On a more realistic level, any relationship with an animal brings some kind of contact with nature, taps those natural forces within that may be hidden by man's civilized veneer. Such a contact is illustrated by another section of *The Hamlet*, commonly known as "The Spotted Horses," which is part of the section entitled "The Peasants." The small, wild, vari-colored ponies, whipping around the lot "singly or in pairs... fluid, phantom, unceasing" (280); "calico-coated, small-bodied, with delicate legs and pink faces in which their mis-matched eyes rolled wild and subdued... wild as deer, deadly as rattlesnakes, quiet as doves" (275), call forth from the impoverished peasants that desire for possession which has ever been man's downfall, from Adam and Eve, through Paris, to Hitler and on.

But more than just greed, the desire for possession of these obviously untamable ponies (the peasants spend a good deal of time rationalizing about them; pretending among themselves that the ponies do have some worth, can be put to some use), represents that response in man to the wild, the hostile in nature; that desire to conquer, to be master of a ruthless and untamable life, and by doing so, to proclaim his mastership of all things. It is the same kind of irrational passion that has kept these men in the hamlet, contracted them to a lifelong and often empty struggle with an unyielding earth; the same kind of passion seen in "The Bear" in the image of the puny men hacking in fury and abhorrence at the elephantine wilderness. It is the same force by which Americans conquered the West.

This force or passion has a dual nature. Through it men endure and perpetuate their race, spreading civilization and raising cities and states
as monuments to their achievement, just as they erect temples to their
gods with whom they are in competition. But it is also a destructive
force, for man must destroy to conquer.

In the Spotted Horses section, however, the ponies themselves reflect
the destructive nature of this blind desire. After the auction, during
which even love and duty have been repudiated for the sake of purchasing
one of the animals, the gate is left open and the ponies dash free. Few
are ever caught; Tull’s arm is broken, Henry suffers a concussion and
Mrs. Armstid’s five dollars for her children’s shoes are gone for good, as
well as everyone else’s money. To people in the midst of a depression,
and poor to start with, who fight a bitter battle with the earth for bare
subsistence, the loss of the money is a severe enough blow. But the
blow to pride, to vanity, counts equally. Their own blind desire and
folly, which they recognized from the first, had been their downfall. For-
tunately, Flem is there for a scapegoat. He had played on passions which
he was clever enough to see in others, but which he could not feel, for
easy money. So it was not completely their own blindness, but also the
machinations of a cold, too clear-eyed rapacity, akin to their own desires,
but different, since stripped of emotion, which had caused the destruction.

One of the ponies turns up in another, earlier novel, as the substi-
tute mistress and mother for the illegitimate Jewel Bundren (As I Lay Dy-
ing). Jewel has gone to fantastic lengths of endurance to buy the pony.
For him, it is the one outlet, release and escape from the bitter, life-
drying existence he, like the peasants of The Hamlet, leads. And like
Harry’s affection for the horse in A Fable, it is a substitute for the
human relationships he is unable to establish; an outlet for the human
emotion, the life of passion and love, which must otherwise have been left unexpressed. Like Harry, and also Boon, he recognizes some affinity, some basic likeness between himself and the animal, thus acknowledging, through the relationship, his connection with nature.

A study of Faulkner's use of animals in his novels reveals several recurring themes and techniques. Through contact with animal life and nature, an understanding of human life is accomplished. By means of the juxtaposition of men to animals, the basic qualities of human nature which make man a part of the continuum of nature, are revealed, if not to the characters themselves, then to the reader, as in the case of the Ike-Cow story. Characters often achieve knowledge of their own selves through meaningful contact with animals, as in the story of Isaac McCaslin, and also of Harry. And, as in "The Bear," an insight into the natural life, its virtues and its ways (which is necessary for the understanding of man's place in the world), is accomplished through contact with animal life, especially in its untamed aspect.

The theme of man's war with nature, of his desire to conquer its powerful forces, is also seen by a study of the author's use of animals. Faulkner's conception of the consequences of such a war is also revealed: the destruction of something good, through contact with which man is raised to a higher level of being. In "The Bear," the devastation of the wilderness, the loss of an old way of life in which men became men and wisdom and virtue were acquired, is the result of man's battle with the land. The end of the Ike-Cow affair marks the triumph of civilized man
over natural life and passion, which triumph leaves the hamlet once again a wasteland. In the Spotted Horses section, man's irrational desire to possess, to conquer, wreaks havoc. And even in the Theft Section, the dollar sign and man's greed triumph over passion, that quality which most links man to nature, leaving the world once again empty; but here the effects of that act of the human heart manage to survive the destruction, as they do to some extent in "The Bear."

In each of the stories man's very personal relationship to the land is touched upon, if not dealt with directly. In the Ike Snopes section, man and beast are one with the land, the earth; they are as much a part of its teeming life as are the trees that shade them and the birds that sing their hymeneal song (The Hamlet, 168). The men in the Spotted Horses section are pictured as engaged in a personal and unflagging battle with the earth for simple subsistence; life becomes a contest between a stubborn race and a stubborn land. This is also true in the Ike-Cow section, when the life of the farmer, from whom Ike steals the grain, is described. In "The Bear," man is seen in relation to a larger portion of land, the whole wilderness, from which he hacks a small clearing that eventually expands as his numbers and needs increase. But the relationship is still a personal one, an individual fight and contest of endurance.

There is also, however, the fruitful relationship of the hunters to the wilderness. In it they find a peace and fulfillment the civilized world cannot offer, although they too engage in a contest with its strength and danger. For Isaac, the relationship is not a contest of brawn against brawn, of cunning and prowess pitted in honor and pride.
His relationship with the wilderness is a personal quest for truth and understanding, which, of course, first requires that he master the skills of a hunter and acquire the courage to face the dangers of the wild places he walks through. In the passage of the Theft Section which describes the old impoverished hill couple that Harry goes to work for, once again the relationship of man to the land is seen as a striving to tear a living from the reluctant earth.

Another recurrent theme is that of the opposition of materialism to passion, of civilization to nature. Faulkner presents these opposing forces as being unreconcilable, an inescapable fact of the human condition. This is brought out most clearly in the Theft Section, especially when it is considered in its relation to the entire novel. It is part of the development of "The Bear," although, once again, all of Go Down, Moses must be brought in before the full expression of this idea can be seen. It is man's greed, and his desire to perfect his material life that leads to both the destruction of the wilderness and the problems of land ownership and slavery which cause Isaac to renounce his patrimony. The same type of force ends the love relationship, the grand act of passion, of the groom and the horse. The unethical, grasping Flem of The Hamlet, by playing on men's irrational passions, represents this force, as the peasants' passion, even though destructive and materialistic, is at least passion, whereas Flem is pure calculation and emotionless greed. The natural relationship of Ike and the cow is ended when the old, embittered farmer discovers the idiot's theft of his grain, and becomes infuriated that that tenuous grasp which he has on material goods and on the land has been, he thinks, somehow threatened by the
actually negligible theft. And Ratliff, in order to satisfy his social conscience, appeals to the grasping and materialistic natures of the Snopeses in order to have the relationship of the idiot and the cow permanently stopped, although in one sense he is protecting the goodness of natural passion. The section that describes Ike's wanderings with the cow is a hymn to nature, and the relationship is meant to represent something good, but in a social context such a relationship can only be seen as a perversion; hence it becomes a dirty joke. Ratliff's action, thus, is one that seeks to protect the dignity of man and of natural passion. When alone with his cow, Ike's passion is sacred, a product of nature, but in the world of men, of moral precepts and social law, it is degrading.

In terms of technique, there are also similarities among the different stories. In "The Bear," the Theft Section and the Ike-Cow story, classical and romantic images are used to develop the stature of the animals, and, in the last two, of the men also: to give them almost supernatural dimensions, and to place them in the aura of that heritage of man's ideal and legendary shapes: Eve and Paris, the knights in shining armour, and, less commonly, the old Indian deities. Old Ben, Lion and the race horse are giants among their fellow species and even men; the fear-crazed stallion of the idiot's section is a tremendous, terrifying dragon-shape. Ike's cow is hardly a cow at all, but more "the flowing immemorial female" (The Hamlet, 168), a fertility goddess, which is brought out by Faulkner's imaging her as Juno and as "the escaping shape of love" (169).

Faulkner does not employ these images in his description of the
spotted ponies; yet, in their depiction, they are more than any one animal could ever be: to see a real pony of the corresponding type, temperament and markings, is to find the real world lacking. As they mill about Mrs. Littlejohn's lot they create a kaleidoscopic scene of bright color, of fluidity of motion that repeatedly explodes into new shapes and designs. By moonlight they are phantom-like, silvery streakings punctuated by the thud of invisible hooves, as if Flux itself were trapped within the lot.

Jewel's horse comes closest of all the animals to being true-to-life, but this is because Faulkner gives it little symbolic weight: the symbolism, if any, is projected from the minds of the characters onto the horse. Neither is the horse at any time a central figure or actor in the novel, as are the animals in the other stories, with the exception, perhaps, of the horse of the Theft Section, which Faulkner handles somewhat differently from the other animals. And because of these two factors, the spotted horse, though more real or true-to-life, perhaps, is less vital, less vivid, than the others animals. The race horse is again an exception here, because the reader never really "sees" this animal.

The second similarity in technique, which is really part of the first, is the humanization of the animals. Old Ben and Sam Fathers have similar qualities, and the bear is described as chief, widower and possessed of almost human intelligence and awareness. In fact, he goes even beyond the human scope, to seem to possess almost supernatural qualities, such as foreknowledge. That Ike's cow seems human at times, and also superhuman, has already been mentioned. It is interesting to note that
Faulkner, in writing of the cow, refers to the animal as "she" and "her," whereas the other animals, when not referred to by a proper noun, are called merely "it" rather than "he."

Lion is treated in much the same way as the bear. He and Boon share similar qualities and virtues, although Lion possesses them in a superior degree. The race horse, though never physically described, is, in terms of its relationship to the groom, like a woman devoted to her lover; the horse is equated with the female half of such famous love affairs as Paris and Helen's and Pyramus and Thisbe's. In its reciprocal trust and love of the man, it has human, rather than animal, characteristics.

The ponies in The Hamlet and the one in As I Lay Dying, however, are not treated in this manner, although Jewel's horse is taken somewhat out of the animal realm by its owner's strange passion for it.

The thematic and the technical tend to overlap, as can be seen by the preceding discussion, especially when the type of relationship becomes a symbol, as in the Ike-Cow story; but the important point is that all the stories have basic similarities in theme and technique. That Faulkner used stories of special or unusual animals, and their relationships to particular men, to carry or reinforce the themes and ideas of the novels in which they are found is, I believe, a sound statement. Although at first the relationship of the animal stories may seem tenuous or obscure, a close study indicates that each story carefully underlines, by contrast and complement, the main themes, characters and ideas of the novels.

The themes which these stories illustrate are not limited to their
specific novels. They can be found, to some degree, in all of Faulkner's works. They reflect what I believe to be the author's main purpose in his writing: an attempt to define the kind of world man lives in, and what his relationship to that world is, so that, in the end, man himself can be better understood.
FOOTNOTES

1. Go Down, Moses, (New York, 1942), p. 191. All quotations are taken from this edition; page numbers are given in the text after each quotation.


5. All quotations are taken from the Random House edition of A Fable, (New York, 1954). Page numbers are given in the text.


8. The Hamlet, (New York, 1940), pp. 167-168. All quotations are taken from this edition; page numbers are given in the text.


13. See Volpe, pp. 282-304, and also Strautman's essay for a more complete discussion of the dualism in A Fable.
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