

CHAPTER 4

SELF-DESTRUCTIVENESS OF JOE CHRISTMAS

In analyzing Joe Christmas's self destructiveness, the writer emphasizes on the development of the deviation of Joe's personality. First of all, the writer will focus his attention on Joe's childhood which is corrupted by the harmful conditions, such as the racial hostility and the rigid discipline of puritanism which are depicted in the novel. Secondly, the analysis will be on Joe's adolescence which mostly concerns with his struggle for obtaining the acceptance of his manhood. Unfortunately, Joe's own foster father always fails the struggle. Some troubles are seen in this phase of his life including his inability to have pleasure out of his sexual relationships. And, finally, one will be led to the complicated problem of Joe's life; that is, when he must accept the fact that every man like he himself is an individual as well as a social human being. Whereas, the social conditions depicted in the novel seem incompatible with his origin. On the one hand, he is a mulatto who refuses to act either as a white or as a black. On the other hand, the society only accepts the dichotomy; that is, the whites and the blacks. More than that, his

infantile attitude denying his originality is still confusing him to behave properly at his age of thirties.

4.1 Characterization

Joe Christmas is the leading as well as the round character who is obsessed by the mystery of his past. In his struggling for being some body, he is treated as an object of other characters' idealisms. He suffers from his foster father's puritanical way of life which demands his rigid self-sacrifice. He is also irritated by Joanna's determination which insists him on proclaiming his black self. Therefore, the intense of his life lies on his perpetual sufferings that he himself never succeeds in revealing his past identity or finding the point where the strangeness, such as his inability of defining his individuality, begins. Throughout his life, Joe is getting further and further from his social involvement, he even keeps trying to deny his origin. The deeper he searches his past identity, the further he is from his real world. Joe Christmas is a mulatto who is assumed to get his Negro blood from his father, Mexican circus member who had seduced Joe's mother. When he was born, Joe's grandfather, Doc Hines, still thought that he was a Negro and therefore, he tried to get rid of him. After his mother's death from giving his birth, Hines brought him to an orphanage and left him at the

doorstep of the orphanage at Christmas Eve. Then, Joe had lived as an orphan about five years before Mr. McEachern, a presbyterian farmer adopted him and later taught him with strict discipline.

Joe is about thirty three, when he comes at Jefferson and lives in an old isolated plantation which belongs to the Burdens an abolitionist. He is working for the planing mill, while he is secretly selling whisky, for about three years. During the time, he refuses to act either as white or as black. Physically he can pass his life as a white though actually he wants to be a Negro. Among the planing mill workers in Jefferson, only Byron Bunch who wants to get in touch with him. Byron is a good man who later helps Lena find her husband. He keeps being kind to Joe although Joe often neglects him. In Jefferson, Joe lives in an old plantation which belongs to the Burdens, the abolisionists. He shares a cabin in the plantation with Joe Brown, who is Lena's husband. His first appearance in Jefferson also brings about strangeness and questions. According to the people's opinions, Joe Christmas's name itself sounds strange to them, especially for the whites. There is no white man by the name of "Christmas".

. But as soon as they heard it, it was as though there was something in the sound of it that was trying to tell them what to expect; that he carried with him his own inescapable warning, like a flower its scent or a rattlesnake its rattle. Only none of them had sense enough to recognize it. (p. 33).

The following evidence shows the effect of Joe's mental deviations in his adulthood which is more sociological, therefore, makes his self destructiveness complete. He is always afraid to fall in love with women, since it reminds him of Bobbie's betrayal, and his dependency on whiskey. He always tries to run away from the fact that he needs woman anyway.

Yet it still seemed to be filled with the presence of the blonde woman, its very cramped harsh walls bulged outward with the militant and diamondsurfaced respectability. On the bare bureau sat a pint bottle almost full of whiskey. He drank it, slowly, not feeling the fire at all, holding himself upright by holding to the bureau. The whiskey went down his throat cold as molasses, without taste. He set the empty bottle down and leaned on the bureau, his head lowered, not thinking, waiting perhaps without knowing it, perhaps not even waiting. Then the whiskey began to burn in him and he began to shake his head slowly from side to side, while thinking became one with the slow, hot coiling and recoiling of his entrails: "I got to get out of here." (p. 222-223).

He gets accustomed to bedding with women whom he is not afraid of; they are the prostitutes. He feels they can help him reduce his nerves. He pays when he has money, but he will bed with any body anyway though he does not have it. By telling them that he is a Negro, he will have it "free", though he has to bear the curse. He does it only for obtaining the assertion that no one, including Bobbie, should love him because he is a black. He thinks he only deserves punishment and betrayal. In this case, Joe hits a prostitute

who has given him no response after he has told her about his being black.

He was sick after that. He did not know until then that there were white women who would take a man with a black skin. He stayed sick for two years. Sometimes he would remember how he had once tricked or teased white men into calling him a negro in order to fight them, to beat them or be beaten; now he fought the negro who called him white (p. 225).

Eventually, Joe meets his death at his age of thirty six, on Friday in August.

Joe's character is totally contrasted from Lena Grove's, which is flat and friendly to her reality; she assumes all the burdens of life without losing her original nature as a country woman and a mother of her future baby. She is a young, pleasant-faced, candid, friendly, and alert woman (p. 11). Her mission is to look for the father of her unborn baby and to build a happy family. Unlike Joe who is terrified with the legal marriage, Lena constantly believes that a family can be a lot of meanings for her in the future. Perhaps, it is because of her condition that she had become an orphan when she was twelve years. The comfort she experienced in her brother's family after all had made her being obsessed with having good family of her own. She expresses her belief with extraordinary strength when once she is asked about that:

Lena's lowered face is grave, quiet. Her hand has ceased now. It lies quite still on her lap, as if it had died there. Her voice is quiet, tranquil, stubborn. "I reckon a family ought to all be

together when a chap comes. Specially the first one. I reckon the Lord will see to that." (p. 21).

She is also kind to women who may feel embarrassed and contempt for she can not show her husband to them during her pregnancy. Her presence as an opening and ending character in the novel serves as a totally undeveloping as well as the clearest character than all the others, which are mostly presented on their bad sides. She seems to rely her life on the wheel of time; she follows the changing of the time though she never changes herself. Faulkner reminds his readers of that quality from the words and actions Lena shows to one of the country men outside Jefferson :

She looks up at the sun. "I reckon it's time to eat," she says. He watches from the corner of his eye as she opens the cheese and crackers and the sardines, offers them.

"I wouldn't care for none," he says.

"I'd take it kind for you to share."

"I wouldn't care to. You go ahead and eat."

She begins to eat. She eats slowly, steadily, sucking the rich sardine oil from her fingers with slow and complete relish (p. 29).

She is indeed a country woman and will always remain like that till the end of the novel.

Other characters which can be included to be the supporting ones are Doc Hines, Miss. Atkins, Mr. and Mrs. McEacherns, Joanna Burden, and Gail Hightower. The first three characters above are essential to Joe's personality construction. They directly emasculate his "id" impulse that one of the results is his inability to accept pleasure out of

himself which is partly Negro. First of all, Doc Hines left Joe at the orphanage since he can not accept his daughter's having a negro baby. Not only has Hines abandoned him, but also he spies on him by disguising himself as a janitor at the orphanage wondering that his negro blood might be contagious to the white boys. Hines seems to consider the white is always superior and the black is a threat out of slavery that he thinks God has cursed all.

"You've been watching him too. I've seen you. Dont say you dont. " He looked up at her face, the spectacles propped now above his brows. He was not an old man. In his present occupation he was incongruity. He was a hard man, in his primer; a man who should have been living a hard and active life, and whom time, circumstance, something, had betrayed, sweeping the hale body and thinking of a man of fortyfive into a backwater suitable for a man of sixty or sixtyfive. "You know," she said. "You knew before the other children started calling him Nigger. You came out here at the same time. You weren't working here a month before that Christmas night when Charley found him on the doorstep yonder (p. 127).

Joe's strong rejection of love, especially that embodies womanly kindness, comes firstly from Miss Atkins, the dietitian of the orphanage, who bribes him instead of punishing him as his sense of order expects the punishment for his having slipped into her room. Faulkner symbolically describes the close connection between Joe's childishness and the characterization of Miss Atskin by attaching her profession to the sense of food or sweetness :

The dietitian was nothing to him, yet save a mechanical adjunct to eating, food, the dinning room,

the ceremony of eating at the wooden forms, coming now and then into his vision without impacting at all except as something of pleasing association and pleasing in herself to look at - young, a little fullbodied, smooth, pink-and-white, making his mind think of the diningroom, making his mouth think of something sweet and sticky to eat, and also pinkcolored and surreptitious (p. 120).

Joe's sense of order is broken by the dietitian's attitude which is inexplicable for him at his age of five. He can not understand why she gives him a gift though he happened to catch her making love with Charley. Indeed, he suffers from the curse and being spoilt because he has refused the bribery. As a result, Joe becomes irritated by pleasure, especially the sexual one in which the feminine domination presents as a strong affection over him.

The dietitian was twenty seven - old enough to have to take a few amorous risks but still young enough to attach a great deal of importance not so much to love, but to being caught at it. She was also stupid enough to believe that a child of not only could deduce the truth from what he had heard, but that he would want to tell it as an adult would (p. 123).

The role of other woman character of Mrs. McEachern is also essential to Joe's self destructiveness. Mr. McEachern, her husband, who is a very rigid presbyterian farmer, is growing up hatred in her heart since he never thinks of her as other usual housewife, even she is often ignored as a human.

She was dressed, in black, with a bonnet - a small woman, entering timidly, a little hunched, with a beaten face. She looked fifteen years older than the rugged and vigorous husband. She did not quite enter

the room. She just came within the door and stood there for a moment, in her bonnet and her dress of rusty yet often brushed black, carrying an umbrella and a palm leaf fan, with something queer about her eyes, as if whatever she saw or heard, she saw or heard through a more immediate manshape or manvoice, as if she were the medium and the vigorous ruthless husband the control (p. 148).

She is trying hard to be in Joe's side whenever she sees him suffering. However, she never succeeds in doing that since Joe himself always wants some kinds of punishment to show his manhood as shown by his foster father.

Mr. McEachern is not only Joe's foster father but also his living catechism since with his discipline the father serves himself as a divine figure which is described in the catechism. He, then, becomes a genuine puritan who believes in self-denial and self-sacrifice as the only means of safety. Unfortunately, it turns to the destruction of the practice itself and in one way or another, he himself becomes the victim.

He had looked once and saw a thickish man with a close brown beard and hair cut close though not recently. Hair and beard both had a hard, vigorous quality, unslivered, as though the pigmentation were impervious to the forty or more years which the face revealed. The eyes were lightcolored, cold....He could feel the man looking at him though, with a stare cold and intent and yet not deliberately harsh. It was the same stare with which he might have examined a horse or a second hand plow, convinced before hand that he would buy. His voice was deliberately, infrequent, ponderous; the voice of a man who demanded that he be listened to not so much with attention but in silence (p. 142).

His puritanical attitude has emasculated Joe's sense of pleasure and ability to accept the world at present. He is responsible for Joe's inability to achieve his manhood since during Joe's childhood McEachern is the most possible object upon which Joe portrays the sense of manhood for himself.

The presence of a white advocate for the Negro race, namely Joanna Burden, is often regarded as the external force which allows Joe's self destructiveness to come into effect. She is a spinster, of the Burdens, who is an abolitionist and a Calvinist as well. In struggling for her idealism, Joanna lives in an old isolated plantation of her family where Joe and Brown also stay, but in its other cabin in Jefferson. Later, she is revealed by the people of Jefferson to be Joe's secret lover and the cause of her own death since she strongly imposes on him the resolution of his being a Negro. As a pure abolitionist, Joanna is encouraged to devote the best of her ability for the blacks' interest. She often reveals her idealism and the plan she has organized to him since she thinks he will take her side. Being in the process of observing the environment to find its acceptance of his determining to be a black, Joe has no agitation and suspicion in listening to her. Eventually, Joe thinks he should express his feelings to her as well in order to obtain the acceptance of his being partly black and to lessen his pain.

Then he spoke again, moving; his voice now had an overtone, unmirthful yet quizzical, at once humorless

and sardonic: "If I'm not, damned if I have not wasted a lot of time." (p. 254).

Joe meets her when he is at his thirty three years of age and has made her his secret lover for three years.

If there is a male character which is attributed by its possession of the past romantic dream, it will be of Gail Hightower's. He becomes a presbyterian minister, gets appointed to Jefferson, and encourages his ostracism from the community so that he can be relieved each day in that moment between the light and dark of the story of his grandfather's foolish, gallant chicken house raid. He is fond of spending or wasting his time thinking of his grandfather's adventure that he often ignores his social responsibility. Like Joanna and Joe, he is a victim of his predecessors. His entire career is devoted to alienating himself safely away from the terrors of the harsh world. But to escape the terrors, he must also deny himself the world's pleasures. Unlike Joe, however, he quits his withdrawal from social life by helping the delivery of Lena's baby and also by trying to save Joe's life from the brutality of Percy Grimm, who is a white American fanatic soldier, though it does not work. If Joe and Lena are strangers to each other; they even have not met through out the novel, Hightower only sees and talks to them separate almost at the end of the novel. Anyway, those two scenes give one the impression of Hightower's changing character to a sociable one which is

partly approved to Lena's but totally opposed to Joe's. He is about thirty at that time, and just like the other extreme characters, his ending is still vague. But, the point is that he has managed to free himself from the past romantic dream of his grandfather. And that makes him different from the other extreme characters, such as Joe and Joanna.

4.2 Plot

The following sequence of events builds up Light in August novel in which it implicitly conveys an important point of this study; that is, self destructiveness of Joe Christmas. First of all, Joe Christmas is suffering from mental anguish and doubt of not knowing his identity.

What he knows only that everyone considers him as a mulatto. He becomes separated from his relatives thus prevented him from being loved and loving others. His mother's death and his abandoning father seem to complete his shortages since he automatically loses his chance of obtaining the parental love. Regarding one's individuality is important to himself as well as to the whites and the blacks, Joe starts struggling for defining his own individuality. On one hand, he manages to pass his life as a white man, but on the other hand, he wants to be a Negro too. Such feeling strongly motivates all his committing damage and destruction because the part of his unconsciousness confuses him with

pleasures he fails to obtain during his childhood. In the realm of this unconscious mind, all happenings in the childhood are recorded and they will appear as some infantile behaviours in the adulthood. Joe Christmas' bad memories during his childhood haunt him all the time.

Being an orphan, Joe only knows the dietitian as the best and the sweetest woman in the world. Perhaps, he thinks she is the most dependable and tolerable creature too. However, pleasant things are still indispensable to Joe's childhood world. He is looking for something sweet and delicious, smell of the toothpaste, when he happens to catch the dietitian making love with a man, named Charley. Since the sense of order is still dominant for boys of his age, Joe tries to get the punishment for the mistake he has done. On the contrary, the dietitian breaks his sense of order by trying to bribe him on his silence. Not only has she expelled him for some moment outside the orphanage, but also taunted him with "nigger bastard" because of his irresponsible attitude toward the bribery. Moreover, his grandfather, who always spies on him, tortures him with the suspicious and hateful feelings against him. So, at the age of five, Joe has suffered from being rejected and suspected that, in this case, his sense of order makes him believe that sorrow and punishment are parts of his destiny.

It never occurred to her that he believed that he was the one who had been taken in sin and was being

tortured with punishment deffered and that he was putting himself in her way in order to get 2it over with, get his whipping and strike the balance and write it off (p. 123).

The first thoughts conceived in his mind concerning with this event are that the taunt is referred to him and that it is a means of getting his whipping. After spending the first five years of his life in the orphanage, Joe finds difficulties in asserting his id impulses. And, the main condition which supports his inability to have pleasure in being a black is the narrow-minded view on the racial problems. Joe blames himself for not being able to resist the temptation in searching for the pleasnt and sweet things, and associates the dietitian's curse with his being a black. Therefore, his bad childhood experience "creates" his inability of enjoying his life since his life is partly that of the black's.

In addition to the taunt, the dietitian's bribery is also confusing him. Joe himself believes that he has done a mistake, therefore he is thinking of his punishment all the time. Whereas the dietitian ignores punishing him, on the other hand, she has even bribed him; thus Joe thinks that he does not deserve any punishment for his deeds. This brings a great impact in his adulthood. Believing that he does not kill Joanna, he thinks he is not guilty for murder, therefore he refuses to be punished. However, Joe considers the bribery as related to the womanly kindness that he himself can not

understand, but feel its destructiveness. His becoming resistant to womanly kindness is basically caused by such experience.

Since Joe has accidentally slipped into the dietitian's room, he is always haunted with the feeling of guilt, he expects the punishment for his wrong doings. But, on the contrary, the dietitian delays the punishment, and even ignores it. As a result, Joe feels unsatisfied and turns to break every orderly thing, including his own nature as a compensation. That is why Joe continuously denies his origin since it also represents a fixed thing, while he himself never feels satisfied with his ambiguous identity.

In further development of Joe's personality, he is fond of fighting against his peers in order to be punished by his foster father. And the way he uses to start his fights is by asking his friends to call him "Negro". In his early years of adolescence, he only has the puritanical farmer whom he himself considers to have achieved his manhood. Though he himself suffers from the rigid discipline, he witnesses himself how the farmer has managed to control his wife. For Joe, all women are possessed with the soft kindness which he believed will doom to be a forever victim.

One day, when his peers ask him to go hunting, Joe Christmas refuses to join them because he does not want to kill any living things. He considers hunting and killing as

terrors which always haunt him. He refers the target of hunting to himself. While hiding in a barn, Joe is thinking that he will lose his manhood if he is afraid of hunting and, therefore, his peers will humiliate him. However, he also realizes that his absolute surrender is the main cause of such emasculation. Consequently, on the following day he shoots a sheep all by himself. The sheep conveys a symbol of an innocent as well as a weak creature. He is kneeling before it and wets his hands with the yet warm blood of the dying sheep. It indicates his other mental deviation which is quite serious. As if, he describes his suffering, shortages, and condition like those of the dying one; he detests having them all in his life. He, then, has a fatalistic as well as a pessimistic view on realizing the reality he is faced with. Though his hunting shows the sign of struggling or fighting against his weaknesses, but it is more intensified with the avenger for his ravaged manhood. It reminds him of his struggle against his foster father for his manhood since the father always rigidly disciplines him whenever he shows his independence. He determines to destroy his shortages encompassing his ambiguous identity which has led him into many troubles. He said, "All right. it is so, then, But not to me. Not in my life and my love", (p. 186) As result, he always tries to run away from himself; to deny his origin and the reality. He thinks he is alone and lonely in this world

and the world seems to him, like it does to puritans, to be his own destroyer.

Since he often fails to get the acceptance of his manhood from the family, Joe turns to seek it outdoors. Joe is honest to Bobbie about his black self. At first he feels that she is different for her kindness. She can reveal his being lonely for not having a sweetheart at his age of eighteen. Being naive about his surroundings, Joe never knows that she is a prostitute. Joe believes in her and considers her to really love him. While having sexual relationship, Joe explains that he is not purely a white man. Naturally she cares nothing for it, which results at Joe's becoming more dependent on her. Being disappointed to find her serving another man in her room, Joe strikes her for he feels she has betrayed him. His inability to examine and to learn about the real situation can also lead to Joe's self-destructiveness. Joe's foster father can be blamed for having educated him with such a rigid discipline.

Later, Joe's foster mother makes his resistance toward the sense of kindness and womanly affection increase; he associates the sweet smelling and the finding of the dietitian's making love with a man to his bad memory, since she always tries to lessen or to keep the punishment away from him. The discipline he learns from his foster father is basically too extreme and unhumane, but unfortunately, it is

the only available example which can satisfy Joe's need of punishment and manhood.

It was not the hard work which he hated, nor the punishment and injustice. He was used to that before he ever saw either of them. He expected no less, and so he was neither outraged nor surprised. It was the woman: the soft kindness which he believed himself doomed to be forever victim of and which he hated worse than he did the hard and ruthless justice of men (p. 169).

Obviously, the manhood Joe wants to achieve is that of the puritanical one represented by his foster father. It is against all his id pleasures and embodies his self destructiveness.

When entering his adulthood, starting from Chapter eight, Joe has shown his other external conflict. He attacks his foster father for treating him as a child and having made Bobbie, the prostitute with whom he has had some sexual relationships, angry with him. According to the psychoanalysis theory applied in Sequal: A Handbook to Literary Criticism, Joe's childhood experiences, which are recorded in his mind in its unconscious realm, in which only pleasant principles exist, generate his sensory conducts, especially the destructive ones. The experiences seem to produce an impulse to do what it is so called self protection or self preservation which an adolescence thinks he has lost it in his childhood. The appropriate example of such mental deviation is shown in Joe's attacking his foster father.

"I dont know, I tell you!" Joe said. He looked from one to another, fretted but not yet glaring. "I hit him. He fell down. I told him I was going to do it someday." (p. 216).

In addition to the discipline, there are two other conditions deserved for the writer's attention concerning with Joe's mental deviation in his adolescence. One is the over-protective personality of Mrs. McEachern towards her husband's rigidity which she thinks it causes sufferings to her as well as to Joe. And, the other one is the social environment in which Joe lives. First of all, Joe becomes resistant to womanly kindness. During his childhood, Joe has ever been disappointed by the dietitian for her refusing to punish him and the foster mother's selfishness 'She was trying to make me cry. Then she thinks that they would have had me.' (p. 169). The poor social conditions, such as prostitute practices, that affect Joe's character. He feels betrayed by the womanly kindness represented by Bobbie, who is a prostitute. Being induced by his ego impulses, Joe opposes his foster mother's kindness to show to her that he has been a man already. He begins stealing money from her hoard and using the money for making love with Bobbie. It lasts for months until one day McEachern dismisses Bobbie from his life when Mrs. McEachern makes use of the opportunity to show her concern with his sufferings.

So, he tries to anticipate her domination over his dependent state for having stolen her money, which he has used to make love with the prostitute, to prove his manhood.

"I didn't ask you for it," he said. "Remember that I didn't ask, because I was afraid you would give it to me. I just took it. Dont forget that." (p. 209).

The reason of such deviation comes from Joe's bad experience when selling the heifer that he thinks his foster father has given to him. At twelve, Joe is confused with the fact that the father never and will never let him to have his own heifer. The father means to make Joe responsible to God for the duty which has been assigned to him.

"She's my cow," Joe said. "You gave her to me. I raised her from a calf because you gave her to me to be my own." (p. 163).

"It was my cow," Joe said. "If she wasn't mine, why did you tell me she was? Why did you give her to me?" (p. 164).

The suffering from being left by Bobbie which is accompanied by the taunt of "nigger bastard" leads to his isolating himself from the social life. He conceals his real identity by communicating with neither the whites nor the blacks. Under his white complexion, Joe gets along with the whites, but for preserving his isolation, he refuses to act as a white. He makes himself look like a tramp, wears dirty shirts and trousers, with his indolent and contemptuous attitude towards the whites.

He did not look like a professional hobo in his professional rags, but there was something definitely rootless about him, as though no town nor city was his, no street, no walls, no square of earth his home. And that he carried this knowledge with him always as though it were a banner, with a quality ruthless, lonely, and almost proud. "As if," as the men said later, "he was just down on his luck for a time, and that he didn't intend to stay down on it and didn't give a damn much how he rose up." (p. 31-32).

His presence at Jefferson invites hatred and suspicion of other people's because of his unfriendly manners. When it comes to the time he determines himself to be a Negro, Joe is trying to expel from himself the white blood and being as well as the white's thoughts. As a result, he begins walking and wandering along the black neighbourhood. The fact that Joanna accepts Joe to live in her place is not because he is a white, but because she sees something in him that she can make use of to support her idealism. And what appeals to Joe is not her providing him with foods, but her willing to live among the blacks.

"And she lives there by herself. Dont she get scared?"

"Who going to harm her, right here at town? Colored folks around here looks after her." (p. 227).

"If it is just food you want, you will find that," she said in a voice calm, a little deep, quite cold (p. 231).

Faulkner describes how Joe approaches Joanna's place in such a way that it seems to remind one of Joe's childhood experience. He crawls toward the place in the dark night. His skipping through its window into the kitchen refers to his

slipping into the bathroom in the orphanage to look for foods. It shows that Joe is imposed by hunger and that the smell of sweetness, he tastes in the darkness, coming from the peas cooked with molasses, is like that of the toothpaste. The sweetness tastes hot, anyway, that Joe can feel the bitterness. It also represents his inability to enjoy life because he is always afraid of being corrupted for being a black. Therefore, up to this point Joe is still unable to make up his will, indeed he 2prefers isolating himself to behaving properly.

And later, Joe is also accused of murdering Joanna Burden. The murder itself seems to happen on account of his rejection of any social responsibilities. He wants no child from his secret relationship with Joanna since he is obsessed by the fear of proclaiming himself as a Negro. Therefore, he does not want any one know about the relationship. However, it is absolutely in contradiction with her idealism. After the murder, Joe hides himself to avoid being captured. During his hiding, Joe has determined to proclaim his black self. He performs his will by swopping his shoes with those of a black woman. In this point, Joe has recognized his fault or in other words the plot shows the recognition of the tragedy.

"That was all I wanted,' he thinks, in a quiet and slow amazement. "That was all, for thirty years. That didn't seem to be a whole lot to ask in thirty years.' (p. 331).

Again, there are two conflicts showed by the protagonist, one is the internal conflict which comes from Joe's inability to define his individuality. He refuses to choose his racial division since his white self causes him rejected by the blacks, whereas his black self makes him spoilt if he is honest about it to the whites. And, the other one is the external conflict including Joe's conflict with Joanna and the people of Jefferson who cannot accept his manners. Moreover, they justify the killing of Joanna not because of the crime Joe has committed but because of his black property.

" 'You better be careful what you are saying, if it is a white man you are talking about,' the marshal says. 'I dont care if he is a murderer or not.' (p. 98).

Joe's life's adventure in his adulthood is mostly charged with his conflicts against Joanna's idealism and against the society's - the Jefferson's - racial views. As an individual, Joe lacks self acceptance and self determination. He can not accept his origin properly and tends to severe himself. He is aware of being conditionally entrapped, he knows how to get himself free from the entrapment, but he has never determined how to finish it. Since it never occurs to him that a man, at least, should be responsible to himself, it is difficult for him to be responsible to others. He withdraws himself from social life; rejects the whites for

their making him isolated. Indeed, neither does he accept the whites' kindness nor proclaims publicly his being a black. However, Joe's uneasiness of social involvement is manifested to his broken relationship with Joanna. Joanna's insisting Joe on proclaiming his being black has indicated his breaking isolation. And, later, Joe's murdering her invites the society's annoyance and inhumanity against him.

There is one important event preceding the murder of Joanna which deserves the writer's attention; that is, Joe's visit to both the white and the black sections. He comes to the white section which he rejects since the whites always break his struggle for his sense of order and his manhood.

"White bastards!" he shouted. "That's not the first of your bitches that ever saw...." (p. 108).

Then, secondly, he finds himself rejected by the black folks since he refuses to act either as a white or a black. He actually prefers to be a black, but he himself always conceals the real truth.

"Come on away from there, Jupe," the one who had followed the woman said.

"Who you looking for, cap'm?" the negro said.

"Jupe," one of the woman said, her voice a little high. "You come on, now." (p. 117).

All these things are done to show such a ritual cleansing in which he feels his struggle has come to nothing. He thinks his life has no meaning at all. In any case, it has something to do with the puritanical way of life which Joe has

experienced in his childhood. When he was a child, he ever proposed a question about himself to a Negro who then answered it critically.

...., until at last the nigger said 'What you watching me for, boy?' and he said 'How come you are a nigger?' and the nigger said 'Who told you I am a nigger, you little white trash bastard?' and he says 'I aint a nigger' and the nigger says 'You are worse than that. You dont know what you are. And more than that, you wont never know. You'll live and you'll die and you wont never know' and he says 'God aint no nigger' and the nigger says 'I reckon you ought to know what God is, because no body but God know what you is.' (p. 384).

Finally, since Joe considers Joanna to have betrayed him too, he seeks for his death. He does not seem to realize that the society has known who he is and has spent almost his life time in fearful struggle for deceiving others. In this case, Joe's proclaiming his black self becomes waste, since Grimm, who represents the whites' arrogance and inhumanity, uses Joanna's murder as an excuse for lynching him:

4.3 Setting

The silent hostility serves as the actual conflict between two or more different interests which always exists as a part of human life. It inevitably affects both individual and group disputes, such as discriminations that sometimes for certain individuals it offers a dilemma. For example, like Joe Christmas in the novel Light in August, he is a mulatto who is forced to determine his racial division

since the society only divides its individuals into the whites and the blacks. Therefore, especially for Joe who suffers from anguish for his ambiguous identity, this fact increases the complexity of his dilemma into the crucial problem of his life. In more general words, self destructiveness of Joe Christmas is the intensity of his social problem caused by the primitive social views and of his own inability to determine his choice in order to behave himself appropriately.

Another possible environment conditioning Joe to create his self destructiveness is the effect of puritanism. Judging from the white folks' side, one may see the puritanical views, underlying the whites' arrogance and inhumanity, especially coming from the priests. They are emphasizing on what makes God curse the blacks; that is, they are children of lechery.

"Ah the janitor said. "I knowed he would be there to catch you when God's time came. I knowed. I know who set him there, a sign and a damnation for bitchery." (p. 127).

The whites consider the purification is the best way of releasing themselves from God's curse and they think they are still God's beloved sons.

The puritanical resistance of the present world prevents him from happiness, idleness, and loving himself. Placing

himself as a sinner before God eyes, Joe attacks his humane weaknesses through his rigid self-denial and self-sacrifice.

The boy's body might have been wood or stone; a post or a tower upon which the sentient part of him mused like a hermit, contemplative and remote with ecstasy and selfcrucifixion (p. 160).

Being physically a white boy, Joe is adopted by a white farmer who happens to be a puritan. As a child, Joe is more easily stimulated by his fear than by his obedience that, in any case, under his white being Joe becomes the victim of his foster father's inhumanity.

However, Faulkner completes the atmosphere by presenting a very simple view of abolitionists, though still extreme in Joanna's existence, which is based on the Calvinistic belief that in this novel it is incompatible with the whites' spirit as well as Joe's.

"...The curse of the black race is God's curse. But the curse of the white race is the black man who will be forever God's chosen own because He once cursed him'." Her voice ceased (p. 253).

She suggests that every white must forever suffer from his predecessors' guilt over the slavery, therefore, the whites must make reconciliation with the blacks

It is said that the whites in the South are always possessed by their being White Anglo-Saxons Protestants Society. This atmosphere, then, creates a tension which is characteristic not only for the community in the novel

itself, but also for the one in our modern world. Faulkner has succeeded in presenting the tension through his creation of Yoknapatawpha county and Jefferson in Mississippi, which represent the difference between the country and the modern lives. The people are the poor whites, commonly called white trash, and the blacks who are not enslaved any more. Jefferson is so typical for its modern wilderness since its individuals, like Joe, Joanna, and Hightower, are selfish. Besides, one of the reasons underlying Joe's self-destructiveness is that he does not want to behave properly. And this fact strongly refers to the problem of modern world in which every man is confused with how people define and do the truth. Having convinced with his ideal truth and with his own interests, he becomes victimized by the conditions and by his own struggle.

It also shows how the modern world has emasculated the church's function and the humane senses. They are respectively intensified by Hightower's entrapment in his past romantic dreams and Grimm's castrating Joe Christmas. More than that, Hightower's failure also represents the downfall of the puritanism. It shows the connection between the divinity and the humanity in which man can only succeed in living according to the divinity if he himself has become a human. Thus, the modern wilderness, the individualism in this case, has made a man afraid of his own world and,

therefore he rejects the reality. After all, self-destructiveness of Joe Christmas occurs for he has rejected himself.

But the Player was not done yet. When the others reached the kitchen they saw the table flung aside now and Grimm stooping over the body. When they approached to see what he was about, they saw that the man was not dead yet, and when they saw what Grimm was doing one of the men gave a choked cry and stumbled back into the wall and began to vomit. Then Grimm too sprang back, flinging behind him the bloody butcher knife. "Now you'll let white women alone, even in hell," he said (p. 464).

In addition to individualism, inhumanity has also ruined the human life. The whites' arrogance depicted in the novel prevents Grimm from seeing Joe as a human. Grimm has changed himself into a victim as well as a slave of the modernity since his fanaticism is simply a selfishness. Although Joe has tried to avoid Grimm's killing him, during his life time Joe has been severe to himself. Therefore, Joe's own inhumanity is the reason for his self-destructiveness.

Anyway, the significance of this mood is the absence of Joe's life spirit which causes his violations that in any case Joe has achieved his death wish before his own dead body is castrated. In other words, Joe's failure in struggling to eliminate his white self for obtaining the acceptance of his black self turns into his self destructiveness which is manifested to his being killed severely.

..., thinking All I wanted was peace thinking.
'She ought not to started praying over me.' (p. 112).

4.4 Theme

As it is said in the theoretical framework that one of the conceived ideas in the novel is a man must preserve the relationship between his individual and his social lives . A man should be responsible either to himself or to others since he exists to be an individual as well as a social human being. Faulkner shows the idea through his describing the friendly atmosphere of the country side out of Jefferson, which is going to be the central place where most of Joe's story happens. The idea is presented in Chapter one in which one can perceive the peaceful feelings and see the charity exist as a part of the social life of its people.

Another strong thought revealed in the novel is the consequence of resisting the previous idea. It is the terror of isolation caused by the broken relationship. A man who rejects any social interest can be the same with isolating himself. The theme reveals problem concerning with an individual who is terrified by social corruption. Consequently, a man who isolating himself considers the involvement of external factors as the destruction of his individuality. Light in August presents Joe Christmas, a mulatto who isolates himself under his white body in his struggling for the acceptance. He puts out his will of preferring to be a black that it eventually leads him to the fatalistic attitude.

He would have died or murdered rather than have anyone, another man, learn what their relations had now become. That not only had she changed her life completely, but that she was trying to change his too and make of him something between a hermit and a missionary to negroes (p. 271).

Since Joe is affraid that the whites must have the same thought with him about his black self, he wants no child from his relationship with Joanna. The revelation of his black self through the birth of their child will results in his broken isolation and, therefore, will fail his idealism.

The novel has also emphassized on the danger of being an individualist as an attempt of preserving his idealism which is especially against any social interest, such as his selfishness. The strong inability to accept his origin delights him in refusing others and makes himself busy with looking for the satisfactory answer for the doubtness, such as selling whiskey and making love with prostitutes. He sells the whiskey while he is working at the planing mill as if he found the deed reducing the tension without necessarily letting others know his secret. Along with his regressive changes of personality, Joe Christmas enters his adulthood. Therefore, some other crucial problems are attached to him, especially those of the sociological ones, since he must be an individual man and a social one as well. He may ignore his social involvement with either the whites or the blacks, but he will never succeed in concealing his conflicting blood towards those two communities. His big mistake is that he has

refused both assuming his sufferings and choosing his racial deviation as well. While, the society only wants to accept the dichotomy; that is, the whites and the blacks.

He, therefore, becomes easily irritated with his surroundings and destructive in his way of thinking. The idea is closely related to the main problem of modern man who seems to be lost and victimized by his own world. It comes from his unreasonable fear of the social corruption. Joe has served as a victim of the modernity through his isolating himself and denying his origin because he is afraid of the social judgment. It, however, has developed his self-destructiveness.

He thought that it was loneliness which he was trying to escape and not himself (p. 226).

'And yet I have been further in these seven days than in all the thirty years,' he thinks. 'But I have never got outside that circle. I have never broken out of the ring of what I have already done and cannot ever undo,' he thinks quitely, ... (p. 339).

In that case, Faulkner has provided the novel with his sympathy for the sorrow by opening the novel with Lena's adventure. He conveys the idea of "back to nature" through her extreme simplicity and endurance to the wilderness of reality. Faulkner reveals the importance of having good relationships with the world and being kind to oneself. An individual is expected to be natural to face with some problems, especially the modern ones, which have corrupted

his own individuality. He should assume his life burden without complaining as if it was just simple matter.

Joanna is obsessed with having black children from Joe, whereas Joe insists on concealing his real identity. Each has the reason as follows, on one hand, by having blackchildren she thinks Joe will proclaim his being a black, but on the contrary, Joe is afraid of determining his racial devision. Her perpetually whistling "Negro!, Negro!" during her sexual relationship with him is, therefore, against his will. More than that, Joe always thinks of the curse for his black self since it reminds him of the annoyed dietitian's curse or Bobbie's betrayal or the dissapointed prostitutes' curse which is accompanied by the taunt of "nigger bastard". However, Joe suffers from the personality crisis since at the turning point he has to assert his balck self; he is filled with the fear of external corruption over his individuality. He wonders whether Joanna is honest to him or she is taking advantage of him. He becomes selfish and therefore he tends to have no respect to others. His refusing to marry Joanna is the evidence of the "sickness". Though in this case Joanna can be blamed for having lied about her pregnancy. The significance is that Joe himself is unready to accept the reality that Joanna never curses him for his being black. indeed, she wants to have children with Negro blood descended from him.

"Why not?" she said. And then something in him flashed Why not? It would mean ease, security, for the rest of your life. You would never have to move again. And you might as well be married to her as his thinking 'No. If I give in now, I will deny all the thirty years that I have lived to make me what I chose to be.' (p. 265).

The sense of emasculation he got in his childhood is nevertheless almost indispensable to Joe's self-destructive ness. It has been growing for years in his life and shrinking his super ego impulse. As a result, his id impulse is irrepressible, no concept of socialization throws his mind, no conscience and pride are seen in his conducts. So, after murdering Joanna, Joe runs to Mottstown in his effort to release himself from the responsibility. He himself perfects the society's agitation in such a way:

He never denied it. He never did anything. He never acted like either a nigger or a white man. That was it. That was what made the folks so mad. For him to be a murderer and all dressed up and walking the town like he dared them to touch him, when he ought to have been skulking and hiding in the woods, muddy and dirty and running. It was like he never even knew he was a murderer, let alone a nigger too (p. 350).

