Images of Virginia: Allen Tate, the Agrarians, and the Old South

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IMAGES OF VIRGINIA

ALLEN TATE, THE AGRARIANS, AND THE OLD SOUTH

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

R. H. Mitchell

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes exhibited by Allen Tate, Southern man of letters, towards the State of Virginia during the period of the intellectual movement known as Agrarianism.

Agrarianism, with its concentration on the Southern past, forced Allen Tate to examine antebellum Southern society. Because of Tate's strong familial, intellectual, and spiritual ties to Virginia, his view of the antebellum South as a whole tended to focus on Virginia. This essay discusses not only his familial ties to Virginia but Tate's attitudes toward Virginia as it was exemplified by three men: Thomas Jefferson, Robert E. Lee, and Edgar Allen Poe. It is the argument of this paper that as Tate wrote his biographies of Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis and began work on a never-completed biography of Lee, he came to realize the evils antebellum Virginia possessed. Tate's final description of antebellum Virginia society and its evils appeared in his 1938 novel The Fathers. After this novel, Tate turned from the antebellum South to the Roman Catholic Church for his salvation.
INTRODUCTION

"We are what the scholars call a corpus and we are about to be studied." Allen Tate

The Southern Agrarians developed an analysis of the modern world. One of the ills of this world that they attacked is the modern tendency to indulge in abstraction. The Agrarians insisted that abstraction, the sorting out of certain qualities from concrete reality, "the religion of the half horse" as Allen Tate called it, is dangerous. It is the method of the scientist, not the artist. Where the scientist abstracts from phenomena general laws, the artist must attempt to render both the particular and the universal aspects of any moment:

At one moment we are conscious but at the next moment we are self-conscious or interested in the moment that is past and we attempt to write it down. Science writes it down one way, by abstracting a feature and trying to forget all the rest. Art writes it down in another way, by giving the feature well enough, but by managing also to suggest the infinity of its original context. 2

As Allen Tate said in 1931, "Works of history should be works of art." 3

Labelling Allen Tate as an Agrarian is to abstract certain qualities from his life and "to forget all the rest." Allen Tate the Agrarian cannot be separated from Allen Tate the Poet, Tate the New Critic, Tate the Roman Catholic. Defining Tate's intellectual community as his fellow Southern

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Agrarians does not further our understanding of his intellectual development; the most casual reading of his correspondence would dispel that notion.4

Somewhere Allen Tate the Southern Agrarian merges into Allen Tate the Roman Catholic. On the one hand, it seems logical that a man who devoted so much of his life to the defense of Western culture and its tradition should become a Catholic. On the other hand, it seems strange and perhaps even a little perverse that a man who identified himself with a Southern rural tradition would join a Church whose presence in the South has been limited mainly to urban enclaves and the Gulf Coast, and which has never successfully claimed that region as its own. The man who advocated that the Southerner seize his tradition "by violence" seems to have torn himself from it the same way.5

When the Agrarian movement was just getting underway in the late 1920s, Allen Tate wrote his friend Donald Davidson, "I am more and more heading towards Catholicism." Davidson wrote back to discourage him from conversion. John Gould Fletcher, the Imagist poet who contributed to the Agrarian symposium, also feared during 1930 that Tate would become a Roman Catholic, and wrote him letters urging him not to. As if in substitution for that Church, Tate joined the Agrarians.6

Tate had met Donald Davidson in 1918, when Tate started college at Vanderbilt University. Davidson, and his fellow Tennessean John Crowe Ransom, had just returned from the Great War. Davidson and Ransom were now members of the English faculty and writers of poetry. In 1921 they brought
Tate to the regular meetings that a group of young men interested in the arts and in philosophy held at the house of James Frank, a Nashville businessman. These meetings originated as a forum where Frank's brother-in-law Sidney Hirsch held forth. This pedantic mystic of eclectic and baffling erudition lectured the young men on his theories of a hidden universal knowledge which could be discovered by his tortured etymologies. The young men, who included, besides Ransom and Davidson, William Y. Elliot, Walter Clyde Curry, and Merrill Moore, hijacked the meetings and turned them into sounding boards for the poetry they were writing. Hirsch benignly presided over the poets, occasionally finding confirmation of his theories in a poem's metaphors.

Eventually the poets accumulated a large body of poetry—good, bad, and indifferent—and the requisite amount of vanity for publishing it. In 1922 they began their own magazine The Fugitive. It continued to be published until 1925 and was both financially and artistically successful for a magazine of its size. It published the already mature work of Ransom, and provided training for Davidson, Tate, and, towards the end of its existence, for Robert Penn Warren. After 1925 those talents connected with it began to pursue careers that took up sufficient time and had sufficient prestige that they could no longer give the magazine the time necessary to keep it going. 7

In 1924 Allen Tate packed his bags and headed north. In New York City he hoped to earn his living as a professional man of letters. In the fall of that year he married
Caroline Gordon, a novelist of considerable talent, and he was soon the father of a daughter named Nancy. In New York he met literary figures such as Malcom Cowley, Edmund Wilson, and Hart Crane, and he wrote for journals such as *The New Republic* and *The Nation*. In 1928 his first book of poetry, *Mister Pope and Other Poems* appeared.

He seemed to be well launched into a career as literary journalist. Whatever homesickness for Nashville he may have felt he kept quiet about, and he even persuaded Davidson to toy with the idea of leaving the South to teach at Columbia University. Finally, however, he wearied of the life he had chosen, for reasons that are not altogether clear—living one winter with the madman Hart Crane may have helped!

In the 1920's the South was under attack from the rest of the nation. It was pictured as a land of squinty-eyed, racist, ignorant Fundamentalists bent on lynching every black man and running every man of enlightened sensibility out of the South on a rail. New York City was the headquarters of this attack and the very magazines Tate worked for took part in it. Tate must have felt this anti-Southern prejudice sharply, and he reacted to it. He came to believe that not only did the North lack the amenities that he associated with the South, but that modern American society was rejecting certain Southern values that needed to be maintained.

John Crowe Ransom and Donald Davidson, teaching in Nash­ville, came to share this belief of Tate's. Furthermore, with some distress, all three of them realized that the South, gulled by the honeyed words of the industrialists, was on the
verge of repudiating these values too.

There were letters back and forth, plans made and abandoned, allies recruited and enemies discovered, but in the end the three men initiated a campaign to protect the values of the traditional South. The opening challenge to modern America was to be in the form of a Southern symposium, for which Davidson would serve as managing editor. The twelve men who participated in this symposium made up the core of the Agrarian crusade, but they were joined by others, notably John Peale Bishop, Herbert Agar, and Clearnth Brooks. The symposium appeared in 1930 under the title *I'll Take My Stand.*

The platform was simple. The values of the industrial world, whether capitalist or socialist, were replacing those traditional values needed for men to lead the good life. Only the rural economy could support these traditional values, and the one place in America that still maintained that traditional rural economy was the South. The so-called defects of the South were really its virtues; the South still had the chance to take a stand for tradition and to resist industrialization.

Inevitably, these defenders of Southern traditions were drawn to the antebellum South, where those traditions had been strongest. But at this point the movement splintered: there was no consensus on what the antebellum South was, except that it was better than the New South with its visions of skyscrapers and smokestacks.

When men like Donald Davidson, Andrew Lytle, and Frank Owsley looked back at the Old South, they saw a land tilled
by individualistic yeoman farmers. They spoke of "the backwoods progression" and of the "plain folk of the Old South." Theirs was a South of small farms in north Georgia, middle Tennessee, or backwoods North Carolina. Allen Tate observed that Davidson's vision of the Old South "was one without niggers. He had a South without plantations raising cotton for export. That's how he freed the slaves."  

For Stark Young the words "Old South" summoned up those fields of cotton, with the slaves working them, and the gentry in big houses on the Mississippi delta. For some the Agrarian values of manners and civility were to be found among the aristocrats. Stark Young was pleased that he had the blood of plantation owners in his veins.  

Allen Tate had such blood too. His mother's people had come from the Northern Neck of Virginia, where they had owned a plantation in Fairfax County. When Tate looked back to the Old South, he tended to see Virginia first. But he was not as smug about this aristocratic lineage as other Southerners were. Something in his vision of the Old South came to trouble him as he sought in it values to protect himself from the horrors of the modern world. Eventually the sins he found in the Old South led him to place his faith not in its values but in those of the Roman Catholic Church.
CHAPTER I

"EVERYTHING BUT KIN WAS LESS THAN KIND"

"This quest of the past is something we all share, but it is most acute in me--more so than in you, I suspect. You, for example, have never changed your scene; your sense of temporal and spatial continuity is probably more regular than mine; for since the Civil War my family has scattered to the four winds, and no longer exists as a social unit." Allen Tate to Donald Davidson, April 12, 1928

I

Donald Davidson was born in Tennessee. Allen Tate was born in Kentucky. Both of them had family ties to Virginia, a far from inconsequential fact. Kinship was a dominant fact of life in the South of their time. Andrew Lytle observed that one sure mark of the change from the rural South to urban America is that people identify themselves by their occupations, not by their homes. "It used to be," he said, "when a man told you where he was from, you would think 'Well, what kin of mine lives there?' and you'd know how to place him." Virginia Rock, author of the major study of the Agrarian movement, notes that in the South kin provide security, a place in the social scheme. In a society so highly aware of the past, one's family provides the link between the virtues and sins of the past and oneself. The sterotypical grandma jawing endlessly about her Uncle Dave is not merely Yankee fantasy. Davidson explicitly made his obeisance to his Virginia
roots. His ancestor Andrew Davidson left Clark River, Virginia, to settle in Blue Stocking Hollow, Tennessee, at the very beginning of the nineteenth century. Davidson's attempt at modern epic, *The Tall Men* (1927), celebrates those pioneers who crossed the mountains from Virginia, and this glorification of the backwoodsmen of Tennessee dominates not only Davidson's poetry but also his social criticism: for Davidson the pioneer farmer is Jefferson's yeoman farmer, the best source of republican virtue. But Davidson also paid his respects to Andrew Davidson even more directly. His poem "Heritage" (1943) is "written in memory of Andrew Davidson, a pioneer of Southwest Virginia and of Bedford County, Tennessee," his "far-off sire who notched the first oak on this western hill." Significantly, it is when Virginians leave Virginia that Davidson expresses admiration for them. The Virginia of Davidson's heritage was the place left, a resting place between Scotland and Tennessee, quiet time between Culloden and Nashville.  

Allen Tate's concept of his place among the families of Virginia was much less clear, and troubled his mind still when he wrote his memoir "A Lost Traveller's Dream" (1972). At first glance his place seems as sure and settled as Davidson's. Tate's father's people, the Tates and the Allens, had originally settled in Virginia, and then, much as Andrew Davidson did, migrated to the Old Southwest. The Allens provided the material for the story "The Migration" (1934), Tate's one literary treatment of the American pioneer. But where Davidson's accounts of such folk are admiring, Tate's is a flat
attempt at "Defoe-like versimilitude." Furthermore, this account was to appear in his never finished work "The Fathers of Exile: Imaginary Autobiographies of Obscure Americans," where it would be one in a series of narratives showing how "our forefathers made what I [Tate] . . . call fundamental errors." Tate did not make the warm-hearted identification with his pioneer ancestors that Davidson did with his. Davidson regarded those early settlers as "tall men" who have left no sons behind to match them; Tate saw them as men who "betrayed posterity."

One reason for Tate's lack of full identification with those Kentucky ancestors was the emotional pull of his mother's people across the mountains in Virginia. She was the daughter of George Varnell and Susan Bogan; it was the Bogans who captured both her and young Allen's imaginations.

The Bogans lived at Pleasant Hill in Fairfax County, Virginia, and Tate's great-grandfather was the prototype of Major Buchan in his novel The Fathers (1938). Louis Rubin, Southern literary critic, makes much of the notion that Tate's mother filled him with discontent about the decline of his proud and wealthy Virginia connections; in any case in "A Lost Traveller's Dream" he dwells on his Bogan connection but discusses his father's people not at all. Radcliffe Squires, author of a critical biography of Tate, tells us that Tate's mother always preferred to think of Virginia as the true home of the family, and apparently Tate's Virginia blood earned him respect when he first came to school in Tennessee. If Davidson was a Tennessean with Virginia roots, Tate was a
Virginian who happened to live in Tennessee. Yet Tate by his own confession lacked a sense of place. In 1955 he wrote Andrew Lytle that "Because of the peculiar temperament of my mother, I have never lived in a place, but was bounced around from one to another." The purpose of "Fathers of Exile" was to discover what his forefathers had done to leave him an exile in his own country—a condition which Tate always saw as the universal fate of man in the Western world of the twentieth century. Speaking of our ancestors, he said: "it is certain that they did not or could not leave us a seasoned way of living." He once complained to Herbert Read, "We had to pass the fiftieth year to reach the knowledge that our grandfathers had a twenty: how we ought to live." If exile is the universal lot of man today, one thing must have made dislocation peculiarly part of Tate's life, and that thing was tied up with his Virginia mother. Until he was thirty years old, Tate believed that he had been born in Virginia, when in fact he had been born across the mountains in Kentucky. It was not until an afternoon's drive after his mother's death that his father pointed out to him the house he had been born in:

A few months later I told my brother Ben that I felt I had been the victim of a shell-game. He said "You were. Forget it. We knew it all along."

It would be dangerous to make too much of this incident, but we can note that Tate felt a certain relief upon discovering he was not a Virginian by birth, for he goes on to say:

I have never felt like a Virginian—whatever it
is to feel like a Virginian—and it was a relief, accompanied by a fleeting sense of bi-location, to learn that I had been born in Kentucky. Tate was always offended by those who explained his work by reference to his mother and he insisted that private matters are not public business. Yet it is hard to avoid concluding that somehow Tate had gotten into his head the notion that to be a Virginian was to incur special obligations, obligations which he was glad to be rid of, and that the likeliest source of this belief was Eleanor Varnell Tate, of Fairfax County, Virginia.

II

"Aeneas didn't go to New York. He went to Virginia. Caesar went to New York." Allen Tate

There is yet one more Virginia ancestor of Allen Tate who might be mentioned. Tate's mother had always insisted that his family was descended from one of the original settlers of Jamestown. When Tate learned that during the first hard winter at Jamestown one of the settlers, not content with waiting for his wife to die so he could feast on her, killed her and salted her down, Tate decided he had found his true Virginia forebear. Surely he was of the line of "the gentleman cannibal" of Jamestown, who was too proud to work but not to murder.

The South as a whole had descended from that same Jamestown settlement, if not from the gentleman cannibal, and there had begun the practice of feasting on the black man's labor if not his flesh. The Old South to which the Agrarians looked to find traditional virtues was to a large extent an
extension and modification of the colony of Virginia.

From the collection of essays *The Attack on Leviathan* (1938) one can glean the outlines of Donald Davidson's vision of the colony and then state of Virginia and its relationship to its colonies of the Old Southwest. His vision, with all its lack of sophistication, is given here.

Jamestown, like Plymouth, was a starting place of the westering impulse. Those who settled Virginia must have had drives and desires similar to those who left the Atlantic colonies for the Old West. Essentially, the early Virginians were attempting to recreate England; changed conditions alone caused the rise of a new culture. Gradually colonial dependency was replaced by the self-conscious desire for self-determination. Even then, the cultural patterns remained English. Davidson believed with Frederick Jackson Turner that the American character was a product of the frontier experience, and he was quite clear in his preference for Americans over displaced Englishmen.¹²

Davidson regarded the American Revolution as the inevitable strife between an empire and its dependencies. He thought that Virginia and her sister colonies took over the exploitation of colonial outposts from the British when they gained their independence. The Atlantic states bore the same relation to their colonies to the west that Britain had borne to the seaboard colonies.¹³

For men had left Virginia to go further west. If Virginia and the seaboard South had already become an odd mixture of aristocracy and democracy, a jumble of yeoman farmers,
haughty nabobs, and black slaves, the Old Southwest would exaggerate these qualities, with its vast cotton fortunes and its rough-and-tumble democracy which appalled the East. For Davidson, the best men were the pioneers who settled his country, Tennessee, and if the best had left Virginia, who was left behind? The westerners cleared the wilderness and defeated Indians, British, and Spanish alike with no help from their home states. They learned in a hard school self-reliance and independence; they became "better Jeffersonians than the Jeffersonians."¹⁴

Even as Virginia had tried to reproduce England, these pioneers tried to re-create Virginia. Davidson thought that they succeeded better than had been realized: only the sneers of the Easterners persuaded modern Americans that these men had been ruffians.¹⁵

But then an odd thing happened to Virginia. Davidson thought that when the Virginia dynasty had control of the federal government they had no impulse to economic aggression. Virginia was an agrarian state; all it wanted of this government was to be left alone. The commercial and industrial regions of the country wanted more than that. They needed tariffs, trade barriers, and other paraphernalia which resulted in economic exploitation of the agrarian parts of the nation, West and South. When the Virginia planter elite recognized the aggressive nature of the commercial and industrial regions, which intended to enslave the farmer in the name of a spurious national interest, they also recognized the community of interest they shared with their cousins in
the Southwest. Jefferson had seen it long before: the first recognition of their common interest had been expressed in his and James Madison's Kentucky-Virginia Resolutions. In the antebellum period, Davidson believed, the East-West split lost significance in comparison with the North-South split.  

Yet the Virginians' uneasiness with their more democratic brethren to the west continued. In fact, Davidson believed that there was only one Virginian, only one Easterner, who "understood, or half-way understood, the Western democrats who were quite truly 'conquering the wilderness' and making continental America a reality." He was a man we must come back to, the man who provided the Agrarians with the fundamentals of their political thought, yet a man who also believed in much which ran counter to their tenets: Thomas Jefferson.

III

Allen Tate dealt with those Scotch-Irish pioneers and the Sage of Monticello, too, but his picture of the society created by Tidewater aristocrats presented more detail than that of Donald Davidson. Not only did his own family history force him to consider those who lived on plantations, but his whole conception of what the South's past meant required an understanding of its origins. If one American heresy began at Plymouth, a second began at Jamestown.

Tate's comments on this period of history are more scattered than those of Davidson. However, his version of early Virginia history can be pieced together, and it runs roughly as follows.
Like man, Virginia was conceived in sin. The Virginia Company established Jamestown not for the greater glory of God but for money in the purse. The modern spirit of commercial capitalism, which would lead inevitably, as machinery grew more sophisticated, to industrial exploitation of the land, the New South, and the twentieth century, was at work already in that first outpost of the British Empire.  

But gradually the quality of life in the colony changed. The gold and silver from which the colonists had hoped to grow wealthy could not be found. Tobacco brought great wealth, and tobacco tied men to the soil. An agricultural economy developed, with all that such an economy means: dependency on nature, social stability, and, man being what he is, a love of the land and a love of home. No longer did the colonists plan on riches and luxuries in London. Tate thought that they became Virginians with all the family pride and tradition that agrarian societies have:

... all those prejudices of class that the Virginians in time acquired were but the outward defenses of a great social idea. This idea was a great one because it contained in it probably as high a degree of political and moral disinterestedness as any society in the world has ever achieved.  

Tate thought that in the seventeenth century small landholders made up this society. He admitted that there were already great planters, whose holdings would grow even greater in the eighteenth century until Jefferson struck down primogeniture and entail—Tate's vision of the past was often vivid and highly personal—and that these great planters "not rising from the soil but settling down on it," gave
Virginia a full array of English traditions. Those small planters and those who grew great incorporated these traditions yet made something native of them. This interchange between the older European tradition and the new spirit of America could have made Virginian society vigorous and whole; as it was Tate still found Virginia society attractive. But Tate believed that for a culture to be healthy there must be full communication between those who work the land and those who cultivate instead the arts of government and poetry. In Virginia this communication was broken by the African slave system. Between its elite and its masses there could be no communion, Tate thought, because their cultural heritage was so different. Tate never did understand, in the way that Donald Davidson did, segregationist that he was, that much that was distinctive about the South of antebellum times and the South which produced him came from the interaction of the English-aping Virginia masters and the slaves remembering the ways of Africa.  

The Virginians bought slaves because the white laboring class could not be transformed into a peasantry. The servants came over on indentures; when the indentures ran out they were entitled to fifty or more hundred acres of land in freehold, enough for them to aspire to the status of great planters themselves. (Historical investigation has shown that Tate was overly confident that these servants actually received their promised land or that the land they did get was any good.) It would be consistent with Tate's analysis to attribute the spread of the slave system in part to this drive to emulate the upper classes, but Tate does not do so.
Slavery was firmly established at the time of the American Revolution, where once again the Virginians acted for capitalistic reasons as they did at Jamestown:

Virginia took the lead in the American Revolution, not to set up democracy, as Jefferson tried to believe, but to increase the power of the tobacco-exporting aristocracy. The planters wished to throw off the yoke of the British merchant and to get access to the free world market.

Slavery became for Tate a paradoxical symbol of responsible and often humane notions of the relation between a man and those who labor for him, and exploitative capitalistic impulses present in the Southern way of life. The man in The Fathers who sells his own brother is just as much a Southerner as the man who tries to set his slaves free.21

The English had come to settle, prosper, and rule. The Africans had come to serve. One last race came to the Virginia of the eighteenth century. From Ulster Plantation the Scotch-Irish, the ancestors of Tate and Davidson, the cutting edge of the frontier, crossed the Atlantic and came to Virginia. Despite their quarrels with the English back home, they did not fight to change what they found. When they found a Virginia from which tobacco earnings and primogeniture and entail had carved great estates, and in which yeoman farmers lived beside poor whites and great planters, they sought only land and the proper tools to cultivate it: mattock, wooden-pointed plow, and as their use became widespread, slaves. The good land in the Tidewater and Piedmont had been settled. The Scotch-Irish moved into the Valley of Virginia. Men such as Thomas J. Jackson, known as "Stonewall," came from these
pioneers. Such was Virginia at the close of the eighteenth century. The people lived close to the land, closer than the merchants and the manufacturers in the cities to the north, but with an alien race preventing them from reaping the full benefits of their agrarian life. Virginians were not free from the taint of commercialism that was the special emissary of the modern world, but they had begun to build a society which at its best—which Tate thought was very good indeed—had what was necessary for humans to live well: a sense of place and family, a pact with nature, the heritage of European civilization, the independence of self-sufficient farming communities. All was not well with Virginia, nor would all be well. From this land both new and old sprang Thomas Jefferson.
CHAPTER II
THOMAS JEFFERSON

"The Heavenly City was still visible, to Americans, in the political economy of Thomas Jefferson." Allen Tate, "The Man of Letters in the Modern World"

I

All of the Southern Agrarians affirmed that their ideological mentor and spiritual forebear was Thomas Jefferson. Indeed, it is an odd political group in America that does not count Jefferson among its ancestry. Nonetheless, the Agrarian claim, while often disputed, has clear and forceful reasoning behind it. Jefferson believed in liberty foremost, as Frank Owsley agreed in his 1936 essay "Foundations of Democracy," but the preconditions he saw as necessary for political freedom were those that the Agrarians sought to restore in the United States. The first of these was an electorate composed of men living on the land, and earning their sustenance thereby. These yeomen provided a republic its virtue. One reason that Jefferson and the Agrarians admired the farmer was romantic: farmers were, as a famous Jefferson statement says, God's chosen people and the special repositories of virtue. But there was a second reason closely related to the first: independent men who raised their own food and lived as the farmers described in Andrew Lytle's "The Hind Tit," in I'll Take My Stand, did, could not be bought. Time and time again both the thinkers of the early
republic and the Agrarians made the point that the way to corrupt the body politic was for one class of men with political aims to have the bulk of the voting populace laboring for them to earn their living; thus Jefferson's fear of the urban canaille, who were not vicious in themselves but as tools of their employers. Jefferson, believing in man's perfectibility, thought that the farmer, uncontaminated by greedy bosses, would be virtuous; the Agrarians, who recognized the need for traditions to restrain man's sinful nature, should have known better.

There was more to the Agrarians' identification with Jefferson than a shared belief in the necessity of a rural society for a republic and the corresponding fear of aggressive Northern commercial capitalism and industrialism. Jefferson advocated states' rights. Governments should be as close to the governed as possible; Washington was too far away and Washington could be too easily seized, politically and, as the 1860's showed, militarily, by the North.  

Finally, while Jefferson's own improbable identification with the yeoman farmer pleased men like Davidson, Owsley, and Lytle, Stark Young and others enjoyed his position as Southern aristocrat. The Sage of Monticello was an intellectual and literate man who knew which French wines to serve and how a house should be designed. John Gould Fletcher preferred Jefferson's aristocracy of talents to American egalitarianism through mediocrity, and thought Jefferson's educational system, which culminated in the University of Virginia, properly elitist. Thomas Jefferson loved the common
man without being too "common." 3

Clinton Rossiter, government professor at Cornell University, came to Kenyon College to give a lecture in the 1950's. By this time John Crowe Ransom had repudiated his Agrarianism, but Rossiter called on him to ask about the Agrarians for a book he was writing. Ransom told the story later at the Fugitive's Reunion at Vanderbilt University. "He wanted to know what sort of economy we represented, or what sort of view of the Republic we represented. I said, decidedly the Jeffersonian." 4

II

As Davidson's heart lay in the Old Southwest, we may trust that there we will find some of the cause for his love of Jefferson. Jefferson after all was the man who approved the Louisiana Purchase for reasons which Davidson must have found cogent. Land was needed for the spread of the independent farmer without whom a republic could not be built. Davidson's picture of the Old Southwest makes it clear that he too found the stuff for republican virtue in those same men who settled the western lands. It may have been that Jefferson only "half-way understood" the Westerners, but the Old Southwest "united under the leadership of Jefferson... to force its needs upon the attention of a reluctant East." 5

Jefferson's political economy was devoted to small farms and smaller government. Jefferson may have himself lived on a plantation and the Virginia dynasty may have been composed of men remarkably similar to Hamilton's "rich and well-born," but his faith was in "the people." In his "Expedients vs.
Principles--Cross-Purposes in the South," first published in the Spring 1937 issue of Southern Review, Davidson quotes Jefferson's December 20, 1787, letter to Madison. "This reliance [on the people] cannot deceive us, as long as we remain virtuous; and I think we shall be so, as long as agriculture is our principal object, which will be the case, while there remain vacant lands in any part of America."

There is found the political reliance on the farmer which Davidson so willingly shared with Jefferson. Jefferson went on to say, in this letter to Madison, "When we get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, we shall become as corrupt as in Europe, and go to eating one another as they do there." Davidson approvingly comments: "In these sentences, the basic theme of American history is set forth in epitome." A few pages later Davidson quotes Jefferson on the weakness of relying on the industrial proletariat for republican virtue; with no land to fall back on, the industrial worker is dangerous: his vote can be suborned.

One unpleasant result of Davidson's fears of an easily-swayed electorate that lacks independent means is the reinforcement it brings to his contempt for the notion of the black vote; this ambivalence about political freedom when it comes in contact with the race question is an equally authentic part of the Jeffersonian legacy.

Jefferson knew that the government could oppress his beloved farmers as well as it could protect them. Placing his reliance on the people, he preferred to keep the government weak, so it could do little harm. What need did self-
sufficient farmers have for a vigorous national government?

Some said that Jefferson placed too much hope in the possibility of man, and that the Jeffersonian legacy contained elements that gave too much scope to the beast in man because Jefferson did not recognize it was there. Robert Penn Warren wrote a thorough and powerful indictment of Jefferson's liberalism in his philosophical poem *Brother to Dragons* (1953). This poem centers on Jefferson's response to the brutal butchering of a slave by Jefferson's own nephews. Jefferson is forced to admit his own guilt and participation in the murder, and to stretch forth his hand to the murderers.\(^9\)

Davidson objected to Warren's treatment of Jefferson in this poem, and he cited Jefferson's concept of "least government" to defend Jefferson. In a letter of January 3, 1954, he wrote Warren:

> You stack the cards against Jefferson (and his followers) in using his supposed "equalitarianism" as a prime dramatic "cause" in the case of the poetic justice unrolled. Since this equalitarianism, with its necessary basic assumption as to man's essential "goodness" has to be accented, to the exclusion of all other aspects of Jeffersonianism, in order to make the paradox of the poem work, the poem inevitably becomes a sort of special pleading . . . .

Those who "denied the existence of evil" and found such a denial in Jefferson's philosophy, Davidson insisted in his letter to Warren, were the New England Transcendentalists and Abolitionists from Thoreau to John Brown. The South did not repudiate "Jeffersonian equalitarianism" as some had claimed; it did repudiate false notions of what Jefferson had
actually said. Jefferson knew the reality of evil. "Jefferson's 'least government' idea necessarily assumes that human nature has profound capacity of evil." In Davidson's eyes, no frontier brutality was needed for Jefferson to see the limits of human goodness and the vileness of man.  

So even if he admitted that Jefferson was a liberal "of the old and libertarian order" (not the New Deal variety), and "a child of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, and, to a lesser degree, of the Romantic Movement," Davidson did not feel obliged to disown him. Jefferson was the "living symbol" of agrarian democracy. Not a traditionalist himself, because a new land with new conditions produced him, and the old ways could not apply, Jefferson stood at the head of the Southern political tradition. When Davidson complained to Warren that he had stacked the cards against Jefferson and his followers, he included himself in their number.

III

Allen Tate had no such easy relationship with the Virginia statesman. On the one hand he confessed to Davidson in 1926 that Jefferson was his "chief admiration in American history." On the other, by 1929, at the beginning of the movement that led to the writing of I'll Take My Stand and as an integral part of that movement, he suggested that Jefferson be repudiated.

For the great ends in view...we must have a certain discipline; we must crush minor differences of doctrine under a single idea. I suggest a repudiation of Jefferson and a revised re-statement of the South Carolina idea. We shall never refute Progress with the doctrine of a man whose negative side made Progress possible
... In fact, we must here oppose one of the ideas of the Southern tradition. Emotionally this does me considerable violence because I am, emotionally, a Jeffersonian. This is what I mean by discipline. Indeed, Tate cited Jefferson's political economy a minimum number of times in defense of Agrarianism. Unlike Davidson, Tate did not list all those features of Jefferson's thought which he found attractive: yeoman farmers, "least government," and hatred of commercial capitalism. His appeals to the Jeffersonian tradition were both more vague and more philosophic; for all his professed hatred of abstraction Tate had, as T. S. Eliot among others pointed out, an essentially abstract cast of mind. Instead of specific details, he extracted the underlying principle behind Jefferson's political economy to back up Agrarianism:

... here the critical doctrine of organicism implies the organic society. I have strong affinities with Sir Herbert's [Read] vision of the anarchic society (literally, the society without rulers); it is an old American doctrine... [Tate's champion with us was Thomas Jefferson; it was revived some thirty years ago by a group of Southern writers and renamed Agrarianism.]

This explicit recognition of Jefferson as forebear was written in 1963. During the period of his active Agrarianism Tate was wary of using Jefferson as a symbol of his thought; he preferred John C. Calhoun who more forcefully advocated Southern regionalism. Being more religious than his fellow Agrarians, Tate was more aware of the differences between himself and Jefferson. In fact, one may wonder whether Tate would have made reference at all to Jefferson had not the tactics of the group as a whole forced him to do so. In
Tate's "Notes on Liberty and Property," (1936) he used Hamilton and Jefferson as symbols of conflict in American history. This is the one reference to Jefferson in Tate's writings which resembles the sort of references Davidson made. "Notes on Liberty and Property" is not one of Tate's more successful essays. As Tate admitted to Davidson, "I have no alibi for my article. It is simply that the technical subject of property was beyond me, and I ought to have had sense enough not to take it on... Nothing short of knowledge would have made the article good."¹⁵

Tate derived two principles from Jefferson's thought. The first of these may represent that which Tate found admirable about Jefferson's political economy. In his Phi Beta Kappa Address at the University of Virginia in 1936 Tate says,

In order to make a livelihood men do not have to put aside their moral natures... The whole economic basis of life is closely bound up with moral behavior, and it is possible to behave morally all the time. It is this principle that is the center of the philosophy of Jefferson.¹⁶

It is also the principle at the heart of the Agrarian critique of corporate industrial America. To be a successful businessman in corporate terms one must indeed "put aside" one's moral nature. As Tate rightly insisted, one cannot bifurcate one's life that way and stay healthy. Nor can modern man be happy in his economic life, if only because it gives him no room for human dignity to take root. Modern industrial man is in the curious position of not having his cake and not eating it too: he cannot have a unity of life and he cannot enjoy life in separate parts. Surely this critique is part of that which is most enduring in the Agrarian legacy.
The second principle which Tate found in Jeffersonian thought must have amazed him. Jefferson had rightly seen that man's moral and economic natures were one, but he could then separate man's religious and political natures. This principle is voiced in the very first of Tate's "official" Agrarian writings, his essay in *I'll Take My Stand*:

Since there is, in the Western mind, a radical division between the religious... and the scientific, the scientific mind always plays havoc with the spiritual life when it is not powerfully enlisted in its cause; it cannot be permitted to operate alone. It operated alone in Thomas Jefferson, and the form that it took in his mind may be reduced to a formula: The ends of man are sufficiently contained in his political destiny.

It is just this principle that helped destroy the Old South; the other element in its destruction was slavery. The argument in "Remarks on the Southern Religion," the essay quoted above, is that "the South would not have been defeated had it possessed a sufficient faith in its own kind of God."

The political defeat of the Civil War would have meant little if the Old South had possessed a mythology, as Ireland did, which would have kept its spiritual identity vital. The exaltation of politics divorced man from his tradition.17

It also kept the Old South from creating literature. Tate placed part of the blame for the Old South's poor and paltry literature upon black slavery because the white man could get from the black "no profound image of himself in terms of the soil." But another bar to literature was that the South "was hag-ridden with politics." Tate thought that "every gifted person went into politics" in the Old South; those who did not, like Poe, were soon run out. The dominance
of politics was in part the result of the South's embattled position, in part a result of the Jeffersonian heritage. ¹⁸

One more reason for Tate's dislike of the Jeffersonian formula of political salvation he did not state explicitly during the 1930's, although he later hinted at it. The Agrarian crusade, despite all the lip service paid to religion, was essentially political. It lacked many of the trappings of vulgar politics, although it did have its share of conferences, polemics, and public debates. The Agrarians never did set up their county newspaper. Tate could not "capture" The New Republic as he had hoped; his influence over Lincoln Kirstein, owner of the Hound and Horn, waned; the American Review was lost to the Agrarians when its owner Seward Collins announced that he was a fascist. The Agrarians fielded no candidates. Nevertheless, their vision had a political end; if they did not seriously hope to create a predominantly rural South in an America which would take either legal or cultural cognizance of the doctrine of sectionalism, it was still the goal toward which they strove. It was all very well for Tate and Ransom to argue that religion could not flourish in other than an agrarian society; such are the arguments of the sociologist, not the man of faith. Seeking to establish a utopia through political means they became gnostics. ¹⁹

In 1930 Tate argued that the Southerner could regain his tradition by political means alone. "He must use an instrument, which is political, and so unrealistic that he cannot believe in it, to re-establish a private, self-con-
tained, and essentially spiritual life." In 1955 he admitted, "Many of the opinions put forth in the early essays I no longer hold. I do not think that men can achieve salvation... by cleaving to a historical or a social tradition; I believe I stopped short of thinking that the State could save us." Tate may prefer to think that he stopped short of that belief, but insofar as he called for a political seizure of the Southern tradition he called upon the mechanisms of the State for salvation. In this respect of course he was not simply an heir of Thomas Jefferson but a product of the thirties as well. In his Agrarian writings Tate points out the error of Jefferson's belief in political salvation at precisely the same time he himself is head-over-heels in his flirtation with politics.20

Tate had another discontent with Jefferson. Jefferson may have taught that man's economic and moral natures were one but he earned his living and defended a section which earned its living from a vile labor system. Tate never directly pointed out the contradiction between Jefferson's writings and his life, but The Fathers (1938) showed that he was keenly aware of the rottenness at the core of the society which he loved as much as Jefferson did. The problem of ripping out what one hates from the body of what one loves is yet another inheritance Jefferson left the Southerner.

And there is one last thing. From Jacques Maritain's The Dream of Descartes (1944) Tate derived the notion of angelism currently expounded by Walker Percy, a man who is in many ways a student of Tate. In short, Descartes by split-
ting mind and body from one another destroyed the unity of Western man. Angelism is the sad state of the mind when it has been left on its own after the split. Edgar Allen Poe was the man whom Tate discussed at greatest length in terms of angelism. From his own complaints of his feeling of exile and the way he dwelt on Poe's angelism and Poe's position as the first modern man, one suspects that Allen Tate himself was not immune to the condition. But there might be cause for surprise at finding in his list of angels "that eminent angel of the rationalistic Enlightenment, Thomas Jefferson." 21

It is true that the essay which mentions Jefferson's angelism was written twenty years after the heyday of Agrarianism. The Dream of Descartes itself did not appear until 1944. But it is not far-fetched to think that Tate's emotional commitment to Jefferson and his recognition of the split in Jefferson's mind between the scientific and the spiritual led him to feel a certain kinship with the man. Where the other Agrarians saw the Sage of Monticello creating and embodying the Southern tradition, the connoisseur of wine, art, and conversation, the successful political man, founder of the Virginia dynasty, defender of liberty, and prophet of the agrarian life, Tate could see the modern man full of odd contradictions and bereft of his tradition. Tate could see this so vividly, because it struck such a responsive chord in his own heart, that he could advise "the repudiation" of Jefferson. While opponents of the Agrarians cried that Jefferson was too liberal for them to claim as their own,
only Tate saw that he was too much possessed of the same diseases of modernism that the Agrarians sought to cure.
CHAPTER III
ROBERT E. LEE AND THE FAILURE OF VIRGINIA

"... and is universally acknowledged to have been the noblest character since the Christ." Said of Robert E. Lee on a "Flags of the Confederacy" broadside from Atlanta, 1923.

"A man so self-contained may, in a sense, be said to be without ambition, yet in another sense, a more realistic one, his ambition is inexhaustible. No worldly reward can satisfy it; it feeds upon its own perfection, and drops its participation the moment its integrity is threatened." Allen Tate on Robert E. Lee."

I

If we may judge from the most recent attempt to evaluate Robert E. Lee, Thomas Connelly's The Marble Man, we can conclude that those Southerners across the mountains from Virginia feel cheated of their due place in Confederate history by the Lee myth. They resent this. Connelly, the historian of the Confederate Army of the Tennessee, and a transmontane Southerner himself, exposes a great many flaws in the traditional Virginia-centered accounts of the Civil War. Andrew Lytle and Donald Davidson both favor Bedford Forrest as the Southern military man par excellence and both find Lee's military reputation inflated. But neither of these Tennesseans begins to match the ferocity of Allen Tate in his analysis of Lee. Tate's outbursts against Lee can leave no doubt that for him Lee is more than a sentimental hero or a historical problem. Lee became a personal
problem and as such, to a man of Tate's mentality, a religious one.2

Whatever doubts Donald Davidson had about the structure and direction of antebellum Southern society—they do not seem to have been many—his most passionate commitment was to this agrarian South and he hated the industrial North that defeated it in war and then used its defeat to establish political and economic hegemony. Davidson would have ridden with Bedford Forrest. He believed that America would have had a better destiny had the South won the war, and he cursed the Northern victory his whole life long.

But Davidson did not attribute the success of the Northern troops merely to their superior arms and ammunition, railways and supplies, or the sheer weight of numbers. In the Old South's struggle he found signs of the other dominant theme of his vision of history. The South was defeated not by advancing armies but by the East-West split which was as old as America. Specifically, it was defeated by the inability of the Eastern elite, headquartered in Virginia, to recognize the West for what it was.

How else could defeat fit with the Tennessee myth? The sons of the men who stood with Old Hickory at the Battle of New Orleans, the grandsons of those who fought with John Sevier at Kings Mountain, could not, if properly led, be beaten. It was not that the West could no longer produce a Jackson or a Sevier; they had one in Bedford Forrest. It was the Virginians, who could not recognize quality in men who had not gone to West Point or moved in the proper social
circles, who failed to give the Westerners the generals they needed. It was the old story of Virginia snobbery.

In fact, during the war, Virginians could see little further than their noses. Davidson believed that Jefferson Davis had "gone Virginian" once he came to Richmond. He and his advisers worried and fretted over the Yankee threats to Richmond and neglected the equally real war in the West, until Sherman camped in front of Atlanta and Hood was given command. Using the rivers of the Southland the Yankees had penetrated to its heart. Hood knew little save how to fight. So he fought them at Atlanta and lost.

The Army of the Tennessee came again to Nashville:

. . . .One great charge more, my brothers!
Rake the South free from burnt Atlanta's walls
North to Ohio, east to the camps of Lee
Till the red hand of Sherman marches in vain.
One charge, the last!

We have riders who know how to lead the way,
And men with guns who can bite a cartridge yet.
Then sound the bugles, dress the ranks, and charge.
The Army of Tennessee knows how to charge.3

Davidson attributed the South's defeat during the Civil War to the Virginians who sacrificed the Western parts of the Confederacy and who refused to recognize ability in men of uncouth accents. Lee, as adviser to the President, comes in for some small rebuke from Davidson. Davidson also wondered in letters to Tate whether or not Lee has been credited with that which was accomplished by others. But in the main Davidson's preoccupation with Lee is not with Lee the military man but with Lee the symbol.

Davidson thought that the "General Lee to whom the
unreconstructed Old South gave its fierce devotion" had been
stolen by New South apologists. They emphasized not the
Lee who led soldiers into battle against the North at the
Wilderness but the Lee who advised patience in defeat.
Davidson growled angrily in his prose against this tendency,
but in his "Lee in the Mountains," one of the great pieces
of biographical verse, he not only presents Lee as a Christian
man bearing the great burden of defeat--an Everyman in grey--
but recaptures Lee as a symbol of the whole South, not merely
of aristocratic Virginia or of the New South.4

This Lee has his Tidewater Virginia origins. Davidson's
love of the local and hatred of mere abstraction would not
let him minimize that "the fortune of the Lees goes with the
land" of Virginia. This Lee is moved to action by family
pride, the need to keep the vow he made at his father's grave.
It is typical of Davidson that what extends Lee's loyalties
to the whole South is not some analysis of constitutional
rights but the command of "beardless boys gone up to death"
from all of the South. This new Lee thinks not of aristoc-
tratic old Virginia but of the farms of the yeomen in the
Valley. He had dreamed of moving his army from the defense
of Richmond to a defense of the whole South by maintaining
a resistance in the mountains; now he serves the whole South
and its young men in those mountains. Davidson gives us not
"Lee the Virginian" nor "Lee the American" but Lee the
Southerner, trying to keep down the bitterness at what he
considers betrayal after Appomattox with faith in the God of
his fathers.
II

One Christmas Ellen Glasgow—known to Tate and others as Miss Ellen—sent Allen Tate a copy of a painting of Robert E. Lee on horseback. This may have been a friendly gesture between Southerners. It could just as well have been intended as mild rebuke. Miss Ellen would have heard that Tate had been commissioned to write a biography of Robert E. Lee for the publishers of his biographies of Jackson and Davis, and that they, like Samuel Johnson's subscribers, could inquire "Where's the book?" Tate never did write his study of Lee. Of all the tasks he took on as a professional man of letters, this proved the most painful. If the watcher by the gate of the Confederate cemetery could not summon up the dead past, Allen Tate found it all too alive.

To be sure, Tate did not shrink from Lee because he found in him "the first Southern apologist of industrialism." Tate with Davidson decried the theft of Lee by the orators of the New South. Lee may have advised that the Southerner make his peace with the Northerner, but that virtue was private not political. It did not mean "that the South should become a suburb of the North, should go industrial, go modern . . . ." Henry Grady could quote Robert Lee for his purposes, as, no doubt, could the devil.

This is not to say that Lee had no traces of the New South mentality. One need only consider his plan to reduce the emphasis on the classics and to boost the useful arts, such as engineering and mathematics, at Washington College to discover how Allen Tate might have trouble using Lee as
a symbol of agrarian ideals. "Lee was one of the first Southerners to become converted to the idea of progress," Tate wrote in 1934, and if progress does not demand smokestacks spewing out contagion it does urge us to leave the past behind.  

If Robert Lee spoke words which politicians easily twisted, it was no surprise. Tate insisted that Lee had had "no interest in politics and even less understanding." According to Tate, the only sustained political analysis Lee indulged in was after the fact: he justified his loyalty to Virginia during the crisis of 1860-61 by abstract notions of constitutional right. Even this analysis Tate rejected. Lee, argued Tate, acted as he did because of "the concrete local fact of Virginia."  

This loyalty to Virginia was the root of some of the failings that Tate began to detect in Lee as he studied the Civil War. Most Southern leaders began the war with their loyalties firmly committed to their home states, not to the South as a whole. Lee was no different. Tate praised Douglas Southall Freeman for dispelling the belief, strong in the Lee and Virginia myths, that Lee agonized during the midnight hours at Arlington before he resigned his federal commission. Instead, Tate believed "that Lee had made up his mind before he left his post in Texas, and that he awaited the secession of Virginia to do the only thing he could have done: join Virginia."  

Confederate nationalism grew as the war went on. Its origins were in the deep South. The men who had settled
there had come from various states and had not yet had time to
develop the strong devotion of the sovereign state alone that marked the older Southern states, states such as Virginia or South Carolina. Men learned loyalty to the whole South. Yet while on occasion Tate admitted the possibility that Lee too learned loyalty to the whole South, in general Tate was clear that "to the end he fought for Virginia."

This love of Virginia was not merely the cause of Lee donning the Confederate grey and leading the armies of the South into battle. It also hampered his effectiveness as commander in a war fought for the South as a whole. In a 1929 letter to Andrew Lytle, Tate deplored "Lee's states rights provincialism which led him to prefer doing his duty to winning the war—his duty being to Virginia alone." Later he worked on his biography of Lee, Tate reconsidered where Robert E. Lee felt his duty lay.10

Allen Tate first treated the Civil War at length in his Stonewall Jackson: The Good Soldier (1928). He wrote this work for various reasons, ranging from the mundane desire to put food on his family's table to his zeal "to issue a little doctrine" which he did not want "to be obvious enough for the reader to be able to put his finger on..." By 1927, when he started the biography, he had decided that Jackson was the man who could have won the war, and that Southern victory would have meant a better world.11

It cannot be said that the "doctrine" in Stonewall Jackson is as unobtrusive as Tate's scheme might indicate. Clumsy describes the promulgation better. Stonewall Jackson
makes clear Tate's preference for the social system of the Old South, his hatred of industry (and Yankees, excepting the rank and file Union soldier) and his belief that abstraction is the lure of the devil. The book is fledgling agrarianism. The abolitionists and the Republican Party are called "revolutionaries." Calhoun and Andrew Jackson are "the Christ and the Anti-Christ of political order in the United States."\(^{12}\)

The opening of the book foreshadows the orientation of the rest. Young Tom Jackson is coming down the road with a fish he had promised to sell to a Mr. Kester. Colonel Talbott stops him, and, admiring it, offers to pay him a dollar and a quarter for the fish that Kester will give him only fifty cents for. Tom's honesty in a bargain and loyalty to Mr. Kester enable him to resist the blandishments of the colonel. He goes on. The story is that of the Garden of Eden with the Virginia gentleman playing the role of the snake. This time Man does not fall; in fact, he cannot even be tempted. The burgeoning capitalistic system, which abandons loyalty and holds out for the highest price, is set on its ears by young Tom's words, as it will be by his sword some years later. It is no casual accident that the tempter is not a New England manufacturer but a "gentleman of the county" and that the sturdy fellow who resists is of yeoman stock.\(^{13}\)

Stonewall Jackson and the work which followed it, Jefferson Davis: His Rise and Fall (1929), were both proto-Agrarian works. Tate admitted to Donald Davidson that in
the case of the former "I know little and care less about
the character of Jackson and my interest is diffused over
the general significance of the Civil War." Former Fugitive
William Elliot exaggerated when he maintained "it became
the fashion to write at least the life of one Confederate
general by the more active members" of the Fugitives, but
these works did exhibit the beliefs which brought Tate to
Agrarianism even if they themselves did not lead him there. 14

The picture Tate gives of the Civil War in Stonewall
Jackson bears resemblance to that given by Donald Davidson.
To be sure, Tate deals little with the West, except to suggest
that things would have gone better for the South had Jackson
been given command there. But the blame for Southern defeat
is placed on the policies of the same man against whom David­
son railed: Jefferson Davis. Davis could not conceive of
a vigorous war in which Southerners would win their indepen­
dence by feats of arms. Instead, he hoped that martyred
virtue would so touch the hearts of England and France that
they would relieve the South in its distress. He fell in
love with the map. If the South had Yankees within its
borders, they must be pushed out. If the map were clear,
things were as they should be. No maneuvering which might
permit a Northern foot on Southern soil could be considered.
The end result of Davis's policies was that "Lee and Jackson
had not merely to fight the enemy; they had to fight Mr.
Davis for the privilege." 15

Jackson, on the contrary, was a man in the grip of one
idea: Southern independence. To this he would have sacri-
ficed men, territory, and himself. He had subsumed his ambition in the cause he thought God's. It is in this that Tate finds the difference between Robert Lee and Thomas J. Jackson.

Lee saw intellectually the object of the war more clearly than his statesmen. Like every complex sensibility, he was subject to intuitions that disturbed his vision of this object. Up to certain limits he could pursue it with a single purpose. But his character, unlike his great subordinate's, was not in any respect over developed. He saw everything. He was probably the greatest soldier of all time, but his greatness as a man kept him from being a completely successful soldier. He could not bring himself to seize every means to the proposed end. Jackson, who saw one object only, could use them all.16

Tate draws the contrast between Jackson and Lee in ways abstract and concrete, large and small. For example, during the Second Manassas campaign, Jackson had wanted to attack Federal General John Pope before the Army of Northern Virginia's supply wagons had come up. The men could live on green apples and corn from the fields. Lee thought the men could not fight on such fare and vetoed the attack. Jackson turned away and groaned. Later in the campaign, as his men marched to meet Pope's army, we see Jackson's own troops making their breakfast on the same green corn. After the bloody repulse of Ambrose E. Burnside's troops at Fredericksburg, the Union General Franklin's men lay between Jackson's forces and the river. Defeated, scared, and tired, they would be easy prey for Jackson's men if a night attack could be launched against them. Once they had been destroyed, Longstreet could attack on his front. Jackson went to Doctor McGuire, the surgeon for his corps, and inquired if they had
enough white bandaging to put a yard on the arm of every
soldier, so they could distinguish one another in the night.
Once again, Lee vetoed Jackson's plan for an attack, not,
Tate thinks, because of its audacity—Lee was one of the most
audacious generals who ever lived—but because it went against
his Christian gentleman's code. "Such an attack was more
like massacre than war. Lee defeated his enemies by violat-
ing the rules of strategy. But could he afford to butcher
them? That would be violating something else." 17

Lee could not overcome one scruple which crippled the
efficacy of the Southern armies: his respect for the con-
stitutional authority of the Confederacy's President. Both
he and Jackson recognized that Davis's policies were near
to losing the war for the South. Lee's "consciousness of
the universal moral insufficiency" may have been admirable
but it stood between him and the means necessary for Southern
independence. He would not try to override Davis's directions;
thus, for example, General James Longstreet was allowed to
go chasing will o' the wisps in the Suffolk campaign as the
Federal General Joseph Hooker readied his armies for an inva-
sion of Virginia. Lee accepted conditions which made it
impossible for him to win the war, where Jackson would have
resisted them. 18

This was all the more remarkable because Lee not only
understood that the Richmond War Office hampered Southern
generals, he understood that Lincoln's fears hampered Northern
ones. Not only did he recognize Lincoln's fears, he played
upon them to defeat Northern invasion. While General George
McClellan crawled up the Peninsula towards Richmond, Lee knew that if Jackson were to threaten Washington from the Valley, a frightened Lincoln would refuse to re-enforce McClellan and would hold his troops near Washington where they would do the Confederates no harm. He advised Jackson accordingly. The pressure on Richmond was relieved. After Lee had been given command of the Army of North Virginia, and McClellan's and then Pope's invasion attempts had been thwarted Lee in turn invaded the North, recognizing that a victory on Northern soil would increase the political pull of the anti-war party and hasten Southern independence. It was neither ignorance of military strategy nor blindness to the bad effects of politicians' military blunders that kept Lee from shaking off Davis's foolish instruction. 19

Appreciation of the need for understanding Lincoln's character and awareness that hitting the enemy at one point took pressure off the South at another were two of the things which Jackson and Lee shared. The will to fight and boldness in battle also united them. After Jackson, Lee is the hero of the book. There was an understanding between the two men which led to a profound respect and a curious affection. Lee had the good sense to give Jackson a free rein, something Davis and the War Department were loathe to do. Tate insists again and again that Lee's flaws were not those of weakness but of greatness. "Lee alone, as a soldier and as a man, was almost God." 20

Of many fine moments Lee has in the book, perhaps his finest is the evening after the battle of Antietam. All
of the Confederate officers counseled retreat. Back across the Potomac, they all urged. Even Jackson held this melancholy view. In a famous exchange with General John Bell Hood of the Texas Brigade Lee asked, "Where is the splendid division you had this morning?" "They are lying on the field where you sent them . . . ."

After all the officers told their single story, silence fell, silence that after the roar of the day beat in upon their ears. Then General Lee rose in his stirrups.

'Gentlemen, we will not cross the Potomac tonight. . . . If McClellan wants to fight in the morning, I will give battle again. Go!'21

If Tate had begun to doubt the Lee myth when he wrote Stonewall Jackson and had offered a Jackson myth—for such it was—in its place, some of the old mystery and glory still clung to Robert E. Lee. Even his faults were godlike. But could any human stand up to the scrutiny that Allen Tate was about to bring on the Old South and its inhabitants as he searched for political salvation? Can any man bear the burden of being "almost God?"

III

After Stonewall Jackson was published in 1928, Tate set to work on a biography of Jefferson Davis. In that year he also received a Guggenheim Fellowship which he needed badly to support himself and his family since he no longer held any of the usual means of livelihood. The requirements of the Guggenheim Foundation and the vagaries of life being what they are, in 1928 Tate crossed the Atlantic Ocean to live first in Britain, and then at 32 rue de Vaugirard, Paris, and to write of certain events in Montgomery, Richmond, and
Fortress Monroe. He wrote *Jefferson Davis: His Rise and Fall* surrounded by literati such as Gertrude Stein and Ford Madox Ford; he finished it on Bastille Day, 1929.22

Other than the locale (the American Library in Paris) his methods of research for *Jefferson Davis* presumably resemble those he used for *Stonewall Jackson* and his never finished biography of Lee. He relied on the printed record: the *Official Records* and the *Battles and Leaders* series—the latter he once called “one of the most fascinating works in the world.” He also used eyewitness accounts such as Mary Boykin Chesnut’s diary for bits of color and referred to biographies and other secondary accounts. He did not trouble with manuscripts nor, considering the nature of his task and the speed with which the publisher wanted it done, should he have. His admitted habit of paraphrasing other sources is more dubious and he lacked the scholar’s zeal for footnotes and bibliographies: “The text is either good or bad, and that settles it.” For Tate, the writing of history was an art; in this case an art harnessed to the ends of social criticism. He was writing parables for the modern South.23

The focus is wider in *Jefferson Davis* than it is in *Stonewall Jackson*, but the outlines of the story are the same. Davis bungles the war but does so with singular dignity, bearing himself like a Greek tragic hero. In Hamilton James Eckenrode’s *Jefferson Davis: President of the South*, Tate discovered the real culprit of the war in the pathetic figure of Braxton Bragg.24 He and Davis lost the war in the West by keeping command from men such as Jackson or Bedford Forrest, either of whom should have led the Army of Tennessee. Davis
still required that all Southern territory be held until it was too late. Davis retained the post of commander-in-chief until Lee could do little good when it was given to him.

This was an odd role for a man of the West. After all, even if he were not a Yancey or a Rhett, Davis was in Virginian eyes one of the hotheads who plunged the South into war. When Tate placed the blame on the "Virginization" of Davis, he confessed the hold that the Old Dominion had on its children states. By the time he wrote The Fathers it made sense to him to encapsulate the Old South in a picture of Old Virginia. The sour grapes that set the children's teeth on edge had been planted, picked, and eaten in Virginia.

The hints about the relationship between Lee and the civil authority given in Stonewall Jackson become bare-faced statements in Jefferson Davis. Bluntly, Tate argues that Lee deferred too often to a civil authority which was not, in fact, legitimate. In discussing the position of the Confederate army at Fredericksburg, a position which Tate did not regard as the best possible, he says,

Lee himself was partly to blame; he was something of a governmental martinet; for he would not override the constituted authority of the President—an authority that had only as much permanence as he himself could give it by the force of arms.25

In short, Tate thought that Lee should have established himself as "a revolutionary leader who would call the people to arms, trample on law and government, and conduct a people's war." Even in 1864, the South could have established its independence if properly led.

All things considered—the military talent; the
resources of self-support which the blockade could not touch; the vastness of the country that the Federal armies had to conquer; the united resistance of the plain people, who grew even closer together as the war went on—these facts would have made victory no miracle, while defeat, had the South been properly led, would be difficult to explain. 26

There were those who would have made Robert E. Lee a dictator. Tate believed that had Lee chosen to take that role, it would have been no usurpation. The people of the South loved Lee, and they detested the Davis government. Indeed, Tate thought that they did not even recognize the government by 1864. Robert E. Lee as popular leader, Tate argued, would have held more legitimacy than the Davis government, the Confederate Congress, or even the states themselves. As Tate wrote to Andrew Lytle in 1929, the war was not fought for "political abstractions and civil liberties; it was fought (largely unconsciously) for that irrational good known as national independence. It was less principle than sheer desire." 27

Davis and Lee attempted to fight the war as an outgrowth of states' rights.

In Stonewall Jackson, Tate explained Lee's unwillingness to tamper with civil authority as a flaw attributable to his greatness of character. By the time he wrote Jefferson Davis, he publicly explained of "all objects of respect [Lee] respected constituted authority most." Privately Tate was writing Lytle that Lee had failed to seize the means to Southern independence because of his "Sunday school morality." 28

Behind all this belief that the South would have won the war had Lee taken power was a vision of what could have been.
Tate had not yet come to the realization of evil that he had by the time he wrote *The Fathers*. Instead, he thought that he saw a way that all the good of the Old South society could have been preserved through military victory and independence, and its evil destroyed. He projected a scenario which would have permitted him to be an almost unthinkable man—a Southerner without guilt.

In January 1864 General Patrick Cleburne had suggested filling the ranks of the Southern armies with slaves. Later in 1864 the crisis of the South had grown so serious that men in high places, such as William Smith, Governor of Virginia, were recommending that the slaves be armed. There were many suggestions as to the best way to do this, but it is clear that the only way arming the slaves could have been successful would have been to accompany it with widespread emancipation. Robert E. Lee advocated such emancipation. It would have provided the troops necessary for Southern victory; it would have enhanced the South's position in the eyes of Europeans; and Northern victory would mean emancipation in any case. But while Lee was willing to write a letter to a Virginia state senator on the matter, he would go no further. Lee neither pushed for emancipation in Virginia as a politician, nor acted for it on a national scale as a "revolutionary leader."29

Tate may have written that he, like George Fitzhugh, thought the paternalistic slave system provided better for the workers than the capitalistic free labor system, and he may have praised the social structure of the Old South as
preferrable to that of modern America. But at the core he thrilled to the vision of Robert E. Lee leading an army of whites and freed blacks to victory against the Northern forces. "That irrational good known as national independence" was better than the South's "peculiar institution." Such a victory for the South would have freed not only the slave but the modern Southerner who now suffers from the strain of appearing to defend slavery when he defends the Old South; in short, it would have freed Allen Tate. But it was nothing more than a vision. And Robert Lee had to share some of the blame for the failure of that vision.

At one time Tate believed that Lee's whole loyalty was to Virginia, and that that explained his failure to wage the war successfully. Lee was so committed to defending Virginia that he would neither go west to head the armies in what Tate regarded as the main theater of the war nor permit his army to be reduced enough to help the West, although he once allowed Longstreet to take troops out there. But as he worked on his biography of Lee in 1929 and the early thirties, Tate began to suspect that Lee's ultimate loyalty was not to Virginia but to himself. He wrote Lytle in 1929,

I say this in a whisper and at present for your ears alone: Lee had a kind of egoism that yielded to no influence—not even the independence of his country. It was the egoism of self-righteousness . . . . I believe that Lee was in the sole position in which even personal honor becomes secondary; he valued his own honor more than the independence of the South.

Lee betrayed the South to maintain his own purity; Lee could not "see beyond the needs of his own salvation." By 1931,
as he worked on that draft of the Lee biography that remains in his papers, he had decided that Lee's "ambition" was "inexhaustible," and could have been satisfied by "no worldly reward." 30

Tate described Lee's religion as "a personal and very obscure mysticism." 31 Lee's ambition must have been otherworldly, not connected with the sordid politics that the Jeffersonian formula had proposed as the ends of man. Lee must have lived by some principle contrary to the formula. Like Poe, who was born within two years of Lee, Lee was a product of Jefferson's Virginia. If Lee's ambitions could not be tied to this world, he too must have had a touch of that will which required infinite scope that Tate was to find in Poe.

Lee, of course, was no Poe. He was firmly committed to a Christian code which was older than Poe's mysticism or Jefferson's rationalism. When Tate argued that Lee should have been a seeker after political power, a more ruthless military leader, he was arguing that Lee should have seized the means necessary to the end of political independence for the South. Tate found himself arguing that Lee should have found his salvation through political means and that he should have abandoned his gentleman's Christianity. No wonder the burden of such an argument grew painful, and that Tate abandoned the Lee biography. By this time Tate was well into the Agrarian revolt. He knew that his fellow Agrarians expected a laudatory biography of Lee from him, something that would champion Lee as the type of man that the Old South
was capable of producing. His publishers and his reading public surely expected his Lee biography to be another Southern hurrah. But he could not get his own "inner consent" to write such a biography: he wrote to Lytle in 1931, "The integrity of the cause is one with the integrity of its defenders. . . ." Like Lee, Tate could not violate his own integrity to advance the cause; he would not write as a political tract what he believed to be false. Just as he refused to cite Jefferson's politics to support the Agrarian cause, he would not summon up all the great deeds of Lee, when he believed that Lee had almost willfully lost the war to save his soul. 32

If Tate had been able to define the Old South as the Old Southwest, as Donald Davidson did, his rejection of the Virginia that Lee represented might have meant little for his consideration of the Old South. But Tate's strong identification with his Virginia kin—perhaps the product of what Tate termed "a family religion" which was based on his mother's worship of her father—forced him gradually to narrow his vision of the Old South to the society he would soon write of in The Fathers. When he began to question Lee's virtues, he questioned those of the Old South as a whole. 33

Allen Tate finally rejected Lee with language so violent that the nature of his consideration of the man becomes clear. The hatred of Lee is so obsessive that it is irrational. The imagery is graphic, sexual, and full of horror:

... the longer I've contemplated the venerable features of Lee, the more I've hated him. It is as if I had married a beautiful girl, perfect in
figure, pure in all those physical attributes that seem to clothe purity of character, and then had found when she had undressed that the hidden places were corrupt and diseased. . . . In Lee, who was not weak, there is when we see under the surface an abyss, and it is to this that I do not want to give a name.34

It is as if Lee had done Tate a personal wrong.

He had. Lee had represented the best of the Virginia tradition, the most perfect product of the Old South, the final realization of the values which Tate had pledged himself to defend by his political writings. Lee was too often cited as justification for all the wrongs the Old South had committed. He was the mortal image of the Agrarian philosophy. But when Tate studied him, he discovered that Lee had in him the old offending Adam and the cankers of modern man. Lee betrayed Tate's political vision: no society could provide man a way to live. Just as Lee had looked to his private salvation Allen Tate began to look to his.
CHAPTER IV
TATE'S VIRGINIA COUSINS

"We thought that the South was an historical problem; it was actually a theological problem." Allen Tate to Andrew Lytle, December 23, 1954.1

I

"I am pleased to see as epigraph to your poem Poe's words. Poe's Nervous Man is our ancestor, however clumsily he creates him . . . ." Allen Tate to Donald Davidson, February 18, 1950.2

When Allen Tate abandoned his biography of Robert E. Lee, he did not abandon his desire to write a book on the American past. He tried to give form to his vision of the past in the never-completed "Fathers of Exile." This work would have presented Americans from the earliest pioneers to modern men almost contemporary with its writing. But this book was abandoned, too, and Tate narrowed his focus to that which interested him most: antebellum Virginia. The book which incorporated his vision of Old Virginia, The Fathers, was published in 1938.3

The Virginia inheritors of the Jeffersonian legacy appear in this book, as do those whose conduct is determined by the gentleman's code clung to by Lee. One more Virginian whose influence is found in The Fathers is the Southern man of letters, Edgar Allan Poe.
Like his association with Virginia, Tate's ties to Poe are more than intellectual: they are personal. In the name of all of us, Tate claims kinship with him in "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe." To be sure, the reasons for this affinity are not merely personal, as we shall see, but its roots are in Tate's adolescence, and he is at pains to expose this in "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe." Tate has confessed to the avidity with which he read the works of Poe at his childhood home. He studied the face of Poe from a picture in the family's edition of Poe's works as he dreamed of his own career as a poet, sure that there could be found the true conception of the artist. Discovering that his great uncle had scribbled poetry and known Poe besides, he hunted up the poetry and decided he felt closer to Poe. When Tate left the South to try to earn his living as a professional man of letters, he must have borne in mind Poe's rejection by the self-same region.

Tate wrote about Poe and his relationship to the Old South in his 1934 essay "The Profession of Letters in the South." After the publication of Jacques Maritain's The Dream of Descartes (1944) Tate wrote two essays devoted entirely to Poe, "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe," (1949) and "The Angelic Imagination: Poe as God" (1952). His 1968 essay, "The Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe," written as an introduction for the New American Library edition of The Complete Poems and Selected Criticism of Edgar Allan Poe, may be considered a restatement of ideas in the three earlier essays. But even if part of Tate's writings on Poe are from the post-war period, comparison of these essays and The Fathers shows that the ideas
expressed in them were already firmly held by Tate during the composition of *The Fathers*.\(^5\)

For mate, Poe was the first modern man. Poe grew up in a society torn by conflicting impulses. On the one hand, Virginia was still organized along the notions of traditional English class structure; on the other it was a product of the Enlightenment, a place where an educated person "was a deist by conviction and an Anglican or a Presbyterian by habit."\(^6\) In short, Virginia was where men attempted to maintain social traditions without the philosophical underpinnings that rendered them sensible. The thrust of Jeffersonian thought, whether viewed as democratic or deistic, seemed to Tate to disrupt Virginian patterns of living. Tate believed that the Virginians handled this situation by rejecting Jefferson. Poe, who had attended Mr. Jefferson's University, ended by rejecting Virginia traditions in favor of his own brand of mysticism. The man who has no tradition to sustain him is the modern man.\(^7\)

To be sure, Virginia rejected Poe before he had a chance to reject it. In this case Virginia took the unlikely shape of John Allen, "a dour Scots merchant building a fortune and a place in the society of Richmond." Tate assures us, however, that "the foreigner, trying to better himself, always knows the practical instincts of a society more shrewdly than the society knows them. Allen was, for once, the spokesman of Virginia, of the plantation South."\(^8\) Poe had been educated a gentleman and felt himself to be one, but he had neither the property nor the professional drive that such a calling
required in antebellum Virginia. (Robert E. Lee himself had lacked the property and was forced into the military as a profession.) And as Poe soon learned, there was no place for the professional man of letters in the South; literature was regarded as an eccentricity not a profession.⁹

The society which rejects the poet is not only unhealthy, it is mad. It is, Tate told us, a society too concerned with defending itself from outside attack to pursue self-knowledge. There can be no doubt that the Old South was such a society, even though it would seem that it had all the tradition and learning necessary to produce a great literature:

... the very merits of the Old South tend to confuse the issue: its comparative stability, its realistic limitation of the acquisitive impulse, its preference for human relations compared to relations economic, tempt the historian to defend the poor literature simply because he feels that the old society was a better place to live in than the new. It is a great temptation--if you do not read the literature.¹⁰

There are times in "The Profession of Letters in the South" when Tate sounds as if it were not slavery which damned the Old South, but its bad literature.

In any case, had the Old South supported Poe he would have lost his claim to our attention. Thrust out of the order that he knew only after his Christianity had been "short-circuited," Poe, like his heroes, had only his will to sustain him. In the end it proved inadequate.¹¹

II

Allen Tate described the modern malady as angelism. He analyzed Poe's divided, undisciplined psyche in terms of
angelism, using the triad of Intellect, Feeling, and Will, because he had contempt for the terminology of behaviorist psychologists who spoke of "drives," "stimuli," and "responses." Of such jargon he said, "This is not the language of freemen, it is the language of slaves."^{12}

His image of Poe is derived from a poem attributed to Poe. In "Alone" Poe speaks of a cloud taking the form of a demon. Tate says that "Poe surrounds us with Eliot's 'wilderness of mirrors', in which we see a subliminal self endlessly repeated, or, turning, a new posture of the same figure." This is "the forlorn demon in the glass." This endlessly repeated demon is not just a fictional creation; he is Poe. "I suggest that Poe's poetry . . . were [sic] all written by Poe as his own fictional projection; by Poe as the demon he tells us he saw take shape in a cloud."^{13}

Whether he calls Poe a demon or an angel, the meaning of the image is plain. Both are beings which are both more and less than human; they are spiritual entities which lack carnal bodies. If a demon

is simply a person who cannot develop—a fierce determinism has arrested the rounded growth of his facilities, so that the evil he does other persons is not a positive malice but an insistence that they remain as emotionally and intellectually deprived as he himself must remain,^{14}

then a human cast in the role of angel will be similarly deprived, cut off from nature. "Man as angel becomes a demon. . . ."^{15}

Poe suffered from the "hypertrophy of the three classical faculties: feeling, will, and intellect." Excessive feeling leads to morbid sensitivity, which in turn leads to
selfishness. Poe and his characters feel everything in life—their own troubles, the force of cannibalistic love which seeks to consume the beloved, even simple everyday sounds—so strongly that they become prisoners of sensation, locked in themselves. Craving satisfaction of such strong feelings, they come to regard others as instruments placed here to fulfill their needs; the will grows large and restraints disappear. Will becomes the will to destroy that which resists the will. In the case of Poe's lovers, it is the beloved who must be destroyed simply because the beloved cannot be utterly subsumed in the lover. The beloved, offering some slight yet final degree of resistance, can only be destroyed to appease the ruthless will. It is, as Tate points out, essentially the condition of the vampire.\footnote{16}

"The Poe hero tries in self-love to turn the soul of the heroine into something like a physical object which he can know in direct cognition and then possess."\footnote{17} This is the intellect set loose with a vengeance. Denying the common corporal bonds of mankind, the Poe hero hopes to encompass the universe. Poe wrote four long cosmological works, telling of the ultimate annihilation of this world and of the universe: \textit{Eureka}, \textit{The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion}, \textit{The Colloquy of Monos and Una}, and \textit{The Power of Words}. This cosmology of Poe is the highest reaching of the angelic imagination, for it places the intellect of man in the position of God. The intellect has no object; cut off from the material world, it strives for knowledge which cannot be obtained.\footnote{18}
This sounds remote from Old Virginia. But what has freed these faculties of feeling, will, and intellect is man's loss of place in an organic universe where traditions advise one how to act and where one fits into the scheme of things. Tate believed that the philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, which proposed politics as the means of encompassing man's salvation, and which rejected traditional Christianity, is what stripped Poe of his God and left him to assume the divine functions himself. "Had he not been bred in a society committed to the rationalism of Descartes and Locke by that eminent angel of the rationalistic Enlightenment, Thomas Jefferson?" 19

Underneath the traditional and commonplace rhetoric and literary devices of Poe is the essence of existentialism:

Poe is the transitional figure in modern language because he discovered our great subject, the disintegration of personality, but kept it in a language that had developed in a tradition of unity and order. 20

It is not surprising that Poe, the first modern, filled The Colloquy of Monos and Una with invective against the doctrines of progress, "wild attempts at an omnipresent Democracy," "huge smoking cities," and such ills that the Agrarians railed about. Indeed, Tate admits that when Poe's critics refer to certain passages in that work, "it is to inform us that Poe was a reactionary Southerner who disliked democracy and industrialism." 21 Such a description mirrors those given of Allen Tate, another modern. Considering the pain Poe felt in the modern world, a contempt for its uses is inevitable. Allen Tate carried the diagnosis farther and
offered treatment of a political sort. He also said of Poe,

He is so close to me that I am sometimes tempted
to enter the mists of pre-American genealogy to
find out whether he may not actually be my
cousin.22

III

"The outlines of the Southern myth shift and vary with one's
degree of self-consciousness. I see it somewhat as follows:
the South afflicted with the curse of slavery—a curse, like
that of Original Sin, for which no single person is respon-
sible—had to be destroyed, the good along with the evil."  
Allen Tate, "Faulkner's Sanctuary and the Southern Myth."

"Thus, with a mixture of self-deception and idealism, the
South adopted an image of itself which some men used as a
fiction to avoid confronting sordid reality, while others
used it as a standard toward which to strive in order to
develop, as far as they were able, the better aspects of human
behavior that were latent even in a slaveholding society."  
David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis.23

_The Fathers_ (1938) is a narrative of two heirs of Poe
moving through the life of Virginia during its moment of
危机 at the beginning of the Civil War. One man is George
Posey, a Poe-like hero who will be redeemed by the tragedy
he causes; the other is Lacy Buchan, who, like the heroes of
Poe, is lost, but who understands what he is lost from, and,
like Ishmael in _Moby Dick_, can affirm the good and the bad
by telling his story.

Lacy Buchan, now an old man, tells of events that took
place in his family in the years immediately preceding
the Civil War, when he was in his mid-teens. His brother
Semmes, studying medicine in Washington, D.C., has introduced
George Posey, a Marylander, to the Buchan family. Posey
comes down for a visit, intending to marry Lacy's sister
Susan. The head of the family, Major Buchan, does not approve
of the match, but is powerless to prevent it. The engage­ment is announced after a tournament modeled on Sir Walter Scott's idea of medieval chivalry. Posey rides to victory on a fine horse which he bought only by selling Yellow Jim, a slave who is also his half-brother. John Langton, the man he defeats in the tournament, is deliberately rude to him; Posey knocks him down and after being challenged to a duel, refuses to fight according to the code but knocks him down again.

When the war breaks out, Major Buchan supports the Union and forbids members of his family to join the Southern cause. His two eldest sons defy him. Lacy is sent to live with the Poseys in Georgetown to prevent him from enlisting. Both he and Semmes are in love with Posey's sister Jane, but it is Semmes who persuades her to marry him. Susan, having been driven mad by the Poseys by some means which are never made clear, is unalterably opposed to any other Buchan marrying into the Posey family. When Yellow Jim reappears, having run away from his new master, Susan uses him to prevent the marriage. Jim is encouraged to rape Jane. The rape attempt fails but during the process he stumbles by mistake into George's mother's room and she dies of fright. Furthermore, Susan lies to Semmes, Lacy, and Posey about the success of the rape and Jane enters a convent. The three of them take Yellow Jim up the river. Semmes shoots Jim; Posey then kills Semmes. Lacy flees the scene and in a daze wanders back to his father's plantation. When he recovers from his illness he discovers that Susan and her daughter Jane have
also returned to the plantation. Posey comes in a futile attempt to be recognized by his now totally mad wife. When Yankees come to the plantation he insults their officer and drives them away. A few days later, after Lacy and Posey leave, the Yankees return and turn the plantation. Major Buchan hangs himself. Posey, having gone with Lacy to the Confederate Army during the battle of Bull Run, only to shoot Langton who is the captain of a company Posey raised, rides off, perhaps to Georgetown; later, we are told, he restores his wife and her family as best he can. Lacy rides back to his outfit and fights for the South until Appomattox.

In outline the novel is melodramatic and shares many of the features associated with Gothic novels. It is told in a style reminiscent of Proust, with the narrative crossing back and forth between the memories of the old man Lacy and his perceptions of events as a boy. It is essentially an attempt by Lacy to understand the events which destroyed his family and the civilization of antebellum Virginia.

"Pleasant Hill," the opening section of The Fathers, gives a picture of the society which is about to be destroyed. Its microcosm is Fairfax County, where the Buchan family lives, and its exemplar is Major Lewis Buchan. The sturdy yeoman that Jefferson, Davidson, and Lytle loved so well makes few appearances in The Fathers; this is a tale of the Virginia aristocracy. Mr. Higgins, the overseer, is one representative of the small farmer class; he is an honest and respectable man if a dull one. There is also a jibe at Andrew Lytle in the character of Mr. Regan, who tells Lacy
"I ain't goin' to have no Yankees a-drinkin' of my water. I'll 'spectorate in it first," Lytle having advised the Southerner, "if we have to spit in the water bucket to keep it our own, we had better do it." Mr. Regan certainly displays the independence and hospitality associated with the small farmer; he is also the vicious onlooker of the humiliation of a "plain man" who has dared to mock a member of the local aristocracy.

The world of Pleasant Hill is ordered, hierarchical, and traditional. The order is a sure and kindly one in many ways. When Major Buchan takes his family to the Marshall House in Alexandria, he lines them all in a row to march them to the front desk. As Arthur Mizener points out in his seminal essay on The Fathers,

"... we are at once charmed by the perfection of his manners, astonished by the innocent confidence with which he performs them, and amused—not very credibly—by his simplicity—for it is this same simplicity that makes him leave his place in his wife's funeral procession to "take the brown hand [of his wife's maid] to lead her into the line and make her take her place ahead of us just behind the body of her mistress."25

Even Death has its order. When Lacy visualizes the society he has grown up in he sees it as "the processions [that] would go on till the end of time."26

For this order is not based upon mere wealth alone but on a set of traditions which made a rite of matters so small as washing dishes and so great as death. This tradition gave to those who believed in it the ability to face death. "The forms of death ... were, to us, only the completion of life. ..."27
Life in antebellum Virginia had grown so mannered that it became, in fact, a game. "Our lives were eternally balanced upon a pedestal below which lay an abyss that I could not name. Within that invisible tension my father knew the moves of an intricate game that he expected everybody else to play. That, I think, was because everything he was and felt was in the game itself; he had no life apart from it. . . ." The game, the mannered code, allowed the Virginians to live with the "abyss" of slavery, of the slave trade, insurrection, rape, and murder, under them. This was the meaning of their civilization. At its best their way of life gave everyone a place in society, whether black slave, small farmer, or plantation head, and a code to guide his actions. At its worst, it was a fragile game, too easily destroyed by those who did not wish to play it and too forgetful of the terrible sin which underlay it. People became silhouettes like those of his parents which Lacy had on his bedroom wall. Major Buchan's belief in the inevitability and rightness of the Virginia way of life becomes, in Tate's word, "hubris." He is a classical hero who watches his family crumble and is driven to death because, in his pride, he cannot recognize his society is dying and that things are going to change. His pride also forces him to take all the blame for the family tragedy on himself and to absolve Semmes and Posey of their part in the sin; Semmes because the Major had disowned him and driven him out to Jane Posey's arms, and Posey because the Major felt he should have prevented the marriage of Posey and his daughter. The moment when Buchan says "I am to blame
Virginia society was built upon two things: tobacco and slaves. "It ain't natural for a man not to like to see a fine stand of tobacco," Cousin John Semmes, the most articulate defender of the South in the book, complains of George Posey. Tobacco is also ruining the soil of the state, according to Posey, who runs the Buchan plantation with modern business methods after Major Buchan has demonstrated his bafflement with the modern commercial world and has lost much of the wealth of the estate. Buchan has given up raising tobacco and has failed at raising corn, but he continues to try to support his traditional manner of life without the economic basis for it.

As cash crops failed, one way left to Virginians to support this life was the domestic slave trade. Lands to the south and the west of Virginia were still rich enough to grow cotton, and the men who grew it needed slaves and had the money to buy them. Cousin John Semmes realized his choice was to free his slaves or breed them for sale; he could no longer support them, nor they he. John Semmes believed that slavery was wrong and he knew the opprobrium placed upon the man who sells his slaves in a paternalistic society. He freed his. Most Virginians did not. The fine houses, the fancy clothes, the blooded horses and the hunting dogs, and the good food and drink that permitted one to practice hospitality all required large sums of money. Major Buchan attempts to free one of his black families, but by the time he does so, George Posey controls the family finances. He
sells the slaves south to Georgia. The money he earns by the sale he uses to pay some of Major Buchan's debts. Major Buchan wants the benefits of slavery and the slave trade without dirtying his hands with the business. He apparently is so innocent of business that Posey's transaction, soon common knowledge, escapes his notice.

Posey, of course, has already sold his own brother to buy a horse to impress Susan and a shotgun to give Lacy to earn his love. This literal sin against a brother serves to show the sin of the antebellum South as a whole. Not only the slave trade is revealed, but the debasement of black women. Yellow Jim is the son of Posey's brutal father and a black maid. Southern denunciations of Northern treachery spouted in a speech by John Semmes are undercut by the spectacle of slaves awaiting shipment and by Yellow Jim's betrayal by Posey; Virginia notions of honor are ridiculed when Lacy watches the duel between Langton and Posey in the company of a teenaged mulatto girl who will, as he is assured by a smug young gentleman, "let you have it." The children of the fathers of the title are both black and white. 32

This ordered Virginia society, based upon tobacco and slavery, undergoes its greatest challenge, and fails it, during the Civil War. "The Crisis" and "The Abyss" deal with the beginnings of the war up until the first Battle of Bull Run, along with the final destruction of Major Buchan's way of life. George Posey, a man with little sympathy for the traditions of time and place, is most direct with his condemnation of Virginians at war. He tells John Semmes,
"Mr. Semmes, you people are about to fight a war. They remind me of a passel of young 'uns playing prisoners' base."

Indeed, the Virginian concept of war seems to be much the same as their notion of a medieval tournament, right up to ill-tempered John Langton being a leader of men. Once again, Langton's overzealousness for honor leads him to pick a quarrel with Posey when Posey is given precedence over him. Because Posey comes from neither Alexandria nor Virginia, when the company Posey raised and armed joins the Alexandria regiment, Langton, not Posey is made captain of the company. Lacy protests to John Semmes, "Mister John [Langton] ain't from Alexandria either." Semmes answers him, "But he's a Virginian. That's the difference—he's a Virginian."

War, for the Virginians, is a family affair. Major Buchan, Lacy tells us, pictures the flocking of men to the Confederate banner as a purely local phenomenon:

Where in his mind were the vast hordes of young men who were rushing to village and country town, from the river bottoms and the hills, coming with squirrel rifles, shotguns, bowie knives, to form 'military companies' in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, by the banks of the James, the Chattahoochee, the Tennessee? For papa, these young men did not exist; all that country below the James to the Rio Grande was a map, and the 'war' was about to be fought between the government and the sons of his neighbors and kin in the old Northern Neck, Virginia.

Similar misapprehensions dogged the heels of many Virginians at the beginning of the secession movement. They could not regard themselves as threatened by the actions of the federal government and so they hesitated in giving their loyalty to the Southern nation. Virginians, men and boys,
felt that the government, that collection of buildings on the Potomac River, was theirs by right. "God was a Virginian who created the world in His own image." The seceding Southern states, on the other hand, represented the "West." Some Virginians, like Major Buchan, would have liked to see those hotheaded cotton states returned to the Union, but they simply could not see that the only way for such a thing to happen was use of federal force. Thus the Major was so shocked when, at the announcement of the secession of South Carolina, Posey commented that President Buchanan should "reduce Charleston to ashes."36

Virginians had so long played the elegant mannered game of life and politics that when the "cotton people" and the Northerners acted against the rules, they could not comprehend it, any more than Major Buchan could resist Posey when he decided to marry Susan. The Major tried the same icy politeness on a Yankee officer that he had tried on Posey, but the only way he could maintain the Virginia code in the face of Yankee guns and modern manners was to kill himself. "There is nothing you can give to me, sir," he told the officer, and there was nothing he could take from the modern world; his death reaffirmed his integrity but his plantation was left in ashes.37

IV

We have here something like a capacity for mere sensation, as distinguished from sensibility, which in Usher is atrophied. In terms of the small distinction I am offering here, sensibility keeps us in the world; sensation locks us into the self, feeding upon the disintegration of its objects and absorbing them into the void of its ego. . . . Poe's sensibility, for reasons I
cannot surmise here, was almost completely impoverished. He could feel little but the pressure of his predicament. . . ."38

The words are from Tate's "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe;" if the names Usher and Poe were changed to Posey, this could be a passage from some essay explicating The Fathers. Posey has a sensibility which could take little from the ordered Virginia world. Instead, he tosses himself about, seeking comfort in violence. If sensation feeds on disintegration, Posey has much to feed on: the growing madness of Susan, the splintering of the Buchan family, the shutting-away of Jane, the deaths of Yellow Jim, Semmes, Major Buchan, Langton, and Posey's mother, the imprisonment of Cousin John, and the Civil War—all events he either causes, or helps to cause, or takes part in. If ever a man suffered from the "pressure of his predicament," that man was George Posey.

But Tate was not writing of Posey when he wrote the sentences above; he was writing of Poe and of Poe's characters. If it is hard to distinguish the remarks made of one from the remarks made of the other, it is because Tate believed that both suffered from the same malady. Tate believed that Poe created the modern romantic hero in characters such as Roderick Usher; in the note to the 1977 edition of The Fathers, Tate tells us that Posey is "a modern romantic hero."39

We know of a handful of things that helped to cause the emptiness in Posey. His mother and his aunt are both self-centered and crazy women. His uncle Jarmen has shut himself up in the attic and is writing an epic history of mankind: a Poe character if ever there was one. The Poseys have left
the land whence they draw their income. They have all the
resources of wealth but none of the responsibilities; they
are free to fritter their energies away. Their Roman
Catholic faith has shriveled away to almost nothing. The
Church provides music instruction and priests with whom to
play pinochle. Nonetheless, all these matters seem to be
symptoms, not causes. As Tate writes of Poe, we cannot sur­
mise the reason for Posey's impoverishment of sensibility;
we can only say it exists.

This impoverishment of sensibility and the need of his
overweening will which has no object to contain it, leads
Posey to Semmes and from Semmes to the Buchan family. "What
Semmes gave to him is what he needed most but could never
take—first Susan, and then . . . he tried to give him what
the Poseys had lost: an idea, a cause, an action in which
his personality could be extinguished. . . ." Semmes's
belief in the Virginia code overrides all else with him.
When Virginia secedes, Posey has to pause and reflect what
his course of action will be. Semmes knows immediately. He
goes with his state. When Yellow Jim is believed to have
raped Jane, Posey is torn between different impulses, but
Semmes knows only one way to act. He follows the code and
shoots Jim. Posey reacts on pure impulse and will alone and
kills Semmes. Once he does that, he has admitted that the
code of the Buchans cannot satisfy the modern man.

It does not matter if Posey is drawn to the Buchans
through some evil desire to destroy what he lacks or through
some virtuous desire to become a part of and to sustain that
which he cannot be. With no tradition to guide him, and nothing but raw will, now devoted to the economic success of the Buchans, he must destroy them. He cannot distinguish the essential from its trappings; he sacrifices the best of the Buchans to maintain what is worst about them. We are left to imagine the nature of his marriage to Susan, just as Conrad leaves us to imagine the horrible doings of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. We see enough of the results of that marriage to know that the triumphant will of Posey destroys Susan's belief in in the inevitability of the Buchan way of life and gives her over to chaos.

Posey plays havoc with the world of the Buchans. Shortly after the murder of Semmes he recognizes what he has done. Even then his past catches up with him in a manner which should persuade him that flouting the established traditions of life, even when they are foolish and sinful, cuts oneself off from the source of that life. He is now willing to serve the Southern cause wholeheartedly, but the long-ago parody of a duel which he had with John Langton rises to prevent him. He leaves the Southern army. But his recognition of the consequences of his actions acts on him in such a way that he becomes a better man and does his best to restore the family. Thus, *The Fathers* presents in its end a message of hope. The book is not only about sin but about the knowledge of sin. Posey achieves this knowledge and this knowledge can lead him to better action. The society of the Old South, the civilization based upon slavery and upon the refusal to recognize "the abyss" cannot achieve such
self-knowledge, and no matter how good it may be in some respects, it is destined to be destroyed by its sins.

There is one other modern man in the book, one who is torn, in a way Posey is not, between the traditions he knows and loves, and the modern age represented by Posey, a man whom he loves as well. That person is Lacy Buchan. He sees that Old Virginia is dying, and he knows he cannot be wholly a man of its code the way his brother was. Nevertheless, he chooses to identify himself with its cause, and he fights under Robert E. Lee for four years. He has been a spectator; he becomes an actor.

But that is not the greatest service he renders the Buchan family or Virginia. Lacy insists that he tells his tale not knowing what it means, but the very telling is an act of knowledge. Theoriticians of language tell us that things in the real world are not real to us until they have been named. The act of naming is the act of communication both to others and to ourselves. Simply by telling the story of the Buchans and their destruction, Lacy reaffirms all that is good and noble about them and comes to the knowledge of sin which is necessary for the avoidance of sin. The Fathers is a naming.

In the end we are left with a few facts. In 1930 Allen Tate entered into the longest period of sustained political activity in his life. Through this period he was also engaged in examining and evaluating the Old South. At some point in this evaluation he abandoned a biography of Robert
E. Lee and started on a book named "Fathers of Exile" that was in turn abandoned. In 1938 he published *The Fathers*, a relentless study of evil in the Old South. At about this time the Agrarian movement fizzled out. In 1950 Allen Tate joined the Roman Catholic Church. 41

As Allen Tate considered Virginia and its representatives—Jefferson, Poe, Jackson, and Lee—there was a desperate quality in his search. It is shown by the violence with which he castigated Lee; it was caused by the personal nature of his explorations into Old Virginia society.

Don Quixote observed that modern times were no Golden Age, and in 1934 Tate wrote of Golden Ages:

> The Golden Age is not a moral or social possibility; it is a way of understanding the problem of evil, being a picture of human nature with the problem removed. It is a qualitative fiction, not a material world, that permits the true imagination to recognize evil for what it is. 42

Old Virginia was the Golden Age to contrast with modern America. As a Golden Age it had one fault: it was susceptible to historical investigation. When Tate found the evil in antebellum Virginia, he wrote a book confessing it. After *The Fathers* Tate could no longer look for a political solution to the problems of modern man. Man's problems are those of Original Sin and they cannot be solved by architects of perfect societies, whether they be Edens or Utopias.

In 1929 Tate wrote Donald Davidson that he wished somebody could prove that "the Old Southerners were historically Catholics all the time." 43 His essay in *I'll Take My Stand*, "Remarks on the Southern Religion," was essentially a lament
that the Old South was not Catholic. In 1935, he was pretending that it was:

Only in the South does one find a convinced supernaturalism: it is nearer to Aquinas than to Calvin, Wesley or Knox.44

As Malcolm Cowley commented, "But if we reduce St. Thomas Aquinas to a feeling of 'convinced supernaturalism', we have not much left of the 'Summa Theologica.'"45 John Crowe Ransom had dismissed Tate's search for Catholicism in the Old South long before:

I don't entirely believe in Romanism as Tate and other friends do--by the way, I think it is impossible to find Romanism or its influence in our Old South; what we had there was pure Calvinism, and that had all the essential elements of a great religion in it, except possibly some aesthetic ones.46

There was a pathetic note in Tate's writings when he pretended that the South had Catholic affinities.

Tate's picture of the Posey family in The Fathers shows that he was aware of the difficulties in reconciling the Southern tradition with Catholicism. The Poseys allowed their religion to become meaningless. Surrounded by a culture which lacked elements friendly to Catholicism, it was not surprising that they did lose their religion. When Tate wished to show that Posey was an alien in the South, he had to do no more than give him a Catholic background.

Cowley had diagnosed Tate's problem accurately when he said, "Today if Tate carried his praise of traditional religion to the logical point of joining the Church, he would be alienating himself from his own people."47

Alienation was Tate's curse. His alienation from the
past was witnessed in "Ode to the Confederate Dead." His alienation from Southern traditions was proved when he said they could be recovered only by violence. For him to become a Catholic would be to admit his alienation from "his own people." Instead, in the 1930's he returned to the South. He preached the Old South. But as he investigated Virginia and all its successes and failures, he found that the Southern past could not sustain him. He had to look elsewhere.

When I talked with Mr. Tate, one Saturday afternoon in Nashville, less than a year before his death, I told him what the result of my research into his attitudes towards Virginia were. I said, "I can tell you the way it ends. I conclude that it doesn't matter what your image of the Old South was, what your vision of the past was. You have to have something beyond the past, and I can't see what it can be but God."

Tate answered me, "You are certainly right young man. The past is not enough. Without religion the past is dead. With us, it has to be Christianity."
FOOTNOTES

Introduction


4 Allen Tate Papers, Firestone Library, Princeton University, Princeton New Jersey.


6 Letter of Tate to Davidson, February 18, 1929; Letter of Davidson to Tate, July 29, 1929. John Tyree Fain and Thomas Daniel Young, *The Literary Correspondence of Donald Davidson and Allen Tate* (Athens, Ga., 1974), 222, 227. Letter of Fletcher to Tate, December 19, 1930, Tate Papers.


8 Fain and Young, *Correspondence*, 148-149, 151-152, 156, 159.

9 See in particular Rock, "Meaning and Making:" Fain and Young, *Correspondence*, 218-255; Stewart, *The Burden of Time*, 91-205.

10 Allen Tate in an interview with the author, June 24,


12 Squires, Allen Tate, 18; Rubin, The Wary Fugitives, 64-74.

Chapter One

1 Fain and Young, Correspondence, 212.


3 Young and Inge, Donald Davidson, 17-18; Rubin, The Wary Fugitives, 137-138; Donald Davidson, Poems 1922-1961 (Minneapolis, 1966), 68-70, 113-181.


5 Squires, Allen Tate, 18; Rubin, The Wary Fugitives, 64-75.

6 Letter of Tate to Lytle, February 9, 1955, Lytle Papers; "Fathers of Exile;" Letter of Tate to Read, cited in Squires, Allen Tate, 185.

7 Tate, Memoirs and Opinions, 8.

8 Ibid., 6.

9 Letter of Tate to Davidson, May 29, 1965, Fain and Young, Correspondence, 398.

10 Letter of Tate to Davidson, January 22, 1963, Fain and Young, Correspondence, 392.

11 Tate, Memoirs and Opinions, 10.


13 Ibid., 18-19.
Chapter Two


John Gould Fletcher, "Education, Past and Present," I'll Take My Stand. For Stark Young, see his appreciation of the University of Virginia as Jeffersonian symbol in Rock, "Making and Meaning," 83.

Furdy, Fugitives' Reunion, 207.

Davidson, Attack on Leviathan, 170. For Davidson's view on Jefferson the following essays in Attack on Leviathan are crucial: "Two Interpretations of American History," 13-38; "The Two Old Wests," 169-191; "American Heroes," 212-227; "The Dilemma of Southern Liberals," 261-284; and "Expedients vs. Principles--Cross Purposes in the South," 312-338. Quotation can be found on 170. Also see Davidson, "Mr.
Cash and the Proto-Dorian South," Still Rebels, Still Yankees (Eaton Rouge, 1957), 191-212. Of these two collections of Davidson's essays it may be said that The Attack on Leviathan presents Davidson at length as a social critic, while Still Rebels, Still Yankees gives more emphasis to Davidson as literary critic; it should be added that Davidson did not seem to draw a fine distinction between these roles.

6 Davidson, Attack on Leviathan, 328.

7 Ibid., 330.

8 For Davidson on the black vote see Donald Davidson, "Preface to Decision," Sewanee Review, LIII (Summer, 1945), 393-412.

9 Brother to Dragons (New York, 1953). I am indebted to Mr. Peter Hegeman, Harford County, Maryland, for his analysis of Brother to Dragons. Mr. Hegeman graduated from the College of William and Mary in May of 1978 with an honors degree in English.


11 Davidson, Attack on Leviathan, 266, 328.

12 Letter of Tate to Davidson, August 20, 1926, Donald Davidson Papers, Joint University Libraries, Nashville, Tennessee. While Drs. Fain and Young put together an excellent selection of Donald Davidson's and Allen Tate's letters in their The Literary Correspondence of Donald Davidson and Allen Tate, it must be remembered that their emphasis was "literary;" those concerned with Davidson's and Tate's social views must check the original manuscripts.

13 Letter of Tate to Davidson, August 10, 1929, Pain and Young, Correspondence, 230-231.

14 Letter of Eliot to Tate, October 28, 1930. Tate Papers. Eliot's letters to Tate indicate that he took a strong interest in the Agrarian movement. Tate must surely have been vexed by the fact that neither Donald Davidson nor John Crowe Ransom liked Eliot. Tate, Essays, 377.

15 American Review, VI (March, 1936), 596-611; reprinted in Who Owns America? (New York, 1936). Letter of Tate to Davidson, January 18, 1936, Pain and Young, Correspondence, 295.

16 Tate, Essays, 556.

17 I'll Take My Stand, 173-175.

18 Tate, Essays, 523, 524, 525; "The Profession of Letters in the South," Essays.
On *The New Republic*, see Fain and Young, *Correspondence*, 244; on *The Hound and Horn*, see *Hound and Horn Papers*, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, and Leonard Greenbaum, *The Hound and Horn* (The Hague, 1966)—the history of *The Hound and Horn* would make a fascinating book if handled with more grace than Dr. Greenbaum possesses; on *The American Review*, see Rock, "Making and Meaning," 400, and *New Republic*, LXXXVII (May 27, 1936), 75. For the Agrarians and political activities, the whole of Dr. Rock's dissertation is, as in all respects, invaluable.

I'll Take My Stand, 175; Tate, *Essays*, 624.

For Tate and angelism, see "The Angelic Imagination: Poe as God," *Essays*, 401–423. For Percy and angelism see his two novels *The Last Gentleman* and *Love in the Ruins*. Tate and Percy also shared conversion to Catholicism and an interest in linguistics. While it is true Descarte was not the first to split mind from body, Tate observed "the demonology which attributes to a few persons the calamities of mankind is perhaps a necessary convention of economy in discourse." *Essay*, 4.

Chapter Three

1 unfinished biography of Lee, 31.


5 See the correspondence between Earle Balch and Andrew Lytle, *Lytle Papers*; the correspondence between Balch and Tate, *Tate Papers*; and in particular, Tate's letter to Lytle, July 16, 1931, *Lytle Papers*. The picture of Lee is in the letters of Ellen Glasgow to Tate, *Tate Papers*.


7 unfinished biography of Lee, 46.


10 Tate, "Mistaken Beauty," 51; Letter of Tate to Lytle, April 1, 1929, Lytle Papers.

11 Letter of Tate to Davidson, May 5, 1927, Fain and Young, Correspondence, 199-200.

12 Tate, Jackson, 25, 38.

13 Ibid., 3.

14 Letter of Tate to Davidson, November 27, 1927. Davidson Papers; Elliot quote in Purdy, Fugitives' Reunion, 33.

15 Tate, Jackson, 191.

16 Ibid., 272-273.

17 Ibid., 272.

18 Ibid., 285.

19 Ibid., 131-132, 224.

20 Ibid., 254.

21 Ibid., 247-248.

22 Tate, Memoirs, 46-66.

23 Letter of Tate of Lincoln Kirstein, February 6, 1933, Hound and Horn Papers; letter of Tate to Davidson, November 9, 1929, Davidson Papers; letter of Tate to Lytle, June 16, 1929, Lytle Papers; Tate, Jackson, Bibliography, 321-322; Allen Tate, Jefferson Davis: His Rise and Fall (New York, 1929), Bibliographical Note, 303-306.

24 Letter of Tate to Lytle, April 1, 1929, Lytle Papers; Tate, Davis, 303.

25 Tate, Davis, 153.

26 Ibid., 271.

27 Letter of Tate to Lytle, June 11, 1929, Lytle Papers.

28 Tate, Davis, 272; Letter of Tate to Lytle, April 1, 1929, Lytle Papers.

29 Tate, Davis, 271, 274-277.
Chapter Four

1. Letter of Tate to Lytle, December 23, 1954, Lytle Papers.

2. Letter of Tate to Davidson, February 18, 1950, Fain and Young, Correspondence, 350.

3. Allen Tate, The Fathers and Other Fiction (Baton Rouge, 1977). This is a revised edition; the reader should also consult the original edition of 1938. Since Allen Tate chose to make changes to establish that George Posey is a modern romantic hero and not a villain (xxi), and this concept of the modern romantic hero is so important to our understanding of Tate's interpretation of the society pictured in The Fathers I have elected to use this edition rather than the original.

4. Tate, "Our Cousin, Mr. Poe," Essays, 385-400.

5. Tate, Essays, 385-423, 517-534; Tate, Memoirs, 115-127.

6. Tate, Essays, 416n.

7. I'll Take My Stand, 173-174; Tate, Essays, 415-416.

8. Tate, Essays, 529.

9. Tate, Memoirs, 121.

10. Tate, Essays, 527.

11. Ibid., 402.

13 Tate, Essays, 387; Tate, Memoirs, 119.
14 Tate, Memoirs, 119.
15 Tate, Essays, 422.
16 Ibid., 403.
17 Ibid., 404.
18 Ibid., 405-423.
19 Ibid., 416.
20 Ibid., 407-408.
21 Ibid., 406-410.
22 Ibid., 400.
23 Tate, "Faulkner's Sanctuary and the Southern Myth," Memoirs, 151; David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis (New York, 1976), 457.
24 Tate, The Fathers, 264; I'll Take My Stand, 245.
26 Tate, The Fathers, 281.
27 Ibid., 23.
28 Ibid., 33-34.
29 Ibid., xxi.
30 Ibid., 280.
31 Ibid., 83.
32 Ibid., 73.
33 Ibid., 167.
34 Ibid., 167, 298.
35 Ibid., 155.
36 Ibid., 122, 125.
37 Ibid., 305.
38 Tate, Essays, 392, 398.
39 Tate, The Fathers, xxi.
40 Ibid., 179.
41 Fain and Young, Correspondence, 423-427.
42 Tate, Essays, 184.
43 Letter of Tate to Davidson, July 27, 1929, Davidson Papers.
44 Tate, Essays, 521.
47 I'll Take My Stand, 174.
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For Book Reviews by Donald Davidson, see *The Spyglass* below. (V. Books)

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