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Faulkner

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## 9 Faulkner

*Philip Cohen and Joseph R. Urgo*

The two of us wrote this chapter collaboratively and use “we” throughout the essay for the sake of consistency, but we individually reviewed and commented on each other’s work on Faulkner. We erred in last year’s chapter by failing to provide a full citation for *Unflinching Gaze: Morrison and Faulkner Re-Envisioned*, ed. Carol A. Kolmerten, Stephen M. Ross, and Judith Bryant Wittenberg (Miss., 1997); then, to add insult to injury, we twice misidentified the volume and confused it with another. Readers should thus be alerted that all of the essays discussed on pp. 160–65 in *AmLS 1997* are from *Unflinching Gaze*.

### **i Biography**

Based on personal interviews with some of the principals and archival research in special collections in New Orleans, W. Kenneth Holditch’s “William Spratling, William Faulkner, and Other Famous Creoles” (*MissQ* 51: 423–34) is an informative biographical sketch primarily about Spratling, the artist and architect at the center of the group of Vieux Carré bohemians and artists in the 1920s. Two reprints this year are John Faulkner’s important 1963 memoir, *My Brother Bill*, with a new foreword by Jimmy Faulkner (Hill Street Classics), and Carl E. Rollyson’s 1984 dissertation, with updated notes, *Uses of the Past in the Novels of William Faulkner* (International Scholars Publications).

We gratefully acknowledge the help of Jack Giddens, our graduate research assistant at the University of Texas at Arlington, and Helen Matteson, our undergraduate research assistant at Bryant College, in preparing this chapter.

## ii General Criticism

An ambitious, revisionary attempt to politicize and historicize discussions of incest in Faulkner, Karl Zender's well-researched "Faulkner and the Politics of Incest" (*AL* 70: 739–65) strikes us as one of the year's two most important pieces. Rejecting contemporary psychoanalytical interpretations of incest in the fiction as too monolithic and static, Zender instead proposes that Faulkner followed his Romantic forebears and modernist contemporaries in distinguishing morally between parent-child incest as hierarchical, authoritarian, and tyrannical, and sibling incest as egalitarian, revolutionary, and utopian. Psychoanalytic discussions, he notes, have often glossed over this distinction, positing sibling incest as a displaced version of parent-child incest. Zender charts the increasing complexity of Faulkner's use of the motif by positing three stages: the first culminating with a critique of his earlier use of incest "as a trope in support of, rather than in rejection of, regionalism and reaction" in *The Sound and the Fury*; the second consisting of his "linking of incest with race and history" in *Absalom, Absalom!*; and the third consisting of "the politicized descriptions of father-daughter and sibling incest" in *Go Down, Moses*. Particularly instructive is Zender's discussion of Faulkner's linking of incest "ever more explicitly to the Southern history of slavery and to America's political situation on the eve of World War II" in *Go Down, Moses*. The essay is notable for its awareness of the costs of incest, even as it explores Faulkner's fascination with and varied use of the subject for different ends.

Equally important is Joe Karaganis's "Negotiating the National Voice in Faulkner's Late Work" (*AQ* 54, iv: 53–81), a serious engagement with the intellectual content of Faulkner's thinking about race, nation, and the imperatives of the world war in the late 1940s. Correcting the misconception that Faulkner's later work was politically unstable and unsophisticated, Karaganis sees the later Faulkner deeply engaged with the ethical weaknesses of his earlier writing. For example, "Shall Not Perish" revises previous visions of the Civil War and "refuses . . . the crushing sovereignty of the past" that marked the major phase of his fiction. Indeed, refusal looms large in Faulkner's writing during this period, as he worked toward defining ethical behavior "less by positive qualities than by a refusal to participate in the ubiquitous injustice of society." An exemplary drama is played out in *Intruder in the Dust*, where racial thinking is cast as a conflict between individualistic values and the

logic of mass identity, leaving moral autonomy weakened as a result. As long as race and identity were inextricable (as they are, for instance, in *Go Down, Moses*), civil rights was a matter of consciousness as much as legal and social maneuvering. Faulkner's thinking in the late 1940s (and into the 1950s) led him to foresee a confederation of minorities as a "defense of individual conscience in increasingly large *combinations*." It was this highly individualist departure from postwar consensus that Faulkner "brought to bear against the cold war logics of authoritarianism and militarism, both at home and abroad."

A different view of Faulkner's later work is presented by Michael Kreyling in *Inventing Southern Literature* (Miss.). Kreyling is most concerned with the Faulkner-haunted landscape of Southern literature in two chapters, "Southern Writing Under the Influence of Faulkner" and "Parody and Post-Southernness." The quandary is tough: without Faulkner, the South is one of many geographic regions within which a literary tradition has emerged; with Faulkner, the South is home to *Faulkner*—and any tradition that is home to *Faulkner* must arrange itself around that presence. Kreyling looks at Faulkner's late career as proceeding in response to and within the confines of the major period of his writing—just as Southern literature must live with the ghosts of Quentin and Shreve, for example, so did Faulkner in the 1950s, as he attempted to maintain creative autonomy. The author's futile attempts at anonymity drove him so far as to actually "unwrite or subvert his public image." Hence, his work after 1946 (when Malcolm Cowley published *The Portable Faulkner*), especially *A Fable*, "is a tortured coming to terms with 'Faulkner.'" He wrote that big flawed book in order to systematically unwrite the prestige of *Faulkner* by recasting it on a dramatically revised literary canvas. The goal was to undermine critical projects with literary agendas, like Cowley's. Kreyling's argument is intriguingly perverse, as we wonder how an author sets out to unwrite his prestige when it is difficult enough to revise its premises. More likely, we suspect, no thesis on Southern literature has room for *A Fable*. Kreyling sees nearly all of Faulkner after *A Fable* as self-parodic, labeling the final portions of the Snopes trilogy a "wax museum of 'Faulkneriana.'" Nonetheless, Kreyling is himself haunted by something in the later works: "The 'meaning' of the late Faulkner for southern literary history is vexed: invoking the 'late Faulkner' seems to indict the cause with post-southernness, a consciousness of replica and parody." When Faulkner steps away from the Southern mantle, he takes it with him, raising

questions about “southernness” that continue to haunt the apologetics of that region’s art and culture.

Regional matters take on a revised sheen from the other side of the world. Proceedings from the International Faulkner Symposium held at Peking University in 1997 are available in Tao Jie, ed., *Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance* (Peking University Press). General essays are discussed here, with specific works described at appropriate places in this chapter. A discussion of Faulkner’s regionalist origins is offered by William Moss in “He Was Talking About a Girl . . . He Had to Talk About Something: William Faulkner on the Subject and the Object of Literature” (pp. 161–75). Moss recounts Faulkner’s evolution from regionalist to national voice. Noting that today’s climate may return that voice to specific race and ethnic (and regional) identity, Moss suggests that multiculturalism is a contemporary version of regionalism. Ultimately, Moss endorses what Faulkner argued: that out of the details (the specifics of place, gender, race, and class) come transcendent human themes that are at once place-bound and transcendent, capable of communicating across the boundaries that define place, and race, and class, and gender. Eleanor Porter employs another set of contexts in “Faulkner and the American Nature Tradition” (pp. 176–96), where she poses two questions: “what relationship does the individual have to the non-human world and how can that world be depicted in language?” If representation is linked inextricably to exchange and to commodification, then the central issue in *Go Down, Moses* might be cast as “translating the land into books,” thus raising problems both about representation and currency, from the ledgers to the novel itself. From these premises Porter produces vital conclusions about the kind of tragedy that Faulkner saw in the landscape, and the conflicted attitudes held toward it by others’ rational modes of thought. The way out of the stalemate is not through the traditions of rationality that produced it, however, but in a return to the partially conscious dimensions of human existence—the world of the subaltern and the pastoral, for example.

Related to Porter’s thinking is the work of Wei Yujie’s “W. Faulkner’s Two Worlds” (pp. 230–45), which picks up from Robert Penn Warren’s thesis that Faulkner’s cosmos contains the world he reports and the world he creates. The reported world, according to Wei Yujie, is linked to the “physical fear” mentioned in the Nobel Prize address; this fear comes from the prospect of social change and the affronts to identity that result. The rebuilt world, on the other hand, is tied to Faulkner’s rhetoric

concerning what he called the “human spirit,” and it is peopled by those who endure and help others. M. Thomas Inge contributes “The Dixie Limited: Writers on Faulkner and His Influence” (pp. 46–81), taken in large part from his *William Faulkner: The Contemporary Reviews* (1995) but adding a paragraph on notice of Faulkner in Japan, China, and South Africa. Continuing in the vein of influence is Zhu Shida’s “William Faulkner and Mo Yan” (pp. 336–51), which employs statements by novelist Mo Yan, citing Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez as primary influences, to speculate generally on the assimilation of outside literary influences in China. Novelist Alex Kuo presents an appreciative essay, “The Writer as Private Eye: Interpreting Evidence in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!*” (pp. 117–24).

In “Faulkner: God Over the South,” pp. 234–53 in *God and the American Writer* (Knopf, 1997), the late Alfred Kazin begins with the familiar thesis that Faulkner’s literary greatness stemmed from the South’s postbellum experience of guilt and defeat. As he ranges widely over Faulkner’s fiction, especially *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*, Kazin’s real point, however, is that Faulkner was “beset by a [severe Baptist] religious consensus that explains many of his characters.” Although drawn to the Old Testament and “a Calvinist without religion,” his skepticism about a personal God led him to frequently travesty that racist and patriarchal Southern consensus with its emphasis on “the elect and the hopeless sinfulness of others.” John Sykes’s “Faulkner, Calvinism, and Religion” (*Journal of Presbyterian History* 75 [1997]: 42–53) covers similar ground but reaches different conclusions, arguing that Faulkner “found in the corrupted ‘Calvinism’ he knew the essence of what was wrong with institutional Christianity, and that he defined his own religious values over against it.” In place of Christian affirmation, Sykes maintains, Faulkner formulated a tragic humanism. A different take on the Southern environment is Marie H. Liénard’s engaging and original essay, “Faulkner’s Poetics of Heat: Summer’s Curse” (*FJ* 14, i: 53–65). Liénard considers “Faulkner’s handling of heat as a vector of the unsaid that figures the violence at the foundation of the South,” indicating the way in which “poetics and history intersect,” particularly in various strategies of representing psychological and physical violence. (Surprisingly, sexual heat is not included among the vectors.) In *Absalom, Absalom!*, for example, narrative energies are triggered by late summer’s intensity, linked inextricably to the heat and the strong smells of the season. Throughout Faulkner, the weather “plagues characters as they

must endure it. . . . Heat pins them down to earth.” Liénard also examines *Light in August*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, “Dry September,” and “That Evening Sun.”

In “Teaching the Conflicts as a Temporary Instructor” (*CollL* 24, ii [1997]: 126–41) Charles Hannon recounts how he combines discussions of his position as a temporary full-time instructor and of *Absalom, Absalom!*, “Barn Burning,” and Richard Wright’s “The Man Who Was Almost a Man” to overcome student resistance in the literature classroom to questions of politics and ideology. In particular, Hannon foregrounds “issues of class and economic identity in literary texts through the examples of higher education and a ‘restructured’ [i.e., part-time] American workplace.” Banditry concerns Dianne C. Luce in “John A. Murrell and the Imaginations of Simms and Faulkner,” pp. 237–57 in *William Gilmore Simms and the American Frontier*, ed. John Caldwell Guilds and Caroline Collins (Georgia, 1997). Luce investigates how Simms in *Richard Hurdis* (1838) and *Border Beagles* (1840) and Faulkner in *The Unvanquished*, *Requiem for a Nun*, and *A Fable* drew on the notorious antebellum bandit’s exploits on the Natchez Trace. After showing that Faulkner primarily derived his knowledge of Murrell from a 1930 volume on the area by Robert M. Coates, Luce argues that Simms’s and Faulkner’s different use of Murrell’s escapades “reflects their contrasting views of the natures of man and civilization.”

Combining historical and theoretical methods to attend to Faulkner’s role-playing and performative tendencies, Donald M. Kartiganer offers a fully developed study of Faulkner and war in “So—I, who had never had a war . . .’: William Faulkner, War, and the Modern Imagination” (*MFS* 44: 619–45). Kartiganer explicates Faulkner’s use of “theatrical historicism,” a mode of behavior and writing by which one participates in anachronistic cultural codes through the employment of gesture, allusion, and “the half-parody of pantomime.” The result of such distance is that despite the success of the performance, the code is rewritten in the language of irony and takes on “meanings its model never dreamed.” Biographical information on Faulkner’s “gestures” at enlisting in war service is invoked to show how such acts are consistently revealed to be without significance, undermined and marked more by theatricality and posing than sincerity—of a piece, in other words, with stories he would later tell about being shot down in combat. And so we cannot say that Faulkner was biographically dishonest, only that he found military gestures rich in fictional and self-defining potential. Kartiganer also

charts war depictions in the novels, especially impersonations and gestures toward war participation. As a result of performative warfare, the meaning of conflict is always deferred, and the question of motive begged. The process culminates in *A Fable*, where Faulkner seems to be “holding back the war, holding back history, holding back the murder whose meaning he wants to explore forever, in the artist’s delusion that, supremely rendered, the real will give way to gesture, the body to imaginative power.” Kartiganer’s take on Faulkner and war is required reading for any Faulkner scholar interested in the way that the relationship between act and gesture influences and informs Faulkner’s imagination.

Two excellent contextual studies are Katherine Henninger’s “‘It’s a outrage’: Pregnancy and Abortion in Faulkner’s Fiction of the Thirties” (*FJ* 12, 1 [1996]: 23–41) and Arthur A. VanderVeen’s “Faulkner, the Interwar Gold Standard, and Discourses of Value in the 1930s” (*FJ* 12, 1 [1996]: 43–62). Henninger locates a historical tension in *As I Lay Dying* between male desires to have women represent collectivity and women’s desire to achieve individuality. The conflict is revealed explicitly in the reproductive politics of the late ’20s and early ’30s. Politicizing Dewey Dell, Henninger finds that while her quest for an abortion at first appears to be an effort to conquer female biology, the conflicts she encounters reveal “that what in fact antagonizes Dewey Dell is not feminine nature, but masculine ideology.” To contextualize such claims, Henninger reads *As I Lay Dying* and *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* in the context of Old Left politics, especially the views of women advanced by the Communist Party. By the late 1930s the masculine collective, on the verge of remilitarization, had reincorporated female creativity, particularly in its reproductive capacity, and so in *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* Charlotte’s refusal to devote herself to reproduction is seen as a threat to the collective.

VanderVeen examines the logic of the gold standard as the ideology underpinning the desire on the part of many Faulkner characters “to access an uncorrupted source of value.” Coin-fetishism in *Go Down, Moses*, for example, serves to both evoke and conceal “what everyone of any color knew and chose to ignore: that surplus value was never free, but derived from the blood and sweat of a dispossessed people.” Although characters may invoke absolute notions of race, blood, and property for self-justification, such claims are consistently revealed to rest on weak foundations, the weakness of which prompts a more fervent insistence on them. Cash money functions in the same way as the wild horses in



*The Hamlet*, according to VanderVeen, “for while they facilitate trade by their capacity to roam freely, they pose the same question the hamlet keeps sweating over: just who exactly owned those horses?” Attempts to control spotted horses and printed money (and mobile Snopeses) merge into a matrix of futile efforts to set value in place in a social order that makes sport (and art) out of such futility. New money and economic development were forces resisted by rural communities despite severe economic depression, and VanderVeen suggests that such resistance was not perverse but part of a concerted, legitimate effort to maintain traditional sources of community value. In Faulkner’s career, *As I Lay Dying* and *The Hamlet* “bracket the final crisis of the gold standard” and any hopes that it would provide coherence to a complex economic system. VanderVeen reminds us of Lucas Beauchamp, clutching the coin in *Go Down, Moses*, himself agent and witness to profound transfers of value. VanderVeen’s essay is a model of ideological criticism, one that continues recent efforts to read Faulkner’s economics as seriously as he employed them aesthetically.

Thomas L. McHaney has edited this year’s “Special Issue: William Faulkner” for *Mississippi Quarterly*. We discuss general essays here and essays on individual works under the appropriate headings. Linda J. Holland-Toll’s wide-ranging “Absence Absolute: The Recurring Pattern of Faulknerian Tragedy” (*MissQ* 51: 435–52) describes Faulknerian tragedy as a narrative pattern in which a corrupt, often marginalized character perverts all positive values, “pervades the lives of the other characters and leaves them in a dystopic world.” Holland-Toll maintains that Faulkner emphasizes significant Southern cultural objects to “heighten the significance of the characters responsible for the abnegation of humanity” and thus our awareness of his tragic world. Perhaps because of the essay’s brief bibliography, Holland-Toll often either states what many have said before or seems unaware that other assertions—for example, that Addie Bundren’s “morbid desire for intensity of meaning” and her “warped and pathological need for communion” destroy her family—are extremely controversial.

Treading in the steps of previous work such as his “Faulkner’s Aural Evangelism: An Essay in Religious Aestheticism” (*AmLS* 1995, p. 158), William E. H. Meyer Jr.’s original, ambitious, but seriously flawed “Faulkner, Hemingway, *et al.*: The Emersonian Test of American Authorship” (*MissQ* 51: 557–71) argues that “Faulkner’s Southern lyricism and historicism continue to promote aurality over hard-nosed vision.”

Faulkner always sought “the redemption or apotheosis of the South through the Old World ‘thunder and music of prose.’” An engagingly written piece of literary history, the essay willfully ignores relevant traditional and contemporary scholarship on American literature and Faulkner, paints Faulkner as an uncritical Southern chauvinist, and treats the many voices in Faulkner’s fiction as expressions of his opinions and beliefs.

Joseph Urgo has guest-edited a useful issue of the *Faulkner Journal* (13, i–ii), “Faulkner the Reiver,” that features essays mostly on the author’s acknowledged and unacknowledged literary borrowings. Urgo’s “Introduction: Reiving and Writing” (pp. 3–14) meditates on theft’s relation to knowledge, storytelling, and the production of literature in Faulkner’s life and fiction, especially his last novel, *The Reivers*. Unsurprisingly, Urgo finds in Faulkner not the Romantic-modernist emphasis on originality but a premodern belief that an artist may freely plunder, provided he creates something that would not shame or debase the materials or methods pillaged. We discuss general essays here, while essays on individual works are discussed under their appropriate headings.

Several essays in “Faulkner the Reiver” explore various literary influences on Faulkner’s evolving conception of the Snopeses and the eponymously named Trilogy. Jacques Pothier’s “The Designs of Faulkner’s ‘Yoknapatawpha Saga’ and Balzac’s *Human Comedy*” (*FJ* 13, i–ii: 111–32) is a wide-ranging, well-researched, essential contribution to the study of Balzac’s influence on Faulkner. Pothier’s subject is Faulkner’s selective use of the French novelist’s ambition to articulate comprehensively an entire sociohistorical cycle in his sequence novels with their recurring characters. He usefully differentiates Balzac’s quasi-sociological emphasis on character types and setting from Faulkner’s interest in the idiosyncrasies of atypical individuals in conflict with oppressive, regulatory communities. Unlike Malcolm Cowley’s formulation of a sociological and historical unity to the Yoknapatawpha novels, Pothier persuasively argues that Faulkner “never deliberately attempted to organize his texts according to sociological criteria.” Judith Bryant Wittenberg’s “William Faulkner, T. S. Stribling, Trilogistic Intertextuality, and the Politics of Criticism” (*FJ* 13, i–ii: 149–62) eschews traditional questions of literary influence for a fine discussion of intertextual dialogue in Faulkner and Southern novelist T. S. Stribling. Citing a number of significant plot, character, and thematic parallels between Stribling’s commercially successful but now largely forgotten Vaiden Trilogy (1931–34) and the

Snopes Trilogy, *Absalom, The Unvanquished*, and *Go Down, Moses*, Wittenberg observes that both writers deal critically with the South's legacies of racism, the Civil War, and Reconstruction by dramatizing the socioeconomic changes that swept through small Southern towns. While acknowledging Faulkner's greater narrative and linguistic sophistication and modernist self-reflexivity, Wittenberg ties the precipitous decline in Stribling's literary reputation to Agrarian and New Critical attacks in the 1930s and 1940s on his documentary realist aesthetic and liberal views.

Less compelling is Jon Smith's "Faulkner, Galsworthy, and the Bourgeois Apocalypse" (*FJ* 13, i-ii: 133-47), which contends that Faulkner deliberately sought to satirize Galsworthy's immensely popular trilogy *The Forsyte Saga* in the Snopes Trilogy. Citing parallels of character, plot, and theme, Smith maintains that Galsworthy's naturalizing of capitalist greed and possessiveness and his authorizing of a kind of feminism within capitalism threatened Faulkner's Southern conception of masculinity with its emphasis on honor, pride, and sacrifice and its virgin-whore and body-soul dichotomies. The piece singlemindedly views Faulkner's trilogy as a careful response to Galsworthy's saga, overlooks much of the recent excellent work on Faulkner and gender, and identifies Gavin Stevens with Faulkner. Robert Woods Sayre's careful and well-researched "Artistic Self-Theft as Obsession and Creative Transformation: The 'Memphis' Stories and Beyond" (*FJ* 13, i-ii: 37-55) examines the difficulty of remaining faithful to the ideals of the Old South in the "fallen modern world" in some closely related, posthumously published work that dates mostly from the late 1920s—"The Big Shot," "Dull Tale," "A Return," and several manuscript and typescript versions of "Rose of Lebanon." Sayre demonstrates that Faulkner treated this subject in increasingly complicated and ambivalent ways within the four pieces and beyond. Suzanne Chamier's "Faulkner and Queneau: Raymond Queneau's Preface to *Moustiques*" (*FJ* 13, i-ii: 15-36) reprints and translates the French novelist's preface to a 1948 translation and uses Queneau's reading of Faulkner to examine how each writer employs difficulty, frequent borrowing, and allusiveness.

Lothar Hönnighausen edited a special 1997 issue of *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, "William Faulkner: German Responses." We discuss general essays here and essays on individual works under the appropriate headings. In his "Conclusion: Faulkner's Achievement" (*Amst* 42: 685-92) Hönnighausen suggests that critics consider Faulkner a mannerist ("an urge for restless experimentation, an obsession with

technique and style, a richly grotesque pictorial inventiveness and . . . a delight in images with jarring juxtapositions”), a more precise term than modernist for its anticlassicist implications. Hönnighausen also contributes “The Impact of the Arts on Faulkner’s Writing” (pp. 559–71), a study of Faulkner’s metaphors as the product of his fascination with the plastic arts of painting, photography, sculpture, drawing, and sketching that also reviews Faulkner’s use of similes, metaphors, stylizing images, and images of stasis and motion.

Three occasional pieces should be mentioned. Joseph Blotner provides a useful review of Faulkner’s French connections in “Dedication of William Faulkner Bust at University of Rennes” (*SLJ* 30, ii: 127–32). Charles East, who served as editor of the Louisiana State University Press during the production of *William Faulkner of Oxford* and *The Faulkners of Mississippi*, recounts memories of A. Wigfall Green, Emily Stone, Murry Falkner, and others in “Oxford-in-Yoknapatawpha” (*VQR* 74: 475–89). Finally, a review of Faulkner’s life and career as unfolding “against the inescapable backdrop of [W. E. B.] Du Bois’ ‘color line,’ its implications and complexities,” is offered by Edwin M. Yoder Jr. in “Faulkner and Race: Art and Punditry” (*VQR* 73: 565–74). Yoder is interested less in what problems Faulkner may have solved or dodged and more in what it means to speak the unspeakable in fictional terms, where “merely *saying* anything can be a snare,” a predicament Faulkner often discovered when he spoke out in public.

### iii Individual Works to 1929

Three essays on *Soldiers’ Pay* appeared this year. Jacquelyn Scott Lynch’s “Postwar Play: Gender Performatives in Faulkner’s *Soldiers’ Pay*” (*FJ* 14, i: 3–19) reads the novel as subversive of gender roles through “scenes of male homosocial bonding and female hysteria.” Influenced by Judith Butler, Lynch treats gender as performance as she examines Faulkner’s experimentation with sexual identities, especially the possibility of transgressing heterosexual imperatives, including “masked homoeroticism.” However, while the novel makes room for gender play, it does not endorse gender redefinition and has women and men return to prewar identities. Lynch ties this failure to “an artistic muddle that the 28-year-old Faulkner was not yet prepared to work through”; however, we suspect that historical facts and the pressures of representation may have exerted an influence as well. Two essays from the Peking conference focus on

*Soldiers' Pay*. Wu Bing's "Soldiers' Pay as a Germ of Faulkner's Great Literary Career" (*Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance*, pp. 266–82) reads the novel as a storehouse of formalist and stylistic devices. For example, Donald Mahon, the absent center, prefigures the absent central figures of Caddy Compson and Addie Bundren; also, Faulkner employed plot-device letters and dialogue sections, and he experimented with a variety of methods of thought representation (the essay is particularly strong here) in this inaugural novel. Yao Naiqiang's "Faulkner's *Soldiers' Pay*: A Southerner's Romance and Modern Warfare" (pp. 319–35) is largely appreciative—and miffed at critical neglect to the point of listing seven critical and anthology sources that misplace that apostrophe in the novel's title.

In "Faulkner's Family Crucible: Quentin's Dilemma" (*MissQ* 51: 465–82) Gary Storhoff applies family systems theory to *The Sound and the Fury*. He provocatively but thoughtfully treats Mr. Compson's alcoholism as the figure in the family carpet that organizes and explains the behaviors and pathologies of all family members. Seeking to supplant Freudian and Lacanian intrapsychic approaches with an emphasis on the family as a "complex, organic whole," Storhoff contends that Quentin's problems and choices as well as "the contradictions, confused communications, and paradox[es] that permeate the . . . family" are best explained by Mr. Compson's selfish and controlling manipulation of his wife and children. Specifically, Quentin's failed attempts to play a variety of heroic roles result less from his Southern heritage than from a desire to restore family prestige lost by his father's drinking. In "The Compson Family Finances and the Economics of Tragic Farce" (*SoAR* 62 [1997]: 79–86) Rick Wallach relates Jason Compson's mismanagement of his complicated financial transactions on April 6 to the novel's thematic elements. In arguing that "Jason's obsessive and blundering transpositions of emotional values into financial terms" may be read "against the delusory sensibility of southern capitalist culture" and that his ultimate failure in the cotton market proceeds "according to principles of exchange which reflect and elaborate the [novel's] themes of emotional dissolution and loss," Wallach uncritically uses the "Appendix: Compson" account of the family's long history of financial decline to interpret the novel.

Several essays in Urgo's special *Faulkner Journal* issue deal with Faulkner's appropriation and transformation of various influences in *The Sound and the Fury*. Michael Zeitlin's lucid "Returning to Freud and *The*

*Sound and the Fury*" (FJ 13, i–ii: 57–76) isolates and defines "some of the ways Faulkner 'reused' (if only to transform) certain Freudian signs and structures." In resituating *The Sound and the Fury* within the psychoanalytic contexts that surrounded its composition and publication, Zeitlin is especially attentive to homologies between Freudian concepts and methods such as splitting, excess, and unconscious power and Faulkner's descriptions of the novel's composition in the various posthumously published drafts of his 1933 introduction to the book. Joseph Csicsila's "'The Storm-Tossed Heart of Man': Echoes of 'Nausicaa' in Quentin's Section of *The Sound and the Fury*" (FJ 13, i–ii: 77–88) lays out stylistic and thematic parallels between the chapter in Joyce's *Ulysses* and Quentin's monologue. Although he seems unaware of much recent work on Joyce and Faulkner and makes no mention of Quentin's incestuous desires and fantasies in discussing Caddy's promiscuity, Csicsila usefully notes that both chapters obsessively employ motifs of female undergarments, water, and twilight to portray sexuality in terms of the two extremes of virginity and sexual decadence. And Merrill Maguire Skaggs's "Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*" (FJ 13, i–ii: 89–99) cites verbal echoes and parallels in character and theme. Skaggs contends that Faulkner transformed what he borrowed from *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and that *The Sound and the Fury* redefines our reading of Cather's novel. Skaggs is especially attentive to differences between the two novelists' treatment of loss, self-consciousness, and the longing for order.

Overwritten at some 30 pages, Phillip Novak's "Meaning, Mourning, and the Form of Modern Narrative: The Inscription of Loss in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*" (FJ 12, i [1996]: 63–90) examines the novel's search for "that origin which is an explanation, an authorizing context," made emblematic by Quentin's refrain, "if I just had a mother." Nonetheless, Novak argues, the text "can conceive of no perspective that will function as a stable source of illumination." Marked by refusals, Faulkner's first great novel will not sustain a narrative even though it suggests a number of them, such as "blood gone bad," "tragedy of two lost women," and "decline of the Compson household." But each of these stories necessitates the generation of authorities that the novel insistently denies. As if refusing to be implicated in any single subjective stance, the text repeatedly invokes and denies perception rooted in stable human identities. In this context, Benjy's narrative takes on renewed

significance as the kind of “unmotivated seeing” that would occur should perception be divorced from subjectivity. Liu Jianbo’s “On the Polyphonic Features in *The Sound and the Fury*” (*Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance*, pp. 125–36) presents a Bakhtinian analysis of the Compson brothers’ successive narratives, tying this form of representation to an emergent value of collectivity: “Faulkner has lost his authoritarian control over his readers. Benjy, Quentin, and Jason are not his ‘voiceless slaves’ but ‘free people’ who are able to subvert the authoritarian and monologic discourse.”

Robert L. Yarup’s “Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*” (*Expl 57*: 45–48) considers the fourth section as a crystallization of the novel’s sense of tragedy, specifically condensed into a single day and clarified by “the passive moral evil of Mrs. Compson.” Ulrike Nüssler’s intelligent “Reconsidering the Function of Mrs. Compson in Faulkner’s ‘*The Sound and the Fury*’” (*Amst 42* [1997]: 573–81) characterizes Mrs. Compson as a significant but destructive family power whose rigidity, physical immobility, bigotry, and disregard of maternal duties derive from the Old South’s restrictive, patriarchal “ideal of ‘true womanhood.’” Although this ideal empowers her and enables her to manipulate members of her family, the shift from aristocratic to market values in a rapidly changing South has rendered the ideal obsolete. In portraying her as both a victim of her conventional upbringing and a victimizer of others, Nüssler sensibly finds the middle ground between earlier critical attacks on Mrs. Compson and more recent attempts to rehabilitate her.

#### ***iv* Individual Works, 1930–1939**

An excellent and instructive critical history of *As I Lay Dying* is included in Harriet Hustis’s “The Tangled Webs We Weave: Faulkner Scholarship and the Significance of Addie Bundren’s Monologue” (*FJ 12*, i [1996]: 3–21), which focuses on scholarly engagement with the first Mrs. Bundren. Hustis contends that Addie has been effaced in the service of a level of realism uncommon in Faulkner criticism. Drawing on the work of Carol Gilligan to support her arguments about female psychological development, Hustis finds that Addie alternates between a desire for isolation and control and the need for interconnection. Paul Luís Calkins’s “Be Careful What You Wish For: *As I Lay Dying* and the Shaming of Abjection” (*FJ 12*, i [1996]: 90–109) reads the novel through Kristeva’s *Powers of Horror* (1982) and identifies Addie as a figure who “gestures at but doesn’t

quite achieve exile.” This places her somewhere beneath contempt, since her achievement “has been less to abandon than to defile the homely structures of which she is irrevocably a part, to teach self-contempt, and to shame into paralysis her own children’s capacity to mourn, to face loss and lay it to rest.”

Three essays from the Peking conference concern *As I Lay Dying*. Hu Hong’s “The Truth of Life Can Hardly be Reached: The Hidden Philosophy of *As I Lay Dying*” (*Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance*, pp. 17–45) applies Lenin’s writings on absolutism, science, and the judgment of collective ideas in order to analyze narrators based on their place in the collective, “from outside to inside,” rather than by their place in the linear journey. Those on the outside judge primarily according to sight and physical presence—hence, the “public effect” of the Bundren journey as seen through Samson and Tull. Those on the innermost segments of the collective are furthest from physical reality, and so their judgment is highly problematic—Darl, who is clairvoyant, for example, and Addie, who is dead. Jin Hengshan’s “The Otherness of *As I Lay Dying*: An Interpretation of *As I Lay Dying* through Bakhtinian Dialogism” (pp. 82–104) defends Jewel as “the only person who is able to undertake the responsibility of the family and keep the journey through various obstacles to a successful end.” Again, the underlying value located in the novel is that of the collective, and so Jewel, who sacrifices the most to secure it, is raised to heroic stature. Formally, the novel also represents collective value in “the complete abolishing of the authorial narration,” where the narrative voice exists in “a dialogic relation . . . between the authorial voice and the narrator’s voice.” The third essay, Sarah Liu’s “The Forlorn Echo of the Dead: Addie Bundren and the Paradox of Language” (pp. 149–60), links metaphor to Anse (and to the paternal) and links metonymy to the female and to Addie’s blood imagery. Male metaphor is both connective and isolative, while metonymy “allows one to conceptualize terms in a non-hierarchical position.” As a result, familiar patriarchal oppositions between life and death, individual and community, and even the human and the natural are transformed by Addie into “a sense of continuity and connectedness that flows together.” Although working without access to Faulkner criticism that has dealt with similar issues (by Minrose Gwin, in particular), Liu’s attention to the symbolism of menstruation contributes to suggestions by feminist scholars that the menses, in the fluid “capacity both to bleed and to produce,” mark a point of imaginative struggle against “phallic fixity.”



Patrick H. Samway's "Pure Speculation: William Faulkner and St. Augustine" (*America* 27 Sept.: 25–29) locates an influence on *As I Lay Dying*, specifically in Saint Augustine's writing about the death of his mother and the question of where she would be buried. E. F. Kaelin's "'If You Could Just Ravel Out Into Time . . .,'" pp. 107–21 in Raymond Prier and Gerald Gillespie's *Narrative Ironies* (Rodopi, 1997) explores the reader's experience of the tragic tensions in *As I Lay Dying* as "established between two orders of temporal significance—between the natural, in which the characters are pushed from behind, and the phenomenological, in which each character attempts to project a future that pulls it from ahead." The essay's heavy reliance on plot summary and its failure to refer to a single critical work on Faulkner mar this phenomenological reading with its emphasis on the novel's ironic, indirect "deep narrational structure."

In "Incest, Repression, and Repetition Compulsion: The Case of Faulkner's Temple Drake" (*Mosaic* 30, iv [1997]: 39–55) Kathryn M. Scheel contends that the central mystery of *Sanctuary* is not Temple's rape at the Old Frenchman's Place but her very real earlier incestuous rape by her brothers. Scheel's well-researched but provocative psychoanalytic reading suggests that Temple has repressed any awareness of this earlier rape but that the repressed trauma nevertheless manifests itself in her "complex and seemingly contradictory" speech and behavior. In this fashion Faulkner attempts "to reflect with verisimilitude the repression of that which is forbidden." Hal McDonald's "Faulkner's *Sanctuary*" (*Expl* 55 [1997]: 222–23) argues that Ruby Lamar changes her mind about divulging information to Horace Benbow to help defend Lee Goodwin when she realizes that the small box in which she keeps her child does not protect the infant. Christopher D. Campbell's "Sweeney Among the Bootleggers: Echoes of Eliot in Faulkner's *Sanctuary*" (*FJ* 13, i–ii: 101–09) adds "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" to the list of Eliot's poems that influenced the novel.

Laura L. Bush's "A Very American Power Struggle: The Color of Rape in *Light in August*" (*MissQ* 51: 483–501) carefully argues that Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden are socialized by patriarchal Old Testament Christianity and Southern Jim Crow ideology "to act out dysfunctional gender and race conflicts." Violently intensified by racial and gender ambiguities in their makeups, their struggle for power over each other is played out through sexualized violence that includes both genuine and imitative rape. Moreover, Joe literally enacts the Southern myth of the

“Black rapist” to dominate women and threaten men, while Joanna invokes it to regain control of their relationship. In “Faulkner’s *Light in August*: Epiphany, Eternity, and Time” (*SoQ* 36, i [1997]: 25–36) Peter Puchek briefly discusses the influence of Joyce, Eliot, and Bergson on Faulkner’s interest in secular, intuitive, mundane, and human epiphanic insights.

David R. Jarraway’s “The Gothic Import of Faulkner’s ‘Black Son’ in *Light in August*,” pp. 57–74 in *American Gothic*, substitutes Kristeva for 40 years of criticism on this novel and does not even mention Elizabeth Kerr’s *William Faulkner’s Gothic Domain* (1979). As a result, standard interpretations are rehashed. It is disappointing to see Faulkner’s gothicism represented so superficially. Michael Wachholz’s “Marginality and William Faulkner’s *Light in August*” (*Cultural Difference and the Literary Text: Pluralism and the Limits of Authenticity in North American Literatures*, ed. Winfried Siemerling [Iowa, 1996]; pp. 130–41) claims that poststructuralist theory and the admission of “critical voices from the margins” who entered the academy following postwar liberation movements effected a major shift in Faulkner criticism. Historical reversals proliferate in Wachholz’s arguments. “*Light in August* is . . . concerned with the notion of identity. This notion, we know from poststructuralist discourse, involves power relations.” Once again, the currency of contemporary language is no substitute for research.

*Absalom, Absalom!* attracted a great deal of attention this year. Recent work by Richard Godden and Barbara Ladd on the role of Haiti in the novel is taken one step further by Sean Latham’s cogent “Jim Bond’s America: Denaturalizing the Logic of Slavery in *Absalom, Absalom!*” (*MissQ* 51: 453–63). Latham proposes that Sutpen’s recounting of his time in that country is the book’s narrative center. Noting that Sutpen occupies and exploits the space between two competing racial ideologies, imperialism and American slavery, Latham proposes that Faulkner employs Sutpen “to destabilize any claim to American exceptionalism.” Sutpen’s experience in Haiti, his appearance in Jefferson with Haitian slaves whom he occasionally wrestles with, and his installation of his mixed-blood daughter Clytie in his house, all combine to uncover “the ideological structures of a European model of imperialism” based on arbitrary violence, the will to power, Romantic primitivism, and kinship between the colonizer and the colonized that American slavery with its absolute divide between white and black and its objectification of blacks has effaced. Alessandra Vendrame’s “Toni Morrison: A Faulknerian Nov-

elist?" (*Amst* 42 [1997]: 679–84) investigates parallels and differences between Faulkner's and Morrison's use of multiple shifting points of view with cumulative monologues that create a choral effect in *Absalom* and *Song of Solomon*.

Ulfried Reichardt's dense "Perceiving and Representing Slavery and 'Race' Through Time: William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*" (*Amst* 42 [1997]: 613–24) maintains that Faulkner's novel simultaneously criticizes and affirms slavery and racial difference "by doubling the perspective on discursive structures through narrative and rhetorical strategies." In particular, the historical narrative that is reconstructed in the course of the novel "is centered around the concepts of racial difference held by its protagonists, but is also refracted through the 'racial categories' that characterize the views of the reconstructing narrators." Using a Heideggerian framework, Heide Ziegler's "The Fragile Pandora's Box of Scrawled Paper: A Different Reading of *Absalom, Absalom!*" (*Amst* 42 [1997]: 637–48) characterizes the novel's subject as the sin of colonization rather than the sin of miscegenation, but Ziegler makes almost no attempt to connect her conclusions to previous Faulkner scholarship. Given that the past in *Absalom* is more the product of memory and storytelling than of history, Dan Bentley-Baker's "Investigation into the Holographic Memory Model in Relation to Multiple Narration in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*" (*JEP* 19: 236–43) argues that Faulkner used the holographic model of memory well before its contemporary formulation "to represent the way a network of memories and folktales can interact within its own boundaries and take on a life of its own."

Like recent feminist critics who have claimed some narrative authority and centrality for Miss Rosa, Bettina Entzminger's "'Listen to them being ghosts': Rosa's Words of Madness that Quentin Can't Hear" (*CollL* 25, ii: 108–20) contends that Quentin's repression of Rosa's critical characterization of Sutpen's masculine actions as mad and destructive rather than heroic or romantic generates hysterical symptoms that destroy him. Moreover, Quentin's hysteria suggests that Faulkner never intended to privilege his voice over Rosa's. Although we object to the essay's uncritical conflation of Quentin as he appears in *The Sound and the Fury* and his subsequent incarnation in *Absalom*, Entzminger usefully argues that Quentin and Rosa are doubles whose common hysterical obsession with Sutpen's terrible history reflects their inability "to survive in a southern patriarchal society."

The intricacies of narrative privilege and handicap are taken up by

Jonathan S. Cullick's "‘I Had a Design’: Sutpen as Narrator in *Absalom, Absalom!*" (*SLJ* 28, ii [1996]: 48–57), which teases out the trope of Sutpen's "inability to deliver a message." The handicap is first manifest at the door of the wealthy landowner and continues throughout his life, as Sutpen proves unable to become the author of his own story. Cullick intriguingly points out the numerous instances where Sutpen cannot remember the facts, where his memory fails or he cannot supply the motivation or reason for an action or occurrence in his past. Sutpen's narrative deficiencies are indications as well of his larger, more tragic inability to manage his affairs: "He cannot control and manipulate either the people necessary for his dynasty or the materials of his narration." Robert K. Martin's "Haunted Jim Crow: Gothic Fictions by Hawthorne and Faulkner," pp. 129–42 in *American Gothic*, ignores all but the most recent examinations of gothicism in *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The House of the Seven Gables*. According to Martin, Faulkner rewrites Hawthorne's primal scene where the servant, Scipio, brings Matthew Maule a message from Gervayse Pyncheon as the scene of Sutpen's aborted message. Insights emerge from the juxtaposition. What is lost in the 20th century is redemption, replaced by a kind of eternal suspension. Faulkner seizes on the burdens and nightmares of history "to argue against an American tradition that clings to the possibility of eternal renewal, even as it repeats its gestures of exclusion."

An original approach to the novel is offered by Jocelyn Hazelwood Donlon's "Porches: Stories: Power: Spatial and Racial Intersections in Faulkner and Hurston" (*JACult* 19, iv [1996]: 95–110), a cultural study of an architectural feature (a porch is a product of creolization processes) and its role in socialization, especially cross-racial contact: in Faulkner and Hurston the porch links storytellers to their own separate racial communities. "But because 'black' and 'white' cultures converge on it, the porch in these texts is also situated at cross-racial intersections, and these intersections can either erect or efface racial and cultural boundaries." Reading the novel on the porch, as it were, yields fresh insights concerning Sutpen's attempt to control the sites of racial intersection in his household and Mr. Compson's effort, in turn, to control the telling of Sutpen's story on the Compson porch.

Four essays on *Absalom, Absalom!* were presented at the Peking conference. Ester M. K. Chueng's "Faulkner and Modernism: History and Subjectivity in *Absalom, Absalom!*" (*Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance*, pp. 3–16) begins with the premise that the novel is a hybrid of

indigenous American (or Southern) materials and the European intellectual tradition; it then ponders whether *Absalom, Absalom!* is a modernist text. Postmodernist classification is rejected on the grounds that its seemingly postmodernist aspects are the product of local folk traditions—which may well amount to the same thing, we suspect. Folk traditions in the novel keep it from achieving a modernist totality, making it “an impure modernist text.” Liu Jianhua’s “Revenge and Dialogue in *Absalom, Absalom!*” (pp. 137–48) after examining the way in which Faulkner employs the trope of revenge to assail cycles of violence in the South, locates redemption in “Faulkner’s call for fruitful dialogue as a substitute for futile revenge.” Charles Joyner’s “Sutpen’s Honor: William Faulkner and the Historians” (pp. 105–16) faults the ahistoricism of formalist criticism and reads the novel in light of Bertram Wyatt-Brown’s *Southern Honor*, finding that Sutpen acts without honor as he destroys his family in an effort to live up to its code. Joyner’s approach would have been more interesting had it measured Quentin and Shreve by this code of honor instead of playing them against each other and providing another version of the Sutpen story. Finally, Xiao Minghan’s “Dialogism and Plurality in *Absalom, Absalom!*” (pp. 283–304) makes an application of Bakhtinian theory to the novel to yield familiar results.

Last but far from the least of this year’s essays on *Absalom, Absalom!* is Jay Watson’s “And Now What’s to Do: Faulkner, Reading, Praxis” (*FJ* 14, i: 67–74), where a gauntlet is thrown down before socially committed Faulknerians. Sutpen’s narrators and witnesses “must all decide what to do with, and about, what they know. This is, of course, a responsibility that extends to the novel’s readers as well.” As a result, *Absalom, Absalom!* contains an ethical mystery: “not who did it or why he did it but how to live with the terrible knowledge you have gleaned, how to put that knowledge to best use.” Viewed in this light, Shreve’s decision to serve in the Canadian medical corps during World War I and then become a surgeon in Edmonton may be seen as “a direct rejoinder to the Sutpen legacy of injury and pain, as if the tale that ultimately claims his roommate has also, in a different and more hopeful sense, claimed him.”

In his original and well-researched “The Wages of Pulp: The Use and Abuse of Fiction in Faulkner’s *The Wild Palms*” (*MissQ* 51: 503–25) Vincent Allan King proposes that the novel reflects Faulkner’s anxieties about the artistic and moral value of his fiction with its sensational aspects and about earning time and money to write his books by working in Hollywood in the 1930s. Concerned with “the relationship between

those who create (or are perceived to create) morally suspect pulp fictions and the audience for these works” and with where the responsibility for the effects of such fictions lie, the author of *Sanctuary* blurred the lines between elite and popular culture, inoculated himself against the charge of writing pulp, and lessened his guilt in *The Wild Palms* by intertwining two narratives: the comic and popular “Old Man” and the private and tragic “Wild Palms.” Wanting to be a serious writer who explored the sort of extreme characters and actions found in pulp fiction, Faulkner sought with this novel to create an audience that would hold itself rather than the author accountable for the use and abuse of his work. Both narratives in *The Wild Palms* thus verge on the postmodern by “repeatedly showing the danger of ‘buying’ stories” and reminding readers “that they must create—and accept the blame for—the fictions by which they live.”

### v Individual Works, 1940–1949

Peter Nicolaisen’s fine “Public Life and Private Experience in Faulkner’s *The Hamlet*” (*Amst* 42 [1997]: 649–60) carefully examines the novel’s tension between the public life of Frenchman’s Bend and the private experience of some of its inhabitants. Faulkner critically presents the public realm as an antipastoral, constituted primarily by rumor and gossip and characterized by a voyeuristic interest in greed and sexual matters. While not much is actually known about Flem Snopes or Eula Varner, the private experience of Ike Snopes, Mink Snopes, and Jack Houston is abundantly articulated and extremely accessible. Nicolaisen speculates that Faulkner’s emphasis on the heroic individual in the novel reflects both his response to the collectivist novels of the 1930s and his growing interest in public issues.

In an important essay that revives interest in the irrational, Gerhard Hoffmann’s “Myth, Ideology, Symbol, and Faulkner’s Modernism/Postmodernism in *Go Down, Moses*” (*Amst* 42 [1997]: 661–78) examines Faulkner’s use of mythic modes of narration “for the presentation of the unrationalizable, the ineffable, for which the modernist novel increasingly seeks new forms of expression” and which Faulkner pushes into postmodern “contradictoriness.” One example is seen in Isaac’s repudiation, a position that seems irrational in the face of Cass’s reasoned position, and is thus largely faulted by readers committed to ratiocinative modes of thinking. Isaac’s position approaches what Hoffmann calls the “*mystery of Life*, its infiniteness and opaqueness, its ineffableness and in-

expressibleness.” The intriguing aspect of this argument is that through its application of the postmodern it returns to what Faulknerians know as the old verities. However, Hoffmann makes it clear that the employment of the mythic and the nonrational do not result in the creation of positive value norms (which would serve only to buttress the ethical social world) but in the creation of “empty spaces . . . that appeal to the imagination, not to the sense of reality, probability, or logic, and leave the reader wide-ranging possibilities of experiential and evaluative engagement.” This is what Hoffmann identifies as Faulknerian postmodernity, “the negation of the fixities and definites of society after the relativization and exhaustion of the social values,” a position that curiously revives transcendental and frontier consciousness while not betraying the ironies to which it owes its vitality. Hoffmann’s essay is a major contribution to our understanding of Faulkner’s intellectual development in the 1940s.

Less rigorous is William E. H. Meyer’s “Emerson Dines on Bear: Or, the Eradication of Nature in Faulkner’s South” (*SLJ* 29, ii [1997]: 32–44), which takes Faulkner’s romanticism at face value in a lyrical response to the novel’s transcendental elements. Meyer does what Hoffmann says so many critics have done—he measures the mythic by a rational yardstick and finds it will not measure up. What Hoffmann sees as an alternative to rationality Meyer sees as nostalgia, and he finds Faulkner thoroughly infected with it. The playfulness of Meyer’s essay does not make up for its critical lapses, however, such as identifying Faulkner with Ike (and with Old Ben), and the strangely assertive use of terms like “undoubtedly” to preface speculative statements. After documenting Faulkner’s interest in Melville in “Moby Bear: Thematic Structural Concordances between William Faulkner’s ‘The Bear’ and Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*” (*SLJ* 30, i [1997]: 43–54), Rick Wallach posits an intertextuality based on archetypal myths, communal rituals of hunting, genealogy, and problematic relationships. Employing Harold Bloom’s revisionary ratios, Wallach argues that Faulkner appropriates, assimilates, and revises *Moby-Dick* in so many key formal and thematic ways that the novel becomes the parent text of both “The Bear” and *Go Down, Moses*. For example, his revisionary use of “the hunt quest’s very archetypology” reflects his reinterpretation of Melville’s concerns “in terms of the terrible social and spiritual problems of the modern South” with its horror of miscegenation. One difficulty with Wallach’s methodology is his occasional por-

trayal of far-fetched similarities as related on the grounds that Faulkner has dramatically revised Melville's themes and methods.

Stephen Atkinson's "Constructing History in *Go Down, Moses* and *Beloved*: A Critical and Pedagogical Perspective" (*PMPA* 22 [1997]: 21–27) examines how both novels in their opening pages overwhelm students with noncontextualized information, requiring readers to assemble coherence from fragmentation. While *Go Down, Moses* offers an extraordinary amount of genealogical history in primarily chronological fashion with relatively few flashbacks, *Beloved* presents a more limited amount of information presented nonsequentially and through multiple perspectives. First-time readers of the novels, Atkinson concludes, should weather their confusions and complexities as they struggle for coherence before consulting chronologies of the novels because such reading experiences are constitutive of their meanings. Heather O'Donnell's "Limiting the Dixie Limited: Teaching Through *The Portable Faulkner*" (*MissQ* 51: 573–79) makes a welcome contribution to the occasionally neglected subject of teaching Faulkner. Seeking a way to organize a course on Faulkner and his immense, variegated corpus for upper-division undergraduates, O'Donnell opens and closes the semester with assignments from Cowley's important anthology, including his introduction and selections from the volume. This procedure led her students to emphasize "which elements of Faulkner's work were featured by Cowley, and which were muted" and how the elements minimized or overlooked by Cowley shaped "the 'Faulkner' at the center of his texts." Instead of a traditional research paper, O'Donnell required her students during the semester to compile, edit, and introduce their own anthologies of Faulkner's work. Suying Yang's "Verbal Forms and Narrative Effects in *Go Down, Moses*" (*Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance*, pp. 305–18) studies grammatical construction to argue the ways in which verbal forms "control the progress of time" and serve "the establishment of narrative viewpoint." Some useful classroom examples may be found here.

An excellent revisionist essay is Tao Jie's "Growing Up in the South: Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust*" (*Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance*, pp. 197–207), which argues that Chick Mallison's maturity is marked by the discovery not only of his own racism but also of the source of that racism in the social foundation of the county. However, Chick is no Huck Finn with a conscience to draw upon; on the contrary, he is corrupted to the point where his own sense of right and wrong is



confused by assumptions of white supremacy and by “Gavin Stevens, his exemplar in life, [who] intrudes into his thinking and tries to convince him with new abstractions” meant to counter the evidence of day-to-day oppression. By the end of the novel, the abstract has won out, as Gavin recovers his status as Chick’s mentor. The novel by Tao Jie’s reading emerges as the exposition of the near impossibility for a young Southern boy to break out of “established indoctrination” and reject the “guidance offered by the grown-ups around him.” A study of influence is provided by Thomas Carmichael’s “Intruder in the Text: Faulkner’s Djuna Barnes” (*FJ* 14, i: 21–31), which traces and explicates two appropriations by Faulkner of Barnes’s poetry.

### **vi Individual Works, 1950–1962**

Theoretical work by Cixous, Heilbrun, Irigaray, and Sedgwick informs Kelly Lynch Reames’s “‘All That Matters Is That I Wrote the Letters’: Discourse, Discipline, and Difference in *Requiem for a Nun*” (*FJ* 14, i: 31–52), a sophisticated and informative study of female discourse in the novel. According to Reames, the novel asks “how two disempowered women can change their lives through language” and achieve a sense of commonality. Temple and Nancy share backgrounds of misogynist violence that their race and class differences obscure. Through their intersected lives, the novel suggests the potential for social change once female alliances begin to cross racial and class divisions. Reames links the novel’s dramatic sections to the prologues in an excellent demonstration of the ways in which “forms of female resistance are given a specifically female history in the prose sections of the novel,” with “special emphasis on women’s written language as an assertion of subjectivity and a potential means of achieving power.” Given the biographical links between *Requiem for a Nun* and Faulkner’s female associates in the arts, Reames’s conclusions about the novel’s feminist implications are especially valuable; her woman-centered perspective provides one of the strongest readings of this novel in years.

Asking whether “some force has been working to confine Faulkner in a totally apolitical, aesthetic domain and disregard him as a writer who has argued against the old problem of war and humankind,” Kiyoko Toyama’s “A Huge Parable on Peace: Faulkner’s *War and Peace*” (*Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance*, pp. 208–29) responds with an appreciative and summative study of *A Fable*, paying particular attention to its

support for individual effort and actions based on possibility in the absence of certainty. Toyama concludes that the novel “verges on anarchism” in its denial of the nation-state as legitimate political entity, as Faulkner himself transcends cold war bipolarity through the novel’s intense individuality.

Merrill Horton’s “A Possible Source for Faulkner’s Flem and Byron Snopes” (*FJ* 14, i: 75–78) links these characters to the bank teller M. Castanier in Balzac’s “Melmoth Reconciled.”

### **vii The Stories**

Susan V. Donaldson’s elegant and original “Making a Spectacle: Welty, Faulkner, and Southern Gothic” (*MissQ* 50 [1997]: 567–84) explores how both writers responded to rapidly changing roles of women in the modern South by probing the intertextual debate between Faulkner’s gothic women in “A Rose for Emily,” “Dry September,” “There Was a Queen,” and “That Evening Sun” and Welty’s “parade of monstrous women” in *A Curtain of Green*. Whereas Faulkner’s stories about women who are often punished for disrupting “cultural narratives of traditional manhood and womanhood” reflect a deep ambivalence about such gender changes, Welty’s heroines suggest “the emergence of . . . female stories about hysterics whose bodies provide expression in the absence of appropriate language.” Donaldson comments usefully on the “vaguely salacious” pattern of characters watching the suffering of entrapped, confined women in Faulkner’s stories and argues that Welty appropriates gothic women such as Minnie Cooper in her own stories “to explore their potential for subversiveness,” for challenging masculine gender definitions by making spectacles of themselves.

Richard Conway’s “A Rose for Hedda” (*CLAJ* 42: 87–90) briefly compares Ibsen’s heroine with Emily Grierson in “A Rose for Emily”—and speculates on the possibility of influence. Pia Masiero’s “‘There Was a Queen’: A Question of Onomastic Difference” (*MissQ* 51: 541–56) treats the story as an indirect onomastic meditation on names and naming, especially the name “Sartoris,” and their racial and social implications. Beatriz Vegh outlines various formal and thematic parallels between Lord Dunsany’s “Carcassonne” (1910) and Faulkner’s story of the same title in “‘The Strength of Imaginative Idiom’: From Lord Dunsany’s to Faulkner’s ‘Carcassonne’” (*FJ* 13, i–ii: 163–69) to support her claim that Faulkner “overtly and gaily” reived from “writings

that are not canonically strong but which do have an unusual imaginative strength.”

Jean O'Bryan-Knight's "From Spinster to Eunuch: William Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily' and Mario Vargas Llosa's 'Los Cachorros'" (*CLS* 34: 328–47) offers a comparative analysis of two characters who "live at odds with their close-knit communities." The value of O'Bryan-Knight's work lies in a revealing examination of choric narration, a narrative style rare in literature generally, but common in Faulkner, who employed a narrator's collective perspective to enforce the theme of "the community's collective responsibility for individual suffering." The effect of the choric narration is to require that readers identify with those who victimize rather than with those who are victimized. Linda Pui-ling Wong, "Landscape of the Heart: The City and the Feminine in William Faulkner's 'Artist at Home' and 'Idyll in the Desert'" (*Faulkner: Achievement and Endurance*, pp. 246–65), finds that in these stories women resort to such alternatives as adultery to escape social and emotional traps. The stories reveal the boundaries that women must transgress, boundaries that originate in definitions of home. Of particular value here is Wong's refusal to see "home" as a refuge from ideology, but as contested space where men and women negotiate public and private modes of existence. It might be fruitful to expand this perspective to the domestic novels of Faulkner's later career.

Marilyn Claire Ford's well-researched and closely argued "Narrative Legerdemain: Evoking Sarty's Future in 'Barn Burning'" (*MissQ* 51: 527–40) explores how Faulkner's tendency to make the teller the center of a tale produces a doubled perspective in the story in which the sophisticated, intellectual, and poetic narrator "absorbs and interprets Sarty's anguish for the reader," who "simultaneously experiences the terror-stricken child's distress and the narrator's rationalizing of Sarty's suffering." Featuring "an intricate intertwining of diverse levels of consciousness," this narrative technique "compresses time to the poetic moment." Max L. Loges, "Faulkner's 'Barn Burning'" (*Expl* 57: 43–45), traces the name of Abner Snopes to a biblical source and to Chaldean etymology wherein Abner is derived from "nuwr" ("fiery" or "fire"). Ron Evans's "Faulkner's 'Tomorrow'" (*Expl* 56: 95–99) focuses on Horton Foote's 1960 reinterpretation of Faulkner's short story for stage and screen.

The essays in *William Faulkner's Short Fiction: An International Symposium* (Oslo: Solum, 1997), ed. Hans H. Skei, the proceedings of the 1995 International Faulkner Symposium in Oslo, make an important

contribution to our understanding of the short stories in themselves and in relation to the novels. Part I, "Faulkner and the Short Story Genre" opens with preliminary questions of genre. André Bleikasten, "'It Still Wasn't Enough': The Novelist as Failed Short Story Writer" (pp. 19–28), argues that Faulkner seemed constrained by shorter forms, a conclusion borne out by the process that he often repeated of expanding and combining short stories into novels. Aurélie Guillain's "Waiting for the End: Eliminating Digressions and Representing Repression in Four Short Stories by William Faulkner: 'Elly,' 'The Brooch,' 'Red Leaves,' 'Hair'" (pp. 29–37) finds that in these stories a narrative process is employed by which "the very possibility of novelistic digression is obliterated." Anne Goodwyn Jones's "Penetrating Faulkner: Masculinity and Discourse in Selected Short Fictions" (pp. 38–48) reads Faulkner short stories as contributions to the popular culture of their era. Donald M. Kartiganer's "Learning to Remember: Faulkner's 'Rose of Lebanon'" (pp. 49–59) is a convincing discussion of Faulkner's use of the short story not simply to try out material he had yet to explore in his novels, but to explore formal innovations and sketch out intellectual issues.

Part II, "Narration and Narrators in Faulkner's Short Fiction," contains three essays. Sonja Basič's "Stories vs. Novels: The Narrative Strategies" (pp. 63–73) categorizes stories according to a self-styled "narrative/stylistic schema." Basič also considers the transformation of stories into novels in an attempt to theorize the relationship between long and short fiction in Faulkner that is only partially successful. Jakob Lothe's "Narrative, Character, and Plot: Theoretical Observations Related to Two Short Stories by Faulkner" (pp. 74–81) offers a comparative study of the function of narrative voice and concludes that in Faulkner narration is never an ideologically neutral activity. Joseph Blotner's "Children in Faulkner's Short Stories" (pp. 82–89) lists more than 20 stories where children figure prominently, arguing that Faulkner led his contemporaries in such depictions. Part III, "Faulkner and the Short Story Canon," opens with Pearl McHaney's "Eudora Welty on Faulkner's Short Fiction: 'not meteors but comets'" (pp. 93–105), a useful and well-crafted survey of Welty's critical and personal comments on Faulkner's short fiction. Welty's words are set beside those of Caroline Gordon and Katherine Anne Porter, neither of whom saw the same degree of quality and whose comments on Faulkner are marked by misreadings and pedantic statements. Susan V. Donaldson continues with Welty in "Dangerous Women and Gothic Debates: Faulkner, Welty, and Tales of

the Grotesque” (pp. 106–16), a version of the essay printed in *Mississippi Quarterly*, reviewed above. Part III concludes with Peter Nicolaisen’s “The Quality of the Real in Hemingway’s ‘My Old Man’ and Faulkner’s ‘Barn Burning’” (pp. 117–25), an intelligent comparison of the two authors.

Part IV, “From Short Story to Fiction,” starts with James B. Carothers’s very thorough “Short Story Backgrounds of *Absalom, Absalom!*” (pp. 129–38), which explains how the novel “emerged from the matrix of Faulkner’s short fictions.” A very long, overwritten, and largely summative essay, Gerhard Hoffmann’s “The Comic and the Humoristic, the Satiric and the Grotesque Modes of Representation: Faulkner’s Fusion of Perspectives in *The Hamlet*” (pp. 139–63), claims that “except Faulkner none of the major artists [in the United States] is a humorist,” a claim that begs the questions of artistry and humor both. Michael Millgate playfully questions in “Was Malcolm Cowley Right?: The Short Stories in Faulkner’s Non-episodic Novels” (pp. 164–72) whether Cowley was accurate in his assessment that Faulkner’s strength was not the novel but rather narratives of short-story length. If the novels are seen as short-story composites, then Cowley was technically correct, even if he did not entirely understand Faulkner’s processes of composition and the forces of economic necessity that affected him. Jacques Pothier’s “Black Laughter: Poor White Short Stories Behind *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Hamlet*” (pp. 173–84) studies the composition process in which short stories are integrated into novels. Pothier is interested in the “intertextual discourse which takes on its full meaning only when the short stories and the novels are read side by side.” Richard Gray’s “Across the Great Divide: Race and Revision in *Go Down, Moses*” (pp. 185–93) examines revisions to “The Fire and the Hearth” that resulted in the augmented role of George Wilkins as trickster, the composite, transracial symbolism of Lucas, and other racial representations. The essay includes a superb comparison of “Go Down, Moses” and “Pantaloons in Black,” further elaborating on the novel’s troublesome combination of racial representations.

The first essay in Part V, “Faulkner and Culture Studies,” is very strong. Ineke Bockting’s “Whiteness and the Love of Color: The Development of a Theme in Faulkner’s *Go Down, Moses*” (pp. 197–211) draws on research into the effects of racism and the Holocaust on those implicated in these practices. A close examination of Roth Edmonds reveals the way in which racism affects (and effects) his character. The essay is an excellent example of newer studies focusing on the effects of

human evil on those who contribute to its production and perpetuation. Sandra Lee Kleppe's "Reconstructing Faulkner's 'Pantaloons in Black'" (pp. 212–21) cites early assessments of the story that saw it as a bad fit in the novel's text and finds "a parallel between the critical tradition of marginalizing the story as an anomaly and a sort of cultural blindness which inhibits us from approaching the topic of race and literature in a fruitful and dynamic way." John T. Matthews's "Faulkner's Stories and New Deal Interference" (pp. 222–29) places Faulkner in the context of the New Deal policies he deplored, demonstrating ways in which Faulkner's commercial fiction reflects relations between author and marketplace. David Minter's "Faulkner's Imagination and the Logic of Reiteration: The Case of 'The Old People'" (pp. 230–43) examines "the reiterative bent of Faulkner's imagination" and revisits the debate on whether *Go Down, Moses* is a novel or a story collection. Specifically, Minter looks at the way "The Old People" evolved from its original 1940 appearance in *Harper's Magazine*. Robert Sayre's "The Romantic Critique of the Modern World in the Faulknerian Short Story" (pp. 244–52) centers on discrete stories (as opposed to parts of novels) and suggests how "Romantic consciousness and experience of modernity are refracted in them." Karl F. Zender's "'That Evening Sun': Marginality and Sight" (pp. 251–59) finds two movements in 20th-century American literature evident in this story: the effort to depict the "invisibility" of certain characters in the social world, and the attempt to write against such invisibility, to "see" such characters and provide subjectivity to them.

Part VI, "Individual Stories and Groups of Stories," is a kind of catch basin but not the bottom of the barrel. Gene M. Moore's "'European Finery' and Cultural Survival in Faulkner's 'Red Leaves'" (pp. 263–68) offers a revealing comparison of Indian and slave characterizations. Faulkner's Indians seem culturally lethargic, unconnected to their heritage, while his Negro slaves manage remarkable success in preserving their original culture. Edwige Pluyaut's "'That One Man Should Die,' or The Figure of the Scapegoat in 'Uncle Willy' and 'A Bear Hunt'" (pp. 269–74) explores the scapegoat motif in two ways—as structuring principle and as characterization. Lothar Hönnighausen's "'Pegasusrider and Literary Hack': Portraits of the Artist in Faulkner's Short Fiction ('Carcassonne' and 'Artist at Home')" (pp. 275–80) offers an intriguing comparison of Faulkner's dual conception of the artist: the masked, role-playing, heroic rider of the first story and the more pedestrian, ironic, self-effacing hack writer of the second.

The volume concludes with three important essays. Among the strongest contributions is Judith Bryant Wittenberg's "Synecdoche and Strategic Redundancy: The 'Integrated Form' of *These 13*" (pp. 281–88), an explanation of how Faulkner's story collection "both addresses the readerly desire to discern structural patterns, and at the same time thematically foregrounds this desire in individual stories and, subtly, in the volume as a whole." Thomas L. McHaney's "'Beyond' and BEYOND and *beyond*: Faulkner and the Threshold of Human Knowledge" (pp. 289–305) sets the original 1930 composition in a succession of contemporary contexts and points to Faulkner's fascination "with the liminal: the realm of the next moment or of tomorrow and tomorrow." The volume concludes with Robert H. Brinkmeyer Jr.'s "A Fighting Faith: Faulkner, Democratic Ideology, and the World War II Home Front" (pp. 306–15), which concerns the fate of democracy and moral responsibility in the face of expansive totalitarianism in the 1930s and 1940s. Faulkner's short fiction in this era places the hub of democracy specifically in Mississippi, anticipating his own enlistment as the premier American man of letters and his subsequent employment in cold war cultural politics. Faulkner's faith in the masses for purposeful action only, not for principle, made him an ideal choice for such duty.

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