

# Gender Inequality in William Faulkner's "Absalom, Absalom!"



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## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berjudul *Gender Inequality in William Faulkner's "Absalom, Absalom!"*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan tentang pengertian dan jenis-jenis *gender inequality* yang ditemukan dalam novel "Absalom, Absalom!" karya William Faulkner. Dalam hal ini, analisa didasarkan pada *essay* oleh pemenang Nobel bidang Ekonomi, Amartya Sen, berjudul *Many Faces of Gender Inequality*. Dalam *essay* tersebut Sen menyebutkan tujuh jenis *gender inequality* dan penelitian ini mencoba untuk menyelaraskan dan menggolongkan bentuk ketidakadilan jender itu dalam "Absalom, Absalom!".

Pemilihan penulis terhadap novel "Absalom, Absalom!" didasarkan pada kenyataan bahwa ditemukan begitu banyak bentuk ketidakadilan jender terhadap tokoh-tokoh wanita dalam novel. Sementara pendekatan yang digunakan untuk menganalisa adalah strukturalisme genetik (*genetic structuralism approach*).

Lewat analisis yang telah dilakukan, penulis menemukan bahwa bentuk-bentuk ketidakadilan jender ini datang lewat perlakuan Thomas Sutpen. Sutpen merupakan karakter yang semena-mena terhadap wanita, semisal dalam perlakuannya yang meninggalkan istrinya, Eulalia dan bagaimana ia merayu lalu mencampakkan Milly yang baru berumur limabelas tahun. Sementara tokoh-tokoh wanita yang ditindas itu tak dapat berbuat apa-apa sebab mereka lemah. Hal ini menyebabkan perlakuan tidak adil terhadap wanita semakin merajalela. Namun pada akhir kisah, kekuasaan Sutpen tumbang tanpa terduga. Apa yang telah Sutpen bangun begitu lama runtuh hanya dalam sekejap mata.



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION



### 1.1 Background

In the book *Legalizing Gender Inequality*, Robert L. Nelson stated that globalization has recast gender relations and altered the status and life condition of women—while this has undermined traditional patriarchy, it has burdened women and exposed them to harshly exploitative. Simply, women have suffered disproportionately from globalization, while seeing few of its benefits.

Basically, gender inequality is a condition where majority of men and women endures unbalanced handling and unequal social status. According to Amartya Sen, a Nobel Laureate of Economic Sciences, gender inequality is described as a "homogeneous phenomenon, but a collection of disparate and interlinked problems." He argues that "informed and critical agency" is a key in combating this issue (Frontline: Volume 18 - Issue 22, Oct. 27 - Nov. 09, 2001). Gender inequality issue was as well challenged by Geraldine Ferraro, The First Woman to be nominated as Vice President of the United States, said in [www.feminist.com](http://www.feminist.com): "We've chosen the path to equality, don't let them turn us around."

Why William Faulkner's "Absalom, Absalom!" is representative to be analyzed for this project is none but the gender inequality issue in the novel itself. "Absalom, Absalom!" is possibly Faulkner's most focused attempt to expose the moral crises which led to the destruction of the South America. Faulkner, himself was regarded as one best American writer ever wrote about America.

Faulkner was born in 1897, when people of that time was still enslaved and outworked, and eventually raised Faulkner's interest to write as novels. Most of his novels speak of the same major themes, mostly with social insights, that he himself awarded with Nobel Prize of Literature in 1950. In "Absalom, Absalom!" Faulkner tells a single story from a number of perspectives, capturing the conflict, racism, violence, and sacrifice in each character's life, and illustrating gender inequality problems. Yet, this paper aims to identify this problems as an essential scope of the novel.

In accordance of the research object, the theme of the injustice of woman exploitation is developed by Faulkner in so many ways. Thomas Sutpen uses Eulalia and casts her off. He neglects his illegitimate daughter, Clytie. He prevents Judith from marrying the man of her choice. He shows no consideration towards Rosa in his obscene proposal. He seduces the fifteen-year-old Milly Jones and then rejects her when she bears him a daughter.

## **1.2 Identification of the Problems**

1. We can find primarily a social tragedy in William Faulkner's "Absalom, Absalom!" concerned with the themes of legitimacy, legacy and racial prejudice and gender inequality.
2. "Absalom, Absalom!" as well shows that women are ill-used and Faulkner shows the cruelty of their mistreatment.
3. Social and psychological impact of gender inequality to the female characters in the novel.
4. The causative reasons of exploitation and violence to the female characters that raise gender inequality.

### **1.3 Scope of the Problems**

The study focuses on gender inequality in the female characters of the novel, as well their minds and actions whether or not they subjects in "gender inequality" perspective and cause exploitation, as well violence of women. This gender inequality study will be explored in the characters of Thomas Sutpen and his act to Eulalia, Clytie, Judith, Rosa, and Milly Jones.

### **1.4 Statement of the Problems**

In order to explain the topic, the writer offers some essential questions, as follows:

- Why does the gender inequality occur?
- What kinds of gender inequality upon the female characters in the novel?
- What are the effects of the gender inequality upon female characters in the novel?

### **1.5 Objectives**

Based upon the Scope of Problems as mentioned above, thus the objectives that this research is intended to reach, namely:

- 1). To describe the causes of gender inequality.
- 2). To figure out a state of gender inequality upon the female characters in the novel.
- 3). To find out the effects of the gender inequality upon female characters in the novel.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Through the library research that had been conducted, the writer could find previous study on the novel of "Absalom, Absalom!". The difference between the previous study with this

current study is that the previous study focused on the certain factors of "Absalom, Absalom!", namely characters, setting, plot etc. While this current study centers in the issues and matters of gender inequality that exist in the novel.

## **1.7 Sequence of Chapters**

Chapter compositions of the papers go as follows:

### *Chapter I - Introduction*

This chapter of introduction includes with general insight of the whole papers, including backgrounds, identification of problems, and scope of problems, objectives and sequence of chapters.

### *Chapter II – Literary Review*

General Framework of the theory that guides the direction of the study: review of library reverence to support the analysis, including library study exemplifying theoretical base of analysis.

### *Chapter III – Methodology*

This chapter consists of the research method, data collecting, data analyses, and research procedures.

### *Chapter IV – Analysis*

This chapter is the analyses section of gender inequality.

### *Chapter V – Conclusion*

This chapter sums up the significant points from previous chapters, and originates the results of the study. This is a closing session and providing conclusion of the problems based on the analyses and suggestions for future readings and writings.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW



#### 2.1 Genetic Structuralism Approach

Theories are supposed to provide in analyzing literary works. some of these are well-known as semiotic approach or sociological approach. While theory that will be used in this thesis is genetic structuralism approach.

Genetic structuralism approach is the development of structuralism approach. Basically, the definition of structure means that a work or an event inside the society (in this case, a novel) becomes a unity because there is a mutual relation between any section in its very own totality. The relation influences society and the surrounding structurally in contradiction but yet fulfilling to one another. Both these processes are asimilation and accomodation. In those both repeated processes, a literary work as facts of humanity and result of cultural activity of the society deserves the meaning. Tomars in Rene Wellek and Austen Warren states in following lines (1990: 109):

*"Esthetic institutions are not based upon social institutions: they are not even part of social institutions. They are social institutions: they are social institutions of one type and intimately interconnected with those others."*

In applying the theoretical of structuralism genetic approach, the first point to observe is the structural elements of the literary work, then the social situation, as stated by Goldmann in quotation of Damono (1975: 5):

*"Pandangan dunia yang ditampilkan pengarang lewat problematic hero merupakan suatu struktur global yang bermakna. Pandangan dunia ini bukan semata-mata pandangan empiris yang bersifat langsung, tetapi merupakan suatu gagasan, aspirasi dan perasaan yang dapat mempersatukan kelompok sosial masyarakat. Pandangan dunia itu memperoleh bentuk konkrit di dalam karya sastra. Pandangan dunia bukan fakta. Pandangan dunia tidak memiliki eksistensi obyektif, tetapi merupakan ekspresi dari kondisi dan kepentingan suatu golongan masyarakat tertentu."*

Genetic structuralism approach is the approach used to analyze literary work in reaction of pure structuralism approach. The lack in structuralism approach is fulfilled with literary genetics. Structuralism approach or commonly known as objective approach merely focus the analysis upon the literary intrinsic elements, such as theme, plot, background, perspective, characters, and so on (Jabrohim, Ed., 1994: 79).

Genetic structuralism approach exemplifies that in process of creating a literary work is undeniably influenced by the backgrounds of history, era, social situation and experience of the

author. It means that the existence of particular society and particular author would result in particular work as well. This is commented by Drs. Iswanto (in Jabrohim, ed., 1998: 78) that:

*"Karya sastra lahir di tengah-tengah masyarakat sebagai hasil imajinasi pengarang serta refleksinya terhadap gejala-gejala sosial di sekitarnya. Oleh karena itu, kehadiran karya sastra merupakan bagian dari kehidupan masyarakat. Pengarang sebagai subyek individual mencoba menghasilkan pandangan dunianya kepada subyek kolektifnya. Signifikansi yang dilaborasikan subyek individual terhadap realitas sosial yang di sekitarnya menunjukkan sebuah karya berakar pada kultur dan masyarakat tertentu."*

*Thus, the literary work that is analyzed with genetic structuralism approach then supposed to concern the intrinsic as the sociological factors to realize that the work created by employing imagination.*

## **2. 1. 1 Intrinsic Elements**

Intrinsic element is a method employed to analyze the whole aspects that build the story as unity. This method looks forward to the structure of work. The elements which support and build the work up intrinsically can be mentioned such as: plot, character, setting, theme, style, genre, tone, etc. All those elements can be analyzed in this thesis, but in this writing the research would only only focused on several points, namely characters, setting and plot.

### **2.1.1.1 Character**

Character is an important element in story development. Character provides an illustration of life that has been going inside a fiction. Character gives us an illustration about the way of thinking and how the character react to something.

Suhariato in Dasar-Dasar Teori Sastra says that character is a description of figure inside the story, whether their performance, their way of life, attitudes and beliefs or customs. American Peoples Encyclopedia (1982: 31) elaborates that:

*"Character in literature is the presentation of the attitude and behaviour of imaginary person in order to make them credible to the audience and reader. It is a unique feature of such fictional form as the short story, novel, drama, and narrative poetry."*

What the characters do will show the condition and attitude of certain society for the characters are the part of society. In identifying the character inside the story, Jakob Sumardjo (1986: 57) says that the reader and audiences must observe it through: what they say, how they deal with certain problems and other opinions of the characters in the work.

### **2.1.1.2 Setting**

Setting is an important part of many stories. Setting is important to build the story for it describes the place where the



story locates and the nuances. It is a combination of locale historical period, seasons, hour, spirituality, environment, ethnic and cultural background. (Geurin 1979: 327). Another perspective is described by Aminuddin (1987: 68) that the setting in a literary work is not only about certain place and time but also the atmosphere which is related to the behavior of society when they cope up with problems.

The entire actions of a novel is determined by its setting and all elements in the story that is connected with the setting. The authors often write about a place where they root. They might tell us about the place where they were born and grew up. Setting could tell more about a place where they found their identity in life and how they come up in loving or people rebels against a setting that is hostile to their needs and hopes.

Setting of our lives determines opportunity and shapes out the outlook. A region of a part country in many ways figures the lives of people who live there with specific traditions and customary ways, so in doing this analysis later on, we are about to identify settings whether the place and the time which influence gender inequality inside does much matters.

### **2.1.1.3 Plot**

Generally, a plot is comprehended as a simultancy of story in casual relation. It is also stated that plot is constructed by comprehension of the story, as reflected by Luxemburg (et.al):

*"Alur adalah konstruksi yang dibuat pembaca mengenai deretan sebuah peristiwa yang secara logis dan kronologis saling berkaitan dan saling diakibatkan atau dipahami oleh para pelaku (1992:149)."*

In other hands, Sumardjo dan Zaini (1991: 49-50), say that plot is build by the author to guide the readers along the story. Based upon both comments, the writer assumes that plot is constructed by the author to be next explored by the readers.

Furthermore, plot is divided in to three types as follows:

1. Forwarding plot: simultancy of events started from first problem, second problem, up to third problem and so on.
2. Flashback plot: events of the story started from the last problem the returned to the basic problem and finally up to previous problem.
3. Combined plot: combination of both forwarding and flashback plot.

The author presents the characters in variety according to the theme of the story, known with characterization. The whole story then happens in exact place as the background that is constructed in simultancy of each event described or better known as plot.

The novel shuttles back and forth in time between past and present. It opens in September, 1909, the present, with Quentin Compson talking to Rosa Coldfield about Thomas Sutpen. The main story pieced together from the various narratives is interesting.

Thomas Sutpen, a poor farmer from West Virginia, comes to Jefferson in 1833, buys a hundred square miles of land from the Indians with Spanish gold, and builds a plantation, Sutpen's Hundred. Five years later, having furnished the mansion, he marries Ellen Coldfield, the daughter of Goodhue Coldfield, a respectable storekeeper. He has two children by Ellen, Judith and Henry, and an illegitimate daughter, Clytie, by a Negro slave.

The events of the novel are retold and reviewed by many narrators. In the first chapter, Rosa Coldfield speaks to Quentin about the Sutpen saga. In the second through fourth chapters, Mr. Compson speaks and also quotes his father, General Compson, on Sutpen. In the fifth chapter, Rosa narrates, through Quentin's recollection. The sixth chapter is set in Harvard, where Shrevlin McCannon, the Canadian friend of Quentin, discusses the saga with him. The seventh through ninth chapters examine the lives of Sutpen and his family, as analyzed by Quentin and Shreve. Because of its multiple narrative techniques, the book is complex and difficult to read.

### **2.1.2 Extrinsic Elements**

Extrinsically, the aspects that can influence the literary work are social, history, biography, culture, morality and so on. As Semi states in following lines:

*"Struktur luar (ekstrinsik) adalah segala macam unsur yang berada di luar suatu karya sastra namun ikut mempengaruhi kehadiran karya tersebut, semisal fakta sosial, ekonomi, budaya, politik, agama dan norma yang dianut masyarakat."*

In order to understand literary work, it is not just enough to analyze the structures that build the story but what also relevant to social condition. Thus, in this thesis, sociological approach is selected to analyze the issue of gender inequality in the focus of the novel. The writer will also use the biography the author because between the author, because between the author and the work there relationship with them indirectly. Faulkner himself is influenced so much by the background of his life.

#### **2.1.2.1 American Women in 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

There were several conditions that influence the American Women up to this moment. History records that women face phases that shape what they are now. The matters that are so important namely education, reformation, legal status and slavery of women—especially those of colored skin (African-American Women). This last point of slavery is what William Faulkner focuses in his superb literary work: the novel of *"Absalom, Absalom!"*.

Yet, several materials from [www.connerprairie.org](http://www.connerprairie.org) have been digested to explain this so-called "American Women in 19<sup>th</sup> Century" in lines as follows:

With the end of hostilities with Britain and the abandonment of things "European," Americans began to experience the realization of democracy and independence in their relationships amongst themselves.

Families were no longer strictly patriarchal and hierarchical in nature; because of the democratic revolution, all members of the American family were important and more equal than in previous decades. Children were no longer considered "little adults," but human beings who needed affection, guidance, and cultivation in order to become mature people.

Likewise, the status of American women began to undergo a significant change. While the early 1800s can not be characterized as a period of radical feminism comparable to the 1960s and 70s, it could be defined as an age in which the traditional role of women in American society was questioned and often challenged.

#### **2.1.2.1.1 Perceptions of Women in the 19th Century**

During early 1800s, Americans generally believed that there was a definite difference in character between the sexes—man was active, dominant, assertive, and materialistic, while woman was religious, modest, passive, submissive, and domestic. As a result, there developed an ideal of American womanhood, or a "cult of true womanhood" as denoted by historian Barbara Welter. This cult, evident in women's magazines and literature of the day, espoused

four basic attributes of female: piety, purity, submissiveness, domesticity.

### **2.1.2.1.2 Legal Status of Women**

Despite the moral and religious significance of women, American society was predominantly designed for men. Legally, women were strictly dependent and unequal. Harriet Martineau confirmed this by noting the "political nonexistence of women." Since American law followed the principles established in 1765 by the English barrister Sir William Blackstone, it was asserted and accepted in America that "by marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being and legal existence of the woman is suspended during marriage." Essentially, the wife "belonged" to her husband. He had a right to the person and property of his wife; he could use "gentle restraint upon her liberty to prevent improper conduct;" he could beat her without fear of prosecution. Thus, it was very clear that "the wife is dead in law" (Pessen, 49).

National and state constitutions included little mention of the rights of women. In most cases, her right to hold property was either denied or restricted, and she had no right to make a will, enter a contract, or sue in court without her husband's consent. Children belonged to the woman's husband, and he could dispense with them as he pleased in his will. Naturally, only white male citizens of the United States, age 21 years or older, and resident of Indiana for at least one full year, could vote.

Women were affected by other aspects of the law. Divorces were possible and usually granted upon grounds of desertion, adultery, or habitual drunkenness. The court divided the estate on the basis of its own conscience and also considered the custody of children. Abortions were against the law and carried a maximum fine of one year imprisonment and \$500. Males convicted of adultery were subject to fines of \$300; however, women could be sentenced to three months in prison. Indiana law also stated that if a female was convicted of any crime that usually carried a prison sentence for a male, her sentence could be changed to hard labor at her respective county jail.

#### **2.1.2.1.3 Education of Women**

Anti-intellectualism was implicit in the "cult of true womanhood." Women were not expected to use logic or reason, only to exhibit morality and domesticity. Consequently, female education was designed to maintain the dichotomy of spheres -- schools prepared men for careers and trained them to think, whereas women learned to be worthy companions for their husbands, good managers of their households, and virtuous examples for their children.

Regarding the place of female education, the Western Patriot of Canton (Ohio) Almanac of 1842 noted: The destiny of women is obviously, to become at some time spouse and mother of a family, and as such her sphere of action is the domestic fire-side. In order therefore to become a good wife and mother of a family, and to act usefully and blessingly within the circle of her family -- she must

need possess all those attributes such as knowledge and habits, which are required of a good housewife and mother of a family.

#### **2.1.2.1.4 Reforms**

Since early 1800's up to 1900's and 70's, despite the generally accepted status of women in American society, significant changes were forthcoming in certain areas. Women played important roles in religious and social reform movements such as missions and societies, abolition, and temperance. Many began to assert themselves by speaking out publicly before mixed audiences and seeking leadership positions in the movements, thereby violating criticism garnered by overstepping the boundaries of masculinity made these outspoken women ever more conscious of their inferior status and dedicated to the pursuit of their "rights."

Based on the description above, it can be stated that the nineteenth-century American woman was expected to find her strength and meaning of self in her submissive state and in her dedication to home and family. However, as a result of modernization, industrialization, and the accompanying changes in society, women became increasingly, though gradually, more independent—they asserted themselves in the expanding industrial sector; they were drawn into social, political, religious, and literary activities, speaking out on relevant issues of the day. Most beneficial to the cause of women's rights was the involvement by women in the antislavery movement, which readily convinced them



of their similarities with blacks in sharing a status of "bondage" and subordination.

Consequently, American women became a more visible segment of society, no longer considered merely as an adornment for males or solely relegated to kitchens and parlors of their homes. While it would be decades before women's "liberation" and suffrage were attained, women were rallying the forces in defense of their search for freedom and self-identity, winning the support of sensitive contemporaries like John Quincy Adams who asked, "Why does it follow that women are fitted for nothing but the cares of domestic life?" (Pessen, 52).

#### **2.1.2.2 Gender Inequality**

According to *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* in [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com): the word "gender" noun, means sexual identity, especially in relation to society or culture; while "inequality" noun, means the quality of being unequal; difference, or want of equality, in any respect; lack of uniformity; disproportion; unevenness; disparity; diversity; as, inequality in size, numbers, power, distances, motions, rank, property, etc.

Thus, based from those both ethymologies, we could define the terminology of "gender inequality" as the quality of being unequal by the sexual identity, especially in relation to society or culture. This so-called "gender inequality" issue has been studied by most feminist in many countries for the sake of "gender equality" of man and woman.

According to Nobel Laureate of Economy, Amartya Sen in his essay "Many Faces of Gender Inequality": 'there are seven types of gender inequality that rise all over the world. His work on the theory of the household represents the household not as an undifferentiated unit, but as a unit of cooperation as well as of inequality and internal discrimination. He has worked on problems of discrimination against women in the development process, on survivorship differentials between men and women under conditions of social discrimination against women, and on women's agency in the process of social development. Along with his academic collaborator Jean Drze, Professor Sen proposed and popularised the concept of "missing women"—estimated to exceed 100 million round the world—which has given us a new way of understanding and mapping the problem.

In the extent of anti-female bias in "*natality and post-natality mortality*." He concludes by identifying the principal issues, emphasising the need to "*take a plural view of gender inequality*," and calling for a new agenda of action to combat and put an end to gender inequality. *Frontline* features this important essay by Amartya Sen as its Cover Story.

#### **2.1.2.2.1 Seven Types of Inequality**

The afflicted world in which we live is characterised by deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between women and men. Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world, from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekistan to the United States of America. However, inequality between women and men can take very many

different forms. Indeed, gender inequality is not one homogeneous phenomenon, but a collection of disparate and interlinked problems. Let me illustrate with examples of different kinds of disparity.

Hence, to describe what gender inequality issue has in common with work of William Faulkner, essay of Amartya Sen published in Frontline Magazine, entitled "*Seven Types of Inequality*" would be elaborated briefly as follows:

(1) Mortality Inequality: This kind of inequality elaborates about the distinguish in chances of life that women and men could get. Men could have greater power than women, then they could barely harm and violate life of women. Yet, in some regions of the world, inequality between women and men directly involves matters of life and death, and takes the brutal form of unusually high mortality rates of women and a consequent preponderance of men in the total population, as opposed to the preponderance of women found in societies with little or no gender bias in health care and nutrition.

(2) Natality Inequality: This kind of inequality could be explained from attitude of a husband who left his wife for bearing a daughter when what he expects is a son. In most part of the world, a son is more "precious" than a daughter. Given a preference for boys over girls that many male-dominated societies have, gender inequality can manifest itself in the form of the parents wanting the newborn to be a boy rather than a girl. There was a time when this could be no more than a wish (a daydream or a nightmare, depending on one's perspective), but with the availability of modern techniques to

determine the gender of the foetus, sex-selective abortion has become common in many countries. This is high-tech sexism.

(3) **Basic Facility Inequality:** This inequality is more about women have rights for education as men do. Yet, even when demographic characteristics do not show much or any anti-female bias, there are other ways in which women can have less than a square deal. Afghanistan may be the only country in the world the government of which is keen on actively excluding girls from schooling (it combines this with other features of massive gender inequality), but girls have far less opportunity of schooling than boys do. There are other deficiencies in basic facilities available to women, varying from encouragement to cultivate one's natural talents to fair participation in rewarding social functions of the community.

(4) **Special Opportunity Inequality:** This kind of inequality is the progress of "Basic Facility Inequality" that women have rights for higher education as men do. Even when there is relatively little difference in basic facilities including schooling, the opportunities of higher education may be far fewer for young women than for young men. Indeed, gender bias in higher education and professional training can be observed even in some of the richest countries in the world.

(5) **Professional Inequality:** This kind of inequality is mostly in terms of employment as well as promotion in work and occupation, women often face greater handicap than men. A country like Japan may be quite egalitarian in matters of demography or basic

women could do it if and only if they could combine it with various inescapable and unequally shared household duties. This is sometimes called "division of labour," though women could be forgiven for seeing it as "accumulation of labour." This inequality includes not only unequal relations within the family, but also derivative inequalities in employment and recognition in the world.

Moreover, this literary review—based upon materials that had been gained from certain sources about womanhood and gender inequality—would be employed to analyze in the next chapter.

### **2.1.2.3 Previous Study**

The previous study of "Absalom, Absalom" involves a thesis by Sudarmin Harun entitled *A Study of Some Aspects of William Faulkner's "Absalom, Absalom!"*, written in 1983. The study itself is more focused on the certain aspects in the novel analysis, like how Faulkner depicts various types of traits or temperaments of various characters. It also talks about how Faulkner sets his characters in a lonely village whose society is a civilized community and then is spoiled by a newcomer from outside. Faulkner sets his characters in this place by measuring the qualities of romanticist and fatalist and also the diversion of ethical values shown by the characters. Besides those, he also implicitly described to us how the system of slavery in the South brought around the Civil War of US.

The study as well elaborates about how Faulkner wrote his work based upon the myth of the South. This myth describes not

facilities, and even, to a great extent, in higher education, and yet progress to elevated levels of employment and occupation seems to be much more problematic for women than for men.

(6) Ownership Inequality: This kind of inequality is basically about heir and heirloom matters. That properties of a family should belong to men rather than women. In many societies the ownership of property can also be very unequal. Even basic assets such as homes and land may be very asymmetrically shared. The absence of claims to property can not only reduce the voice of women, but also make it harder for women to enter and flourish in commercial, economic and even some social activities. This type of inequality has existed in most parts of world, though there are also local variations.

(7) Household Inequality: This inequality explains about why only women who are supposed to be responsible in household matters while men are free with their own private business. Yet, generally there are, often enough, basic inequalities in gender relations within the family or the household, which can take many different forms. Even in cases in which there are no overt signs of anti-female bias in, say, survival or son-preference or education, or even in promotion to higher executive positions, the family arrangements can be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care.

It is, for example, quite common in many societies to take it for granted that while men will naturally work outside the home,

only the life of the main character, Thomas Sutpen, but also of the deep South, a land whose people follow the fate of Thomas Sutpen.

The significance of the previous study with this current study is merely about insight of Thomas Sutpen as the main character in relation to other characters. Yet, the previous study limited on the point of characteristic factor only, while this current study will broadly elaborated about Sutpen's characterization in accordance to gender inequality over female characters of the novel.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In a research, it is necessary to apply a method. This method intends to construct a well-shaped research in academic track.

Methods used in this case are data collecting, data analyses and research procedures.

#### **3.1 Data Collecting**

In order to obtain the accurate data for the research, a library study is done. This method is about to discover data through reading upon relevant materials, mainly books such as gender study books, culture study books, feminism articles, and so on, for the research.

The gathering data are classified according to its type. The data that is obtained from the novel which are analyzed then grouped as primary data resource. Meanwhile, the data that are obtained from the books or other articles that relevant with the research object, called secondary data resource. Then those data are classified according to research objectives.

#### **3.2 Data Analyses**

The collected data are analyzed descriptively referring to the specific approach, that is sociology of literature approach.



### 3.3 Method of Data Analysis

1. Writer is concentrating on comprehension of the script itself. Besides some literatures related to "*Absalom, Absalom!*" are involved to understand easily the script in a whole.
2. Writer works the library research out that is to collect data of some books, journals and anything related to the analyzed topic. The data collecting is completed by reading and digesting with card system. The collected data are then examined, determined and defined.
3. Writer employs some particular theories of literature:

- a. Intrinsic Elements

The writer uses some intrinsic elements analysis, especially characters of women whom described inside the novel. Somehow, setting affects the behaviour of characters as well and it shows directly of how they act and react.

- b. Extrinsic Elements

The writer utilizes another approach to support the analysis. The writer applies sociological approach because the writer believes that the literature works is also a part of the society. Therefore, the social values and life concept are participating in influencing the literary work.

### **3.4 Research Procedures**

The research requires some actions completed before it took shape. The efforts made for this research elaborated as follows:

1. Read and reread the novel "Absalom, Absalom!"
2. Affirm research object.
3. Identify the scope of matters to analyze.
4. Classify the matters of the research to match with research proposals.
5. Gain information required to analyze the scope of matters.
6. Select and overview data
7. Analyze data with defined method.
8. Conclude matters based on analyses.

## CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS



### 4.1 Structure of the Novel

In these sub-chapters, the writer analyzes certain aspects such as characters, setting, plot and themes before elaborating more on the study of gender inequality derived from "Absalom, Absalom!" afterwards. The analysis it self is deeply concentrating on female characters and any other aspects related to the study of gender inequality.

In order to show that gender inequality truly exists in the novel, then several essential quotations are applied on each points when considered necessary to support the analysis. The analysis is more concentrated to discover types of gender inequality in the novel based upon the essay of Amartya Sen, entitled "Seven Types of Gender Inequality". Afterwards, the analysis exemplifies on these types and how often they are found in "Absalom, Absalom!".

#### 4.1.1 Characters

**Thomas Sutpen** – Thomas Sutpen was born in 1807 in West Virginia mountains from a large poor whites family of Scottish-English stock. A tragedy involving black kids when he was a child results in his hatred to the black people.

Thomas Sutpen is a mysterious figure who towers over the book. Although we never come to know him fully, he is a man of indomitable will and frightful immorality. He materialized in Jefferson out of thin air in 1833 and proceeded to swindle Indians out of 100 acres and use a team of 20 slaves to raise an enormous estate, then marry Ellen Coldfield and begin his "dynasty." Born of impoverished Scots-Irish stock in the West Virginia mountains, his life was consumed by a "design" that he decided upon at fourteen.

*"I had a design. To accomplish it I should require money, a house, a plantation, slaves, a family—incidentally, of course, a wife. I set out to acquire there, asking no favor of any man." (Faulkner, 1972: 263)*

Thomas Sutpen is the colorful protagonist of "Absalom, Absalom!" and the hub around which the plot of the novel revolves. As a boy, Sutpen lives in dire poverty, which he desperately wants to escape. His experience as a youth of being insulted by the well-dressed Negro butler of a wealthy planter, Pettibone, fires his ambition to earn wealth and status in life. He runs away to the West Indies, where he marries the daughter of a wealthy sugar planter, who bears him a son, Charles Bon, in 1829. On learning of her Negro blood, he abandons his wife and son. As a gentleman, however, he makes certain that she has money to provide for herself and Charles.

Sutpen's brutality is viewed by Miss Rosa as that of a pure demon. She used this word to Quentin when he accompanied her to visit Sutpen's Hundred.

*"It seems that this demon—his name was Sutpen—(Colonel Sutpen. Who came out of nowhere and without warning upon the land with a band of strange niggers and built a plantation—(Tore violently a plantation, Miss Rosa Coldfield says) without gentleness. Which should have been the jewels of his pride and the shield and comfort of his old age, only—(Only they destroyed him or something or he destroyed them or something. And died)—and died. Without regret, Miss Rosa Coldfield says—(Save by her) yes, save by her. (And Quentin Compson) Yes. By Quentin Compson." (Faulkner, 1972: 9)*

Sutpen comes to Jefferson, Mississippi, where he buys land with Spanish gold and sets about building a plantation—Sutpen's Hundred. He marries Ellen Coldfield, the daughter of a local merchant, despite the animosity of the townspeople, who are mistrustful of his character and his wealth. He has two children, Henry and Judith, by his wife and a daughter, Clytie, by a slave. He sends Henry to the University of Mississippi in Oxford, where he becomes friends with Charles Bon, whom he brings home to the Hundred. Bon falls in love with Judith and wishes to marry her. Sutpen rejects the proposal and Henry quarrels with his father, renounces his birthright, and leaves the Hundred. Tragic fate and divine retribution follow.

Through Rosa's dramatic descriptions, Quentin can picture Sutpen as a fanatical planter with his French-speaking slaves whom he abuses and his captive architect who is responsible for transforming a wilderness into a plantation—Sutpen's Hundred. Quentin also notices Sutpen's prejudicial treatment of the blacks in Rosa's description. It is significant that Sutpen thinks nothing of beating his slaves until they are bloodied; it is also important to notice that Sutpen's young son, Henry, is horrified at the cruelty.

Sutpen's grand design of founding a dynasty is ruined by the reappearance of Charles Bon, his first son. He does not show recognition or affection towards Bon. He later tells Henry of Bon's Negro blood, thus inspiring a fratricide. He proposes to his wife's sister, Rosa, on the death of his own wife, Ellen, but makes the condition that she should first bear him a son. Her shocked refusal causes a deep-rooted hate between them. She views him a demon, an inhuman monster without feelings.

On his next try, at sixty, Sutpen decides to beget an heir by seducing the fifteen-year-old Milly Jones, granddaughter of Wash Jones. When he rejects her after she bears him a daughter, he incurs the wrath of Wash Jones, who kills him brutally with a scythe. This ends the Sutpen saga tragically.

Thomas Sutpen is a man of powerful will and a representative, in both his strengths and weakness, of the South. Like the South, which was blessed by God in its natural resources but seemingly cursed in its inability to address its social inequities, Sutpen is tragically flawed. Despite his ambition, heroism, and ability to persevere under difficult circumstances, he falls prey to

his own weakness. Ultimately his racial discrimination wrecks his plan to create a dynasty, and his obsession brings him ruin. The enterprising son of a poor farmer from West Virginia who comes to Jefferson in 1833 and founds the Sutpen estate. This colorful character, who forms the hub of the novel, is killed by Wash Jones, a poor white squatter on his land.

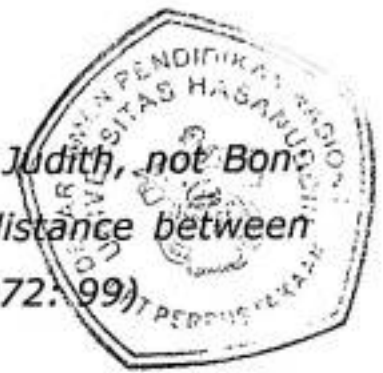
**Henry Sutpen** – Henry Sutpen is the son of Thomas Sutpen and the murderer of his half-brother, Charles Bon. He is the Absalom of the Old Testament, who slays his half-brother, Amnon, for committing incest with his sister, Tamar, and is in turn killed in battle against his father, King David. Although Henry is not killed in battle against his father, his renouncing of his birthright and his departure cause his father similar grief to that felt by David when Absalom, his heir, was killed.

Henry takes more after his mother, Ellen Coldfield, than his father. He is at once both rigid and reserved yet delicate, sensitive, and romantic. This combination of rigidity and romanticism will be his downfall.

*"Because Henry loved Bon. He repudiated blood birthright and material security for his sake." (Faulkner, 1972: 89)*

He loves Bon and does not seem to mind the notion of incest between him and Judith, but the idea of miscegenation is too much for him, and he murders Bon in cold blood at the gates of the Sutpen estate before fleeing in terror.

*"So, it must have been Henry who seduced Judith, not Bon  
seduced her along with himself from that distance between  
Oxford and Sutpen's Hundred." (Faulkner, 1972: 99)*



Years later, he returns to the estate a fugitive and lives hiding in the crumbling mansion, where he is sheltered by Clytie. Three months after he is discovered, decrepit and dying, by Rosa and Quentin, Rosa sends an ambulance to save him, but Clytie, fearing that it is the sheriff coming to arrest Henry for his crime, burns down the mansion, and Henry perishes in the inferno. In Henry, Faulkner satirizes the racial prejudices of the South that brought about its ruin.

**Judith Sutpen** - Judith Sutpen, Henry's sister and Thomas' daughter, is determined, just like her father. She becomes engaged to the handsome Southerner, Charles Bon, her brother's friend, without knowing that he is her half-brother.

*"In fact, perhaps this is the pure and perfect incest: the brother realizing that the sister's virginity must be destroyed in order to have existed at all, taking that virginity in the person of the brother-in-law, the man whom he would be if he could become, metamorphose into, the lover, the husband." (Faulkner, 1972: 96)*



Judith is portrayed as a strong, silent, and tragic figure. The son of Thomas by Ellen Coldfield and heir to the Sutpen estate. Henry kills his half-brother, Charles Bon, to prevent marrying his sister, Judith.

**Clytie (or Clytemnestra) Sutpen** - The Mulatto daughter of Thomas Sutpen by one of his slaves who is older than Judith and Henry. She defends the estate, but burns it in the end.

Clytie is Thomas Sutpen's eldest daughter, born of one of his slaves. She becomes the companion of Judith, sharing the work and sorrows of the Hundred. Clytie is a strong, compassionate woman, loyal to the family. When Rosa comes in 1865 to help bury Charles Bon, she prevents Rosa from seeing his body. In keeping Wash Jones out of the Sutpen kitchen, Clytie prevents him from becoming powerful. She raises Charles Etienne without a fuss, looks after Jim Bond, and protects the aged and helpless Henry. Even her act of burning down the estate, tragic and misguided as it is, is done out of fierce loyalty to a family that has, in her estimation, paid the price and been punished enough.

Clytie is named after Clytemnestra, the disloyal wife of King Agamemnon, who led the Greeks in the Trojan War. Clytemnestra killed Cassandra, daughter of the Trojan king, and Agamemnon, with the help of her lover. Clytie is anything but disloyal, however, causing Mr. Compson to wonder if Sutpen did not mean to name his daughter Cassandra instead. In this case, Clytie's name would somewhat parallel the myth, for Cassandra was a prophetess who

warned her people about the impending fall of Troy. She was not believed, and she lived to witness destruction of her family and city.

**Charles Bon** - Charles Bon is the first son of Thomas Sutpen, born to his first wife, Eulalia Bon. Sutpen father disowns Charles and his mother when he discovers that she has Negro blood. Although Sutpen continues to support them financially, he never acknowledges Bon as his flesh and blood. Bon is desperate for sense of acceptance.

*"So, apparently he does not intend to acknowledge me as his son, but at least I shall have forced him to admit that I am."  
(Faulkner, 1972: 327)*

Charles Bon is a tragic figure. Growing up, his mother lies to him about his father, and when he discovers the truth he becomes angry and bitter. He longs for a sign of affection or acknowledgment from Thomas Sutpen, which he does not get even though he comes to the Hundred seeking it. In many ways, Charles is like his father, however, for he is stubborn and determined.

*"That's all I want. He need not even acknowledge me, I will let him understand just as quickly that he need not do that, that I do not expect that, will not be hurt by that, just as he will let me know that quickly I am his son..." (Faulkner, 1972: 319)*

In an effort to gain his father's attention, he proposes to Judith, his half sister and stubbornly refuses to break his engagement to her, even though he already has a mistress and son, knows Judith is his half-sister, and meets with Sutpen's violent objections. Sutpen, determined that Bon will not marry Judith, tells Henry about his Negro blood; as a result, Henry feels behooved to murder Bon.

*"You are my brother."*

*"No, I'm not. I'm the nigger that's going to sleep with your sister unless you stop me, Henry." (Faulkner, 1972: 357)*

Bon is more sophisticated and polished in his city ways than the clumsy Henry, who is characterized by country ways. In spite of their differences in size, personality, and background, Bon cultivates a friendship with Henry, as his mother has hoped. Ironically, the friendship leads to Bon's death when he stubbornly refuses to break the engagement with Judith. It is significant to notice that Bon means "good" in French, suggesting both his initial goodness and what he could have represented to his father; tragically his goodness is corrupted by the prejudice of the South.

**Eulalia Bon Sutpen** - Eulalia Bon is the mother of Charles Bon and the first wife of Thomas Sutpen. When he discovers that she is one-eighth Negro, he deserts her and Charles Bon, though he does arrange to financially support them in New Orleans. She pampers her son and indulges his whims as he grows up.

*"Have you forgot that this woman, this child, are niggers?"*  
(Faulkner, 1972: 118)

and

*"—between the woman who had been widowed before she had been a bride, and the son of the man who had bereaved her and hereditary negro concubine who had not resented his black blood so much as he had denied the white, and this with a curious and outrageous exaggeration in which was inherent its own irrevocability, almost exactly as the demon himself might have done it." (Faulkner, 1972: 207)*

When she hears that Sutpen's son is studying at the University of Mississippi, she plots to send Bon there and arranges for them to meet. In Shreve's estimate, she is a crafty woman, bent on taking revenge against her husband for his desertion. She dies in New Orleans.

**General Compson** - Thomas Sutpen's good friend in Jefferson. He admires Sutpen's courage, self-confidence, and ambition and feels he is an innocent and a victim of forces beyond his control.

In chapter seven, Quentin portrays Sutpen through the general's eyes. In General Compson's narrative, Sutpen's youthful trauma, his bewilderment at class distinctions, and the insult he suffers at being driven off from Pettibone's door add complexity to the earlier one-dimensional presentation of the protagonist. General

Compson portrays Thomas Sutpen as a self-made man who rises from poverty and overcomes adversity to become a wealthy plantation owner. His grandson, Quentin, while appreciating the general's revelations, realizes that his narrative is full of poetic bits, speculation, and his own personal slant.

General Compson himself is a brave soldier who loses his arm in the Civil War, but goes back to fight for the South. Though his narration is twice-removed in Quentin's retelling, it is full of fire, enthusiasm, and immediacy. Sutpen's best friend in Jefferson and a noted veteran of the Civil War. He admires men of action like Sutpen, being one himself.

**Mr. Compson (Jason)** - Mr. Compson is an interesting narrator, full of his own personal judgments on the motives of characters like Rosa, Sutpen, Henry, and Charles Bon. However, he is not very reliable in his speculations. He is not close to Sutpen, like his father General Compson, or Rosa, and his narrative is colored by his distance from the characters.

Chapters two through four are dominated by Compson's narration, which is full of colorful imagery and complex metaphors. He sees Ellen, Sutpen's wife, as inhabiting "*a shadowy miasmic region something like the bitter purlieus of Styx... and then like some swamp-hatched butterfly... into a perennial bright vacuum of arrested sun*". The sensual and sexual excite him, so he indulges in his fancies, regardless of the facts. He hints at incest between Henry and Judith and homoerotic love between Henry and his half-

brother, Bon. Quentin regards these notions of his father as strange and erroneous.

Compson is able to see that Rosa's history is a subjective viewing of facts. But, like her, he feels that fate and destiny have played a major part in Sutpen's fortunes. He believes that Sutpen is desperate to fulfill his plan so that he can prove that he is in control of his destiny. But Sutpen, in spite of his determination, fails time and again to create his dynasty, confirming for Compson his conviction that mankind is not in control, but the victim of fate.

**Quentin Compson** - The son of Mr. Compson. A Harvard student, Quentin feels the burden of his Southern heritage. The frail, twenty-year-old grandson of General Compson, is a reserved but expressive scholar who attends Harvard. As a central narrator, he is one of the most balanced and objective. Giving his side of the story at the end of the novel, Quentin fills many of the missing details not supplied by the earlier narrators.

Never knowing the protagonist, Quentin has learned about Thomas Sutpen from his own father and grandfather. Since he has spoken directly with Henry and sees the Sutpen saga as part of his Southern heritage, Quentin serves as a link to the past and a voice of the future.

Quentin cares deeply about the saga of the Sutpen family, for he sees their failure as a parallel to the failure of the South; he judges that both the family and the southern states are doomed to defeat because they do not have a strong moral code. Quentin feels

it is terribly ironic that the South fought the Civil War to try and save an immoral and unjust system of slavery.

*"Why do you hate the South?"*

*"I don't hate it," Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; "I don't hate it," he said. I don't hate it he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark; I don't. I don't! I don't hate it! I don't hate it!" (Faulkner, 1972: 378)*

Quentin is particularly sensitive to the tragic fate of Sutpen, who unsuccessfully devotes his life to the establishment of his own dynasty. He is even more sensitive to the tragic situation of Henry's murder of his half-brother, Charles Bon, which is proof of the family's lack of a moral standard. Quentin's interpretations of events are reasonable, based on facts more than speculation. Yet he also has an imaginative, fanciful side, as shown when he revisits the nightmare-like evening when he and Rosa visit the crumbling Sutpen mansion, telling the story as if it were a ghost tale. Through all of his narration, the reader senses that Quentin is filled with passion about his subject matter.

Far removed from the South in his Harvard room, he begins to assess the magnetic power the culture of his home region exercises over his mind and heart. He has a love-hate relationship with the South and its eccentric, irrational characteristics. In his recounting of the Sutpen saga, he hopes to find solutions to the region's ruin, its moral degradation, and its racial prejudice. At the same time, as he tries to shake off the past, he becomes deeply

involved in its events and begins to identify with Henry as he tries to uncover his motivations. In fact, Faulkner implies many comparisons between Quentin and Henry. Both had sisters to whom they were very close, and both had domineering fathers. They also both had strong feelings about the Southern way of life.

**Shreve (or Shrevlin) McCannon** – Shreve is the Canadian roommate of Quentin at Harvard. He is a large young man with a hulking torso, pink gleaming skin, and earnest eyes behind thick glasses. He brings the objective assessment of an outsider to the Sutpen story. In his telling of the parts of the tale which Quentin has told him, he is dramatic; he also repeats the facts in a different way, giving Quentin a fresh perspective on the Sutpen saga.

Shreve enters the novel in chapter six, where he and Quentin sift and sort evidence about Sutpen. He takes the seriousness out of the story with his witty observations and mockery, calling Rosa "the old dame" and Sutpen "Faustus" and "Beelzebub." Shreve is aware of the narcotic power of the South. He tells Quentin, *"Jesus, the South is fine isn't it. It's better than 'Ben Hur', isn't it. No wonder you have to come away now and then isn't it."* Shreve falls under the spell of the Sutpen saga. As Quentin comes to identify with Henry, the unsophisticated, country clown who tries to understand his half-brother and be loyal to him, Shreve comes to identify with Bon, the urbane young man in quest of his true father.

As an outsider, Shreve speculates on Bon's anger against his mother's scheme to get him to the Hundred and his father's cold-blooded rejection of him. Shreve sympathizes with Bon whom to



marry Judith, while Quentin justifies Henry's murder, trying to understand his motive. Faulkner wants his reader to be like Shreve, who first views the story and its mixed-up facts with curious detachment and slowly is drawn into the vortex of the events.

William Faulkner hints strongly at a homoerotic element in the relationship between Shreve and Quentin. Their intimacy in the study of the South and their discussion of subjects like love, lust, incest, and miscegenation rouse their own acute awareness of each other. At various points Faulkner contrasts the huge, strong Canadian with the frail, wraith-like figure of Quentin.

**Ellen Sutpen** - Born Ellen Coldfield. Rosa's older sister; mother of Henry and Judith. Thomas Sutpen's second wife in Jefferson, Mississippi. She is a rather foolish woman, eager only that herself and her children live in comfort. She is done in by the tragedy that consumed the household during the Civil War, and dies at a young age. The elder daughter of Goodhue Coldfield, a local merchant. She marries Thomas Sutpen in 1838 and bears him children, Henry and Judith. She enjoys her life as a wealthy planter's wife.

She is a typical Southern girl, delicate but tough. The hostility of the townsfolk before and during her marriage to Sutpen disturbs her. She weeps hysterically at the wedding, but she soon recovers and grows proud to be the aristocratic wife of a wealthy plantation owner. After the birth of her children, Ellen emerges, according to Rosa, as a "social butterfly." She is also a powerful mistress of the Hundred, ruling with a close watch and iron hand. As a mother, she is strict with Judith and Henry, but compassionate towards Clytie.

In the end, Ellen is only a shadow of her husband, unable to function without him. After Henry fights with Sutpen and leaves the Hundred, she takes ill and becomes mentally deranged. She dies in 1862, while Sutpen is fighting in the Civil War.

**Rosa Coldfield** - As a link between both past and present, Rosa Coldfield is an important character and narrator in "Absalom, Absalom!" This embittered sixty-five-year-old woman, in her black shawl, hat, and voluminous gown, views Sutpen as a demon who is responsible for the downfall of her family - the Coldfields.

Rosa is Ellen Sutpen's younger sister; aunt to Henry and Judith Sutpen (although she was born four years after Judith and six years after Henry). She summons Quentin out to her home in order to tell him her version of the Sutpen legend and asks him to accompany her to Sutpen's Hundred late at night. She was briefly engaged to Thomas Sutpen after her sister died, and then left his house when he insulted her. Since then, she has been a spinster, burning up with bitterness over the events that took place regarding Thomas Sutpen years ago.

In chapter one, Rosa recounts some of Sutpen's history to Quentin. She goes back to 1833, when Sutpen first came to Jefferson as an aloof and arrogant man obsessed with building a mansion and a dynasty. It is amazing that Sutpen has been dead for forty-one years when the novel opens, but Rosa's hatred is still fresh and intense, for she has dwelled on it in her solitary misery for almost half a century. From Rosa's account of Sutpen, Quentin pictures a man of epic size, who is heroic, greedy, ambitious, and

cruel. He feels, however, that Rosa is overly romantic, adding her own desires, aspirations, and opinions to the Sutpen story.

In truth, Rosa has been a romantic, but the dreams of her youth have turned sour. When young, she wanted to marry and was romantically inclined toward Charles Bon. She even fantasized that Bon loved her instead of Judith. Rosa, through her dreams about Bon, lived out her romantic longings since she had no romantic attachments of her own. When Sutpen proposed to her, she felt it was her last opportunity for marriage and eagerly accepted the offer. Though she refuses to admit it in her old age, she obviously admired Sutpen then and felt he was a good catch. Then Sutpen made his outrageous proposal to Rosa that she bear him a male heir before the marriage could take place. Horrified by his proposition and rejected his offer; thereafter, she judged Sutpen as a demon.

*"Let's try it, ... and if it's a boy we'll get married." (Forster, 1962: 168)*

Rosa was greatly influenced by her romantic aunt, whom she was named after. Both women have a rigid outlook on life and seem to be ruled by hatred and jealousy. Since Rosa is much younger than her sister Ellen, the two of them are not close, and Rosa resents that she is not eagerly sought at Sutpen's plantation. Though she dislikes blacks, Rosa is jealous of Clytie, Sutpen's illegitimate daughter who is treated with favor at the Hundred.

She is also jealous of Judith, her niece who is older than she, especially when she wins the love of Charles Bon. During her narration, she expresses little emotion about Henry and makes no judgment about his murdering Bon.

*"I saw Judith's marriage forbidden without rhyme or reason or shadow of excuses." (Faulkner, 1972: 18)*

By chapter five Rosa vanishes from the novel for a period of time, not appearing again until chapter nine when Quentin tells of the evening when he goes with Rosa to the Hundred to investigate her suspicion that someone is in hiding there. In last chapter, Rosa appears larger than life, first as a tense, eccentric, old woman whimpering with fear in her "musty camphor-reeking shawl" and then as a "fierce implacable and dynamic driving" force charging up stairs to see who is living at the house. Faulkner obviously does not portray Rosa as an entirely weak or helpless victim.

Rosa's life is a tragedy. Her early days are spent hating her father and grieving over the loss of her mother. Most of her adult life is spent brooding over the fact that she is an old maid and contemplating her hatred of Sutpen. As a result of her negative emotions, Rosa's narration is not objective and cannot be fully trusted by the reader, though she is the sole narrator who is closely involved with the Sutpen saga and active in the plot of the novel.

**Wash Jones** - A poor white man who lives on Sutpen's land. He murders Thomas Sutpen when Sutpen rejects Milly Jones, Jones' granddaughter, after she bears Sutpen a daughter.

Wash Jones is a white squatter who lives in a fishing camp on Sutpen's plantation. Sutpen helps and befriends the impoverished Jones. Little does he realize that he is nursing a viper on his land, for Sutpen meets his brutal death at the hands of Was Jones.

Jones knows that Sutpen's grand design is to beget an heir, so he does not prevent Sutpen from seducing his young granddaughter, Milly Jones, figuring that his status will be enhanced by their relationship. When Milly bears a girl and Sutpen rejects her, Jones, in a fit of anger, attacks Sutpen with a rusty scythe and chops him to death in the reeds by his cabin. Jones then kills Milly and her daughter, before being killed himself by the sheriff. Jones lowly status and cunning ways only serves to heighten the sense of divine retribution when Sutpen is killed by him.

**Milly Jones** - Melicent's daughter. She is seduced at fifteen by the sixty-year-old Thomas Sutpen. Wash Jones' granddaughter. Only one year old when she begins to live on Sutpen's Hundred.

*"And that she told him and that he stood there for a minute and he didn't move at all, with the riding whip against his legs and the lattices of the sunlight from the unchinked wall falling upon him, across his white hair and his beard that hadn't turn at all yet, and she said she saw his eyes and his teeth inside his beard and that she would have run then only she couldn't,*

*couldn't seem to make her legs bear to get up and run: and then he looked at the girl on the pallet again and said, 'Well, Milly; too bad you're not a mare too. Then I could give you a decent stall in the stable' and turned and went out."* (Faulkner, 1972: 286)

She begins sleeping with Thomas Sutpen at the age of fifteen and bears his child. She dies the same day that Thomas Sutpen does, and by the hand of her own grandfather, Wash Jones.

#### **4.1.2 Plot**

"Absalom, Absalom!" does not have a traditional plot, in which events happen in sequence. Rather, most of the important events in the novel have occurred in the past, and what there is of a "plot" lies in the attempt of the characters in the present to make sense of these past events, which emerge slowly and imperfectly through a variety of narrators. The time within the story shuttles back and forth from the past to the present.

*"A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality."* (Forster, 1972: 93)

Chapter one opens in 1909 with Rosa Coldfield's flashback; she is talking to Quentin Compson about Thomas Sutpen's career. Rosa has called Quentin because she believes someone or something is hiding at the ruined estate and she wishes him to accompany her there. Before they depart, she shares the Sutpen

saga, going back to 1833, when Sutpen first comes to Jefferson and buys a hundred acres of land with his Spanish gold. He marries Rosa's elder sister, Ellen Coldfield, in 1838, and has two children, Henry and Judith.

Rosa portrays Sutpen as a demon, who is cruel and powerful and who has an indomitable will that gets him what he wants. He wants to found a dynasty, but he does not father an acceptable son. Chapter two is a series of flashbacks; voices of the town interweave with the narration of Mr. Compson, whose interpretation of the Sutpen saga is highly speculative, sensual, and sensational.

As Quentin's father, he speaks to his son about the townspeople's past mistrust of Sutpen. He explains that the locals wondered why he was building a mansion in the wilderness, questioned how he has gotten his wealth, gossiped about his exploits, disapproved of his trying to marry Ellen, and boycotted his wedding to her. Undaunted by the pettiness of the townsfolk, Sutpen married Ellen, for she was the kind of wife he had envisioned in his mater plan; after the wedding, Sutpen arrogantly takes up residence in his newly built and furnished mansion.

Mr. Compson's flashbacks continue through chapters three and four. He tells about Henry going to the University of Mississippi in Oxford, where he meets Charles Bon, befriends him, and brings him home to the Hundred. Bon, who longs for some sign of affection from his father, pursues his daughter Judith instead and soon proposes to her.

Sutpen, seeing the cruel hand of destiny at work in Bon's proposal, forbids the marriage. Henry, not knowing the whole story,

judges his father to be cruel and inhuman, quarrels with him, and leaves the Hundred with Bon. Sutpen meets Henry during the Civil War and tells him that Bon has Negro blood. Righteous Henry, who did not mind incest, cannot stand miscegenation and shoots Charles on their return to the Hundred in 1865 .

In chapter five, Rosa talks to Quentin about the tragic death of the mad Ellen, the decay of the Hundred, and Sutpen's return after the murder of Charles. He proposes to her, but she turns him down for his outrageous demand that she prove her worth by giving him a male heir before they marry. Sutpen, still searching for a male heir, seduces fifteen-year-old Milly Jones, granddaughter of Wash Jones, a poor white squatter. When she bears him a daughter, he rejects her and the child, causing Wash Jones to kill him with a scythe.

Chapters six through nine shift to the present, where William Faulkner introduces an outsider, Shreve, the Canadian roommate of Quentin at Harvard. The two young men sift fact from fiction in their examination of the lives and motives the characters in the Sutpen saga. In chapter six, both Quentin and Shreve take turns telling and examining the story.

In chapter seven, Quentin recalls what he has learned of the story from General Compson, with an emphasis on Sutpen's younger days. His narration serves to make Sutpen appear somewhat more sympathetic, though terribly flawed. In chapter eight, Quentin and Shreve examine Judith, Henry, and Bon; in trying to get into their characters minds and motives, the two roommates begin to identify with them and the past.



In chapter nine, Quentin recollects vividly the trip that he and Rosa take to Hundred. There they find, Henry, who has returned secretly to die at home. Rosa and Quentin are shaken and depart. Three months later, Rosa sends an ambulance to fetch the dying Henry. In an effort to protect him, Clytie torches the mansion, killing Henry, herself, and Jim's mother in the inferno.

Through the memories, nightmares, speculations, and narrations of his characters, William Faulkner tells and retells the story of Thomas Sutpen and his family. The author unfolds the story of the Sutpen saga layer by layer, like the peeling of an onion. Although never chronological, each stage reveals a bit more of the basic truth, drawing the reader into the Sutpen tragedy that is the core of "Absalom, Absalom!".

#### **4.1.3 Conflicts**

**Protagonist:** Thomas Sutpen is the tragic protagonist of "Absalom, Absalom!" He typifies Faulkner's vision of the Southern man, tough and crude, with energy, ambition, and a great capacity for hard work. He is a man who risen from humble beginnings to become the wealthiest landowner in the county. He desperately wants a son, as his legacy to the world and an heir to his wealth.

**Antagonist:** Thomas Sutpen's real antagonist is himself. He falls victim to his own blind desire to establish a dynasty and leave a legacy. The conflict in the novel arises from his great desire for a son and heir. For Thomas Sutpen, "son" means a white man. He rejects his first wife, Eulalia, and their son, Charles Bon, after discovering that Eulalia is one-eighth Negro, which means that

Bon also has Negro blood. He then foolishly seeks to have a male heir in other ways.

Henry Sutpen, Thomas Sutpen's son by Ellen Coldfield, serves as the key antagonistic character in the novel. He is a romantic and loves his friend Charles Bon, whose true identity he does not know. He scorns social taboos and rejects his birthright, leaving home when his father forbids Bon from marrying Judith, his sister. Upon learning that Bon has Negro blood, however, Henry's conviction that no marriage should take place between a black and a white makes Henry murder Charles Bon. In this act, he punishes his father, but the terrible conflict of blood and race which they share destroys them both.

Climax: The climax of the story occurs when Henry Sutpen kills Charles Bon. In killing his half-brother, Henry destroys himself and his father's grand design of a dynasty. It is ironic that Henry can accept the idea of incest and would like Charles to marry Judith, his half-sister. But, on learning of Bon's Negro blood, he cannot let a black marrying a white and commits the fratricide.

Outcome: "Absalom, Absalom!" ends in bleak tragedy. When Henry kills Bon, he destroys himself and his father in the process. The murder leads to Henry's realization of his father's deep-rooted racial prejudice and how it has affected him; it also leads to his own deep-rooted guilt over killing his friend and half-brother. Once Henry kills Bon, divine retribution seems to hound Thomas Sutpen for his relentless pursuit of his obsession.

His proposal to Rosa Coldfield on the death of his wife, Ellen, results in rejection, and his abominable seduction of the fifteen-

year-old Milly Jones ends in his death. Sutpen's grand design of creating a dynasty completely fails, and his estate is ironically inherited by a Negro, Jim Bond, the grandson of Charles Bon. In his portrayal of the Sutpens, Faulkner condemns racial prejudice and its effects on society.

#### **4.1.4 Setting**

Setting is the background where the novel takes place and moment. Through the narrative it can illustrate not only the environment and the types of people who lived at the time but also the kind of town or countryside which they inhabited.

*"The setting includes the details of background set forth in the narrative." Blair, 1948: 70)*

William Faulkner's novels are set in the American South, most of them in a mythical county Faulkner created called Yoknapatawpha. Located in Northeastern Mississippi, this county resembles Faulkner's native Lafayette County. Most of the action in "Absalom, Absalom!" occurs at Thomas Sutpen's plantation and in the nearby town of Jefferson. Chapters six through nine are ostensibly set in the Harvard apartment of Quentin Compson and his fellow student, Shrevlin McCannon, in 1910, though the two students spend much of their time discussing events of the past.

*"... and the cold known land to which it was doomed, the civilized land and people which had expelled some of its own*

*blood and thinking and desires that had become too crass to be faced and borne longer... a soil manured with black blood from two hundred years of oppression and exploitation until it sprang with an incredible paradox of peaceful greenery and crimson flowers and sugar cane sapling size and three times the height of a man and a little bulkier of course but valuable pound almost with silver ore.” (Faulkner, 1972: 250-251)*

Set in the Yoknapatawpha County town of Jefferson, Mississippi, the novel opens in 1909. Rosa Coldfield, sixty-five, is talking to Quentin Compson on a summer afternoon. She narrates the early part of Thomas Sutpen's life, starting with his arrival in Jefferson in 1833, twelve years before Rosa's own birth.

Sutpen does not introduce himself to the local folks, but buys a hundred square miles of land from the Indians with Spanish gold. He builds a mansion and plantation as family estate, known as Sutpen's Hundred, with his French-speaking slaves and a French architect, whom he keeps captive on the plantation while he works.

William Faulkner conceived of an imaginary Mississippi county, Yoknapatawpha, and used it as the setting for a number of novels and short stories. "Absalom, Absalom!" is perhaps the most "historical" of the Yoknapatawpha novels, for Faulkner included a chronology of events in it and a map of Yoknapatawpha County, with a notation that he was sole owner of it.

In this mythical landscape, people both with characters of his creation and those inspired by the Mississippians he knew, Faulkner explored the history of the South and its people. For writers like

Thomas Wolfe, Robert Penn Warren, and William Faulkner, the South contains a violent amalgam of opposites: grace and crudity, hate and love, polished manners and violence. Southerners are a class and caste conscious people of cultural paradoxes.

The Southern States are a fertile area of plantations which is inhabited by the Whites. They are all the landowners who have wide plantations. For cultivating them, they need the help of the slaves. During the time of slavery, the slave was forced to work. They were treated like animals by their masters.

*"So the legend of the wild men gradually back to town, brought by the men who would ride out to watch what was going on, who began to tell how Sutpen would take stand beside a game trail with pistols and send the Negroes in to drive the swamp like a pack of hounds; it was they who told how during the first summer and fall the Negroes did not even have (or did not use blankets to sleep in." (Faulkner, 1972: 36)*

"Absalom, Absalom!" is set primarily in Mississippi, with some scenes occurring in Virginia, Haiti, and a dorm room at Harvard University. It spans just over a hundred years of events in the Sutpen family, against which is set the backdrop of the ante-bellum South, the Civil War, and the post Civil War South. A mood of doom and gloom prevails throughout the novel, as its characters seem chained to bleak fates, and the degradation and racial

discrimination that leads the South into the Civil War continues in the years afterward, poisoning its people with tragedy.

Slavery went on in U.S. for more than two hundred years and forty-five years, namely in 1619-1864. During this period, well-known men began appearing to oppose the manners of slavery. Some of them are George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. George Washington was the first president in 1789-1797 who wanted a law passed which would end slavery, and Abraham Lincoln was the sixteenth president in 1861-1865 who succeeded in ending it. Before Lincoln was elected as the president in 1860, the South separated itself from the North (or the Union States).

*"... Lincoln elected and the Alabama convention and the South began to draw out the Union, and then there were two presidents in United States and the telegraph brought the news about Charleston and Lincoln called out his army and it was done, irrevocable now, and Henry and Bon already dedicate to go without having to consult one another."*  
(Faulkner, 1972: 340-341)

Faulkner as well sets his novel in the moment of slavery and discrimination to the black-people in the Southern part of America how this affects the country and the people in their destruction.

#### **4.1.5 Themes**

In "Absalom, Absalom!", William Faulkner weaves several significant Themes into his novel about the South, so that it

becomes a social tragedy as well as a family tragedy. He masterfully shows how suffering, endurance, racial discrimination, decadence, and ruin all play a part in the lives of the Sutpen family.

The theme of moral degradation in Thomas Sutpen is an important one. By placing a greater weight on racial purity than familial ties, Sutpen precipitates a series of tragedies. Because of his great prejudice, Sutpen spurns his first son, Charles Bon, who has Negro blood. His second son, Henry, on whom he has pinned his hopes, rejects his father and his birthright; then poisoned by the same racial prejudice that destroys his father, Henry commits fratricide to prevent the "Negro" Bon from marrying his sister Judith. The guilty Henry must then go into hiding, effectively ending Sutpen's plan. It is Sutpen's moral weakness that has indirectly caused the defeat of his dream of a dynasty.

Sutpen's degradation is a parallel to the larger degradation of the South. His neglected estate, a ruined shell of its former glory, symbolizes the South after the Civil War, with its shattered economy and defeated, demoralized people. Sutpen's strange combination of moral blindness, intolerance, and innocence and Henry's inability to accept the Negro blood of his brother are symbolic of the South's inability to accept its black citizens as brothers and equals.

Through the destruction of the Sutpen family, William Faulkner shows how intolerance has destroyed the South. Another important theme is that of doom. Throughout the novel, characters discuss the role of fate and destiny in people's lives. Sutpen's struggle often seems a struggle against fate, and his

inability to achieve his dynasty seems part of a larger destiny. When his estate falls into the hands of a Negro, the idiot Jim Bond, it seems a fitting act of divine retribution.

The biblical theme of the novel stems from the title, which is taken from the Old Testament story of King David and his son Absalom (II Samuel, chapters 13- 18). Absalom kills his half-brother, Amnon, for committing incest with his sister, Tamar, and is himself killed in battle against David's army when he rebels against him. David mourns his death, exclaiming, "*O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom ! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*" Some of the events of the novel run parallel to this story of Absalom, giving Sutpen's tragic loss of his sons a biblical grandeur.

Another theme is the difficulty of knowing human motivations as well as the full story of any person's life. The shifting perspectives continually affect the reader's perception of the characters and their lives, and many questions remain unanswered, both for the characters and the reader.

Why does Henry feel miscegenation is a crime worth killing for while incest is tolerable? Does Henry perhaps love Judith too much himself? Did he have a homoerotic love for Bon? Did Bon ever love Judith or was he primarily seeking recognition from Sutpen? Why does Sutpen refuse to acknowledge him? In "Absalom, Absalom!", the truth is always uncertain; therefore, the theme of appearance vs. reality is clearly brought forth.

The theme of the injustice of the exploitation of women is also developed by Faulkner. Thomas Sutpen uses Eulalia and casts



her off. He neglects his illegitimate daughter, Clytie. He prevents Judith from marrying the man of her choice. He shows no consideration towards Rosa in his obscene proposal to bear him a son out of wedlock. He seduces the fifteen-year-old Milly Jones and then rejects her when she bears him a daughter. Women are ill-used in "Absalom, Absalom!", and Faulkner shows the cruelty of their mistreatment.

#### **4.2. Types of Gender Inequality in "Absalom, Absalom!"**

According to Chapter II, Literary Review, based on essay of Amartya Sen, we define that there are seven types of gender inequality, namely: Mortality Inequality, Natality Inequality, Basic Facility Inequality, Special Opportunity Inequality, Professional Inequality, Ownership Inequality and Household Inequality.

Based upon the subject and objectives of this thesis about gender inequality, in accordance to the novel "Absalom, Absalom!" by William Faulkner, we find that most of those gender inequality types are found in the novel. We could barely view five out of seven gender inequality types. What different is only that one point of types is more often elaborated than another, like Mortality Inequality which is more frequently stated in the novel than Household Inequality. Yet, this doesn't mean that one point is more essential than another.

### 4.2.1 Mortality Inequality

This kind of inequality elaborates about the distinguish in chances of life that women and men could get. Men could have greater power than women, then they could barely harm and violate life of women. We could observe in "Absalom, Absalom!", about how Sutpen causes suffering of women characters in the novel that is up to fatality.

Sutpen disowns Eulalia, his first wife, and her young son Charles, sending them to New Orleans, for knowing that she is a Haitian woman with negro blood. Next, Thomas Sutpen becomes engaged to Rosa, the younger sister of his deceased wife Ellen, in 1866, but says he will wed her only if she first bears him an heir. Rosa bitterly rejects this proposal and returns to her father's house in Jefferson to brood for the next forty-three years.

*"—a man with a name for absolute and undeviating and even Puritan unbrightness in a country and time of lawless opportunity, who neither drank nor gambled nor even hunted. In their surprise they forgot that Mr. Coldfield had a marriageable daughter." (Faulkner, 1972: 43)*

From above quotation we learn that Sutpen is in search of wife yet, in the motive of having a male heir. Thus, for a man with dignity and decree, Sutpen seeks for a white woman from a noble family to marry. He, then, proposes Rosa, younger sister of Ellen—his second wife—to be his next mistress.

Sutpen, now sixty, seduces Milly Jones, the fifteen-year-old daughter of his partner, Wash Jones. When she bears him a girl, he rejects them both, angering Wash Jones, who kills Sutpen, Milly, and the baby, before being killed by the sheriff, Major de Spain.

*"And that she told him and that he stood there for a minute and he didn't move at all, with the riding whip against his legs and the lattices of the sunlight from the unchinked wall falling upon him, across his white hair and his beard that hadn't turn at all yet, and she said she saw his eyes and his teeth inside his beard and that she would have run then only she couldn't, couldn't seem to make her legs bear to get up and run: and then he looked at the girl on the pallet again and said, 'Well, Milly; too bad you're not a mare too. Then I could give you a decent stall in the stable' and turned and went out."*  
(Faulkner, 1972: 286)

Above quotation exemplifies how much a son means to Sutpen. When Milly delivers her baby from Sutpen and noticed as a girl, Sutpen becomes outrageous. Sutpen is upset for that birth. He even speaks to Milly that if Milly is a horse, then he prefers to build her a stable for herself and her daughter.

Yet, in some regions of the world, inequality between women and men directly involves matters of life and death, and takes the brutal form of unusually high mortality rates of women and a consequent preponderance of men in the total population, as

opposed to the preponderance of women found in societies with little or no gender bias in health care and nutrition.

#### **4.2.2 Natalivity Inequality**

This kind of inequality could be explained from attitude of Sutpen that left his lady for bearing a daughter when what he expects is a son.

*"Let's try it, ... and if it's a boy we'll get married." (Forster, 1962: 168)*

From the statement above, it is obvious how Sutpen expects a son to be his heir. Sutpen's utterance is another kind of gender inequality in literal form. Somehow, that sentence as well explains how women do not mean much to Sutpen.

In most part of the world, a son is more "precious" than a daughter. Given a preference for boys over girls that many male-dominated societies have gender inequality can manifest in the form of the parents expecting the baby to be boy rather than girl.

*"Wait," Shreve said; "wait. You mean that he had got the son at last that he wanted, yet still he—"*

*"—walked the three miles and back before midnight then sat on the sagging gallery until the daylight came and the granddaughter stopped screaming inside the cabin and he*

*even heard the baby once, waiting for Sutpen.” (Faulkner, 1972: 286)*

Above quotation explains that eventhough Sutpen already has a son, Henry Sutpen, from his latest marriage with Ellen Coldfield, still he proposes Rosa and seduces Milly for the unreasonable motive: male heirs. It is ridiculous that Sutpen expects male heirs so much though he already has a son.

There was a time when this could be no more than a wish (a daydream or a nightmare, depending on one's perspective), but with the availability of modern techniques to determine the gender of the foetus, sex-selective abortion has become common in many countries. This is high-tech sexism.

In chapter five, Rosa talks to Quentin about the tragic death of the mad Ellen, the decay of the Hundred, and Sutpen's return after the murder of Charles. He proposes to her, but she turns him down for his outrageous demand that she prove her worth by giving him a male heir before they marry.

*“Then about a week later they caught the nigger, the midwife and she told how she didn't know that Wash was there at all that dawn when she heard the horse and then Sutpen's feet and he came in stood over the pallet where the girl and the baby were and said, 'Penelope—' (that was the mare) '—foaled this morning. A damned fine colt. Going to be the spit and image of his daddy when I rode him North in '61. Do you*

remember?' and the old nigger said she said *Yes, Marster* and that he jerked the riding whip toward the *pallet* and said, 'Well? Damn your black hide: horse or mare?' and that she told him and that he stood there for a minute and he didn't move at all, with the riding whip against his legs and the lattices of the sunlight from the unchinked wall falling upon him, across his white hair and his beard that hadn't turn at all yet, and she said she saw his eyes and his teeth inside his beard and that she would have run then only she couldn't, couldn't seem to make her legs bear to get up and run: and then he looked at the girl on the pallet again and said, 'Well, Milly; too bad you're not a mare too. Then I could give you a decent stall in the stable' and turned and went out." (Faulkner, 1972: 285-286)

In resemblance with above analysis in Mortality Inequality section, Sutpen expresses his dissapointment when what Milly delivers is a girl not boy. He even speaks to Milly that if Milly is a horse, he prefers to build her a stable for herself and her daughter.

Sutpen, still searching for a male heir, seduces fifteen-year-old Milly Jones, granddaughter of Wash Jones, a poor white squatter. When she bears him a daughter, he rejects her and the child, causing Wash Jones to kill him with a scythe.

"*Stand back. Don't you touch me' only he must you have heard that because he answered it: 'I'm going to tech you, Kernel' and Sutpen said 'Stand back, Wash' again before the*

*old woman heard the whip. Only there were two blows with the whip; they found the two welts on Wash's face that night. Maybe the two blows even knocked him down; maybe it was while he was getting up that he put his hand on the scythe—" (Faulkner, 1972: 288)*

Above quotation shows action when Wash Jones, feeling insulted that his granddaughter is violated by Sutpen after she delivers his baby. Wash Jones outrageously attacks Sutpen who tries to defend himself by screaming his commands. Yet, Wash does not care of Sutpen's yelling and kills him with a Scythe.

#### **4.2.3 Basic Facility Inequality**

This inequality is more about basic rights for education, home for shelter, consumption and nutrition, finance and economy, clothing and et cetera. This kind of inequality, is rarely found in "*Absalom, Absalom!*". Because both male and female characters are treated fairly by Sutpen. Eventhough Sutpen casts Eulalia off, he still sends her money. Also, he doesn't let his workers stay hungered and unpaid. How Sutpens acts and reacts cruel to them as slaves is only based on the reason that most of them are blacks.

*"I stayed there and waited for Thomas Sutpen to come home. Yes. You will say (or believe) that I waited even then to become engaged to him; if I said I did not, you will believe I lied. But I do say I did not. I waited for him exactly as Judith and Clytie waited for him: because now he was all we had, all*

*that gave us any reason for continuing to exist, to eat food and sleep and wake and rise again: knowing that he would need us, knowing as we did (who knew him) that he would begin at once salvage what was left of Sutpen's Hundred and restore it." (Faulkner, 1972: 154)*

There, we can see that everybody still needs Thomas Sutpen however cruel and rude he is, for they are dependent on him in fulfilling their basic needs.

Yet, even when demographic characteristics do not show much or any anti-female bias, there are other ways in which women can have less than a square deal. Facilities that a man and a woman could earn in that era were different. Man had greater opportunity to continue college, while woman mostly spent their time with private education in house. Subjects that they learn were as well distinguish. Man study about medical, economy, literature, economy, politic, social and plenty more issues while woman merely focused on house-keeping, cooking, and handicraft lessons.

#### **4.2.4 Special Opportunity Inequality**

This kind of inequality is the progress of "Basic Facility Inequality" that women have rights for higher education as men do. Even when there is relatively little difference in basic facilities including schooling, the opportunities of higher education may be far fewer for young women than for young men. Indeed, gender



bias in higher education and professional training can be observed even in some of the richest countries in the world.

Although this kind of inequality is not commonly elaborated in *"Absalom, Absalom!"*, yet we could view unfairness of how such higher education is not dedicated for woman. Education for woman is not a main aspect of that time. Most women were supposed to work, whether in a farm or in a house. Yet, most women of that time were taught privately by teachers coming to their houses. But, as we could also view in *"Absalom, Absalom!"* that men already had greater opportunity in education rather than women.

*"Then Henry and Bon went back to school, and now the nigger groom that fetched the mail back and forth each week between Oxford and Sutpen's Hundred brought letters to Judith now that were not in Henry's hand (and that not necessary either, Father said, because Mrs. Sutpen already covering the town and county both with news of that engagement that Father said didn't exist yet) and still he did nothing." (Faulkner, 1972: 268)*

From above quotation, it is clear that Charles Bond and Henry Sutpen, two main characters of the novel enrolled in University of Mississippi, and had greater job chances than woman in the story. While Judith Sutpen, sister of Henry and half-sister of Jim, was not too much in education. People of that era seemed to think that education is only for men while women, sooner or later, in the end, should belong to family and kitchen, at last.

#### 4.2.5 Professional Inequality

Men had greater job chances than women did. Men went more to business while women merely spent their ages cooking and keeping in the house. However, women were about to be housewives with sons and daughters to take care. Men, as we could read in *"Absalom, Absalom!"*, owned more freedom in choosing what kind of job they wanted. They could enrolled in universities, taking medical or politic class for their future success. Thomas Sutpen could build and manage his own farm and employed more female than male slaves. He also sent his son, Henry, to college while his daughter, Judith, was only around the house.

*"I had a design. To accomplish it I should require money, a house, a plantation, slaves, a family—incidentally, of course, a wife. I set out to acquire there, asking no favor of any man." (Faulkner, 1972: 263)*

From above line, we can see that Sutpen probably thought what education for woman is while they are going to just keep the house fine. Yet, probably Sutpen did not think that without a good basic of education then there wouldn't be a good chances of work. Either for man or woman.

*"So maybe she wasn't out of the office good—or at least as soon as she had time to open the safe and look in the secret drawer and make sure it was the University of Mississippi that Henry attended—before his hand was writing steady and even*

*into the space where the daughter? daughter? daughter?  
never had showed—and with the date here too: 1859.”  
(Faulkner, 1972: 310)*

Above quotation explains to us how higher level education is not a common subject for woman of that period. This kind of inequality is mostly in terms of employment as well as promotion in work and occupation, women often face greater handicap than men. Country like Japan may be quite egalitarian in matters of demography or basic facilities, even, to a great extent, in higher education, and yet progress to elevated levels of employment and occupation seems more problematic for women than for men.

#### **4.2.6 Ownership Inequality**

This kind of inequality is basically about heir and heirloom matters. That properties of a family should belong to men rather than women. This inequality could be found in "*Absalom, Absalom!*" from attitude of Sutpen that always expects a son rather than a daughter for his heir when he is dead.

*"I had a design. To accomplish it I should require money, a house, a plantation, slaves, a family—incidentally, of course, a wife. I set out to acquire there, asking no favor of any man." (Faulkner, 1972: 263)*

From above quotation, we learn that Sutpen's grand design of founding a dynasty is ruined by the reappearance of Charles Bon, his first son. He does not show recognition or affection towards

Bon. He later tells Henry of Bon's Negro blood, thus inspiring a fratricide. He proposes to his wife's sister, Rosa, on the death of his own wife, Ellen, but makes the condition that she should first bear him a son. Her shocked refusal causes a deep hate between them.

*"Yes, Rosie Coldfield, lose him, weep him; caught a beau but couldn't keep him; (oh yes, they will tell you ) found a beau and was insulted, something heard and not forgiven, not so much for the saying of it but for having thought it about her so that when she heard it she realized like thunderclap that it must have been in his mind for a day, a week, even a month maybe, he looking at her daily with that in his mind and she not even knowing it. But I forgave him. They will tell you different but I did. Why shouldn't I?" (Faulkner: 1972, 171)*

From above line, it is obvious that Ellen views Sutpen as a demon, an inhuman monster without feelings. On his next try, at sixty, Sutpen decides to beget an heir by seducing the fifteen-year-old Milly Jones, granddaughter of Wash Jones. When he rejects her after she bears him a daughter, he incurs the wrath of Wash Jones, who kills him with a scythe. This ends the Sutpen saga tragically.

In many societies the ownership of property can also be very unequal. Even basic assets such as homes and land may be very asymmetrically shared. The absence of claims to property can not only reduce the voice of women, but also make it harder for women to enter and flourish in commercial, economic and even some social

activities. This type of inequality has existed in most parts of world, though there are also local variations.

#### **4.2.7 Household Inequality**

This inequality explains about why only women who are supposed to be responsible in household matters while men are free with their own privat business. Yet, generally there are, often enough, basic inequalities in gender relations within the family or the household, which can take many different forms. Even in cases in which there are no overt signs of anti-female bias in, say, survival or son-preference or education, or even in promotion to higher executive positions, the family arrangements can be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework.

It is, for example, quite common in many societies to take it for granted that while men will naturally work outside the home, women could do it if and only if they could combine it with various inescapable and unequally shared household duties. This is sometimes called "division of labour," though women could be forgiven for seeing it as "accumulation of labour." This inequality includes not only unequal relations within the family, but also derivative inequalities in employment and recognition in the world.

This kind of inequality is hardly found in "*Absalom, Absalom!*", because there had been a collective opinion that woman should do the house-keeping, cooking and et cetera. Even though, woman didn't mind that they should be busy in the house while

man had more spare time outside for education or profession. Household was female business and not a matter man should interfere. Yet, this inequality is not an essential issue in "*Absalom, Absalom!*".

## **CHAPTER V**

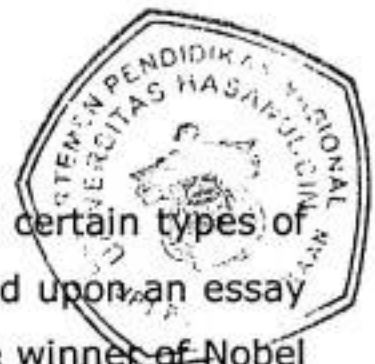
### **CONCLUSION**

By the analysis that has been elaborated along the chapters, concluding points of the novel will be as of the following.

The story begins in 1909 and gradually returns to the earlier episode in 1833 as series of flashback. The plot of the novel is very interesting, as mentioned in the themes section before. One of this theme is the gender inequality issue in "Absalom, Absalom!".

Thomas Sutpen is the main character, both protagonist and antagonist, in the novel who twists ethical values in the scope of gender inequality, for instance: he leaves his first wife and son after discovering that she is somehow negro-blooded. He proposes to Miss Rosa with a bold outrageous request and he prevents the marriage of Bon and Judith for the reason of incestuous relation. He seduces the fifteen-years-old Milly Jones and promises that he will marry her after she has born a son for him. In brief, he insults and violates most of female characters in the novel.

Refusing to acknowledge the son from his first wife for the reason of her negroid blood is such an unfair treatment. His action of literal and actual violation upon Ellen Coldfield, Miss Rosa and most of his female slaves shows his unsensible power and strength in ruling the women as the weak victims. Seducing and then leaving Milly after she bears a female child could obviously show the importance for being a man to Sutpen—for his own unsensible reasons that women are weak.



This study of "Absalom, Absalom!" takes the certain types of gender inequality that are found in the novel based upon an essay entitled "Seven Types of Gender Inequality" by the winner of Nobel in Economy, Amartya Sen. The study is expanded to certain kinds of gender inequality that happened along the slavery and racial period of the South. The analysis results show that there are only five types—out of the so-called seven types of gender inequality. These types that could be found in the novel is Mortality Inequality, Natality Inequality, Special Opportunity Inequality, Professional Inequality and Ownership Inequality. While, Basic Facility Inequality and Household Inequality are hardly discovered in the novel.

The concentration upon the gender inequality issue bears the whole reasons and results of this injustice. The novel reveals several motives and reasons why Sutpen sustain his violation and cruelty, for he has ruling power—and because Sutpen thinks that women are weak creatures. He believes that they could not harm and hurt him at all—yet, eventually cause and the ruin of his "dynasti". This novel concerns with the decay of moral values by degradation of Sutpen related to the destruction of South.

The South of that era was descriptively clear in the landscape of Civil War with slavery, racial discrimination, and gender injustice. However, sooner or later, hopefully this study can be a basic thought and bottom line for the figure of feminisms and gender equality for balancing level of woman with man. It is very suggested a well for man to treat woman with fair and fine attitude, for both male and female are created equal.



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