proust has revealed the decadence of bourgeois society with great skill and thus helps the revolutionary intellectual

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20 For a much fuller treatment of proletarian literature, see Wingard, "Toward a Worker's America." Wingard traces the development of the theory of proletarian literature and then examines four "proletarian" novels: Mike Gold's Jews Without Money, Robert Cantwell's The Land of Plenty, James T. Farrell's Studs Lonigan trilogy, and John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath. Gilbert, Writers and Partisans is also helpful.

understand that society.  

Although they did not agree entirely on literary matters, Gold and Hicks did agree as to what sort of fiction should be written by novelists in the 1930s and how other pieces of fiction should be judged. Good art, fiction in particular, according to the editors of the New Masses, should have a social function: "it teaches peasants to use tractors, gives lyrics to young soldiers, designs textiles for women's factory dresses, writes burlesque for factory theaters, does a hundred other useful tasks"; it should "lead the proletarian reader to recognize his role in the class struggle." Proletarian novels should serve political ends, raise the consciousness of the working people, and show the light to the bourgeoisie. 

For literary technique, Gold and Hicks have fairly specific requirements. Gold wants a straightforward style such as Hemingway has (this, according to Gold, is Hemingway's only contribution to fiction). Gold and Hicks both

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23 Michael Gold, "America Needs a Critic," in Folsom, Mike Gold, p. 130; Granville Hicks, "Crisis in American Criticism," in Robbins, Granville Hicks in the New Masses, pp. 11-12.
want realism, the "portrayal of life as it is," "authenticity and relevance." Authenticity means, according to Hicks, "correspondence to the best documentary evidence about the period in question as interpreted according to the Marxian theory of history. [And] Relevance is relevance to the contemporary situation, interests, and demands of the working class." The point of view of the novel must be proletarian. The intended audience of these books would be, of course, working people.  

The sympathies of the *Southern Review*, obviously, lay more with the regionalist approach than with the Marxist, whether it was expressed with Gold's utter contempt or with Hicks's pitying condescension. The editors and contributors of the *Southern Review* were very much concerned with the life of at least one region, the South. The magazine's writers also had great respect for tradition and the past. They demonstrated their disillusionment with the present, but they did not share the Marxists' faith in progress and human perfectibility. Further, the editors felt that Marxism arose from industrialism and thus would be unable to solve the problems produced by industrialism. Any fiction coming

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out of the Marxist point of view, therefore, was unlikely to captivate the editors of the Southern Review.

Both the Marxist and the regionalist approaches to literature have basic problems. The problem for the Marxists is the effect of their dogma on their writing. Marxist critics judge art on the basis of political beliefs, not on the basis of artistic merits; proletarian fiction has to reflect the party line. The regionalists' problem is the ever-present possibility of lapsing into mere local color, the regaling of habits, details, and idiosyncracies of a region for no other reason than that they are "different" and "interesting."

Actuality rather than belief has to be the subject and inspiration of fiction, and the Review thought that realism is more characteristic of the regionalists than the Marxists. Two writers greatly admired by Brooks and Warren, William Faulkner and Thomas Hardy,25 are bound to the reality of their regions as worked on by their imaginations. Neither Brooks nor Warren discussed Faulkner in the Review; in fact, there were only two articles on Faulkner in the magazine and Delmore Schwartz wrote both of them. In one of those articles

25 The Review did not publish many articles on Faulkner. It is clear, however, that both Brooks and Warren regard Faulkner very highly. Brooks, of course, has written two major books on Faulkner's work. Warren has edited a book of essays on Faulkner and has written an important essay on him ("Faulkner" in his Selected Essays.) As for Hardy, the special issue on him should suffice as evidence of their great respect for his work.
Schwartz says:

The suggestion is that for Faulkner, as for most authors, actuality is an inexhaustible well or mine; imagination and invention are bogus unless they are bound to actuality and inspired by it. This is one of the most important senses in which art is an imitation of life, beyond any assent to the doctrine of naturalism and realism. There are inconceivably more possibilities in Life for the author with gifts than in anything his imagination can construct. As there is nothing in the mind not first in the senses, so there is no richness in the imagination which is not surpassed by the richness of Life when it works upon the imagination. 26

Schwartz says that Faulkner is most successful when he writes about Yoknapatawpha County. Donald Davidson says that Hardy is at his best when he writes about Wessex. Davidson maintains that Hardy's purpose appears to have been "to tell about human life in the terms that would present it as most recognizably, and validly, and completely human." Hardy deals with actuality through tradition:

There is surely no other example in modern English fiction of an author who, while reaching the highest levels of sophisticated artistic performance, comes bringing his tradition with him, not only the mechanics of the tradition, but the inner conception that is often lacking. . . . The achievement is the more extraordinary when we consider that he worked (if I read his career rightly) against the dominant pattern of his day. He did what the modern critic (despite his concern for tradition) is always implying to be impossible. That is, Hardy accepted the assumptions of a

society which in England was already being condemned to death, and he wrote in terms of those assumptions, almost as if Wessex, and perhaps Wessex only, would understand.  

The Southern Review's tastes in regard to fiction should now be evident. While the Marxists searched for the Shakespeare of the proletariat, the Southern Review looked for what it considered to be good literature. The journal reviewed the novels of these spokesmen for the workers, such as John Dos Passos, Richard Wright, and John Steinbeck, but believed that the truly valuable fiction of the thirties was being written by Hemingway and Faulkner. The editors found the notion of judging what was good literature on other than literary grounds abhorrent. It is within this context, among others, that Brooks and Warren and other of the "New Critics" propose that literature be judged by only literary criteria. And it is this proposal that has led other critics to accuse Brooks and Warren of looking at literature in a vacuum. As will also be seen in the discussions of poetry and the teaching of literature, such a summation of the editors' point of  


28 Louis D. Rubin, Jr., suggests that the Review's taste in literature made it a focus for the best writing in the period. He says that when the fads are cleared away, it turns out that, the Review was right -- in pointing to Dos Passos and Steinbeck, the people at the New Masses and the New Republic were pointing to writers who are definitely second-rate. Interview with Louis D. Rubin, Jr., March 1, 1979.
view does them a great disservice. It is precisely because of their concern for the health of the culture that Brooks and Warren and the contributors to the Southern Review insist that literature be examined on literary grounds. Literature has a special contribution to make to society, and that contribution must be kept distinct from the contributions of political science, sociology, and economics. If it is not kept distinct, literature as literature will be destroyed and the human experience will be impoverished. Brooks and Warren, then, are concerned with the survival of literature as a special form of knowledge and with the impact that the survival of literature has on society. There is a place for political science, sociology, and economics, even within the pages of the Southern Review, but not in a novel or a short story.

The editors chose the short stories and the novellas for publication in the Southern Review on the basis of artistic excellence, not adherence to political or literary programs. Stories were not chosen for their support of Agrarianism, or

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29 This will be more fully discussed in succeeding chapters. Major statements of the notion of literature as knowledge can be found in Ransom, The World's Body; Tate, Essays of Four Decades; Robert Penn Warren, "The Present State of Poetry. III. In the United States," Kenyon Review, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Autumn, 1939); and Warren's interview with Brooks in The Possibilities of Order: Cleanth Brooks and His Work, ed. by Lewis P. Simpson (Baton Rouge, 1976).
for the authors' places of birth, or the authors' reputations. Brooks and Warren note in their introduction to *Stories From the Southern Review* that fifty-one per cent of all their contributors came from the South (the percentage is probably higher for those who contributed fiction), that some were from foreign countries, and that they turned down the work of Nobel Prize winners and accepted that of college students. The editors also made a concerted effort to encourage the work of young writers, particularly from the South, who had yet to establish substantial reputations. One of those young writers was a graduate student at LSU, Peter Taylor. Another, perhaps the Review's biggest plum, was "a young lady from Mississippi," Eudora Welty.

Taylor published three stories in the Review, Eudora Welty seven, the largest number contributed by any writer. The other leading contributors of fiction were Warren with three stories, Caroline Gordon with four, and Katherine Anne Porter with five, three of which are actually short novels. Gordon had already published a well-received novel and was working on another one. Porter had established a reputation as a short-story writer, but was just starting to win fame. Warren, as has been noted, was just beginning to work with fiction -- his stories in the Review are some of his first efforts and mark his emergence as an important writer of fiction.
The stories of these five writers, along with the other fiction in the Review, reflect the general attitudes toward fiction that the critics in the Review had outlined. Most of the stories follow the regional approach: they emphasize place, time, the individual, organic society, and tradition, while usually making no comment on politics. Although the majority of stories take place in rural Southern settings, Southern-ness is not their most notable quality. Some stories are set in cities, some in rural locales outside the South. The stories usually depict the conditions of life for specific individuals, not as representatives of types or classes. Stylistically they are rarely experimental. Some use flashbacks and do different things with point of view, but the authors do not make use of stream-of-consciousness or some of the more radical techniques of Symbolism or Imagism.30

The five writers I have mentioned are also important with respect to the Southern Renascence. Fiction is the most significant product of the Renascence, and Faulkner, Warren, and Welty are generally considered to be the most important Southern novelists of the period. Warren and Welty both published their first stories in the Review. In addition, what many feel to be Katherine Anne Porter's

30 For a good sampling of the stories in the magazine, see Brooks and Warren, Stories from the Southern Review.
best work, her three novellas -- "Old Mortality," "Pale Horse, Pale Rider," and "The Leaning Tower" -- all appeared in the Review. Caroline Gordon and Peter Taylor, too, are significant figures in the renascence, although they are lesser lights. These writers would no doubt have succeeded without the encouragement of the Southern Review -- there are rare spirits who refuse not to write and would make themselves heard under any circumstances. The Review did, however, serve to bring attention to some very important creative artists.

The Review's most significant "discovery" was Eudora Welty. The seven stories she published in the magazine were her first and brought her to national attention. Welty's first story for the Review was "A Piece of News," published in the Summer, 1937, number. This story is so polished that

31 For some reason, female writers figure very prominently in Southern fiction; three of the five writers I have mentioned are women. And the work started by Welty and Porter was continued by Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, and Harper Lee. Perhaps one could add Margaret Mitchell's name to the list as well. John Crowe Ransom reviewed Gone With the Wind for the Southern Review and pronounced it worthwhile.

Brooks and Warren include it in some of the editions of their textbook, *Understanding Fiction*. They have also used another of Welty's stories for the *Review*, "A Memory." But the best known of her short stories for the magazine and indeed, perhaps, the best known of all her stories, is "Petrified Man."

Although Welty sets her stories in one place and one time, the contemporary Delta country, they have a sense of not being so rooted, something that distinguishes her style from that of Faulkner or Warren or the regionalists in general. Welty's knowledge of the contemporary Delta country and the people in it provides her with the knowledge of all places, times, and people. Her characters are different from those of other regionalists, too. In one way or another, Welty's people are marginal, set apart either by society or by themselves -- widows, hitch-hikers, traveling salesmen, old men, and circus performers, all live on the fringes of society.

The characters in "A Memory" and "Petrified Man" exemplify this quality. The girl in "A Memory" and Mrs. Fletcher in "Petrified Man" both try to separate themselves from the people around them -- the girl does it physically, Mrs. Fletcher by not telling people she is pregnant. Their attempts at separation show the problems they are having with their identities. Mrs. Fletcher denies at least part of who she is by trying to hide her pregnancy. Her feelings about her condition indicate that she would like to deny what she
has done and who she is in respect to her husband and her child-to-be. She wants to deny the child's identity, as well, by taking away his life. This is related to the way that Mr. Petrie, in the same story, as rapist denies the individual identities of his victims. Mr. Petrie wants to hide part of himself too, but, like Mrs. Fletcher, he does not do it well enough -- not only is he caught, but his real name, Petrie, resembles his circus name, the Petrified Man.

Ruby Fisher in "A Piece of News" does not know who she is either, at least temporarily. She thinks she is a woman in a story she has read in the newspaper, a woman in Tennesee who has been shot in the leg by her husband, even though Ruby knows perfectly well that she lives in Mississippi and does not have a bullet in her leg. The piece of news is her husband's reminding her who she is and where they are.

Why are these characters so disoriented? Why are they unaware of who they are? They have lost pieces of themselves, they have been through personal disasters of one sort or another, and few of them seem to be able to put themselves back together again. Ruby becomes herself again only when her husband, one who knows her, recalls her from her illusion. In a way, she has been called home. The person who recognizes him, Mrs. Pike, is the one who puts Mr. Petrie and the Petrified Man together. He too has returned
home, to a more familiar place and, unfortunately in regard to his freedom, to more familiar people. Mrs. Fletcher needs to be claimed by her husband in order to re-establish her identity. The disasters suffered by these characters are disorienting because they separate the individuals from their people and their places -- they must return to their friends and their homes to put themselves back together.

Although Welty's stories have important thematic elements in common, they differ widely from one another in other respects. Welty creates a distinctive atmosphere in each, usually by suggesting different kinds of lighting and by varying the diction. The reader can imagine the differences between the light in a beauty parlor, the light given by the sun after a summer shower, and that given by street lights and cars. Welty's diction varies from the quick, conversational rhythm of "Petrified Man" to the more meditative movement of "A Piece of News." Welty's characters are of many types, too, in their backgrounds and their personalities. Some are urban, others small town, others rural. Some are open to a certain extent, others less vulnerable, others very mysterious. But they all share the need for self-awareness through their relations with their people and their places.

Caroline Gordon deals with many of the same themes, the disorientation and the fragmentation of modern life, but in a
different manner. By the time she began contributing to the Review, Gordon had already published Aleck Maury, Sportsman (1934). She had met Warren in Nashville during the Fugitive years, and, through him, met Allen Tate whom she married in 1924. Through friendship and marriage, Gordon was more personally connected than Welty to the Review. She wrote four stories for the magazine, one of which was later incorporated into her second novel, None Shall Look Back (1937).

Gordon places her people more obviously than Welty in the midst of their families and their communities. Her characters are definite individuals but they are not as separated from each other as is the case with Welty's. The family and the community can be disrupted — by war, murder, unassimilable outsiders, time — but they can survive these disturbances if people come together and make the effort. Like the individuals in Eudora Welty's stories, communities and families can continue only if they are self-conscious enough to make the adaptations to changing conditions.

Ote and his brother Ed in "A Morning's Favor" are separated more by age than anything else. Ote still has things


to do and see before Ed's religious fervor will have any real significance for him. Ed needs to remember how he felt at Ote's age before he can speak convincingly to his brother about the nature of sin in general and pre-marital sex in particular. Each is too wrapped up in himself, too preoccupied with one aspect of his existence -- Ote with his sexuality, Ed with his spirituality -- for them to establish any meaningful dialogue.

In "The Women on the Battlefield," the story incorporated into None Shall Look Back, the Civil War has caused the separation. The war has cut Rives off physically from his mother and wife, and has cut off each person from who he was before the war. When Rives sees his mother and wife helping the wounded after the battle of Chickamauga he is surprised, but now that they are reunited and even though they are happy to see each other, it is hard for them to be truly together. The women have fought too, and the war has wounded Rives just as certainly as if he had been shot. All three people have more in common with the wounded than surface appearances would lead one to believe.

In this story of the Civil War, history has happened to individuals, not to nations, states, or any other abstract entities (such as the working class), and it has become a part of these persons through their experience and their reflection upon that experience. Gordon says nothing
about how the characters feel about war or slavery or the Confederacy; politics are not important in this story. What is important about the Civil War is that it has destroyed a way of living and has uprooted individuals in the same manner any great historical event does, and the war is significant because it has affected concrete individuals. Gordon's use of the battle of Chickamauga demonstrates this point. She does not supply us with the details of the battle or the retreat, nor does she make any comments upon the military result of the battle or on the merits of Rosecrans and Bragg as generals. In fact, from the tone of the story, one might get the feeling that the Confederates have lost rather than won at Chicamauga. As far as Gordon is concerned, everyone has lost. In no way does she abstract the history that has happened. We see neither military strategy nor politics. We see people.

Warren refers to concrete individuals instead of the kind of abstractions promoted by proletarian writers in his story "Goodwood Comes Back." The major contrast in the story is between what the narrator reads in the clippings his mother sends him and what he learns when he talks to Luke Goodwood himself. The incidents that the narrator has read about in

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the papers have really happened to his boyhood friend, and
the narrator has seen some of what it has done to him. The
contrast between press releases and reality is especially
significant in terms of a sports figure, the modern folk
hero who, more often than not, is the creation of the sports-
writers. Luke Goodwood is more than the pitcher who fooled
the home-run hitter with a curve ball to win the game or the
player who had to leave the sport because of a drinking
problem. He is a man who could not adjust to the life of
the professional athlete in the most fundamental manner.
He felt he had no room to be himself, no room to establish
a place for himself within that life, and he could not
function as an athlete as a result. This is not the story
one reads in the sports page — it is what happened to the
boy the narrator used to hunt with. In this story Warren
has directly addressed himself to the problem of abstraction
in modern life.

Home or place, always an important theme for Warren, also
figures in the best of Caroline Gordon's stories to appear in
the Southern Review, "Frankie and Thomas and Bud Asbury," The
narrator and Thomas have returned to the farm of the narrator's
grandmother to make a crop of tobacco. Thomas brings his
wife Frankie, who soon fits into the household. When it is
time to put the tobacco in the barn and cure it, the narrator
hires the local expert on curing, Bud Asbury. Bud, however,
is an outsider -- he is not part of the household. His presence at dinner the first night he is there immediately makes things awkward. He gets drunk, after having maintained that he has dealt with his drinking problem, and makes a pass at Frankie. His unsolicited attentions soon disrupt the household, for Thomas loses his temper and starts a fight that the narrator has to break up. Because of the fight, the narrator makes Bud leave the farm. And the curing fires in the barn have gone out, so the tobacco will not be of as high a quality as it could have been. Asbury has brought disorder to the household and its enterprise.

Other things besides overt human action or historical cataclysms cut individuals off from their homes, communities, and families. In the case of the grandfather in Warren's "When the Light Gets Green," it is simply the passage of time that separates him from his family. He is an old man who remembers old times and worries about the tobacco. No one pays him a great deal of attention, and Uncle Kirby is downright contemptuous. Even the grandson, the narrator, is unable to say "Grandpa, I love you" with much conviction, and he is not particularly upset when his grandfather dies four years later. About the only thing that makes the grandfather's life worth living is the tobacco. He has a stroke during a hail storm that could damage the tobacco; he dies a short time after his daughter and her husband (the narrator's aunt and uncle) sell the farm. Uncle Kirby had said that the grand-
father's raising of horses was a foolishness -- time has rendered what once was a necessity a hobby -- and Kirby's sale of the farm seems to say that the raising of tobacco is also a foolishness. Both activities are major parts of the grandfather's existence -- thus Kirby has said that the grandfather is a foolish man, perhaps a foolishness himself. As far as Kirby is concerned, he is certainly obsolete.

The figure of the grandfather and the activity of raising tobacco are central to Warren's first efforts at fiction. Warren has mentioned in several places how important his grandfather is to him. Warren's grandfather had been a captain in the Confederate cavalry and had participated in the battle of Shiloh. Warren recalls listening to him reminiscing about the Civil War, explaining Civil War and Napoleonic campaigns, quoting poetry (Warren has vivid memories of hearing "Horatius at the Bridge" and Shakespeare), and discussing world history. Some of Warren's first encounters with literature and history are thus associated with his grandfather. And the grandfathers in both "When the Light Gets Green" and the short novel "Prime Leaf" resemble Warren's grandfather.

Moreover, Warren grew up in the tobacco country of south

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35 See Bohner, Robert Penn Warren, pp. 21-22. Warren has mentioned his grandfather in more than one interview, perhaps the most recent being an interview with Dick Cavett broadcast on the Public Broadcasting System, June 28, 1978.
central Kentucky (Todd County), and his own memories of the stories he heard of the Black Patch wars between tobacco growers and buyers in the early part of the twentieth century and of nightriders figure prominently in his early fiction. The grandfather and tobacco come together in "When the Light Gets Green" and "Prime Leaf." "Prime Leaf," which did not appear in the *Southern Review*, was developed into Warren's first novel, *Night Rider*, published in 1939 (while Warren was at LSU). In the novel Warren uses a technique that he would also use in his next two novels, *At Heaven's Gate* and *All The King's Men*, the story within a story. The story within *Night Rider* is the recollections of a farmer and had first been published as "How Willie Proudfit Came Home" in the Autumn, 1938, issue of the *Southern Review*.

Uncle Kirby in "When the Light Gets Green" has ridiculed the grandfather's ties to nature. In "How Willie Proudfit Came Home," Warren again shows the importance of a right relation to nature, a theme very important in regional literature and one ignored in proletarian literature. While a buffalo hunter, Willie uses nature to support himself, but he has never killed buffalo for sport or profit, as his partner and eastern businessmen have. He leaves off shooting buffalo when the character of the enterprise changes. Willie's most notable characteristic is that he knows himself. He knows when it is time to go off on his own or to return to
the South after years in the West. He never loses himself while living with the Indians and he knows when his time with them is up. The Indians seem to have recognized Willie's possession of himself, for they respect and care for him enough to nurse him through a grave illness and to attempt to convince him not to leave them. The best example of Willie's self-awareness is his recognition of the place by the stream as his home-to-be and his and his future wife's simultaneous recognition that they belong together. Although the story is not perfectly woven into Night Rider, this theme relates to the whole novel by contrasting with the protagonist's lack of this kind of self-knowledge. The theme is underscored by the easy and personal way in which Willie tells his own story.

The theme of self-awareness is also part of Katherine Anne Porter's stories and short novels. Hers are possibly the best stories to appear in the Southern Review, and they brought much praise to the author and to the magazine. Porter had published three collections of short stories by 1935 and had begun work on the somewhat autobiographical "Miranda" stories that would nourish the reputation first established by Flowering Judas (1930). While living in New Orleans she met Albert Erskine, the Southern Review's business manager. He became her fourth husband in 1938, and she became part of the literary community that centered in
the Review. Eudora Welty published the most stories in the magazine, but with the short novels by Porter they published, the editors gave the most space to her.36

Four of Porter’s stories revolve around her familiar character Miranda and her family. Through the pages of the Review we watch Miranda grow up. First we see her as a small child in "The Circus"; then we learn some of her family history in "The Old Order"; in the short novel "Old Mortality" we follow her progress from young girl to young woman; in "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" she is older, more worldly, more troubled.

As mentioned earlier, the chief characteristic of Porter’s work is the delineation and the balance of apparently contradictory elements. In "The Circus" Porter contrasts Miranda’s fear of and fear for the clown with other people’s amusement. The clown uses his grotesque appearance and the audience’s fear for his safety to entertain them, and Miranda is wise enough to be afraid. The reader may be sorry, as her family is, that Miranda has missed the pretty ponies and funny monkeys, but he has to recognize the soundness of her rejection of the unnatural

and deceitful clown. In "The Old Order" Porter compares the lives of Grandmother and Old Nannie and balances the claims of struggle in the past and comfort in the present.

The most important and most complex of Porter's stories are the short novels "Old Mortality" and "Pale Horse, Pale Rider." The first offers many levels of comparison. Warren discusses this story and its many contrasts in a brief article on Porter in the Kenyon Review, and his telling of the story draws out these elements very effectively. In the first section, Miranda and her older sister Maria, then little girls, hear the romantic story of Cousin Gabriel and beautiful Cousin Amy, who died mysteriously but certainly for love. In the second section, which takes place a few years later, Miranda and Maria meet the legendary Cousin Gabriel, who is a very unromantic and unattractive drunk. They also meet Cousin Amy's successor, Gabriel's second wife, who understandably resents them as representatives of Amy's memory. Miranda is returning home from school for Gabriel's funeral seven years later in the third section. From her traveling companion, her cousin Eva, a contemporary of Gabriel and Amy, Miranda gets another less flattering but equally romantic version of Amy's story, and Miranda longs for what she perceives as the reality of her family. But when she and Eva meet her father at the station, Miranda realizes that Eva and her father both belong to a
past that she cannot accept. So she promises herself not to accept any of their illusions and to find her own truth, "in her hopefulness, her ignorance." Thus Porter has set off myth and reality, past and present, and youth and age.

The contrasts in "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" are of a different sort than those in "Old Mortality" and are similar to the contrasts Caroline Gordon makes in "The Women on the Battlefield." Both stories take place during a war -- "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" during the First World War -- and both deal with war as it affects the individual. The war literally sickens Miranda -- she catches the plague (influenza) and Adam, the soldier whom she loves and who is about to be shipped out, catches it from her and dies while she is recovering in the hospital. Miranda has had to fight off death, and she lives only to discover that Adam has died and that the war that had threatened to separate them has ended. It is a fairly trite plot on the surface, but Porter turns it into something much more significant and moving. Western civilization is in its death throes too, and in its struggle to survive it too loses something very precious. Porter does not name it specifically, but part of it, surely, is the promise of persons like Adam and Miranda and what they would have been together. Miranda has survived and she realizes that the only way to continue surviving is not to dwell on what cannot be now, what has been lost. But
without the war, things are silent, empty, closed, dead —
there is time for everything now, but what everything is is
unclear.

"The Leaning Tower" also depicts the effects of World War
I but on Europe rather than on America. Charles' accidental
smashing of the replica of the leaning tower of Pisa certain­
ly symbolizes the damage done to European civilization,
and his landlady's attempt to repair her memento signifies
the attempt to repair the civilization and the lives of the
individuals that have been destroyed. The war has changed
Germany from the way Charles' friend Kuno had described it,
but we are not sure that Kuno's description was accurate in
the first place. Actually, Porter leaves it to the reader to
decide exactly how much Germany has changed. Hans, Charles'
young German housemate, is an enigmatic combination of the
Germany of the mensur (the type of duel that has given Hans
his treasured scars) and of the Germany of the Nazi party.
Hans's nationalism, however, seems to lie much deeper than
in a superficial response to the power of Hitler.

Charles seems to have learned by the end of the story
that Europe has no more to offer him than does his homeland,
America. He is never comfortable with his situation; one
suspects that Hans in the only one who really feels at home.
In one way or another, all the others -- Rosa, Tadeusz, Otto,
and Charles -- are displaced persons. Rosa, Tadeusz, and
Charles are in the wrong country; all are in reduced financial circumstances; Otto is in his native country but apart from his family. At the end of the story, Charles recognizes his emptiness, but he does not know what makes him feel this way -- he knows only that it is important. Once again, Porter has left us with a balanced, but unresolved, tension. She has used the contrasts between past and present and between rootedness and dislocation to illuminate the fragmentation of life in the modern world, the major preoccupation of the Southern Renascence.

Peter Taylor also uses the theme of a civilization's demise; however, he focuses on the Southern aristocracy. Like Caroline Gordon and Katherine Anne Porter, Taylor was connected to the Review through ties of friendship. He had studied with Tate and Ransom as an undergraduate in Tennessee and was a graduate student of Brooks and Warren at LSU. Taylor published his first collection of stories after World War II, and his first book had the benefit of a fulsome introduction by his former teacher, Robert Penn Warren.37

Although Taylor examines faded Southern gentlemen and ladies, he does so without the violence or hauntedness of

Faulkner, or the shabbiness and neuroticism of Tennessee Williams. In "The Fancy Woman," the best of his three stories for the Review, the family's fortune and plantation home are still intact. Yet the moral fiber of the head of the family has begun to unravel. It is not so much that he has brought a prostitute to the house for the weekend as that he breaks his promises to her and is dishonest with his sons. This Southern gentleman cannot even be forthright in his vices.

Taylor's stories, as do Porter's, deal with the conflict between past and present, an important theme in regionalist fiction and in the Southern Renascence. These stories and the others in the quarterly also present the struggles between myth and reality and the individual and community that figure so prominently in Southern fiction. The stories in the Review, then, are fine examples of the work of the Southern Renascence, as well as the critical values of the Southern Review. Although the ideas of the regionalists and the Agrarians are straightforward, just as the Marxists' are, the editors selected stories that suggested solutions to the problems of the modern world in preference to fiction that promoted particular points of view. Certain cultural items and ideas, tradition, custom, and community, for example, were important to the editors, but they never supported an unthinking acceptance of these things. They thought through their cultural and literary values and demanded the same from
other thinking people. The stories and the criticism in the *Southern Review* reflect this process in their themes and structure, and they inspire the reader to go through the same process himself. The ideas are presented, the tension resolved, but the decision is not made. The reader of the *Southern Review* had to think about what he had read there.
CHAPTER IV: POETRY IN THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

By the time of its demise in 1942, the Southern Review had established a reputation for publishing important short fiction, which was unusual for what was regarded as an academic journal. Outside of strictly literary circles, the Review may have been better known for its fiction than for anything else. As important as fiction was for the magazine, however, it took a second place to poetry. Brooks and Warren were downright passionate about poetry, and this passion was reflected in the contents of the quarterly. More space was given to poems, discussions of particular poets, and omnibus reviews than to fiction. During the first year of its publication the magazine sponsored a poetry contest -- it never had a short story contest. Moreover, the two special issues the magazine published examined poets, Thomas Hardy and William Butler Yeats.¹

Now that fiction has come to dominate literature, it is perhaps hard to share Brooks and Warren's enthusiasm, especially in light of the fact that most twentieth-century poetry seems unnecessarily difficult and obscure, and thus

¹ Hardy, of course, is better known as a novelist than as a poet; in the Hardy issue, however, only three articles discuss his novels.
is unpopular. Moreover, it is precisely this difficult modern poetry, that of Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, and others, that the *Review* most admired. The quarterly took all poetry very seriously and had very definite ideas about it. Poetry was more than an intricate diversion for people of delicate sensibilities or an escape for "artistic" society women. The editors and contributors, with few exceptions, believed rather that poetry is a form of knowledge.

"Poetry as knowledge" is a difficult concept to unravel and to explain satisfactorily. It is distinct from such ideas as Matthew Arnold's hope that poetry would take the place of religion, although it does have definite mystic overtones, or Wallace Stevens' desire that it would provide an escape from the reality of everyday life. It also differs from the idea that poetry should inculcate values or, to paraphrase Sir Philip Sydney, make the medicine more pleasing. "Poetry as knowledge" means that poetry teaches us about Life (with a capital *L*, if you will) in a way that religion, science, philosophy, history, sociology, and all the other modes of knowledge do not. Poetry reflects experience and examines the human condition in ways that the other disciplines cannot, and thereby it provides knowledge that no other discipline can provide.

To be sure, the editors and contributors also believed that drama and fiction conveyed this kind of knowledge, that one could speak of "literature as knowledge," but poetry
still was paramount. If they did not use the term "literature" in this way, such writers as John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate did use "poetry." In the Review, the phrases "fiction as knowledge" and "drama as knowledge" occur much less frequently, if at all, than the phrase "poetry as knowledge."

In this usage, as in the idea itself, Brooks and Warren and the contributors followed a pattern established by T. S. Eliot and greatly amplified by Ransom and Tate. Eliot had touched on the idea in some of his essays, Ransom had devoted an entire book to it, and Tate had addressed it in some of his essays. Ransom and Tate both discussed poetry as knowledge for the Southern Review. In "The Tense of Poetry," Ransom contrasts poetry and prose and the knowledge imparted by each. Ransom says both are kinds of language and therefore kinds of experience. Prose, "the language of business, morality, science," "knowledge as power," or simply "science," has become dominant in the modern age. Poetry, the language of sensibility, now in the modern age "has to torture itself . . . in order to be poetry at all." In Ransom's reckoning

\[2\] See n. 29, Chapter III, above for the appropriate bibliographical information.

poetry and science are waging a war, with science claiming objects previously covered by poetry and demanding more of people's attention. Poetry and civilization are the losers.

In "Literature as Knowledge, Comment and Comparison," Tate also contrasts poetry and science -- which he calls positivism. Positivism gives us universal "scientific" rules; poetry gives us a complete knowledge, a full body of experience. Tate maintains that poetry gives us a full knowledge that positivism cannot, and that poetry cannot be understood in terms of rules or in terms of its effect on the reader (two positivistic approaches to poetry).

That other contributors to the Review shared the idea that poetry is knowledge, at least to some extent, can be seen in articles written on particular poets. For instance, Howard Baker, in an article about Wallace Stevens, says that "poetry is a liaison between the individual and his most complex experience." In a discussion of Thomas Hardy's poetry,

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4 Allen Tate, "Literature as Knowledge, Comment and Comparison," SoR, Vol. VI, No. 4 (Spring, 1941), pp. 629-57.

5 In the last issue, the Review published a rebuttal to Ransom and Tate, "Two Theories of Poetry as Knowledge," by Francis X. Roellinger, Jr., SoR, Vol. VII, No. 4 (Spring, 1942), pp. 690 ff. Roellinger maintains that Ransom and Tate unsatisfactorily answer the positivist arguments and exalt poetry to philosophy. He says that Aristotle's definition of poetry as an imitation of life should be enough to ensure poetry's significance and that it more adequately refutes the positivists. The disagreement between Roellinger and the adherents of Ransom and Tate can be viewed as part of the larger disagreement between the New Critics and the Neo-Aristotelians associated with the University of Chicago.
Baker asserts that poetry is a criticism of life and that poetry and morality are related. Cleanth Brooks praises The Waste Land for its rendering of the complexity of human experience, a trait that Eliot shares with the Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. Other frequent contributors such as R. P. Blackmur, Kenneth Burke, and M. D. Zabel, also refer to the knowledge that poetry offers.

By looking at their later and more extensive works of criticism, one can see that Brooks and Warren especially believed poetry to be knowledge. This idea shows up in Brooks's Modern Poetry and the Tradition (1939) and The Well-Wrought Urn (1947) and in Warren's Selected Essays (1958). Modern Poetry and the Tradition merits special attention because Brooks was working on it while editing the Review and because five of its ten chapters first appeared as essays in the Southern Review. The first three chapters originally appeared as a series of articles in the first three issues of the magazine under the title "Three Revolutions in Poetry."

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These three essays stand as the most detailed statement of the magazine's poetic values -- in fact, they are practically a manifesto of the *Southern Review*’s standards in regard to poetry.  

Brooks's main thesis in these essays is that poetry is going through a major revolution, that the conceptions of what are appropriate poetic themes, language, and images are changing drastically. Poets are returning to the practices of seventeenth-century writers, the Metaphysical poets and the Elizabethan dramatists; this appears revolutionary because the new poetry differs so radically from Neo-classical and Romantic poetry, which had held sway for the previous two hundred and fifty years. Because modern poetry is so different from its immediate predecessors, it seems difficult and obscure. Some of this difficulty and obscurity, however, is deliberate and necessary if a poet wishes to write poems that speak to people in the twentieth century. Essentially, then, Brooks is writing a defense of modern poetry.

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8 Brooks is much more important as a critic than Warren within the pages of the *Review*. When Warren wrote for the magazine, it was, with one exception, as a creative artist. His important critical works were written for the most part after the *Review*’s demise. Brooks, on the other hand, is known solely as a critic and largely as a critic of poetry. "Three Revolutions in Poetry" is one of his earliest statements of his critical principles, and, because of Brooks's reputation as a critic and his position as a critic for the *Review*, I think it is reasonable to view these essays as the magazine's "statement of poetical principles."
In the first article, "Metaphor and the Tradition," Brooks contrasts the seventeenth- and twentieth-century poets, on the one hand, to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets, on the other, in terms of the types of metaphors they use. According to Brooks, contemporary critics complain that modern poets use "violent" metaphors like "the eyelids of defeated caves" (Tate), "a patient etherized upon a table" (Eliot), and "a gold-fish swimming in a bowl" (Yeats). These metaphors differ sharply from those used by John Dryden and William Wordsworth and approved by Samuel Johnson and Matthew Arnold. The Neo-classicists and Romantics felt that metaphors should "please," be ornamental, that they are "accessories." Thus these modern metaphors would seem to them to be "demeaning," overly intellectual, "tough," and inappropriate to poetry. Twentieth-century poets are not doing anything new, however -- they are using the same types of metaphors in the same way that the seventeenth-century poets did. They are using "homely" images that function integrally in their poems rather than merely adorning them -- Eliot uses etherized patients as John Donne used a pair of compasses. For the Metaphysicals and the moderns, nothing is intrinsically "poetic" or "unpoetic." The metaphor is appropriate if it works, if it functions adequately as an integral part of the poem.

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The second article, "Wit and High Seriousness," continues the contrast in terms of the play of intellect and wit in poetry. Neo-classical and Romantic critics regarded cleverness and such devices as puns as superfluous, as manifestations of the poet's lack of seriousness. Most of us are aware of how frequently and to what effect Shakespeare used puns. John Donne made a play on his own name in "Batter My Heart, Three-Personed God"; And Andrew Marvell compared lovers to parallel lines. This kind of wit is reappearing in the poems of such writers as Ransom and Yeats with great ironic effect and increased precision in expression. Writing this way had been too vulgar and unpleasant for the likes of Hobbes and Dryden -- it was considered to rob poetry of its seriousness and make it too intellectually difficult. Thus again the Neo-classicists and Romantics revolted against Elizabethan practice and in turn were themselves rejected by the moderns. Brooks's point is that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poets and critics declared too many techniques off limits and that the use of wit is not inimicable to serious poetry. Because they use wit and violent metaphors, the Metaphysicals and the moderns produce a sharper, more concrete, more mature, and more complex poetry.

"Metaphysical Poetry and the Ivory Tower"\(^\text{11}\) introduces Brooks's idea of a poem as an organic whole which balances discordant elements. As stated in the preceding chapter, this concept applies to fiction as well and is one of the most important aspects of the whole body cf Brooks's criticism. A poetry in which structure, imagery, language and statement are fused, and in which "heterogeneous ideas [are] yoked by violence together" (Samuel Johnson's description of metaphysical poetry) is more desirable to Brooks because it is more complicated and more true to life.

The balancing of conflicting ideas raises the question of poetry's relation to truth and its purpose. Good poetry does not exclude items because they do not fit into a doctrinal framework -- it is putting limits on experience if it does. Truth in poetry, for Brooks, does not mean whatever truth inheres in a particular doctrine. Poetry that expresses doctrines is didactic and such poetry is propaganda, according to Brooks, and oversimplifies experience. Whatever statements a poem makes must be integrated within the structure of the poem and must be able to stand up to "ironical contemplation." Only a tough poetry liberates the imagination and does justice to the complexity of the human predicament.

These revolutions in poetry are not simply changes in
taste and technique for Brooks -- they are part of the in-
tellectual history of the Western world. The first and sec-
ond revolutions, those of the Neo-classicists and later the
Romantics against the Metaphysicals and Elizabethans, reflect
the rise of the scientific spirit and the beginning of what
Eliot called the "dissociation of sensibility." The third
revolution, that of the moderns against the Neo-classicists
and the Romantics, is actually more traditional and is at-
ttempting to repair the damage caused by the first two.\(^{12}\)

Brooks states his preferences very clearly -- the qual-
ities of Metaphysical and modern poetry are superior to those
of Neo-classical and Romantic poetry (although bad poetry of
the former types exists, as does good poetry of the latter
types). In addition to these more general preferences, Brooks
points out his favorite poets: Donne, Marvell, Eliot, Yeats,
Ransom, Tate, and Warren. He mentions Stevens, Hart Crane,
and Theodore Roethke as well, but they receive a good deal
less attention. A list of Brooks's "heroes" would also in-
clude Shakespeare. As for Warren, his list would resemble

\(^{12}\) Modern Poetry and the Tradition did not meet with unani-
mous praise, even from those predisposed to agree with Brooks.
Ransom thought that Brooks had drawn his lines too boldly and
questioned his readings of Hobbes and Coleridge. Ransom,
"Apologia for Modernism" and The New Criticism. Brooks's
analysis of Coleridge in particular has come under fire. Cf.
Anthony Tassin, O.S.B., "The Phoenix and the Urn: The Literary
Theory and Criticism of Cleanth Brooks (unpublished Ph.D. diss,
Louisiana State University, 1966). Most critics, however, were
willing to admit that, whatever his poetics, Brooks is one of
the finest interpreters of specific poems.
Brooks's but would give some prominence to Dante, Milton, Keats, and Coleridge.13

Such lists are only suggestive; in no way do they imply that Brooks and Warren regarded all other poets as unworthy or their favorites as faultless. But they did prefer a certain kind of poetry and that is the poetry the Review talked about and published: modern poetry -- difficult, allusive, and intellectually tough, a poetry that reflected the condition of modern man.

In its discussions of specific poets, the Review gave the most attention to two moderns, Hardy and Yeats. Both men had entire issues dedicated to their work, and Yeats was occasionally discussed in other issues. The Review published the Thomas Hardy Centennial Number in the summer of 1940; among those examining his poetry were frequent contributors to the magazine -- Ransom, Tate, R. P. Blackmur, Howard Baker, Delmore Schwartz, and M. D. Zabel. W. H. Auden, F. R. Leavis, Bonamy Dobree, and Jacques Barzun also offered criticism. The poet who emerged from the various analyses was a modern man uncomfortable in the modern world, an artist who had a great concern for the people being run over by that world, a poet attached to a traditional society but isolated from poetic

13 These "lists" are derived from essays by Brooks and Warren, works about them, and interviews and letters. The lists are certainly not exhaustive, but they should give some kind of indication of Brooks's and Warren's tastes in poetry.
tradition and intellectually convinced of the scientific beliefs of the late nineteenth century.

Much of the discussion of Hardy's poetry examined the effect of his philosophy of meliorism on his poems. Hardy claimed that he was not a determinist like Darwin or Nietzsche; while much of life was fated, he believed, people could improve their world. The extent of Hardy's meliorism, especially in his fiction, has long been debated, but the critics in the Hardy issue agree that Hardy's beliefs had some unfortunate results for his poetry. R. P. Blackmur openly asserts that Hardy's bad poetry is that in which he applies his ideas (Blackmur calls them obsessions) to life. Blackmur would rather have what he refers to, adopting the language of Eliot and Ransom, as an anonymous poetry, a poetry that is objective rather than personal and which arises out of the poetic tradition.  

In a more sympathetic assessment, Delmore Schwartz proposes that Hardy's intellectual acceptance of Darwin, Huxley, and Nietzsche was, fortunately, tempered by inherited traditional beliefs and his own sense of history. Schwartz agrees with Blackmur that "Hardy failed when he tried to make a direct

statement of his beliefs" but succeeded when his beliefs passed into symbols that were particular and concrete.

Schwartz ends his discussion with a more general statement of the relationship between poetry and belief, a statement that reflects the basic stance of the Review in regard to what poetry has to offer:

The subject of poetry is experience, not truth, even when the poet is writing about ideas. When the poet can get the whole experience of his sensibility into his poem, then there will be an adequate relationship between the details of his poem and the beliefs he asserts, whether they are true or not.15

T. S. Eliot addresses the same idea in his essay for the special issue on Yeats (Winter, 1942). After identifying Yeats as the greatest poet of his era, Eliot praises him for being an anonymous poet who accomplishes a form of impersonality, "who, out of intense and personal experience, is able to express a general truth; retaining all the particularity of his experience, to make of it a general symbol." Yeats has rendered a great service by subscribing neither to the doctrine of art for art's sake nor to that which insists that art promote social purposes, but by holding to the "right view which is between these" and "serving his art with integrity."16

Yeats was especially admired by the *Southern Review* because, to a greater extent than Hardy, he was a poet who was very much attached to a particular culture and who produced poetry of international significance. Those who had connections with the Nashville Agrarians could appreciate Yeats's involvement with Irish politics and his efforts to ensure the continued existence of Irish culture in the face of British attempts to destroy it. Yeats was the premier example of a person whose provincialism helped make his work universal.¹⁷

The other interests that concerned the critics in the Yeats issue -- many of them the same ones who had contributed to the Hardy issue the year before -- were Yeats's *personae* and his personal mythology. To Eliot, Yeats may have been an impersonal poet, but many of the characters in Yeats's poems (Michael Robartes, for example) speak directly for Yeats; and many of his poems are next to inaccessible without some knowledge of his system of cones, phases of the moon, and symbols. The issue raised the question that has plagued Yeats's critics before and since -- how necessary to an appreciation of his poems is a knowledge of Yeats's

system and his biography? The general consensus appears to be that such knowledge certainly helps, but that the best poems, "The Second Coming" and "Among School Children," for example, can stand without it. The contributors also believe that Yeats invented his system out of need. The modern scientific spirit made it impossible for him to accept traditional religion, but, since he needed some system of belief to give order to his existence, he created one.

Outside the subjects of the special issues, the Review devoted the most attention to Eliot and Stevens among contemporary poets. One of Brooks's most famous essays is an explication of The Waste Land, published in the Summer, 1937, issue. As Brooks describes Eliot's method, the poem stands in the tradition the moderns have inherited from the seventeenth century poets and that Brooks had delineated in the "Three Revolutions in Poetry" series:

The basic method used in The Waste Land may be described as the application of the principle of complexity. The poet works in terms of surface parallelisms which in reality make ironical contrasts, and in terms of surface contrasts which in reality constitute parallelisms. . . . The two aspects taken together give the effect of chaotic experience ordered into a new whole through the realistic surface of experience faithfully retained. The complexity of the experience is not violated by that apparent forcing upon it of a predetermined

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Brooks continues his defense of this difficult poem by asserting that the poet's indirect revelation of his "Christian" material is necessary in an age hostile to such material. By making his work so true to life, Eliot is a poet and not a propagandist.

Hi Simons, in his analysis of Stevens' "The Comedian as the Letter C," argues that Stevens is as important a poet for his generation as Eliot. In this significant poem, Stevens addresses "the central artistic problem of these times, the relation of the poet to his environment and, by extension, 'the relation of poetry to the whole life of an individual and to the general society in which the individual lives.'" 20

Both these discussions reflect the poetic values of the Southern Review. One need only notice key words and phrases in Brooks's paragraph on The Waste Land to see the connection between this particular poem and his analysis of poetry in general: "complexity," "ironical contrasts," "chaotic experience ordered into a new whole through the realistic surface of experience retained." All these conceptions appear often not only in "Three Revolutions in Poetry," but in the whole of Brooks's criticism. As for Stevens, his use of the poet's


relationship to society as a symbol for any individual's relationship to society recommends him to the **Review**.

Clearly then the **Review** favored a particular type of poetry -- at least it seems particular when compared to the more general criteria the editors and contributors applied in assessing and selecting fiction. This poetry has definite characteristics. It is difficult, largely because it attempts to render human experience, which is complex. To depict experience accurately, the poet employs concrete symbols rather than abstractions, and these symbols are so fused into the structure of his work that his poems are meaningless without them. The symbols are both personal and traditional. A poet uses traditional symbols because he works in the poetic tradition, and what other poets have done before can be used by contemporary poets. A poet uses personal symbols because he lives in a new age which requires new explanations and because the poet has a particular point of view. In this way the modern poet makes his own additions to the tradition. The theme of poetry is always man's relationship to the world, and to himself; modern poetry deals with other aspects of that theme. Whereas Keats wrote about the nature of Beauty and Donne about earthly and spiritual Love, and although those great themes concern any poet, men such as Eliot and Yeats write about living in a world that has lost its faith and traditions, while Stevens writes about the saving grace of
art. The concerns of the modern poets reflect a more desperate time and a sense of irrecoverable loss.

The poetry which the Review published possessed many of these qualities. In its themes, particularly the relation of the past to the present and the need for values, and its commitment to the complex, the poetry resembles the kind of fiction the Review liked, but there are also some interesting contrasts. The "Southern" poets one might expect to find in the Review, Ransom, Tate, and Davidson, wrote very little verse for the magazine, primarily because they had all moved to literary criticism at this stage in their careers. Warren, who was writing poetry and fiction while editing the Review, published only two poems in the magazine.²¹ In fact, except for numerous works by Randall Jarrell, the quarterly published little poetry that could be called "Southern" in the way that the short stories of Porter, Gordon, Welty, Warren, and Taylor can be called "Southern." To be sure, one should hardly regard their fiction as parochial; yet the Review's poetry is more cosmopolitan and less tied to a specific place.

Among the poets whom the Review did publish were W. H. Auden, John Berryman, and Muriel Rukeyser, to name a few of

²¹ The two poems are "Letter from a Coward to a Hero" and "Ransom," both in SoR, Vol. I, No. 1. While he was at LSU, Warren published two books of poetry: Thirty-Six Poems (1935) and Eleven Poems on the Same Theme (1942). The first volume would, of course, have to consist of work Warren did before he came to LSU, but the second book would be made up of poems written or revised between 1935 and 1942.
the better known figures. The magazine also carried translations of Frederico Garcia Lorca and Paul Valéry. But the two writers who had the greatest number of poems in the magazine were Randall Jarrell and Wallace Stevens.

Stevens' reputation as a poet was already well established by the time the Southern Review was founded; indeed, the publication in 1923 of his Harmonium (which included "Comedian as the Letter C") was almost as much a literary event as the appearance of The Waste Land the year before. Harmonium is still considered Steven's best work, and it confirmed his standing a second time when it was reissued in 1931. His fame decreased somewhat in the thirties as he gave more energy to his insurance business and as his new poetry failed to match what he had already accomplished in the earlier volume. In 1942 he reemerged as a major poet with the publication of Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction, and his reputation grew in the early fifties when he received the Pulitzer Prize and his collected poems were published. He died of cancer in 1955.22

Stevens' poems in the Southern Review come in the middle

period between his major accomplishments. "The Old Woman and the Statue" was published in the first issue (July, 1935), and the twelve poems in "Canonica" appeared in the Fall, 1938, issue. All are short, generally about thirty lines, usually with short stanzas, in blank and free verse. They express Stevens' major theme of the conflict between art and what Stevens called the life of the quotidian, the life of day-to-day reality. Stevens experienced this struggle intimately, for he led what many have called a double life -- a life severely divided between being a modern poet and being the vice president of the Hartford Insurance Company.

In "The Poems of Our Climate" from "Canonica" Stevens expounds on this theme and uses some of his recurring symbols:

I

Clear water in a brilliant bowl,
Pink and white carnations. The light
In the room more like a snowy air,
Reflecting snow. A newly-fallen snow
At the end of winter when afternoons return.
Pink and white carnations -- one desires
So much more than that. The day itself
Is simplified: a bowl of white,
Cold, a cold porcelain, low and round,
With nothing more than the carnations there.

II

Say even that this complete simplicity
Stripped one of all one's torments, concealed
The evilly compounded, vital I
And made it fresh in a world of white,
A world of clear water, brilliant-edged,
Still one would want more, one would need more,
More than a world of white and snowy scents.
There would still remain the never-resting mind,
So that one would want to escape, come back
To what had been so long composed.
The imperfect is our paradise.
Note that, in this bitterness, delight,
Since the imperfect is so hot in us,
Lies in the flawed words and stubborn sounds.

Stevens maintains that people want and need more than bare reality, here embodied in the pink and white carnations in the white bowl. Stevens often uses colorlessness as a symbol for reality, and nothing could be more colorless than the whiteness of the bowl or the clearness of the water. The season of winter and the feeling of cold are other symbols that Stevens employs to represent reality stripped of the imagination. One needs more than life simplified to cold, stark reality; one needs more than the simple fact of the carnations sitting in a bowl. The carnations must be something else besides mere flowers in a white porcelain bowl -- something that the imagination can make them be.

Even if life reduced to this simplicity could promise an end to torment, an end to personal evil, the speaker would still want more. The mind would want to escape such an existence and return to what had been composed before reality had been stripped of the imagination, to the poetry, the music, and the painting that had created up until then. That imperfect life, reality embellished and transformed by the imagination, is paradise. One should realize that because
of our imperfection, our pleasure, that is, the life of the imagination, is also imperfect. Poetry and rhetoric (words and sounds), key expressions of the imagination for Stevens, are themselves flawed and stubborn. But the imperfect, our paradise, is hot in contrast to the coldness of simplified reality.

The way Stevens uses his metaphors in this poem exemplifies the principles which Brooks laid down in "Three Revolutions in Poetry." "Pink and white carnations in a white porcelain bowl" is a lovely image -- the Neo-classicists would certainly attest to its "beauty." But Stevens does not intend for the carnations to be beautiful. They are the reality he is describing, and as such they are cold and barren. The lovely image functions as a symbol of a kind of emptiness, an unfulfilled existence, of reality untouched by imagination. The technique reverses the poetic process as described by eighteenth-century critics, and thus pink and white carnations become a violent metaphor.

Stevens also makes this metaphor an integral part of the poem. The carnations and the bowl do not serve merely as decoration, or as the sugar-coating for a lesson about life; rather, they are the meaning of the poem. The stark simplicity of the carnations in a bowl is precisely what Stevens wishes to represent. The poem would make no sense without that image, and that specific image conveys the meaning in
a remarkably vivid way, in a way that another image could not. Moreover, the image is particular, it is concrete. Stevens does not present an abstract statement of the nature of reality, but a picture of familiar objects seen from a certain novel point of view. This picture reveals to the reader what Stevens thinks about reality divorced from imagination.

Stevens was probably the most important poet the Southern Review published. But the magazine also introduced the poems of newcomers, just as it had published the short stories of young writers such as Eudora Welty and Peter Taylor. Among these young poets were John Berryman and Muriel Rukeyser, but the best known was Randall Jarrell. Jarrell, like Welty, first became known through his work in the Review. He was twenty-one when his first poems for the magazine appeared, and about half of the poems he contributed to the Review are included in his earliest volume of verse, Blood for a Stranger (1942). Just as newcomer Welty had more short stories in the quarterly than anyone else, Jarrell had more poems -- twenty-two.

Jarrell was born in Nashville, but spent part of his childhood in southern California. He returned to Nashville as a teenager, graduated from high school there, and then went on to Vanderbilt where he received a B.S. in psychology and where he met John Crowe Ransom. Through Ransom he met
Tate, Davidson, Warren, and Peter Taylor (who became a close friend). Jarrell worked on an M.A. in English at Vanderbilt and followed Ransom to Kenyon when the older man left Vanderbilt for the Ohio college in 1937. From 1942 to 1946 Jarrell served in the Army Air Force as a flight instructor, and this experience was incorporated into work for his second, and perhaps best known, volume of poetry, *Little Friend, Little Friend* (1945). In 1947, he began teaching at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, which, except for occasional professorships and fellowships, remained his academic home. He received the National Book Award for poetry in 1960 for *The Woman at the Washington Zoo*. By the time of his death in 1965 (he was struck by an automobile while he was out walking), Jarrell was well known as a poet, novelist, critic, translator, and writer of children's books.23

The first issue of the *Southern Review* contained, along with the only poems by Warren the magazine published, two of Randall Jarrell's. The next time Jarrell appeared (Fall, 1936), it was as the winner of the *Southern Review* poetry contest. A year earlier the editors had announced a prize of 250 dollars, plus the usual publication rates, for the best poems or group of poems submitted to them. The body of work

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had to be between 150 and 500 lines, and the manuscript had
to be unsigned. Naming of the judges was delayed twice;
finally, in the Summer, 1936, issue the editors announced
that Allen Tate and Mark Van Doren had been chosen. The
winning poems appeared in the following issue. 24

Jarrell had submitted seven poems: Untitled (designated
"1789-1939" in Blood for a Stranger), "A Description of Some
Confederate Soldiers," "The Indian," "A Poem," "Old Poems,
"Kirilov on a Skyscraper," and "An Old Song." Like the early
efforts of many poets, these verses are derivative. The un-
titled poem echoes Yeats's "The Second Coming" in both its
sentiments and imagery. "A Description of Some Confederate
Soldiers" recalls Tate's "Ode to the Confederate Dead."
Critics have also noted that Jarrell's early work imitates
that of W. H. Auden, apparently Jarrell's first great literary
passion. The judges, however, must have felt that there was
an original voice in these poems.

The untitled poem demonstrates the combination of imita-

24 The contest was announced in Vol. I, No. 2 (Autumn, 1935),
n.p.; judges were announced in Vol. II, No. 1 (Summer, 1936),
n.p. In his dissertation on the Review, Montesi states that
about six hundred people entered the contest. One of these,
apparently attracted by the $250 prize, sent in handwritten
copies of some of A. E. Housman's poems. Erskine and Brooks
sifted the good from the bad (out of two orange crates in
which they stored the entries) and sent around ninety manu-
scripts to Tate and Van Doren. Each judge made his own deci-
sion and then the two compared notes. Out of a field that in-
cluded Howard Baker, John Berryman, and John Peale Bishop,
Tate and Van Doren chose Jarrell as the winner. Montesi, "The
tion and originality in Jarrell's early compositions:

A man sick with whirling,
A sensibility brutal as a thumb:
Even the idiots clench their spoons,
Rap and call: Great changes have come.

Blood sticks to the platter;
The hangman holds the judge's seat.
Wisdom is choked with violence,
The heads can only vacillate.

Necessity like a marionette
Flops in the dust; the knitters yawn
Or hold the yarn its blood has drenched
Before the trunk -- the head grins like a dog.

Call up the legions! that monstrous child,
Fathered by Reason, the despair of Time,
Who once like an idol overstrode
The streets that glittered with his blood, --

Climbs to the long roll of the drums,
Wearying, wearying, lifts his huge head
To see with helpless and darkening eyes
The tyrant standing among his torturers.

The theme, as the dates in the later title indicate, is the death of the so-called Age of Reason, which was born in 1789 and is dying in 1939 (the poem was written in 1936). This poem is not as visionary as "The Second Coming,"; according to the speaker, any idiot can see that great changes have come. The wise respond to this situation with vacillation ("the best lack all conviction") -- they find the violence appalling, but they know that there is no alternative to the violent end of the age. Order (the "Necessity like a marionette") falls apart with no one to pull the strings. The only connecting bond is the thread of life of the age that
the Furies spin, and this thread is covered with the blood of those who have died for Reason, perhaps the casualties of the revolutions of the nineteenth century, the Enlightenment's imperialistic adventures, the First World War, and the new war looming up on the horizon. So now the age, born of Reason and heedless of Time, climbs the gallows to await its execution by the irrationality that it had attempted to dispose of.

This notion of the end of a civilization obviously resembles not only the theme of "The Second Coming," but the theme of The Waste Land and Ezra Pound's "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly," as well. Jarrell operates quite obviously in the mode of poetry as practiced since early in the twentieth century, the poetry of Brooks's third revolution. Jarrell has lent the familiar theme some personal touches, however. His language is more colloquial than that of the earlier poets. He relies primarily on one- and two-syllable words and his diction is almost conversational. Jarrell's images are generally homelier than those of Yeats or Eliot, and they carry fewer personal references than do Eliot's "hyacinth girl" or Yeats's gyres.

Jarrell's later poems for the Review concentrate on the themes of death and of the impending disaster to civilization. The travelers in "On the Railway Platform" (Autumn, 1937) do not know where they are bound or that they cannot go back where they came from because Time changes everything. The
young and unknowing waltzers in "1938: The Spring Dances" (Winter, 1939) are the ultimate products of a world "That is pressed slowly on to the darkness/ And hard conclusions of the real sea." The diver in "The Iceberg" (Summer, 1941) is confronted by the lifelessness of the floe as he sees it underwater and finds that it is just a lifeless above the surface in spite of its different appearance. In these poems, it seems that Jarrell is finding his own voice and depending less upon his predecessors. "The Iceberg" is a particularly compelling poem: Jarrell draws a disquieting contrast between what the diver sees underwater and what he sees back on the surface, and the descriptions make the diver's dilemma very vivid. As death haunts the diver, so the poem haunts the reader.

In these poems, Jarrell had begun to deal with the themes that would characterize his work in _Little Friend, Little Friend_, the book that signified his arrival as an important poet. Like Welty and Taylor, Jarrell became much better known after the demise of the _Review_. But, as they had with the other two, the editors encouraged the young poet a great deal and, in so doing, demonstrated their own ability to discern talent of a high order. If Welty can be considered the editors' major discovery in fiction (although they claim that a talent as "luminous" as hers needed no help to be recognized), then Jarrell is their discovery in poetry.
One could argue, perhaps, that the editors were more concerned to encourage new poets than to aid new novelists. Possibly they believed that the position of poetry in the thirties was more desperate than that of fiction, which is true enough. The magazine did sponsor a poetry contest and generally had more to say about poetry than about fiction. In addition, the editors went to some pains to present poetry in the most favorable manner by trying to publish a substantial amount of work by one author in each issue and by having that work accompanied by a critical article (the accompanying critical article, however, disappeared after the first few issues).

Despite the efforts of the editors, poetry did not inspire the imaginations of young Southerners the way fiction did, and the Southern Renascence is much more renowned for its fiction than for its poetry. To be sure, poetry did have a role to play in the renascence; as mentioned in previous chapters, the activities of the Fugitive group of poets greatly influenced the character of the literary revival. But most of these activities took place in the 1920s, before the renascence really got underway, and so is generally considered a presage of what was to come rather than an integral part of the movement itself. Perhaps out of their concern for the South and their concern for the survival of poetry, the best
Southern poets of the time stopped writing poems and concentrated on literary and social criticism. Tate had one and Davidson two poems published in the Review (all in early issues), but they and Ransom had written their important poetry before 1935. Although all three contributed frequently to the Review, they did so as literary and social critics. The only member of the Fugitive group who continued to write important poetry was Warren, and, as mentioned before, only two of his poems appeared in the Review.

The thirties and forties were generally less lively decades for poetry than the twenties had been. As for Southern poetry, only two prominent figures, Warren and Jarrell, emerged from the renascence. In addition, Warren as a poet has definite connections with the period before the renascence, and Jarrell has connections with the period following it. Moreover, neither is considered a "Southern poet" in the way that novelists of the period are regarded as Southern. This is less true for Warren than for Jarrell, but Warren's fiction is viewed as being "Southern" much more often than his poetry. Perhaps it is because his fiction receives more


26 The person who has spent the most time studying Warren's poetry, Victor Strandberg, has virtually nothing to say about Warren as a "Southern" writer. See his The Poetic Vision of Robert Penn Warren (Lexington, Ky., 1977). Rubin discusses
attention than his poetry, but the contrast is worth noting all the same.

The Southern Review did not share the relative lack of interest in poetry characteristic of the thirties and forties. For Brooks and Warren and many of the contributors, the health of poetry indicated the health of a civilization. If society refused to respect poetry, then it lost another means that enabled people to understand life. Poetry, for them, was central to the state of society; people needed more than the bare "scientific" facts provided by the modern world, more than the pink and white carnations in a cold, white porcelain bowl. They needed the honesty and the toughness of modern poetry. The Southern Review did what it could to encourage the reading and writing of poems and thus to keep its readers from losing yet another prized possession to the modern spirit.
CHAPTER V: THE CENTER OF LITERARY CRITICISM

In a well-known essay on the character of twentieth-century Southern fiction, C. Vann Woodward makes great claims for the Southern Review: he says, "With the establishment of [the Review] in 1935 the center of the avant garde of American literary criticism shifted temporarily to the banks of the Mississippi at Baton Rouge."¹ Other students, not so fulsome in their praise, have also regarded the Southern Review as instrumental in the propagation of the formalism characteristic of much of the literary analysis of the 1930s. John Bradbury refers to the quarterly as the successor to the Hound and Horn, a magazine of formalist criticism which ceased publication in 1934, and calls the Southern Review "an outlet for the group of Southern critics [Ransom, Tate, et al.] and the aesthetic formalism in general." Indeed, Bradbury notes that the life of the magazine coincides with what he calls "the golden age of Fugitive criticism" (by which he means the formalist literary criticism done in the 1930s

¹ C. Vann Woodward, "The Historical Dimension," p. 29. It is interesting to note that Woodward dedicated this book to Warren, and I know of at least one person who wonders if the "Burden" in Woodward's title bears more than a coincidental relation to Warren's Jack Burden.
by those who had been Fugitives and Agrarians).  Alexander Karanikas, who believes that the Fugitives-Agrarians-New Critics were anti-democratic, calls the Southern Review a "sponsor of the New Criticism."^3

Thus, the critical stance of the Southern Review has generally been associated with the movement known as the New Criticism, a name which is generally believed to have been given to the Formalist criticism of the thirties and forties by John Crowe Ransom in his 1941 volume on contemporary criticism with that title. The term has endured and is associated with a close reading of the text and a narrow conception of literature. In his definition of the New Criticism in the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, however, Cleanth Brooks maintains that close reading in itself does not constitute the method of New Criticism. Rather,

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^2 Bradbury, The Fugitives, pp. 102-103, 106-107. Bradbury is very convincing on the second point: "Ransom's two volumes of the period on literary problems, The World's Body (1938) and The New Criticism (1941), contain almost all of his major contributions to critical theory and practice up to date [1958]. Tate's Reactionary Essays (1936) and Reason in Madness (1941) similarly include the most important body of criticism yet produced by the author. Cleanth Brooks in 1939 published his brilliant synthesis of aesthetic formalist doctrine, Modern Poetry and the Tradition, a book which includes also his best single pieces of practical criticism thus far. Together Brooks and Warren issued their highly influential Understanding Poetry (1938), and their almost equally important Understanding Fiction (1943). By the end of 1942 Davidson had done almost all the literary criticism he was to do." Several of the essays in Ransom's and Tate's volumes, as well as some in Modern Poetry and the Tradition, first appeared in the Southern Review.

^3 Karanikas, Tillers of a Myth, pp. 193, 196, 200.
the method is marked by at least two other distinguishing characteristics. First, it is specifically literary, that is, it is concerned with the piece of literature solely as literature and not as a reflection of sociological or philosophical trends, or of the author's state of mind; nor does it treat literature in terms of its impact on the reader. As Brooks puts it, "the 'new critics' have characteristically attempted to deal with the literary object itself rather than the origins and effects -- to give a formal rather than a genetic or affective account of literature." The second distinguishing characteristic is "its resolute attempt to set up an organic theory of literature." The New Criticism, according to Brooks, distrusts the old dualism of form and content and asserts instead that all elements of a work of literature interpenetrate, contribute to the context they are in, and derive their exact meaning from that context. The complexity and richness which arise from this interpenetration cause critics to depend on terms like irony, plurisignation, and ambiguity to explain adequately a poem or a novel. 4

Although Brooks has arrived at a reasonably precise definition of the New Criticism, one should not assume that all new critics are alike. Some major differences exist among those who are grouped under that rubric, the most

notable being the disagreement between Brooks and Ransom regarding the organic nature of poetry. The conflicts among the new critics arise from the fact that the New Criticism has two points of origin, the work of I. A. Richards and that of T. S. Eliot; the first emphasizes semantic relationships and literature's effect on the reader, the second emphasizes literature as knowledge and its organic nature. A genealogy of the new critics would look something like this:

I. A. Richards
   /  
  |   |  T. S. Eliot
|   |  |
|   |  William Empson  Yvor Winters  J. C. Ransom-- Allen Tate
|   |  --  --  --
|   |  Kenneth Burke -- Howard Baker -- R. P. Warren-- C. Brooks

Any student of literary criticism would concede that the members of this group are fairly disparate and that some do not fit Brooks's definition of a new critic at all points. Their criticism, however, can be characterized as formal, in opposition to the sociological criticism dominating Marxist circles or the biographical criticism taught in many universities and colleges in the thirties. The possible exceptions to this generalization are Richards and Empson, who were very concerned with the psychological effects that literature has on the reader.

All of these men except Richards appeared in the Southern Review (Yvor Winters, however, contributed as a poet). In

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criticism more than in anything else, the Review established something of a literary community. Many of the same critics wrote for the quarterly several times, often upon the invitation of the editors. Ransom appeared eleven times as a literary critic, Tate ten, Baker eight, Balckmur nine. Other frequent contributors of literary criticism were Delmore Schwartz (eight articles), M. D. Zabel (five), Donald Davidson (four), Arthur Mizener (four), and John Peale Bishop (four). Brooks wrote six critical articles and Warren one.

In his chapter on the aesthetic formalism of the Fugitives, John Bradbury maintains that the Southern Review by and large reflected the critical stance of Allen Tate. Bradbury's statement merits quoting in full as a point of departure:

Neither Warren nor Brooks can be considered a direct disciple of Tate, for both, starting from Ransom's influence and gathering doctrines from several sources, developed their individual lines. But the magazine evidently was conceived as a sort of Hound and Horn with a Southern accent, and Tate, as a former [regional] editor [of Hound and Horn], must have seemed the logical authority for reference. Whether or not Tate was actually consulted in policy matters, his influence is apparent before he printed his prescription for the critical quar-

6 A quick perusal of the Southern Review papers would bear this out. Most of the letters in the files refer to work solicited by the editors and being carried out by contributors.

7 Davidson appeared twelve times in the Review. In addition to the four literary articles and the two poems mentioned in the previous chapter, Davidson wrote one general piece and five on Southern topics. This will be dealt with more fully in Chapter VI.
terly ["The Function of the Critical Quarterly," in the Winter, 1936, issue of the Southern Review]. The almost religious devotion to literature as such, the accent on close textual analysis, and the tendency toward dogmatism were so characteristic of Tate as to conjure up a vision of his image occupying the chair nominally held by Editor Pipkin.

This statement does an injustice to the non-literary side of the magazine, not to mention Dean Pipkin; furthermore, Bradbury has not substantiated any of his judgments. No doubt Brooks and Warren discussed the Review with Tate, and Tate's influence on Brooks and Warren cannot be denied. To claim, however, that he was practically the editor-in-chief is to overstate the case.

Nevertheless, Tate's article "The Function of the Critical Quarterly" is important to an understanding of what the editors hoped to accomplish through the Review. That the editors regarded the magazine as a particular type of journal is evident in their statement in the notes on contributors: "Mr. Tate, who has contributed for a number of years to the quarterlies of the United States, England, and France, gives from this experience his judgment on the function of the type of publication to which The Southern Review belongs."8 In the article Tate elaborates on ideas set down by Eliot in the Criterion, the London quarterly which Eliot edited in the

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8 Bradbury, The Fugitives, p. 106.
1920s. After noting the need for subsidization and the desirability of addressing a limited audience, Tate asserts that the critical quarterly must have certain principles, a program. It must have a particular point of view -- "it allows to the reader no choice in the standards of judgment" (the italics are Tate's).

A program of critical principles, for Tate, provides a great deal more than a standard for judging one work better than another. For such a judgment to mean anything, and for the criticism to have any real value, a program of critical principles must teach the reader three fundamentals of increasing importance: the exercise of taste, standards of intellectual judgment (which, according to Tate, differ from taste in that they are more conscious), and self-knowledge. If the criticism does not encourage the reader in self-knowledge, defined by Tate as "a kind of knowing that entails insight into one's relation to a moral and social order that one has begun, after great labor, to understand," then the judgment of which work is better has no center and is merely an exercise in composition. 10

This conception of the type of knowledge provided by a critical program stands at the center of criticism in the

Southern Review and is another element in the conception of literature as knowledge. Not only does the work of fiction or poetry teach us something about the human condition -- the thoughtful analysis of that work based on sound critical principles also gives us a special kind of knowledge. Such criticism accomplishes this goal in two ways. First, it explains what knowledge the artist is trying to impart. It reveals the author's theme and shows the reader how the author has expressed his theme -- how his symbols, his structure, and his diction evoke that theme in a particular way. Second, the critic, by means of his judgments, encourages the reader to come to his own conclusions about the value of the knowledge as related by the artist.

Tate's idea of criticism supports the autonomy of literature. The criticism he describes analyzes a work in terms of literary criteria. Tate's critic examines the plot structure, the characterizations, and the metaphors, not the political philosophy, the sociological significance, or the relationship to the personal biography of the author. Literature is important in itself and does not need politics or psychology tied to it to give it value. The insistence on the autonomy of literature has, as has been pointed out earlier, led many people to accuse the new critics of having a narrow focus. But a careful reading of Tate's essay, and others like it, shows the wider cultural concern behind the dedication to literature as literature. Tate and the other
Southern Review critics would agree with Eliot's well-known statement: "The 'greatness' of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards; though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards."11

The Southern Review followed Tate's prescription in several particulars. It was subsidized by LSU; it had a limited audience;12 it had a group of critics who contributed regularly, and it had a set of firmly held critical principles. The principles were largely those of the New Criticism. One might expect a magazine so closely associated with a particular school of critical thought to carry several discussions of theory. But although the Review did publish a few of Tate's and Ransom's important theoretical essays, it demonstrated its affinity for formalism more often through practical criticism, that is, review articles, extended discussions of specific topics, and omnibus reviews. Of course, many of the essays of practical criticism contained theoretical statements.


12 In the introduction to Stories from the Southern Review, the editors state that about 1,500 people subscribed to the magazine and that there were heavy library subscriptions. They say that the geographical concentrations were easily determined -- the middle South, New York and the East, and the West Coast. They also note that Calcutta and Tokyo each had more subscribers than Atlanta, Georgia. Brooks and Warren, Stories from the Southern Review, p. xv.
This practical emphasis characterizes the critical work Brooks did for the Review. Although long considered one of the foremost proponents of the New Criticism, he is much more highly regarded as a practical critic than as a theoretician. His best piece of practical criticism in The Review, his analysis of The Waste Land, is also a defense of modern poetry. This essay, moreover, illustrates Tate's ideas of what a critic should be doing. Brooks wrote the essay about fifteen years after Eliot's poem first appeared and after a great deal had already been said about it. In his critique, Brooks argues that The Waste Land has generally been misunderstood and misinterpreted; therefore it is necessary to start from the beginning with Eliot's basic theme (the state of modern civilization), his basic symbol (the wasteland), and his method (indirection). Having done this, Brooks goes through The Waste Land section by section, pointing out Eliot's variations on his theme, explaining the symbols and allusions, and showing how all the elements of the poem are fused. Brooks conducts his analysis strictly in terms of literary technique -- not once does he refer to Eliot's relationship with his wife or to the impact the First World War had on Eliot's generation. The business of the critic is the elucidation of literary matters, not biography or intellectual history. The result of Brooks's work is a close reading of an important poem that enables the reader to respond to Eliot's vivid
picture of the malaise of modern civilization. Thus Brooks has helped the reader to arrive at the knowledge of the human experience contained in the poem and has encouraged the reader to evaluate his own experience and find self-knowledge.

Tate and Brooks did not propose that such criticism was a substitute for reading the poem itself. Brooks has insisted throughout his career that no paraphrase or analysis, regardless of its accuracy and detail, can adequately convey what the poem does. What the critic such as Tate and Brooks was concerned about was how one part of the poem relates to another and how good poetry is determined by poetical, rather than philosophical values.

Other critics in the *Southern Review* shared this stance. R. P. Blackmur, who appeared more often than any other critic besides Ransom and Tate, agreed that the overriding concern of the analyst of poetry is poetics. Blackmur is regarded as one of the more important new critics. Brooks mentions him specifically in his definition of the New Criticism; H. J. Muller associates him with Ransom, Tate, and Brooks in an article on the movement in the Spring, 1941, number of the *Review*; in another issue Delmore Schwartz, in a review of Yvor Winters' *Primitivism and Decadence*, maintains that Blackmur and Tate are Winters' principle rivals in critical significance. Blackmur did indeed exemplify the major principles of the New Criticism as practiced in the *Southern Review*: he evaluated poetry on literary grounds, he shared the concern
for the decay of intellectual and moral authority in the modern world, and he admired modern poetry.

In an omnibus review of the quarter's poetry for the Winter, 1937, issue, Blackmur says that the first means of poetry is a principle of composition and that an acceptable philosophy without such a principle cannot be made into a good poem. Using as an example Euripides' Alcestis, a play incorporating a philosophy that was in disrepute, Blackmur argues that "any material is susceptible of imaginative actualization providing you approach it with a principle of composition and a care for detail."  

Blackmur continued to stress the importance of composition in poetry in articles on Emily Dickinson, Hardy, and Yeats. In his discussion of Dickinson, he maintains that the greatness of this or any other poet cannot be determined by anyone's abstract ideas of greatness, mysticism, or intensity. It can be determined only by the words she used and how she used them (the principle of composition). Thus, "so far as poetry goes, then, the influence of intellectual or other abstracted considerations can be measured only as it affects the choice and arrangement of words."  

These concerns were echoed by the other critics who regularly contributed to the Review. In two theoretical pieces, Kenneth Burke addressed himself to what literature teaches and to the distinction between scientific and poetic modes of discourse.\textsuperscript{15} In his article on Winters, Schwartz discussed the organic nature of poetry and praised Winters for his attempt to show specifically how the different elements of a poem are related. John Crowe Ransom lauded Winters for the same reason in another essay.\textsuperscript{16}

On occasion, the Southern Review published omnibus reviews of the year's criticism. Arthur Mizener wrote such a review for the Autumn, 1939, issue in which he discusses, among other things, Ransom's The World's Body and Brooks and Warren's textbook Understanding Poetry. In summing up, Mizener says that whatever value close reading has is vitiated by the practice of attaching great philosophical import


to sticking to the poetic text. The result, according to Mizener, is not so much literary criticism as a philosophy which encourages nostalgia for the days when things were more certain.17

In another article that demonstrates that the editors published views other than their own, H. J. Muller specifically reviewed the New Criticism. Besides discussing books by Blackmur and Brooks, Muller praises the new critics as a group for "their fine apprehension of the imaginative object [i.e., the poem], fine appreciation of the concrete poetic experience, fine criticism of purely aesthetic values." This accomplishment, as far as Muller is concerned, has been approached only by Coleridge. Furthermore, Muller congratulates the new critics for having insisted on treating literature as art rather than sociology or political philosophy. But for Muller, as for others, there are limits to this approach. To him, the new critics suffer from intellectual in-breeding and are cultivating a half-truth. Not only do they treat literature as art -- they insist that that is the only way to treat it; all other approaches are ruled out. Muller regards this as a mistake, for literature obviously (to him) has intellectual, moral, and social values. Because of their narrow view, he feels, the new critics are unable to deal satisfac-

torily with the plight of the poet in the modern world.\textsuperscript{18}

The new critics, at the very least, were guilty of overstating their case in the late thirties and early forties, and in later years some of them tempered their formalism with literary history and a concern for extra-literary values. They still emphasized the work itself, but not so exclusively as before.\textsuperscript{19} In the thirties and forties, however, the new critics were responding to analyses that for the most part ignored literary considerations altogether. The criticism of the twenties was dominated by those who approached poetry and fiction through biography and psychology. One read Van Wyck Brooks's exposition of the effect Mark Twain's wife had on his novels or Freudian explications of the white whale in \textit{Moby Dick}, rather than literary analyses of these works. In the thirties much criticism was politically motivated. A critic did not need to be a Marxist to view literature in political and sociological terms -- liberals and New Humanists also judged literature on its message.


\textsuperscript{19} The best example of this is Brooks's \textit{The Hidden God}, published in 1962. Warren's criticism is largely the product of work after he left LSU and has always been less formalistic, although he certainly focuses on the text.
The group singled out for special disfavor by the Southern Review was not the Marxists or the Freudians, but the professors, those who taught literature in the colleges and universities. The professors, according to writers in the Review, taught literary history rather than literature. A class on Romantic poetry might read the sources of Shelley and Keats or books on Romantic philosophy and never look at the poems themselves. Brooks and Warren threw down the gauntlet with their series of textbooks, An Approach to Literature (with John Tibaut Purser, 1936), Understanding Poetry (1938), and Understanding Fiction (1943).  

In their capacity as editors as well, Brooks and Warren addressed themselves to what they regarded as the problems with contemporary literary instruction. With help from John Crowe Ransom, who had begun the Kenyon Review the previous year (1939), Brooks and Warren arranged a joint symposium of the Southern and Kenyon Reviews published in the Autumn, 1940, issues of the two quarterlies. Each magazine published five articles; among those contributing to the Southern Review

20 While still at LSU Brooks published another text, Understanding Drama (New York, 1945), with Robert Heilman who was also teaching at LSU. For an analysis of Brooks and Warren's pedagogical method, see James Peter Sullivan, "A Study of the Critical and Pedagogical Works of Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1970. Sullivan thinks that Brooks and Warren's emphasis on the text leads them to an overbearing aestheticism and that they ignore the reader's response, a gross oversight, according to Sullivan, by those who would teach students how to read.
were Ransom and Tate; Brooks, Mizener, and Lionel Trilling wrote articles for the Kenyon. 21

The editors did not pull any punches. The symposium led off the issue in both magazines and in the Southern Review was preceded by an editor's note:

The lag between modern criticism and the current methods of teaching literature in most colleges and universities has from time to time occasioned comment. But such comments, though often acute and valuable, have rarely been systematic. In the light of this situation, the editors of The Kenyon Review and The Southern Review have felt that a useful service might be rendered by providing a forum for an extended discussion of the question. 22

The first article in the Southern Review's half of the symposium is John Crowe Ransom's "Strategy for English Studies." Ransom maintains that the professors have done their self-appointed job so well that they are no longer needed. They are unnecessary as researchers because there are no research projects left to do; they are superfluous as teachers because all the information they have compiled is in handbooks. But Ransom's most important point is that none of


these professors has done any original literary criticism — they have written historical and linguistic analyses and have edited older works, including the criticism of their predecessors such as Aristotle and Johnson. What the English professors should have done, according to Ransom, is write their own criticism of literature and of the earlier critics, and leave what research projects remain to intellectual historians.

This argument essentially sets the tone for the entire symposium. Tate, in the second article of the symposium, defines criticism more specifically, if in more grandiose terms, and points out the pitfalls of disregarding his conception of criticism:

The function of criticism should have been, in our time, as in all times, to maintain and to demonstrate the special, unique and complete knowledge which the great forms of literature afford us . . . . The scholars [i.e., the professors of literature] have not maintained the tradition of literature as a form of knowledge; by looking at it as merely one among many forms of social and political expression, they will have no defense against the censors of the power state, or against the hidden censors of the pressure group. 23

The three articles that followed those of Ransom and Tate expounded on the same themes. Joe Horrell, a graduate student in the LSU Department of English, agreed that the professor's

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business is to teach the student to read and evaluate literature, and the student's task is to learn this lesson. Critic Wright Thomas proposed that the way to teach students about poetry is to have them read and criticize the poetry itself, as opposed to reading about the poem or the author and his times. Finally, Harry Levin suggested that literature bears a relation to our everyday lives unaccounted for by those who would insist that it should inculcate particular social and political values. Literature can help us solve society's problems because it serves as a thoughtful examination of those problems and because it trains us in the techniques of communication.

The critics in the Kenyon Review sounded the same notes with little variation. Brooks drew a distinction between literary history, which was presently passing for criticism, and true literary criticism, which focused on the work itself. Arthur Mizener noted the same distinction and added that the confusion of literary history and criticism has led to a situation in which serious evaluation of literature is being conducted outside the academic community by talented amateurs, rather than by the reputed professionals trained in the universities. By the time the reader reached Lionel Trilling's essay, the last in the symposium, there was no missing the point: university English departments did not teach literature; they taught history, psychology, and linguistics instead. For critics who believed that literature provided a
special kind of knowledge, this was a serious charge.

Many scholars believe that the New Criticism revolutionized the teaching of literature in the forties and fifties. Critics as far apart as Alexander Karanikas, who is generally unsympathetic to the Fugitives-Agrarians-New Critics, and Thomas Daniel Young, Ransom's admiring biographer, agree that the new critics changed fundamentally the way literature is taught in the classroom, that because of the new critics, the emphases changed from literary history to textual analysis.

This "revolution" owes a great deal to the talents of Brooks and Warren as teachers and as the writers of textbooks. Having perceived a problem, they decided to do something about it. The result was a series of textbooks, two of which, Understanding Fiction and Understanding Poetry, are especially well-known examples of Brooks and Warren's critical point of view. These texts continue to be used and all of them have gone through several revisions and reprintings.

Besides manifesting particular principles, the textbooks reflect the teaching experience of Brooks and Warren at LSU. According to Brooks, the students at LSU had very little background in literature. Fortunately, however, they were very open and eager to learn, and they had few preconceived notions about the teaching of literature or about specific works.24 In their writing for the classroom, the

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24 Interview with Cleanth Brooks, August 20, 1975.
two authors attempted to provide this needed background, moving from the simple to the complex. The texts progress from more easily grasped elements such as plot and characterization to theme and symbolism, and within the discussions of each element the examples move from simpler works to more difficult ones.

The textbooks of Brooks and Warren apply the principles of the New Criticism in practice and reflect the opinions expressed in the symposium on literature in the academic setting. The insistence on the autonomy of literature and on the consideration of its form reflects a view of culture in general, not just of art or, more specifically, of literature. The concern for form in literature points to the concern for form in life. As Wallace Stevens viewed the artist's uncomfortable position in the modern world as a metaphor for everyman's alienation, so we may view the interest in the structure of literature as a metaphor for an interest in the structure of human existence, an interest in how people and civilizations order their lives. Lewis Simpson makes this suggestion in regard to Brooks's career as a critic, and the idea can be extended to the other new critics. The search for order recommends the work of those who make such quests in their

poetry and fiction to the new critics and to the contributors of the *Southern Review*; the concern for form in literature and order in one's personal life explains the admiration such critics held for poets Eliot, Yeats, and Stevens, and novelists Faulkner, Mann, and Hemingway.

The search for order also places the New Criticism, to the extent that it was practiced by Southerners, within the Southern Renascence. The necessity of forms, traditions, and customs is an important theme in Southern fiction and ties in with the attitudes toward the past and the idea of community that distinguish the work of the Southern Renascence. The distrust of "science" that characterizes Ransom's criticism, and which can also be found in the work of Tate and Brooks, also relates to the uneasiness about the present and to the agrarian themes of Southern literature in the thirties and forties. Ransom's distaste for the "platonic modes of discourse," Tate's preference for a poetry of "intension" over a poetry of "extension," and Brooks's attachment to inclusive rather than exclusive poetry, all express a distrust of positivism, which may be viewed as the philosophical expression of the modern technological age.

The literary criticism of Southerners, therefore, is a very important part of the Southern Renascence and is a comment on more than the state of a particular art form. In discussing that art form, Southern critics and the critics
in the Southern Review not only demonstrated their tastes in literary matters, but expressed well-developed beliefs about culture and the way people should live. The New Criticism is hardly to be regarded as the critical theory of the Nashville Agrarians, if only because the theory was international. But the dedication to literature as a special form of knowledge and the emphasis on the forms of literature are integral parts of the Southern Review's general view of culture, a view which proclaimed that in order for society to be healthy literature had to be respected on its own terms.

That the New Criticism manifested a cultural point of view does not mean that the new critics were guilty of the very charge which they leveled against the Marxists and the New Humanists. Emphasizing literary technique was not a subtle justification to approve of works that had a particular social bias. Critics who admired the works of Mann, Faulkner, Hemingway, Hardy, and Auden, among others, cannot be charged with political or philosophical prejudices in regard to literature. The demand that literature be examined in literary terms is a part of a more general view of culture and does not require that literature should be evaluated on the basis of its political message. It is simply that the new critics in general and the critics associated with the Southern Review in particular were concerned about other things besides literature and that all these concerns were related
to one another. While Marxists might say "everything is politics and economics," new critics would say "politics is politics, history is history, and literature is literature -- they are all related, but they are discrete forms of knowledge to be understood on their own terms and not exclusively as expressions of political dogmas." The jealousy for literature's autonomy may be viewed as a reflection of a conservative political disposition (although the example of Kenneth Burke, a Marxist, would qualify that generalization), but the new critics were much less interested in what regime held office than in the well-being of literature as a separate aspect of human existence and in the survival of civilization in the face of the pressures of the modern world.
CHAPTER VI: THE "SOUTHERN" IN THE SOUTHERN REVIEW

Many critics who have evaluated the Southern Review have seriously erred in regarding the magazine strictly as a literary quarterly. It is easy to see why this mistake has been made. All of the editors except Pipkin were literary men and associated with LSU's English Department. Most of the space in the magazine was devoted to literary topics, and this became even more the case after Pipkin's death in 1941. Furthermore, many of the pieces for which the Review is most famous are literary in nature.

Such a picture is incomplete for it neglects an important feature of the magazine's character. Those who regard the Review as merely a literary quarterly should look again at the journal's prospectus. The announcement, as published in the LSU Reveille, April 16, 1935, lists the topics the editors expected the magazine to address, and "social, economic, [and] political" topics head the list. The editors stated further that the Review would "aim at presenting and interpreting Southern problems to a national audience and at relating national issues to the Southern scene." A quick perusal of the tables of contents of the twenty-eight issues
will clearly establish that the editors successfully accomplished this goal and thus made a significant contribution to Southern and American letters beyond their mark on literature.

The subjects that the Southern Review covered run a wide gamut. The editors published examinations of the plight of Southern farmers and analyses of the trial of Leon Trotsky. Franklin D. Roosevelt's public papers and Adolf Hitler's use of rhetoric were discussed by the contributors, as were radicalism in twentieth-century France and political conventions in America. Marxists, Socialists, Regionalists, and Distributists analyzed and argued about the problems that concerned them all in the late thirties and the early forties.

The extra-literary topic that received the most attention from the Review was, not surprisingly, the South. In this the Review again reflects an aspect of the Southern Renaissance. The discussions of the South found in the magazine are part of the same trend that produced Howard Odum's Southern Regions of the United States, Donald Davidson's The Attack on Leviathan, and C. Vann Woodward's Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel. Many of the same factors that let to the writing of The Sound and the Fury and Look Homeward, Angel -- the Scopes trial, the changes brought on by industrialization, and the pressures caused by increasing urbanization -- resulted in historical, sociological, and economic analyses of the South by Southerners. To judge from the response to
Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and from Roosevelt's labeling the region as the nation's number one economic problem, it sees that the South was on everybody's mind in the thirties.

The editors of the *Southern Review*, of course, shared this concern. Warren had demonstrated his commitment to it through his involvement with *I'll Take My Stand*. Brooks wrote an essay for *Who Owns America?*, a volume that continued the discussion originated by the Agrarian manifesto. Pipkin sat on several boards and committees that discussed such subjects as Southern education and the Southern economy. Some historians have assumed that the magazine's perspective on the South was as clear-cut as its stand on literature. Alexander Karanikas and Michael O'Brien both suggest that the *Review* was controlled by the Nashville Agrarians. That Brooks and Warren and many of the contributors were former Agrarians or closely associated with them can hardly be denied. It should also be noted that ten of the Twelve Southerners who produced *I'll Take My Stand* also wrote for the *Southern Review*. The two who contributed Southern articles most

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2 The two Agrarians who did not contribute to the *Review* were H. B. Kline and Stark Young.
frequently, Frank Owsley and Donald Davidson, were former Agrarians and were the two staunchest defenders of Nash­ville Agrarianism.3

Yet these figures can be misleading. Dean Pipkin was associated with the Regionalists at Chapel Hill and solicited contributions from other Regionalists such as Rupert Vance and Benjamin Kendrick, each of whom wrote for the Review three times. Neither Brooks nor Warren wrote any Southern articles for the magazine, and, of the more than twenty essays that Ransom and Tate contributed, only one of Tate's was extra­literary. Warren's connection with the Agrarians had always been tenuous -- he had written his essay for I'll Take My Stand while at Oxford and was dissatisfied with it -- and both Warren and Ransom renounced Agrarianism in the 1940s. Furthermore, the Review's refusal to publish only the Agrarian point of view elicited complaints from Donald Davidson.4

The Southern articles in the Review, while sometimes general, are usually specific and often practical. What I have called "Southern articles" include reviews of books about the South, biographical and historical sketches, and more general analyses of Southern problems. For instance,

3 O'Brien's chapters on Owsley and Davidson are most informative on this point. Owsley contributed seven Southern articles and Davidson five.

Donald Davidson reviewed Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White's *You Have Seen Their Faces* and W. J. Cash's *The Mind of the South*; Andrew Lytle wrote sketches of John C. Calhoun and Robert E. Lee; Rupert Vance proposed solutions to the problem of agricultural tenancy.

That the *Review* was interested in matters besides literature was made clear at the very beginning of the magazine's existence. The lead article in the first issue was "Culture vs. Colonialism in America," by Herbert Agar. Agar was a correspondent for the Louisville, Kentucky, Courier-Journal and joint-editor with Tate of *Who Owns America?*; a collaborative effort of Distributists and Agrarians published in 1936, it supported the rights of personal property, especially the ownership of land.5 "Culture vs. Colonialism" is not about the South *per se*, but it expresses a theme that runs through much of the writing of self-conscious Southerners, that is, the unjustifiable intellectual dominance of cities on the east coast and in Europe over the American hinterland. Agar maintains that America must save the world from the twin despoticisms of fascism and communism, otherwise she will become a colony of the decadent culture of Europe. The characteristic that enables America to act as savior is her own unique culture which is, according to Agar, social democracy. This culture can be found not in the cities but in the rural areas.

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which represent the "real America." The claim of the cities that they are cultured because they have museums, libraries, and schools, is false and is a product of the "industrial-commercial view of culture." Agar implies that the genius of America is not to be found in New York or Boston, but in the supposedly benighted South and the presumably wild West.  

The theme of cultural colonialism also occupied Donald Davidson throughout his career and in the articles he wrote for the Southern Review. The defensiveness and insistence on the superiority of Southern modes that one finds in The Attack on Leviathan and Still Rebels, Still Yankees also characterize his Southern pieces in the Review. Davidson contributed twelve items to the magazine, at least one a year for the seven years of the Review's existence: two poems, four literary articles, one general piece, and five Southern articles.

In 1935 Davidson's reputation rested on two fairly well received volumes of poetry, on a book review page he had edited for the Nashville Tennessean from 1924 to 1930, and on his involvement with the Fugitives and the Agrarians. Unlike his associates Ransom and Tate, however, he wrote more than half his essays in the Review on extra-literary topics. The editors asked Davidson to write these articles

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because, as Brooks put it, they felt he had interesting things to say about the South. Despite his frequent contributions (after Howard Baker he appeared most often), Davidson seems to have been uncomfortable in his relationship with the Review. He was not on the best of terms with Warren and complained in a letter to Tate that Warren seemed to be avoiding asking him for a contribution. The Review's refusal to be an "Agrarian" journal also rankled him.

All of Davidson's Southern articles, including the two that are book reviews, lash out at the Northeast for assuming that it is the nation and at Southern writers who are taken in by this assumption. In "Expedients vs Principles -- Cross-Purposes in the South," his first Southern essay for the Review, Davidson says that the South has been chastised for one fault or another throughout American history, but similar failings of the North receive no moral censure. The pattern is at least as old as the abolitionist crusade and ensures that the North will feel self-righteous in its attack against the backward South. This self-righteousness, which Warren

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7 Interview with Cleanth Brooks, February 27, 1979; also see note 4 above. By 1935 Davidson was feeling rather estranged from the other Agrarians and that he was less successful a poet than Ransom, Tate, and Warren. That the others were better poets is true enough, but his sense of inferiority caused Davidson a certain amount of disappointment and resentment. Sometimes it seems that Davidson was more important for whom he knew that for what he did. See Cowan, The Fugitive Group; Rubin, The Wary Fugitives; O'Brien, The Idea of the American South; and Bain, et al., Southern Writers, pp. 114-16.
would refer to twenty-five years later as the North's "Treasure of Virtue," is infuriating enough in itself, but the truly horrible result of this constant scolding is that it "indoctrinates the South . . . with a feeling of its own inferiority and so divides the South against itself." This situation is exacerbated by "the coincidence of an over-expanded industrial imperialism in the Northeast with the prevalence of bad agricultural habits, confirmed by poverty and long defeat."^8

The way to solve this chronic problem, according to Davidson, is not to dispose of historical Southern principles as so much cultural excess baggage, as Davidson claims the Regionalists are wont to do, but to search the South's past for directions and policies applicable to the existing situation. The thinkers who have begun this task are not the sociologists at Chapel Hill, but novelists and historians throughout the South. Their appreciation of the Southern past is more valuable than the Regionalists' headlong rush into the industrial future.9

Davidson continued his discussion of Regionalism in his next Southern article, "Regionalism as Social Conscience." Davidson applauds the Regionalist assumption, which he says

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9 Ibid., pp. 655-660.
is taken over from Frederick Jackson Turner, that there are multiple traditions within America, each of which is a distinct, stable, and historical factor in the diverse character of the country. Davidson also approves of the Regionalists' search for a way to give the differing sections latitude to pursue their own interests within the framework of larger national interests, without recourse to such tactics as nullification and secession. Rupert Vance and Howard Odum, for example, have explored the distinctive possibilities of the South so accurately, says Davidson, than any Southerner would recognize the region which Vance and Odum describe from his own knowledge and feelings. For Davidson, there is no mistaking the accuracy of Vance and Odum's depiction of the Southern problems.10

There is, argues Davidson, one defect in their analyses, and it is a major one. In their hopes to serve the interests of the nation as a whole, Vance and Odum do not recognize that one section has laid claim to being the nation. If Vance and Odum accomplished their goals, they would be helping the South in the interests of the Northeast, not the entire nation. The corollary of Davidson's belief that the Regionalists have confused the Northeast with the nation is that strictly sectional planning is not necessarily a negative

approach, and that national, centralized planning is not the only way to solve the regions' problems.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 216-17.}

In his attack on Southerners who agree with the Northeast's picture of the South, Davidson focuses on Erskine Caldwell. In a review of Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White's \textit{You Have Seen Their Faces} for the Summer, 1938, issue, Davidson first asserts that all Southerners, not just certain farmers, are tenants -- that all the merchants, bankers, manufacturers, and teachers are as much tenants as sharecroppers are, only their absentee landlord is the North. Davidson then questions the extent of Caldwell's knowledge of his native region and offers a slight to the leftist intelligentsia at the same time: "One can tell that he [Caldwell] has done a little reading: he has learned about erosion; he has a smattering of Southern history -- a little less than a Georgia high school student, a little more than the average contributor to \textit{The New Masses}." Finally, Davidson decides that \textit{You Have Seen Their Faces} libels the character of the South and that the South will never be able to solve its economic problems as long it has to combat such slanderous charges.\footnote{Donald Davidson, "Erskine Caldwell's Picture Book," \textit{SoR}, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Summer, 1938), pp. 18, 19, 25.}

Davidson again praises the Regional approach to Southern
problems in the Autumn, 1939, issue. This defense of Regionalism is also a defense of the Agrarian point of view, for Davidson claims that the Agrarians, like the Regionalists, emphasized the farm rather than the plantation, democracy rather than aristocracy, and the small farmer rather than the planter. His praise for the Regional perception also condemns the class perception, which may or may not accurately describe the situation in the industrialized North, but has little to do with the agricultural areas of the South and West.\textsuperscript{13}

The \textit{piece-de-resistance} in Davidson's defense of the South is his review of W. J. Cash's \textit{The Mind of the South}. "Mr. Cash and the Proto-Dorian South" appeared shortly after Cash's death, although it was written beforehand. Its strident tone prompted the editors and Davidson to attach an endpaper to the issue conveying their condolences and explaining than they had no intention of criticizing a man who had no way of defending himself. The editors let the review stand as it was written, hoping that the readers would understand that it had been composed in good faith.

Davidson was harsh on Cash. In the review he lauds his occasional insights and brilliant writing, but, in an often Menckenesque style, he accuses Cash of being Menckenesque,

not an altogether inaccurate charge. Cash's analysis, Davidson contends, is at once too simplistic, ahistorical, overly psychology, and largely rhetorical. For Davidson, The Mind of the South is little more than the latest and the most interesting example of an examination of the South written from the perspective of the Northeastern intelligentsia. Davidson's review, in turn, is an interesting example of his attack on "South-baiters" and his militant defense of what he perceived as the Southern tradition.  

Unlike Davidson, whose position was defensive for the most part, Frank Owsley took the initiative and turned the attack upon the North. Instead of responding to the criticisms leveled at the South by supposedly progressive thinkers, he lambasted Northern society and depicted the South throughout history as the true America. Owsley had successfully used this technique in his work as a historian. His two best-known books, King Cotton Diplomacy and The Plain Folk of the Old South, demonstrate his fierce pride in the traditions of the South and his antipathy toward the North. In King Cotton Diplomacy, for instance, Owsley attempts to show that the European powers chose not to intervene on behalf of the South in the Civil War, not because they were convinced

by the rightness of the crusade against slavery (as James Ford Rhodes and his fellow historians from the North would have us believe), but because Union Secretary of State William H. Seward bullied them with threats of war and of disrupted trade, much less honorable motives. Owsley's general view of the Civil War is a premier example of the ego-centric sectionalism and faith in economic determinism that were in vogue among historians in the thirties. Owsley had presented these ideas to students at Vanderbilt since the 1920s and greatly influenced the view of the war held by other Agrarians, especially Tate.15

Owsley wrote seven Southern pieces for the Review, more than any other contributor; six were book reviews and three dealt with matters relating to the Civil War. The conflict, according to Owsley, was fought over constitutional issues and the nature of the Union. Agreeing with Charles Beard, Owsley maintained that the South was struggling to protect the nation from the economic abuses of the plutocratic North. Slavery was not the issue; rather the issue was the rights of the minority and preservation of the life of the land.16


Owsley maintained in his other *Review* articles that the struggle between agriculture and industry, between traditionalism and liberalism, persisted into the thirties. Owsley was a twentieth-century champion of states' rights and *laissez-faire* economics, though he defined *laissez-faire* in its classical sense of no restrictions and no subsides for business. He had little patience with Southern liberals who would change the South into a mirror-image of the industrial North and who would tolerate, if not join, the constant attacks on the South. He suggested that a new constitution might be necessary to restore Jeffersonian (which were also Southern) principles, and he supported a program of subsistence farming. The salvation of America and the world depended on the preservation of values which developed on small farms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and which were being destroyed by the ever-increasing pressures of industrialization.\(^{17}\)

This unreconstructed version of the Southern experience

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also found expression in the essays that former Agrarians Andrew Nelson Lytle and John Donald Wade wrote for the Southern Review. In an article on Robert E. Lee, Lytle suggests that Lee had betrayed the South by not resisting attempts during Radical Reconstruction to destroy Southern civilization, and Lytle thanks heaven that leadership shifted from tidewater aristocrats like Lee to men of the middle South such as Nathan Bedford Forrest. Wade proposed that the three figurative partners who joined forces to fight the South of John C. Calhoun were entrepreneur Jay Gould, philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, and politician Abraham Lincoln. The winner was not the partnership, but Jay Gould, whose victory destroyed the North of Emerson and Lincoln as thoroughly as it had razed Calhoun's South.  

Former Agrarians, unreconstructed or otherwise, were not allowed to express their opinions in the Southern Review unchallenged. Southern liberals and Regionalists came close to receiving equal time.  Among the non-Agrarians who wrote

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19 Former Agrarians appeared a total of sixty-one times in the Southern Review. Of those sixty-one contributions, only nineteen are on Southern topics. Southern liberals and Regionalists appeared thirteen times. For a magazine supposedly controlled by the Agrarians, thirteen to nineteen is a pretty good ratio.
for the Review were Broadus Mitchell, Virginius Dabney, and C. Vann Woodward. Regionalists Rupert Vance and Benjamin Kendrick each contributed three articles (Kendrick had collaborators on two of his). All but one of these discuss the number one problem of the South, if not of the nation, in the thirties, the Southern economy, primarily the position of the farmer. Included in these essays are definitions and refinements of the conception of regionalism in general, that is, regionalism not necessarily associated with the sociologists at the University of North Carolina. These thirteen articles constitute a more direct attempt to reach the Review's goal to relate Southern problems to the nation than do Davidson's and Owsley's pieces.

The supposedly Agrarian editors of the Southern Review were broadminded enough to include in their first issue an article by Rupert Vance, entitled "Is Agrarianism for Farmers?" Vance is definitely talking about Nashville Agrarianism and what it has to say to Southern farmers in the 1930s. Vance thinks the Agrarians made a mistake in going back to the antebellum South of the plantations. Plantation farming, like commercial farming in the thirties, is capitalistic agriculture and as such leaves the farmer very vulnerable to the whims of the marketplace. In this assertion, Vance shows a misunderstanding of the South the Agrarians admired -- except for Stark Young, the Twelve Southerners saved their
greatest praise for the yeoman farmer, not the planter. Vance then uses statistics compiled by the Regionalists to demonstrate the necessity of returning to self-sufficient family farms, of diversifying agriculture, and of ending tenancy. Where Vance differs substantially from the Agrarians is in his faith in the ability of government action, exemplified by what he refers to as the Bankhead Tenant Farmers Bill, to solve these problems. Once the solutions are reached, says Vance, the well-meaning literary men who have attempted to redress the region's economic problems "will be free to take up their rightful task -- the formulation of the cultural and social values of an agricultural people."  

Benjamin Kendrick took up the banner for what he calls the Bankhead-Jones Act in the Winter, 1936, issue. Kendrick suggests that such a bill should have been passed for both blacks and whites as early as the 1860s; it was not because the Republicans then in office were (like their spiritual descendents in the 1930s) out only for the main chance. The Republican party and the representatives of the industrial order have little interest in the well-being of any farmers, much less sharecroppers.  

In the Spring, 1937, issue, Kendrick and Marjorie S. Mendenhall addressed themselves to the South's status in the nation -- is it a region or a colony within the nation? For an area to qualify as a region it has to have a continuous identity -- a history and a tradition. Kendrick and Mendenhall think that the South has this kind of identity. They also believe that of the two major groups discussing the South in the thirties, the Agrarians have a much finer appreciation for the Southern tradition than the Regionalists. Kendrick and Mendenhall say that Odum's magnum opus, *Southern Regions*, repudiates the heritage of the Old South and "in so far as *Southern Regions* presents a viewpoint it approximates that of the 'New South' advocates of the 1890's."\(^{22}\)

Two Southerners directly associated with the New Deal's attempts to redress the ills of Southern agriculture, Will W. Alexander and Russell Smith, shared their prescriptions with the readers of the *Review*. Alexander maintained in general terms that the land needs to be made productive again and that the farmers also need to be made productive, enough so to support themselves. Smith said that we cannot right all the wrongs done to agriculture by what others have called "the Mammoth Capitalism and the Behemoth Finance," certainly

not by unimplemented thinking, but there are steps that can be taken and must be taken soon. Smith's program includes such measures as government purchase and use of submarginal lands; planned management of agricultural lands by government; the establishment of grants, loans, and cooperatives; the improvement of the average farmer's diet; and the altering of farm practices. The people must be made partners in such ventures so that the land can support them and they can become self-sufficient.²³

A young C. Vann Woodward, in a review of H. C. Nixon's *Forty Acres and Steel Mules*, takes both the Agrarians and the Regionalists to task for being extremist and romantic. One group looks optimistically to the future, the other looks nostalgically to the past. What is needed is the sort of realism former Agrarian and present New Dealer Nixon supplies in his examination of the rural South. Nixon's "realism" is evident in a review he wrote for the Winter, 1936, issue in which he states, "The debate between the 'agrarians' and their opponents is to be won by neither, for the forces of Southern life are not to be interpreted or synthesized in terms of 'agrarianism versus industrialism.'"²⁴


²⁴ C. Vann Woodward, "Hillbilly Realism," SoR, Vol. IV, No. 4
Although it hardly discussed industry per se, it should be noted that the Review did not propose to expel the oil men and steelmakers from the region, as one would think a journal controlled by Agrarians would be tempted to. Industry was not discussed probably because it was not perceived as the problem that Southern agriculture was, and the contributors disagreed as to what extent industry was to blame for the region's troubles.

The contributors did agree that the South was a special region within the country with special problems that demanded solving, and they agreed that some understanding of the South's past was a necessary component of the solution. They also concurred in their desire to see agriculture preserved as an occupation and a vocation. This desire was simultaneously realistic and romantic. It was realistic insofar as the South would obviously have to depend on farming for the larger part of its income, if only because of the dearth of existing industry. It was romantic because all these Southerners, conservative and liberal alike, believed that working the land was a dignified and fulfilling way of life, and because they

(Spring, 1939), pp. 676-77; H. C. Nixon, "The South Looks at Its Past," SoR, Vol. I, No. 3 (Winter, 1936), p. 685. Brooks says that some years later when he discovered that the Review had had the perspicacity to publish Woodward, he was quite pleased because Woodward was renowned as a historian and because he had become good friends with Brooks and Warren through their association at Yale. Interview with Cleanth Brooks, August 20, 1975.
remained unconvinced of the promises of the industrial order.

The Review's Southern articles are interesting, moreover, for what they did not discuss. Except in passing in one of Davidson's articles, essays did not deal with the race issue. No mention was made of lynching or disfranchisement; nothing was said about the chronic poverty and illiteracy of blacks. Only one essay touched on Southern politics and the Democratic party. No contributor wrote about demagoguery or Southern contributions to the New Deal. No one examined the problem of education in the South, whether it be the lack of support for public education or the difficulties of Southern colleges and universities.

It is not my intention to criticize the Southern Review for what it did not do. I doubt that these were conscious omissions. Perhaps they can be accounted for by the existence of other magazines that did discuss these problems, by the shortness of the Review's existence, by Dean Pipkin's ill health and subsequent death, and by the particular acquaintances of the editors in political and sociological circles. But it is interesting that a magazine concerned with Southern culture devoted so little space to the region's racial, political, and educational heritage.

The editors, of course, had no intention of making the Southern Review a sociological journal. At the same time it was more than a literary quarterly. The editors believed that
literature was connected to other matters; they themselves were interested in topics besides fiction and poetry, and they were confident that others shared these interests.

The Southern articles are an essential part of the Southern Review's general perspective on culture. First, they exemplify a respect for disciplines other than literature and an interest in what history and political science have to teach us. They provide a supplement to the literature in the Review, a supplement that helps in understanding culture in general and Southern culture in particular. These essays, whether written by Agrarians or Regionalists or unallied parties, all ascribe, at least to some extent, to the point of view Cleanth Brooks attributes to the Southern Review, the respect for traditional societies, the veneration of the folk, and the appreciation of the past. In this they also share the general themes of the Southern Renascence.
CHAPTER VII: THINKING ABOUT THE WASTE LAND

Throughout its existence the Southern Review's analysis of extra-literary matters involved much more than a consideration of the problems faced by the South. Indeed, the examination of those problems reached far beyond regional boundaries to other parts of the nation and to other countries. The Review refused to look at things in simply a regional framework because it believed that the ills of the South were symptoms of something besides the industrial and intellectual imperialism of the North. What lay behind the South's problems were the dislocations from which Western civilization as a whole was suffering.

These dislocations resulted in other than the economic and sociological ills of the South. They affected the arts, particularly, the Review said, literature. Many writers in the magazine put the blame for the didacticism of proletarian literature and the banality of popular fiction, for example, on the decadent civilization Randall Jarrell described in "1789-1939." Indeed, the decadence Jarrell described had been the theme for much of the fiction and poetry written since the turn of the century. Such was definitely the
case with the authors the Review most admired, Hardy, Eliot, and Yeats.

Out of their concern for the South, for literature, and for Western civilization, arose the editors' and contributors' awareness of and interest in matters such as politics, diplomacy, and philosophy. Thomas Hardy and later Robert Penn Warren had described the spider web that connects the fates of all individuals -- the editors and the contributors made the web large enough to accommodate countries and intellectual disciplines because they believed that all these things are tied together. This awareness is evident in the fact that every issue except the special issues on Hardy and Yeats included articles on these topics.

Essays were written on several subjects, but three received the most attention -- the American political system, the diplomacy that would lead to the Second World War, and modern philosophy. As disparate as these topics might appear on the surface, most of the articles had one thing in common, that is, a critique of liberalism and positivism. Discussions of Roosevelt's third term, the Munich pact, and the American Philosophical Society's symposium on American culture turned into attacks of varying vehemence on the manifestations of liberalism and positivism, the philosophies that had produced what Eliot had called the Waste Land.

Such criticism might be expected from a journal that
held the opinions on literature and the South that the Review did. It should be noted, however, that most of the political and philosophical articles were not written by those who contributed regularly pieces on the South and literature. Howard Baker, John Crowe Ransom, and Rupert Vance, for example, did not comment on foreign and domestic politics. Crane Brinton, Ernest K. Lindley, Sidney Hook, Frederick Schuman, and Lindsay Rogers were the most frequent contributors of these articles and were only occasionally joined by the likes of Tate and Blackmur. Other well-known contributors of extra-literary articles included John Dewey, Max Eastman, Max Lerner, and Norman Thomas.

Various occasions might offer an opportunity to explore the larger problems facing civilization. Many of the political and philosophical articles, like the Southern and literary articles, took the form of book reviews. The editors intended that a book discussed should serve as a point of departure for the reviewer, and most contributors took advantage of the freedom to move beyond a mere review. One group of essays was written in response to the American Philosophical Society's annual meeting, whose topic that year (1941) was American culture. Most issues carried two or three non-literary items, and as the world approached was in the late thirties, the Review published fewer Southern articles and
and more diplomatic essays. Following the autumn of 1939, because of Pipkin's illness and death, literature in the narrow sense claimed much more space than before.

Agar's "Culture vs. Colonialism in America," discussed earlier in connection with the Southern articles, led off the attack on modernism, but did so more by implication than by direct statement. The twin despotisms of fascism and communism that Agar so greatly feared could be seen as the result of the modern ethos and, says Agar, could only be fought by restoring America's true culture, the social democracy formulated and experienced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. American social democracy, he continues, is based upon tradition and private property and must refrain from imitating the decadent cultures of Europe if the world is to be saved.¹

Allen Tate made a much more direct assault on the modern ethos in the Spring, 1936, issue. Titled "A Traditionist Looks at Liberalism," Tate's essay asserts that great civilized traditions are built on certain absolutes, "points of moral and intellectual reference by which people live, and by which they must continue to live until in the slow crawl of history new references take their place." The traditionist is convinced that the facts of history prove that, although man no long lives by absolutes, he "needs

absolute beliefs in order completely to realize his nature."

Tate then defines tradition and traditional society. Tradition is "that quality of life that we have got from our immediate past, or if we are makers of tradition, the quality that we create and try to pass on to the next generation." A traditional society is one based upon both the ownership and control of property, a relationship that implies both privilege and obligation. This conception of private property differs from that of finance-capitalism, not to mention fascism and communism, for finance-capitalism, Tate says, is ownership apart from control. The result of ownership without control is the Economic Man, an abstract being who exists outside the human character. The Economic Man manipulates nature through technology, the moral man controls the technology. The mastery of technology by the moral man is evidence of "the excess of attention and love that is art, which is the symbol of man's mastery of himself."

For Tate, property is a concrete representation of a society's tradition, and when a society passes on its property, it passes on its tradition — its conception of human nature based upon a belief in the privileges and obligations imposed by property and a code of conduct based upon this

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3 Ibid., pp. 738-39.
conception. The code, besides being functional, symbolizes art and religion and man's mastery of himself as well as the productive processes. Tate the traditionist brands as immoral and inhuman a society that rests solely on its faith in economics and technology, that is, the liberal and positivistic society, whether represented by the societies of finance-capitalism, or fascism, or communism.

The Review let the liberals answer Tate's attack in a rather oblique fashion when it asked John Dewey to discuss Bertrand Russell's latest book, Religion and Science. In his review, Dewey disagrees with Russell's position because Russell pits religion and science against each other. Dewey did not believe that the answer to the present cultural crisis (even the liberals thought there was one) is a return to authoritarian values. Instead, a scientific temper is needed to apply a "patient and experimental method of intelligence" to problems. Ethics should be scientific; the world requires an "ethical theory that concerns itself with the causal conditions and the concrete consequences of this and that desire." Scientific ethics, Dewey declares, are much more realistic and effective than Russell's religious ethics.

This line of discussion was continued by the two men who

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analyzed domestic politics for the *Review*, John T. Flynn and Ernest K. Lindley. Both men wrote two essays on some specific aspect of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration. Flynn examined Roosevelt's second term and his relationship with the Supreme Court; Lindley looked at his relationship with the party system and how Roosevelt had fared in print. Flynn had some misgivings about the New Deal as well as about Roosevelt himself. He thought that the president was a man of moderate abilities who was a product of his times, not a shaper of them. As for the New Deal, it was haphazard, flawed, and served merely as a patch job on an economy that should be scrapped. Flynn agreed with Roosevelt that the Supreme Court needed reformation, but not along the lines that Roosevelt proposed. If Roosevelt's plan became law, Flynn argued, the Court and the Constitution would become vulnerable to usurpation by those who control production; that would lead to fascism. Ideally, the Court exists to check executive and legislative tyranny, but the problem in 1937 was that the Court was ruling on social and economic matters over which, according to Flynn, it had no jurisdiction.


Lindley was much less critical of Roosevelt. His opinions of the president were formed through a career of covering Roosevelt since his first campaign for governor for the New York Herald Tribune and through gathering material for three books on Roosevelt. In his discussion of the party system, Lindley applauded the president, the New Deal, and the Roosevelt coalition. He liked the Democratic party's broader base and its increased responsiveness to the electorate. He hoped that the coalition would continue and that the Republican party had learned not to represent the interests of only one group, no matter how powerful. Lindley also rendered an apology for the inconsistencies and uncertainties in Roosevelt's public papers -- the conflicts and contradictions do not reflect an illogical mind but result from the vagaries of a movement and a time. While Flynn devolved Roosevelt as a product of the times, Lindley thought that this was only to be expected. While Flynn suggested that the American system by junked, Lindley praised the New Deal reforms for their effectiveness and their outreach, implying that the system as corrected was all right. One analyst perceived major problems in the system; the other thought that what problems existed were being


Lindsay Rogers, Burgess Professor of Public Law at Columbia University, broadened the focus to cover the international front. Rogers was the author of several books on foreign and domestic politics, and his six articles on the national government and various diplomatic crises made him the most frequent contributor of political articles. In his analysis of the situation in Europe, Rogers maintained that the inability of the democracies to deal effectively with Hitler and Stalin was due to inherent imperfections. He says in "Crisis Government: 1936 Model" (Spring, 1936) that America's problem is to find a way "to create and carry out [foreign] policies which will permit enough political appeasement to foster economic recovery." An American policy of appeasement seems reasonable to Rogers because economic dangers encourage the establishment of totalitarian governments, and, once in operation, these governments frighten those less arbitrary governments, to the point where all their energies are directed toward foreign affairs and not economic recovery. Representative governments can break this vicious circle only by not giving into their fears and dealing competently with the crisis that confronts them. The democracies need to provide themselves with enough breathing space to solve their economic problems.

The foremost example of the appeasement policy in action was, of course, the Munich Pact. Rogers, however, found the agreement reached at Munich less than satisfactory. Instead of demonstrating that the democracies were able to handle their problems, it showed them to be weak and ineffectual. The representatives of the democracies, says Rogers in "Munich: British Prestige and Democratic Statecraft" (Spring, 1939), are enfeebled by the fact that their governments have refused to make the changes necessary to deal with the new tasks that face them. The democracies have gained some time, perhaps, but they have made no substantive steps to solving either foreign or domestic problems. The parties to the Munich Pact, in other words, have not followed the advice that Rogers gave in 1936.11

To present-day analysts of the period between the two world wars, the policy of appeasement was a horrible mistake. But for Rogers, who believed that the weakness of the democracies resulted from economic crises and not a failure of will, and who did not appreciate fully the determined expansionism of, at least fascist totalitarianism, any solution of the diplomatic problems had to be reached in connection with economic recovery. This meant changes in the economic system: cutting loose the old vested interests that were

not contributing to recovery, and in the political machinery, so that the system could handle its new problems. Finance-capitalism and representative democracy, the economic and political manifestations of liberalism and positivism, as they stood in the late thirties were incapable of dealing with the situation.

In two articles for the *Review*, Willmoore Kendall expounded on the faults of representative democracy in America between the wars. The defect that first received Kendall's attention was America's faith in science. He says in "The Majority Principle and the Scientific Elite" (Winter, 1938) that science offers no value statements, but America's leading publicists talk as if it did. As a result, Americans have lost sight of the role of values in the formation of social policy and have left political discussion in the hands of a scientific elite instead of the majority.\footnote{Willmoore Kendall, "The Majority Principle and the Scientific Elite," SoR, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Winter, 1938), p. 472. Kendall was a professor at LSU.}

From the effects of positivism on democracy Kendall in his next article moved to the problems caused by centralization. Just as positivism led to political discussion being monopolized by a scientific elite, centralization led to the concentration of political power in an economic oligarchy which was just as free from the popular majority as an oriental despot, or the scientific elite. Real democracy,
Kendall argues, had begun in small groups and had operated on the local level; democracy was failing in 1939 because severe limitations had been placed on local governments by larger political entities. Their taxing powers were restricted and their functions controlled by the larger political units. The spread of democracy had thus been retarded and democracy was now failing. For it to be preserved, power had to be returned to the people at the local level.\footnote{Willmoore Kendall, "On the Preservation of Democracy for America," Vol. V, No. 1 (Summer, 1939), pp. 54, 59, 65-67.}

A general point of view emerges from the political and diplomatic articles the Southern Review published. Like many observers across the political spectrum, the Review's contributors believed that the crisis in Europe was produced by weaknesses inherent in the liberal code that the West had inherited from the nineteenth century. At various points in the discussion, the economic system was faulted, or twentieth-century representative democracy, or liberalism itself. One did not have to be an Agrarian to appreciate this analysis -- men as different as President Roosevelt, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Elmer More, and Granville Hicks shared this outlook.

Because of their broad conception of events in Europe, the editors and contributors of the Southern Review can be characterized as internationalists. The Review never suggested that Americans could ignore the problems raised by the
totalitarian regimes of Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini, or that these problems did not have profound implications for America. The magazine did not discuss military preparations or Lend-Lease, but neither did it question the need for the United States to become involved. Only in one article on American neutrality (by Edwin Borchard in the Autumn, 1936, issue) did a contributor to the Review propose that America write off collective security agreements, rely on international law, and depend upon an "honest" neutrality to secure the nation's survival.\(^{14}\)

The struggle with totalitarianism was obviously the most important foreign issue facing Americans in the 1930s. Another issue that exercised many people, particularly intellectuals, was the character of Soviet Russia after the death of Lenin. Ever since John Reed had traveled to Russia after the First World War, Americans had been curious about life under Communist rule, and many had great faith in the success of the revolution. By the middle thirties, the discussion had come down to a debate between the supporters of Joseph Stalin and those of Leon Trotsky. Stalinists were concerned with consolidating power within Russia and with economic progress. Trotskyites were more interested in ideological matters and the spread

of the Marxist doctrine. Trotsky and Stalin also contested for the leadership in post-Lenin Russia. Stalin gained power through a series of purges in the thirties and with Trotsky's exile. The purges and Trotsky's trial in absentia polarized party members and fellow-travelers in America.

The notorious Moscow Trials began in August, 1936, after which an international commission headed by John Dewey investigated the procedures and the findings of the trials and declared that Trotsky was not guilty. The trials and the investigation became the subject for an exchange of articles and correspondence unrivaled by the attention devoted to any other single topic in the Review. In the Summer, 1937, issue the editors published Frederick L. Schuman's "Leon Trotsky: Martyr or Renegade?," an analysis of the trials and the commission's findings. Fully aware that they were handling a controversial topic, the editors mailed copies of the article prior to publication to Malcolm Cowley, Max Eastman, John Dewey, Carlton Beals (who served on the commission with Dewey), James T. Farrell, and Leon Trotsky. The letters of those who replied were published in the same issue as Schuman's article. For the following issue Sidney Hook wrote an article in reply to Schuman, and letters by Hook, Schuman, Beals, and Farrell appeared as well.

Aaron, Pells, and Gilbert all discuss the effect this schism had on leftist intellectuals.
Schuman, a professor of political science at Williams College and a frequent contributor to the *New Republic*, had written twice for the *Review* prior to his article on Trotsky. In his first essay, "Fascism: Nemesis of Civilization" (Summer, 1936), he describes fascism as "the social philosophy and Zeitgeist of late capitalism," which can be combatted only by an international system of collective security and military sanctions. Schuman's second essay for the *Review* was a discussion of *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. The book is by and large a favorable account of the Soviet Union in the thirties, and Schuman's one criticism is that the Webbs trust too exclusively in science and organized intelligence and overlook the need for the psychological equivalent of religious supernaturalism necessary for a real revolution to take place. Schuman, a member of the Communist party, also felt that the problems liberals and Communists were experiencing were due to the positivism inherent in their systems.16

"Leon Trotsky: Martyr or Renegade?" upholds the results of the trials. Schuman agrees with the Soviet government and American Stalinists that Trotsky is guilty of sub-

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verting the revolution, as are all the others who stood trial with him. He also believes the confessions that have been questioned by many critics of the trials and that incriminated Trotsky and the other defendants. In regard to the international commission, Schuman thinks that the members admired Trotsky to the point of hero-worship and so could not be expected to be objective. The one exception was Carlton Beals, who resigned from the commission for this very reason, and Schuman singles him out for special praise. The overall tone of the article is somewhat snide towards those who are outraged by the trials and towards the commission. Schuman was convinced that the Soviet Union had successfully eliminated a dangerous element from its midst.17

Every one who had received copies of the article except Trotsky responded, two agreeing with Schuman, two opposing him, and one declining to say what he thought. The one was John Dewey, who graciously suggested that it would take another article of equal length to comment adequately on Schuman's article. Malcolm Cowley and Carlton Beals regarded the article as a sound analysis and an able statement of the case. Max Eastman -- thought of by many as Trotsky's leading disciple in America -- and James T. Farrell -- also

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an admirer of the revolutionary -- strongly disagreed. Eastman called the article a phony, and Farrell thought it ignorant, incompetent, and worthless.  

Hook's rebuttal, "Liberalism and the Case of Leon Trotsky," appeared in the next issue (Autumn, 1937). Hook, like Schuman, was a Marxist, but he was estranged from the Communist party. Hook was a student of John Dewey and had written books and articles on Dewey's work. He was a professor of philosophy at New York University and had also published works on the Marxist philosophy. The essay on Trotsky was Hook's first for the Review -- he wrote three more. In his article, Hook disagrees with Schuman on every point. The trials were a travesty of justice, the confessions were extracted by uncivilized methods, and the commission was discrete and even-handed. Trotsky may or may not have been a traitor -- Hook doubts that he is -- but his conviction by this tribunal must be regarded as unacceptable. The one guilty party for certain is Schuman, who has used wrong information and has distorted the facts.  

The letters in this issue were directed at individuals rather than articles. The editors had sent a copy of Hook's article to Schuman, who wrote back, making it clear that he did not appreciate Hook's criticisms. Hook was also given

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the opportunity to respond to Schuman's letter. Hook and Beals also exchanged letters, as did Schuman and Farrell. If the editors had intended to stimulate controversy, they certainly accomplished their goal. This is all the more interesting because the editors published correspondence in only two other issues, once in response to Borchard's article on neutrality and once in response to one of Tate's literary articles.

Hook wrote articles in three other issues, "Democracy as a Way of Life" (Summer, 1938), "Reflections on the Russian Revolution" (Winter, 1939), and "What Is Living and What Is Dead in Marxism" (Autumn, 1940). In the first essay, Hook examined democracy in much the same terms as Willmoore Kendall and Lindsay Rogers. He thinks that it is possible for democracy to function and that democratic ideals have universal appeal. For a democracy to flourish, however, those in power must be attuned to those they would govern. In addition, a political democracy must exist simultaneously with an economic democracy. Finally, if democracy is to survive the dangers that constantly threaten it, it must apply a method of critical scientific inquiry to all issues. The person who has

Correspondence, SoR, Vol. III, No. 2 (Autumn, 1937), pp. 406-15. One can only hope that the editors had a good time.
shown us how to do this, says Hook, is John Dewey. What begins as an analysis of democracy ends as a paean to Dewey.

Hook's essay on the Russian Revolution expands on themes in his earlier articles. Hook was obviously upset with the way the Soviet Union had conducted the Moscow Trials. Such a thing should never have happened in a country that had promised new freedoms and political morality under the aegis of the Communist revolution. It may be that Communism has provided economic democracy, but the "moral and material promise of the socialist ideal" will never be reached unless the economic reforms are accompanied by political democracy.

The Soviet Union and Germany had become allies and had invaded Poland when Hook wrote "What is Living and What Is Dead in Marxism." For Hook, as for many Marxists and fellow-travelers, the establishment of the Berlin-Moscow axis was a severe blow to all their hopes for the Communist revolution. Marxism as it existed in the Soviet Union in 1940 was, for Hook, more dead than alive. By the time the Second World

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23 Sidney Hook, "What Is Living and What Is Dead in Marxism," SoR, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Autumn, 1940), pp. 293-316. Aaron, Pells, and Gilbert all comment on the significance of the alliance to Marxism in America. For one important fellow-traveler, Edmund Wilson, the formation of the axis was very disheartening. Wilson had a great deal of sympathy for and interest in
War began in September, 1939, writers in the *Review* and elsewhere thought that the radical tradition as exemplified by Marxism in the Soviet Union was as morally bankrupt as the liberal tradition in the West.

The editors and contributors were further disturbed by the character of the American Philosophical Society's symposium on American culture at its annual meeting in Philadelphia in April, 1940. Speaking at the conference were such notable "philosophers" as Frederick Lewis Allen, Lewis Mumford, and Van Wyck Brooks. The full title of the meeting was "A Symposium on Characteristics of American Culture and Its Place in General Culture." Allen and his fellow participants addressed such topics as the fine arts, music, science, and the general prospects for American culture in the future.\(^2\!4\)

The symposium's definition of culture was the same as H. L. Mencken's -- a city is cultured if it has museums, libraries, and symphonies; people are cultured if they appreciate art, good books, and classical music. Culture is made possible by technological advances and material well-

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the Soviet Union and had traveled in Russia to collect material for *Travels in Two Democracies* and *To the Finland Station*. Throughout 1939 he rushed to complete *To the Finland Station*, but was not able to until 1940. The alliance made his book something of a curiosity piece and made Wilson feel that he and the revolution had been betrayed by Stalin.

being. Culture is a by-product of the standard of living and has little to do with the artistic frontiers being explored by people like Picasso, Joyce, and Ravel, or with the folk-culture so venerated by Yeats and Faulkner. By implication, any area, such as the South, that is so unfortunate as not to have museums, libraries, and symphonies is uncultured.

Such a conception of culture, of course, contradicted the ideas about culture that had appeared earlier in the Southern Review. In various articles, contributors had called culture as defined by the symposium "commercial culture," "intellectual imperialism," or, with a sneer not seen that often today, "popular culture." Brooks and Warren decided that they would respond with a symposium of their own. They hoped to answer each of the papers at the conference with an essay by a person who held opposing views. In a letter soliciting Mortimer Adler's contribution, Brooks says that the papers err both in their statements and their underlying assumptions; therefore, since "these errors are so widely held . . . they deserve the right sort of attack."

Brooks tells Adler that he and Warren plan to ask others to comment, including Howard Roelofs, Tate, Davidson, and Burke. By the time the counter-symposium was published

(Spring, 1941), R. P. Blackmur had replaced Adler, who was too busy to contribute.26

To judge from the letter to Adler, it would seem that the editors had hoped for a spirited discussion of the issues raised by the symposium. The discussion, however, was something less than that. Most of the articles are fairly general -- only one, Blackmur's "Chaos Is Come Again," addresses itself to a particular presentation of the symposium. All the contributors agreed, however, that the problem with American culture was the prevalent notion that it depended on how many people used museums and libraries or how much money communities spent to make themselves more civilized.

The titles of the articles indicate the point of view the contributors held: "Chaos Is Come Again," "Thrill as a Standard," and "Mr. Babbitt at Philadelphia" all suggest concern about the symposium's conclusions. Blackmur and Davidson worried about the democratization of culture. Blackmur was particularly discomfitted by the symposium's disregard of philosophy and theology because he believed that reason and science by themselves could not maintain a social order. Davidson thought that those who received their culture through the beneficence of libraries and radio were passive and para-

26 Tate's contribution was "Literature as Knowledge." Because it made no reference to the symposium, the editors made it the lead article of the issue and followed it with the counter-symposium. This article is discussed in Chapter IV. The anti-positivistic strain in Tate's thought serves as the connection between his essay and the rest.
sitical recipients of it rather than participants and creators. Davidson viewed mass culture as evidence of the "cultural lordship of New York City over the hinterland."27

Kenneth Burke saw American culture as a business culture, asserting that the primary motives behind raising people's artistic consciousness are financial and pragmatic. Thus, said Burke, the papers presented at the symposium were little more than sales pitches for science and technology. Howard Roelofs suggested that the commercial character of American culture induced people to judge an event or piece of work by its ability to thrill or shock. Books were not considered on their literary merits, but on their capacity for stimulation of another sort. This, too, was a passive approach to culture, one requiring no participation by the audience -- just a response.28

The Southern Review's reply to the American Philosophical Society's symposium was an encapsulation of the magazine's opinions regarding culture, expressing the distrust of technology and finance-capitalism, the cultural elitism, and the anti-positivism that also characterize its point of view.

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towards literature, the South, and the political situation in the thirties. In these articles the connection with the general point of view is especially clear-cut because the editors wanted to represent this specific point of view and solicited contributions from their regulars to do so. The fact that they were so anxious to express their opinions on the character of the American culture demonstrates their commitment to this perception and their feeling that the Review was its representative.
In the spring of 1942, the Southern Review ceased publication. The announcement in the final issue cited budget cuts and new priorities brought on by the war. Friends of the Review cited a new strain of anti-intellecutalism and a desire to rid the university of anything connected with President Smith, a desire that was a result of the scandals of 1939. The new board of supervisors removed Smith's name from campus buildings and withdrew university support from "his" magazine. The University of Minnesota offered Robert Penn Warren a position at a salary that LSU refused to match. Warren took the refusal as an invitation to leave and, even though he had just bought a house, went north.\(^1\) Cleanth Brooks stayed on until 1947 when Yale asked him to join its faculty. Albert Erskine had gone in 1941 to join the editorial staff of New Directions Press. John Palmer, his replacement, left LSU too and a few years later went to work for the Sewanee Review.

In a memoir of LSU in the thirties and forties, Robert B. Heilman, a colleague of Brooks and Warren in the English

Department at LSU, says that the Southern Review served as the focal point of much of the university's intellectual activity. Individuals, including graduate students, in several of the university's departments contributed to the magazine, and in both professional and social circles they discussed the same issues as the quarterly. Heilman thinks that the suspension of the magazine and the departure of Warren and, later, Brooks marks the end of an era at LSU, one of an intellectual excellence that perhaps has not been matched since.²

The Review itself has left its legacy. In its time it was one of a kind among academic journals for the depth and the breadth of its interests. Its only competition, in fact, for the detailed discussion of both literature and contemporary politics was the Partisan Review.³ A spate of literary journals, most of them university-affiliated, appeared to fill the gap left by the Review's demise. Among them were the refurbished Sewanee Review (done over by Palmer and Tate), the Kenyon Review (edited by Ransom, discontinued, and now being published again), the Georgia Review, and the new series of the Southern Review.

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³ Interview with Cleanth Brooks, February 27, 1979.
When the new Southern Review was on the drawing board, it was suggested that it attempt to duplicate the scope of the old Review. The editors of the new series, however, decided that that would be unwise, and the new quarterly has been primarily a literary magazine since its inception in 1965. No periodical published in 1980 at once examines modern literature, contemporary politics, and the problems of the South (or any other region) with the simultaneous care for discrete disciplines and the general culture that marked the old Southern Review.

For Pipkin, Brooks, Warren, Erskine, and Palmer, such diversity within a particular framework made sense. The character of the magazine did not arise out of the editors' pretensions to being Renaissance men -- it was the well-considered result of their belief that literature, philosophy, politics, and the fate of the South were all connected. This never meant, of course, that the Review discussed Yeats's poetry, for instance as evidence of the political and social situation in Ireland, or that it analyzed the Munich Pact in light of the effect it had on Thomas Mann's novels. But it is obvious that the editors and contributors were firmly con-

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4 This was revealed in conversations with Brooks, Donald E. Stanford and Lewis P. Simpson (editors of the present Review), and Sarah S. East (until recently the new Review's business manager). See also Simpson's article on the Southern Review in the Fall, 1978, issue of the Tri-Quarterly Review.
vinced that what was happening in the various arenas of human endeavor was due to the state of Western culture in general.

Although one cannot accuse the Review of being doctrinaire -- after all it did give space to Norman Thomas, John Dewey, and Sidney Hook -- it did have a point of view regarding Western culture. Adjectives such as conservative, traditional, humanist, and religious describe that point of view. The Review's opinions also contain a number of paradoxes, if not contradictions. Set against the quarterly's veneration of the folk is its cultural elitism. The literary critics' demand of an "anonymous," impersonal poetry led them to an ardent admiration for what many regard as the "personal" poetry of Yeats and Eliot. A supposedly narrow view of literature is an integral part of a broad view of culture. The magazine's hopes for democracy were based upon a distrust of democracy's philosophical helpmates, liberalism and positivism. Its criticism of finance-capitalism in the leftist 1930s did not move the contributors to embrace Marxism.

Despite its refusal to lean leftward, the Review was in the thick of the intellectual life of the 1930s. Its affirmation of the literary and critical tradition established by Yeats and Eliot put the Review in the mainstream of twentieth-century literature. In its opposition to both proletarian literature and professors of literature, the New Criticism was on the cutting edge of literary analysis in the
period. This critical position has been supplanted in the sixties and seventies by Neo-Aristotelianism and new sociological and linguistical analyses. Poetry and fiction, with a few exceptions, have become confessional and experimental. The New Criticism did restore the literary text to a position of importance, however, and the work of Ransom and Warren, among others, cannot be written off as out-dated because it is more philosophical than most of contemporary literature.

Politically and philosophically, the Review provided a counterpoint to the Marxism and liberalism that dominated the American intelligentsia in the thirties. The Agrarians as a group and as individuals have been accused of being fascists because of their traditionalism and their association with fascist-sympathizer Seward Collins' American Review, but that is hardly an accurate description of the Southern Review's political stance. Brooks, Davidson, and Owsley at various times called themselves Jeffersonians. Ransom and Tate occasionally expressed sympathy with Eliot's famous royalist stance, but found the idea of economic control by the state completely distasteful. Burke, Hook, and Schuman all referred to themselves as Marxists. Pipkin was a Wilsonian progressive, and Warren might be best described as a skeptical liberal.5

5 Brooks described himself and Warren in the August, 1975, interview. Davidson's and Owsley's self-characterizations
The *Review* believed that the American economic system should be based on private property, more specifically ownership of land. The contributors who commented on such matters thought that representative democracy was the best form of government and that power should be decentralized and situated in local political units. In these opinions, the *Review* opposed both the industrial orientation and the centralizing tendencies of liberalism and Marxism.

The *Review* also disagreed with the materialism and positivism that informed the liberal and Marxist philosophies. Writers as far apart as Frederick Schuman and R. P. Blackmur believed that a cultural or economic revolution was impossible without a religious experience to accompany it. The *Review's* contributors berated the claims of social scientists and technologists that science could point the way to a system of values that would serve the West as it attempted to solve its problems. The *Review* thought that science was amoral and should not have value statements attached to it, as liberals and Marxists suggested it should. Rather, the *Review* held, values came from the traditions communities passed down to their descendents over long periods of time, can be found in their essays in the *Review*. Ransom and Tate expressed their opinions in several of their essays. Pells and Aaron describe Burke, Hook, and Schuman. See the LSU Graduate Report of Spring, 1978, for a description on Pipkin. As noted in an earlier chapter, Simpson characterizes Pipkin as a Jeffersonian.
not from "scientific" experiments or dicta handed down by benevolent governments.

The contributors to the Review, unlike many liberals and Marxists, opposed the democratization of culture. They believed that movies, popular music, and popular fiction represent the debasement of taste by commercial culture. They saw the increase in museums and libraries as evidence of the culture produced by the parasitic nature of finance-capitalism -- a culture much inferior to the participatory cultures of the supposedly backward folk in the South and West. Sacred Harp songs and Indian dances were much more genuine cultural items than Cole Porter songs and the jitterbug. The way to appreciate a Hardy novel or a Donne poem was to work at them, not to store them in libraries or listen to lectures about them.

In addition to being part of the political and cultural discussions that are so much a trait of the 1930s, the Review is an important manifestation of the Southern Renascence. This aspect of the magazine should be evident to any student of American literature who looks at the list of contributors and the topics of the articles. The Review participated in all aspects of the renascence -- the fiction, poetry, literary criticism, and its analysis of the South. Perhaps the Review's most significant contribution in this respect was the publication of the early work of Eudora Welty, Randall Jarrell,
and Peter Taylor.

An intellectual community grew around the Review. The members of this community came together through different sorts of relationships, some existing simultaneously -- relationships as editors and contributors, professors and students, colleagues in different departments at LSU, and as friends. Part of the group maintained ties by direct contact in Baton Rouge; others kept in touch through letters, visits, and their work. According to Heilman, the community also included members of the LSU faculty who did not contribute to the magazine, most notably Eric Voegelin, a member of the Government Department, and T. Harry Williams, who joined the History faculty in 1941. Furthermore, the group became larger as scholars such as Louis Rubin, Lewis Simpson, Donald Stanford, and Thomas Daniel Young studied the work of those mentioned earlier and as a result formed professional associations and friendships with them. The Baton Rouge community itself was an outgrowth of relationships begun in Nashville in the 1920s. The group, of course, has changed a great deal in the sixty years of its existence, and many of the original participants have died. But some of the character and intellectual vitality of this community is still accessible in the work of those involved in the Southern Review.

When begun in 1935, however, the Southern Review was the enterprise of several young men still on the thresholds
of their careers. Perhaps because they were young the editors were willing to take more chances and to try something a bit bolder than anything since. I doubt that the lack of magazines similar to the Review in depth and scope is due to the lack of bold young thinkers of a literary bent. Although firm conclusions are impossible, one might suspect that the increasing atomization and specialization of the period following the Second World War has something to do with it. The only magazines that cover as wide a range of topics are periodicals like Time and Newsweek, and no one would suggest that they investigate any subject as thoroughly as the Review did, but then these magazines have no intention of appealing to the same readership. If one wants a literary discussion of Walker Percy's latest novel, he has to look at a literary magazine. If he wants a detailed discussion of American diplomacy, he needs to go to a political journal. If he wants an analysis of a Southern problem, he must pick up a regional historical or sociological journal.

Magazines have fallen on hard times in this era of television. Earlier sources of quality fiction and political discussions such as Collier's and Scribner's ceased publication long ago. The Atlantic Monthly and Harper's have had chronic financial difficulties in the last several years and have been able to survive, if at all, only because of "angels" who appreciate the traditions of these magazines enough to provide support. Even popular magazines such as the Saturday Evening
Post and Life have ceased publication.

The demise of magazines is, of course, related to the dominance of electronic media. Behind the rise of television and films is also a growing disinterest in the humanities among the general populace and the accompanying disappearance of the Man of Letters. Now that Wilson, Ransom, and Tate are dead, one is hard put to think of another man of letters besides Warren who writes fiction, poetry, literary and social criticism, and history. Non-academic people rarely write history and literary criticism these days. Most contemporary novelists and poets remain outside the political arena.

Although magazines and men of letters have fallen on troubled times, the Review's conservative viewpoint is being revived in this era of lowered expectations and philosophical and economic doubt. The Review's conservatism and traditionalism have little in common with the business conservatism of modern day Herbert Hoovers generally represented by the Republican party or with the religiosity of the Moral Majority party. Many thoughtful people, though, have become convinced that the liberal and capitalist promise is antiquated and that technology has hurt us at least as much as it has helped us. People in search of their roots, of religious experiences, of some sort of community life are people looking for order in their lives. This search has been part of the human experience from the beginning, and the quest has become more
desperate in recent years. It is this aspiration that the stories, poems, and articles of the Southern Review spoke to forty years ago and to which it speaks today.
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Major Field: History

Title of Thesis: THE SOUTHERN REVIEW: AN EPISODE IN SOUTHERN INTELLECTUAL HISTORY, 1935-1942

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Date of Examination:

September 25, 1980