

The most outstanding example of Faulkner's characters who has that kind of courage to be a free individual is Dilsey in *The Sound and the Fury*. She "held the whole thing together and would continue to hold the whole thing together for no reward," making a living example "that the will of man to prevail will even take the nether channel of the black man" (FU 5). In the midst of the turmoil of the Compsons; Benjy bellows, Mrs. Compson whines, Jason complains, Quentin commits suicide, Caddy becomes a whore, Miss Quentin runs off with a bigamous pitchman, and the desperate Mr. Compson drinks himself to death, Dilsey never loses her fortitude with her courage of realistic faith. She made the same response to each event, a response of love, self-sacrifice, compassion and pity. The name of the courage to elect the right and the course is called faith. Faith depends upon a special kind of commitment. It demands a certain degree of courage, to step into the adventure of real chance without establishing guarantees. Thus faith and belief in Faulkner, is a kind of courage within the individual, a courage with which one steps in actions, in undertakings which even normal prudence would advise against. As we have already pointed out man can follow Christ even to the degree of sacrificing himself as Faulkner's sacrificial characters show.

Here it is now clear that the reason why Faulkner leaves Temple uncertain is that Faulkner emphasizes the fact that Temple has long lacked the courage to commit herself in the act of faith. She clings to the hope of nullifying her past since the old sin is still too strong for her as Nancy says:

Because that would have been hoping: the hardest thing of all to break, get rid of, let go of, the last thing of all poor sinning man will turn alose. Maybe it's because that's all he's got. Leastways, he holds onto it, hangs onto it. Even with salvation laying right in his hand, and all he's got to do is, choose between it; even with salvation already in his hand and all he needs is just to shut his fingers, old sin is still too strong for him, and sometimes before he knows it, he has throwed salvation away just grabbling back at hoping. (R 239)

It has taken time for Temple to learn the very fact that faith differs from hope. According to Taylor faith differs from hope in the extension of its object and in the intention of degree:

Faith differs from hope in the extension of its object, and in the intention of degree. St. Augustine thus accounts their differences. Faith is of all things revealed, good and bad, rewards and punishments, of things past, present, and to come, of things that concern us, of things that concern us not; but hope hath for its object things only that are good, and fit to be hoped for, future, and concerning ourselves; and because these things are offered to us upon conditions of which we may so fail as we may change our will, therefore our certainty is less than the adherences of faith; which (because faith relies only upon one proposition, that is, the truth of the word of God) cannot be made uncertain in themselves, though the object of our hope may become uncertain to us, and to our possession. For it is infallibly certain that there is heaven for all the godly, and for me amongst them all, if I do my duty. But that I shall enter into heaven is the object of my hope, not of my faith; and is so sure as it is certain I shall persevere in the ways of God. (HL 167)

Hope implies doubt, while belief is doubt overcome, a fixed and unshakable truth that provides assurance of salvation. Thus Nancy has willingly made herself sacrifice for her belief. Nancy makes a living example of the concept of faith. Because faith is a living truth, not just a theory. It is not an object of analysis and calculation such as could be given in psychological or sociological terms. It is not a matter of detached observation but of involved experience. Thus Temple's salvation depends on her pursuit from then on. Peace of mind will be acquired only when she casts off all hope of nullifying her sins and involves herself in the act of faith as Nancy did. Temple says, "If there is a God to save it" (R 186). There is, and she should know that she is in a way part of Him. It is when she strives for doing good following her substance, making Christ the "matchless example of suffering and sacrifice and the promise of hope,"⁹⁸ she is on her way to salvation.

8) *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interview*, p. 132.