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Worse than Bad: *Sanctuary*, the Hays Office and the Genre of Abjection

No amount of seasoning to camouflage the basic rancidness of the theme can square it. It's hazy, befogged and replete with loose ends which, for obvious censorial reasons, can't be made to jell.

—May 9, 1933 *Variety* review of *The Story of Temple Drake*

I will leave it to someone else to suggest that what Faulkner meant when he said *Sanctuary* was bad was that it was actually worse than *bad*: it was intolerably *close*.

—Noel Polk, "The Space Between *Sanctuary*"

IN FEBRUARY 1933, WILL H. HAYS, THEN HEAD OF THE Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association (MPPDA), received a report from his west coast branch that a particular screenplay had finally been submitted to his censors for review. "The Story of Temple Drake," he learned, was "the new name for that ghost which has been haunting us for several weeks—Faulkner's 'Sanctuary'" (Wingate to Hays, 3 Feb 1933). Hays had actually known for months that Paramount had taken out an option for the rights to the 1931 novel, and that one of his employees had judged the "sadistic story of horror" to be "probably the most sickening novel ever written in this country" (Trotti 1).

Paramount's production of *The Story of Temple Drake* (1933) happened at a moment when the Hays Office was forced to undergo significant changes in its application and administration of the 1930

Production Code; the adaptation of Faulkner's novel would come to represent the extent of the Code's power to control studio narrative.¹ That the resulting film is "hazy, befogged and replete with loose ends" is attributed, by *Variety* and contemporary film scholars alike, to the eviscerating prudishness of the industry under the Code.

But long before Hollywood got a hold of it, Faulkner's *Sanctuary* was "replete with loose ends," elisions, and inconsistencies. Critics have called it "the enigma among Faulkner's novels," and "one of the most enigmatic to literary criticism" (Bloom 6; Brown 75). These enigmas tend to center on the characters of Popeye and Temple Drake. Is Popeye, critics wonder, a slapstick cartoon, an allegory of modernity, an anti-hero, or an abstract distillation of evil? Is he, in short, a man or machine? The reaction to Temple is even more fraught. Again and again the critics ask: why does she fail to flee first from the Old Frenchman place and later from Reba's? Why would she exhibit lust for Red, or perjure herself during Goodwin's trial? Her naiveté is difficult to reconcile with her cunning; her physical and psychological devastation is difficult to reconcile with her tenacious ability to remain somehow "intact" by novel's end. The critical conundrums about both characters seem to boil down to whether or not Popeye is "real," and whether or not Temple is "good." For the studios, the reality of Popeye and the goodness of Temple were less philosophical problems than commercial ones; the film adaptation of *Sanctuary* would be, in essence, a rearticulation of these problematic characters.

One point of general critical agreement is that *Sanctuary* is the Faulkner novel that is not centrally concerned with race. Eric J. Sundquist argues, for example, that *Sanctuary* "places misogyny and racism in a broader climate of brutality," and contrasts what he reads as *Sanctuary*'s "pure text of sexual naturalism," with *Light in August*'s "pure text of racial naturalism" (25–26). I will make the case, however, that *Sanctuary* is fundamentally shaped by anxiety related to the instability of white identity, and in particular, white female identity. Paradoxically, an analysis of how *Sanctuary* was censored by Hollywood under the Code can begin to expose a sexual/racial paradigm that was always already censored in Faulkner's text—what was, in Noel Polk's words, "intolerably close" ("Space Between" 19).

THE GHOST HAUNTING US

Hays Office concern over *Sanctuary* began long before any studio publicly declared interest in the novel. First published in February 1931 to brisk sales, *Sanctuary* was reviewed by a reader for Warner Bros. story department in April of that year. The Warner's reader summarizes what he describes as "a weird piece of work written in an incomprehensible style," focusing on the "strange little man" Popeye who is "either physically or sexually incomplete" and the "immature college girl" Temple, who, after being raped, is driven to become a "nymphomaniac" (MacEwen 1). Warner Bros. quickly rejected the novel as a possible property.

Two months later, Lamarr Trotti reviewed the novel for the Hays Office.² Trotti prepared a report on the novel for Carl Miliken, then head of the MPPDA's public relations department, and executive assistant to Hays on the East coast.

In regard to the book SANCTUARY about which you have inquired: . . . It tells the story of a boy and girl on their way to a football game in Mississippi, who stop at a moonshiner's place for liquor. There are a band of moonshiners, one an important [sic], though sex-maddened creature, called Popeye. The girl is ravished by unnatural means and taken to Memphis by Popeye, who puts her in a house of prostitution, holding her captive, and enjoying her vicariously. There are also a lawyer and his sister involved, a trial, lynching, etc. . . . Much of the book concerns the lawyer, a man of family, who has taken to drink, and who, rather quixotically defends the moonshiner who is lynched for Popeye's crimes. It is utterly unthinkable as a motion picture. (Trotti 1)

Trotti's reading was cursory: he confesses, "I did not read all of the book, which was too much for me." He glosses the most shocking sexual content so obliquely that it would be incomprehensible to one unfamiliar with the novel. Aside from the interesting typo that makes Popeye's impotence "important," we learn only that Temple was "ravished unnaturally" and "enjoyed vicariously," which could be infinitely interpreted. Indeed, the Hays Office would come to worry less about what was on the screen than what people might imagine to be lurking in its absences.

Sanctuary became for the Hays Office symbolically representative of the dangers of literary source material to the film industry. The 1930 Production Code itself was careful to outline distinctions between literature and film, making the case that film “reaches places unpenetrated by other forms of art,” and therefore the “latitude given to film material cannot, in consequence, be as wide as the latitude given to book material Hence many things which might be described or suggested in a book could not possibly be presented in a film.” Trotti offers this advice to Miliken: “If ever you want to contrast motion pictures with other media, keep SANCTUARY in mind.”³

As there seemed to be no studio interest in the novel in 1931, the Hays Office likely felt it had dodged a bullet. But two occurrences in 1932 caused to the studios to consider the novel again: the publication of the Modern Library edition of *Sanctuary* in March, and Faulkner’s subsequent arrival in May at Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer, where he began to crank out treatments and an adaptation of his own short story “Turn About” with Howard Hawks.⁴ Finally it was Paramount that took out an option on *Sanctuary* on June 16, 1932 (Blotner 306). The studio purchased the screen rights to the story in October of that year, and Faulkner received \$6,000.⁵

The trade publications exhibited shock at Paramount’s decision; Maurice Kann of Motion Picture Daily wrote that “no producer would dare faithfully to transcribe its pages into terms of motion pictures. How Paramount can hope to clean it up and keep the elements for which, presumably, the novel was bought, is too much to figure out.” Learning of Paramount’s purchase, Hays wrote to James Wingate, the executive on whom he relied to monitor studio production on the west coast.⁶ Hays complained to Wingate that *Sanctuary* “was bought without any knowledge before purchase by any of us” (Hays to Wingate, 5 Nov 1932). Before knowing what Paramount may or may not do in its adaptation, Hays was concerned that the novel even enter into studio discourse.

If we could prevent the purchase of this very objectionable material in the first instance, it would be very much better for the industry and for the individual company involved because there is grief and worry from the time of purchase until the pic-

ture is finished. Very few of these objectionable or near-objectionable books have worked out into good pictures . . .

Wingate was later warned that Hays felt the production deserved “special watching” (McKenzie). The west coast branch initially decided on a hands-off approach, however. “I think . . . we will be able to handle it when it is brought to our attention by the studio in the form of a script or otherwise,” one employee wrote to Wingate; “They will naturally do a lot of cleaning up before it gets to us, which will save us a lot we’d have to worry about if we get into it now” (JVW). Indeed, the studio would at first be depended upon to police itself.

THE GENRE OF ABJECTION

It wasn’t difficult to argue that *Sanctuary* violated the 1930 Production Code both in its general goals (by failing to exhibit “correct principles of life”) and in nearly all of its particulars. In the language of the Code, the novel depicts “brutal killings” (the shooting of Tommy, the decapitation of the Negro murderer’s wife), “revenge” murders (Goodwin’s mob lynching), “methods of smuggling” and “the use of liquor in American life” (Goodwin’s bootleg liquor operation), a lack of respect for “the sanctity of marriage” (Goodwin and Ruby’s common law relationship, Benbow’s disdain for Belle), “seduction or rape” (Temple is raped several times), “sex perversion” (Popeye’s use of a corn cob to assault Temple, Benbow’s desire for his stepdaughter Little Belle, Popeye’s voyeurism), “white slavery” (Temple’s captivity at Reba’s), “vulgarity” or “the treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil, subjects” (Temple’s defecation, Temple’s vaginal hemorrhaging, the wax plug in the forehead of Red’s corpse), “undressing scenes” (Temple at the Old Frenchman place), “ridicule” on “religious faith” (Reba’s churchgoing), hangings not “as legal punishments for crime” (Goodwin’s and Popeye’s deaths), “surgical operations” (Dr. Quinn “fixing up” Temple at Reba’s), “dances suggesting or representing sexual actions” (Temple at the Grotto), women “selling their virtue” (Reba’s girls, Ruby’s deals with lawyers), “methods . . . of arson” (the hobby of Popeye’s grandmother), “venereal diseases” (Popeye’s mother has syphilis), and even “cruelty to . . . animals” (Popeye’s butchering of the lovebirds). There are so few Hays Office prohibitions that *Sanctuary* does not violate that the Code seems almost a primer in the novel’s

construction (flag desecration, human branding, and—suggestively—miscegenation or “sex relationships between the white and black races” seem to have been overlooked). If the Hays Office proved unable to control the studio adaptation of a novel as notorious as *Sanctuary*, it was surely powerless to effect the kind of sweeping changes in film content then demanded by church groups and local censorship boards.

As Lary May and others have argued, the MPPDA under Hays was largely an industry public relations tool instituted to both contain the power of local censorship boards and justify industry trade practices by making the case that only a vertically integrated studio system could have the power to police the content of its product. With the authority to edit films at will or prohibit their exhibition altogether, regional censorship boards prevented Hollywood from distributing the ubiquitous undifferentiated product that would ensure maximum profits. The MPPDA, as the trade organization of the film industry, took it upon itself in 1927 to regulate film content through its own Studio Relations Committee (SRC) “Don’ts and Be Carefuls” code. According to Richard Maltby, Hays at that time “recognized that the industry could gain autonomy over production only by voluntarily accepting the standards that external agencies would in any event impose on them” (“Production” 43). By 1930, bending to pressure groups and fearing the federal government would involve itself in film content, the MPPDA agreed to adopt a Production Code written by Jesuit priest Father Daniel Lord and catholic layman Martin Quigley, and overseen by the SRC. By 1931, submission of scripts and release prints to the SRC was made mandatory. Producers quickly understood, however, that the Code under the SRC had no teeth; studios could easily appeal the decisions of the SRC to a board of producers who supported studio positions. But in 1934, under pressure from state censors and church affiliated boycotting groups enraged by Hollywood’s flouting of the Code with films including *Temple Drake*, the MPPDA did away with the SRC and established the Production Code Administration (PCA), under the leadership of Catholic layman Joseph Breen. Breen felt that the industry had a history of treating the Code as “a first-rate gag,” and was determined that his PCA would be different (qtd. in Maltby, “Production” 54). In administration, the PCA differed from the SRC in that it was managed directly by the East Coast financial executives of the industry, rather than West Coast studio executives. In practice, the PCA in 1934

“began to regulate, systematically and scrupulously, the content of Hollywood motion pictures” (Doherty 1).

But even prior to 1934, in the so-called “Pre-Code” years, the Hays Office had a significant influence on studio narrative: not at the level of exhibition, as local censorship boards had, but at the level of production—primarily in screenplay development, and to a lesser extent, in the cutting of release prints, which amounted to a last resort screenplay revision. The industry had some interest in appearing to comply with the Code’s parameters, even if that appearance was one of reluctant compliance. The cuts and revisions the Hays Office suggested for submitted screenplays, if heeded by producers, were simpler and less expensive to implement than costly reshoots. Like the readers and editors of studio story departments, Hays Office censors conducted a daily meeting that was, according to one employee, “nothing more or less than a story conference . . . the main body of work was done on the scripts before the productions reached the sound stages” (qtd. in Jacobs, *Wages* 63). In its capacity as reader and reviser of screenplays, the Hays Office should be recognized not as external antagonist of the studio film product, but as co-creator of that product.

Maltby explains this relationship succinctly: “the requirements of censorship,” he argues, operated within studio discourse “as a generic pressure, comparable to the pressure of convention in, for example, the romantic comedy” (103). The Hays Office worked in conjunction with studio writers, directors, and producers to collectively police the conventions of their genre, the Code, which had abjection as its primary trope. According to Julia Kristeva, the abject is that which we are driven to expel from our experience: a horrifying, disgusting disruption of the physical realm (vomit, excrement, the corpse, etc.) or social realm (the traitor, the pedophile, etc.); the abject is the semiotic excess that will not be contained by the tidy systems of meaning we create in an attempt to order our understanding of the world. The Production Code, and the appearance of the application of that Code by the Hays Office and studios, was the industry’s public performance of the expulsion of the abject from studio narrative. The Hays Office performed its role as industry super-ego, and the studios responded as chastised but still barely contained ids.

To say that the Hays Office, both before and after 1934, performed a generic function is not to say that this performance went unchallenged

by individuals inside the industry. Rather, I would stress that any challenge to the Hays Office was part of what comprised the genre of abjection, a narrative form that marked films as tainted by what the studios, if given the chance, would show, and as purged of what the Hays Office was able to expel. The genre narrativized the conflict between concealment and revelation.⁷ When a Hays Office employee called *Sanctuary* “the vilest thing imaginable” he was enacting the first gesture (declared disgust) of the Code’s narrative form (Russel 1).

Faulkner appeared to agree with this characterization of his work, and in fact may have directly inspired it when he wrote that his novel was “the most horrific tale I could imagine” (Introduction vi). Faulkner’s origin myth of *Sanctuary* as laid out in his introduction to the 1932 Modern Library edition is well known; it begins with what he describes as a crude and hastily written potboiler, “deliberately conceived to make money” (v). To a friend Faulkner claimed he had “made a thorough and methodical study of everything on the list of best-sellers. When I thought I knew what the public wanted, I decided to give them a little more than they had been getting; stronger and rawer—more brutal. Guts and genitals” (qtd. in Blotner 234).

This version of *Sanctuary* was completed in 1929, but not published because, Faulkner tells us, his publisher feared imprisonment. By late 1930 Faulkner decided the novel had to be revised, so it “would not shame *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* too much”; he then “tore the galleys down and rewrote the book” (Introduction viii, vii). Indeed, *Sanctuary* is the most revised of Faulkner’s works. But Polk has shown that, despite Faulkner’s claims, the 1929 version of the novel was hardly tossed off quickly, calling it one of “the most complicated of all of Faulkner’s complete manuscripts” that cost the author considerable time and energy (Afterword 294). Faulkner’s “shame” about the novel is elaborately overdetermined: he implies that the 1929 version was at once shoddily crafted, cravenly calculated to appeal to the masses, and, in any case, criminally profane. About the 1931 *Sanctuary*, Faulkner declares (with what one can imagine is the grin of a cat dropping a headless bird at the reader’s feet), “I made a fair job and I hope you will buy it and tell your friends and I hope they will buy it too” (Introduction viii).

Censorship is thematized throughout *Sanctuary*, beyond the broad joke of Mr. Binford, Miss Reba’s husband (and dog), whom Faulkner

likely named after Lloyd T. Binford, a member of the Memphis Board of Censors (Blotner 269). The very action of the plot is set into motion by a sexual economy of revelation and concealment not dissimilar to Hollywood's: Temple's portrayal as a "tease." Faulkner's narrative structure teases in the same way, withholding key plot elements—notably the instrument used to assault Temple—until the end of the novel.

As Faulkner's public comments show, the Hollywood film industry under the Production Code did not have a monopoly on the genre of abjection. By self-consciously giving the readers of *Sanctuary* "more than they had been getting"—the "guts and genitals"—Faulkner acted as the studios did, pushing the envelope of respectability in order to bring in an audience. By then declaring the novel "bad," undertaking an elaborate revision, and publicly narrating that revision, Faulkner acted as the Hays Office did, performing a rite of (symbolic) purification. With this novel, then, Faulkner attempted to cast himself as both the naughty peddler of obscenity and the high-minded literary artist. This strategy had exactly the effect that the Code had in terms of studio narrative. Policing its own content through the Hays Office, the motion picture industry worked to disarm external critics that threatened the industry's mode of production. Sneering at his own bestseller, Faulkner beat to the punch those critics and readers who might find the novel offensive—or worse—unliterary.

But this elaborate performance of concealment, this genre of abjection, had a less deliberate function for both the studios and for Faulkner. A "genre of abjection" is, in one sense, a contradiction in terms in as much as genre functions as conventions of form, and the abject functions as that which disrupts form, or more precisely, that which reveals formlessness. By genre of abjection, however, I mean a narrative form that self-consciously performs disgust over a *fetish* for the abject, and then ritualizes, or rather narrativizes its expulsion from the text. The genre of abjection teases the audience by revealing and concealing what is "bad" behind one curtain, only to distract us from what remains hidden behind another curtain—that which is "worse than bad."

THE CONTINUUM OF REVISION

Maurine Watkins and Oliver H.P. Garrett finished Paramount's first screenplay adaptation of *Sanctuary* on December 22, 1932.⁸ Likely

anticipating intense Hays Office scrutiny, the studio quickly ordered this screenplay revised before it was submitted for review. The second screenplay was finished in early January of 1933, and was sent to the SRC. Wingate reported to Hays on the east coast that

we were relieved to find that the studio had made such important story changes as to make the picture, in our opinion, satisfactory under the Code, and, on the whole, pretty free from censorship difficulties. The principal changes consist in making it primarily a love story between the girl and the lawyer, Benbow . . . She is presented as a complex personality, really in love with this man who appeals to the best in her, but with a wild streak which makes her afraid to accept his offer of marriage. It is this wild streak which leads her, quite innocently, into all the mix-up with the bootleggers, resulting in her rape. (Wingate to Hays, 3 Feb 1933)

Wingate was satisfied with Paramount's main narrative strategy of drastically transforming Benbow and Popeye into vital, potent rivals for Temple's love. The Temple that Paramount creates must choose between the man whom she knows to be good and the one who satisfies her "dark side." In the end, Temple becomes the criminal by murdering Popeye in order to save herself and Benbow. Paramount's overall revision strategy takes a page from the history of Hollywood film under the Code: the Hays Office's public denouncement of the wildly popular gangster genre of the early 1930s had the effect of fostering the "fallen woman" film, a genre which flourished in the mid '30s as the new, more acceptable vice story (Maltby 52). This substitution, of the fallen woman for the gangster, neatly encapsulates Paramount's plan for the adaptation of *Sanctuary*. In a letter to the studio Wingate expressed the tentative approval of the Hays Office:

We have received and read the script of "The Story of Temple Drake" and are glad to note that in it you have gone a long way towards removing the highly censorable elements of the original story. Provided you handle the picture, both in acting and directing, with sufficient good taste to safeguard it, . . . we believe this story can be told satisfactorily under the Code. (Wingate to Hurley)

Temple Drake went into production at Paramount on January 30, 1933.

Adaptation studies, particularly when focused on studio production under the Code, often structure their arguments around an analysis of what has been removed: what the studio screenplay removed from the source text, what the Hays Office removed from the screenplay, what the Hays Office or regional censorship boards removed from the release print. While comparisons of the novel, screenplay, and various edits of the film define novel-to-film adaptation studies, there are methodological problems with centering analysis on “the removed.” First, such an approach grants a primacy to the “source” novel that denies that text’s discursive history—particularly problematic when dealing with novels like *Sanctuary* that are themselves famously (and publicly) revised. Secondly, such a focus suggests a wholeness and integrity of the literary text that can never exist. In her examination of Paramount’s *Temple Drake*, for example, Lea Jacobs cites the off-camera rape of Temple in the corn crib as a “particularly neat example” of a studio’s “calculated use of ellipsis” to appease the Hays Office (*Wages* 36). Jacobs captions a publicity still of Temple cowering in the corn crib as the moment “before the elided rape scene” (“Industry” 96). However, Jacobs’ critique of the film scene neglects to acknowledge (and serves to occlude) the fact that Faulkner, too, employs narrative ellipsis, and that the “rape scene” supposedly elided in the film is never directly depicted in the novel.

To suggest the rape, Faulkner in fact relies on what could be described as cinematographic strategies of elision. The novel describes the shot that kills Tommy, which immediately precedes the rape, as “a short, minor sound shutting down upon the scene” (102). As she watches Popeye’s approach, Temple, disembodied, also watches herself; she is a spectator of this horrific “scene,” screaming, “Something is happening to me!” (102). Although we are offered the graphic description that Temple is “tossing and thrashing,” Faulkner quickly cuts away from the action to Pap’s affectless face. Like the blackout that Jacob characterizes as the film’s strategy of ellipsis, Faulkner places the impending rape at the end of a chapter, drawing a curtain over the violent scene *in medias res* before fading up to a new scene at the beginning of the next chapter.

While studio production under the Code was inevitably prudish, sexist, racist and commodity-fixated, studies of novel-to-film adaptation should not carry a *de facto* presumption that the novel itself somehow escapes prudery, racism, sexism and commodification. Rather than

assuming qualitative differences between narrative iterations we call “revisions,” “adaptations,” and “censored versions,” we would be better served to place all versions of a given narrative on a continuum of revision. A horizontal analysis of narrative recycling allows us to avoid the vertical hierarchies of adaptation studies which inevitably privilege some texts over others on the basis of media form, “authorship,” genre, mode of production, or disciplinary field. The differences between the 1929 novel *Sanctuary* and the 1931 novel *Sanctuary* should be approached in a similar way to the differences between the later novel version and the 1932 screenplay version, as well as between screenplay versions and Hays-approved release prints.⁹ In other words, I contend that a methodological distinction should not be made between analyses of Faulkner’s revisions of the novel and analyses of the film industry’s revisions of the screenplays and film; in all instances the raw material of an earlier version of the narrative is transformed into a later version in order to suit a particular set of aesthetic and commercial goals.

The notion of a continuum of revision makes apparent the story’s continual refashioning over time and allows us to look back to before the 1929 “*Ur-Sanctuary*,” as Polk calls it (Afterword 225). By this I mean that a study of the narrative’s history of revision can allow us to glimpse the narrative’s pre-history, unearthing latent plot elements that affect the manifest text(s) we know.

The simplest example of this is the fate of the word “Sanctuary” in Hollywood’s revisions. As per an agreement with the Hays Office, the novel’s title was not to be used in the film or any of Paramount’s advertising; the Hays Office was concerned not only with the book’s contents but with the book itself as contaminated object.¹⁰ The purchase of pre-sold properties (existing novels, stories, plays, etc.) was an expensive business decision that was expected to justify itself in the free advertising that came with a famous, or infamous, association.¹¹ The studio, of course, knew that the reputation of the novel would follow the film despite an unspoken attribution, and indeed had invested in this belief. The Hays Office knew this as well, and therefore felt a greater burden to make a visible mark upon the film, performing the Code’s genre of abjection. Thus in this particular skirmish over the novel, the title became the fetish of the abject, and the Hays Office could perform its disgust without seriously threatening the studio’s investment. All extant screenplay versions are titled *The Story of Temple Drake*. As if to

play its part in the abjection of the source text, Paramount called the film *The Shame of Temple Drake* in several communications with the SRC, but returned to "The Story" for the released film (Hays to Wingate, 4 Mar 1933). The film's credits read, obliquely, "From a Novel by William Faulkner."

But the industry's choice of title is telling. Faulkner's *Sanctuary* was always primarily the story of Temple Drake, as Faulkner himself seemed to realize when revising the 1929 version. In the published 1931 *Sanctuary*, Faulkner deemphasized Benbow and his relationships with his wife and sister, and centralized Temple's story. But Faulkner does not abandon the device of Benbow as the primary spectator of the novel's events. By allowing Benbow this position and by giving his novel the title *Sanctuary*, Faulkner indicated an interpretation of the work that moves the reader away from any conclusion that this is "merely" the story of a girl and the physical and psychological violence inflicted upon her, and toward a conclusion that the story is an exploration of an abstracted "Evil" affecting everyone and from which there is no refuge. Faulkner may have wanted to occlude the fact that his novel could be read as the latest installment in a long Southern tradition of stories related to a white woman's "fall" from a state of purity. Despite his title and some critical readings to the contrary, however, the violated Temple remains at the story's center: Temple before the rapes, Temple during the rapes, Temple after the rapes. Whatever larger philosophical message the novel attempts to convey, it does so sensationally, and absolutely, through the medium of Temple's body. We then might say that Hollywood's title works to occlude the object (materiality) of the novel, while working to expose the true object (intent) of the novel. Interestingly, when Faulkner wrote the sequel to Temple's story, *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), he chose, as Hollywood had, to give the title to Temple.

BENBOW'S POTENT SHADOW

Benbow's transformation at Paramount is particularly dramatic. Faulkner's Horace Benbow is effectively a castrated character. His desire for his step-daughter Little Belle and his sister Narcissa must be forever unfulfilled; his relationship with his wife Belle is tainted by the fact that she is used goods, and, despite town gossip, he has neither the desire nor the courage to bed Ruby. He is horrified by Little Belle's coquettishness, Narcissa's domination, Ruby's stark commodification of sex, and

Temple's inexplicable ability to withstand assault. Indeed, the character would be completely static were he not perpetually fleeing in disgust.

But rather than this muddled middle-aged lawyer, Paramount's 1932 screenplay introduces us to "Stephen Benbow," a young, idealistic legal crusader who, at the story's opening, has long pursued Temple Drake. This Stephen Benbow is attractive to young women and righteous in the face of corruption—exactly what Faulkner's Horace Benbow dreams of being. By providing Benbow with Temple as an appropriate object of desire, Paramount normalizes his sexuality, and the castrated character grows a phallus—much like the one Temple fantasizes about growing for herself in the novel. Once again, Paramount's revision strategy was similar to an earlier revision of Faulkner's; in the 1929 *Sanctuary*, it is implied that Benbow would not have married Belle if Narcissa had canceled her own planned wedding; the revised 1931 *Sanctuary* plays down this incest plot. Paramount's "invigoration" of Benbow may indicate that there was already an implied potency lurking behind the character's powerlessness. Another Paramount revision strategy suggests what this potency might be.

In a total departure from Faulkner's decision to open the novel with the confrontation at the spring between Benbow and Popeye, Paramount's 1932 screenplay opens with the heated trial of a black man. We are introduced to the new and improved Benbow as this man's defense attorney, who with his assistant Wharton is pitted against a bigoted southern judge. The black defendant has no lines, and the 1932 screenplay suggests that he not be shown on screen; rather the judge "gestures with his gavel toward someone out of scene" when beginning the following exchange:

JUDGE: But before you gentlemen retire to the jury room to decide upon a verdict, I want to add one thing . . . I don't want you should hold it against Mr. Benbow, here . . . for appearin' as a counsel for this negro. It wasn't that he wanted to act in this case. He had no choice. He was appointed by the Court because the defendant had no other counsel. That's all gentlemen.

BENBOW: Objection, your honor! I would like to take exception to Your Honor's charge, on the ground that it is

clearly prejudicial to the interests of my client, whom the Court has seen fit to term, "this negro." And further, that Your Honor's last statement is not the fact. I had no objection to taking the case. On the contrary

...

JUDGE'S VOICE: Order! Please! The clerk will note the exception. But will delete from the record, Mr. Benbow's last remarks.

WHARTON: You fixed it, We haven't a chance now.

BENBOW: (In a low voice; bitterly) We never had a chance after that charge.

(Watkins and Garrett, First Script, Sequence A: "The Jefferson County Courthouse," ellipses original)

The crime the defendant is accused of is not revealed, but its very erasure and Benbow's fatalism regarding the case's outcome strongly suggests a crime against a white victim—perhaps the rape of a white woman.

Paramount's 1933 screenplay keeps this trial scene but downplays the racial identity of the defendant. Clearly the studio was concerned that the Hays Office, like Benbow, would object to the Judge's use of the term "this negro."¹² The 1932 screenplay's line "for appearin' as a counsel for this negro" is therefore changed to "because he's actin' as counsel for this defendant." The line "clearly prejudicial to the interests of my client, whom the Court has seen fit to term 'this negro'" is changed to "clearly prejudicial to the interests of my client." So revised, the Hays Office had no objections to this scene. The film, however, clearly shows that the defendant in prison clothes is black; his race therefore, must have been crucial to the studio's conception of the story. The studio probably created the trial scene in order to establish Benbow as an upright, tolerant force of the New South, unafraid to clash with established—and racist—southern power structures. But given Hollywood's history with the portrayal of black rapists, the scene also anticipates Temple's assault and abduction, suggesting that a predatory "darkness" is always waiting for girls like her.

The strategy of defining Benbow's character and foreshadowing Temple's fate with the trial of a black man was borrowed directly from Faulkner. The film's black defendant was no doubt inspired by the novel's "Negro murderer," the "bes ba'ytone singer in nawth Mississippi" who

decapitates his wife with a razor. The Negro murderer awaiting execution has a prominent thematic role in the novel: he can be likened not only to the murderous Popeye, but to Goodwin, who also awaits death, and to Horace, who also seeks a expedient way to escape his wife. Hoke Perkins has written about Faulkner's preoccupation with "black razor murderers" and "the bond" the author often presents "between the murderer and a white character" (222). Perkins argues that in *Sanctuary*, *A Fable*, *Light in August*, and other works, "Faulkner's characters use their black doppel-gangers to express their most primal urges . . . Those who wield razors inspire those who wield words. In Faulkner, razor murderers, and those who admire them, are female haters" (224). Polk argues that Horace's preoccupation with the Negro murderer is even "more important" in the 1929 version of *Sanctuary* than in the 1931 version, noting that

the first version in fact begins with the oft-noted description of that window, in which Horace sees the Negro murderer's hands lying peacefully. . . . Doubtless part of him admires the Negro's neat, simple, passionate solution to his marital troubles. ("Space" 21)

As in the Paramount film, a black defendant has the prominent position of opening the earlier version of the novel. Just as Faulkner reduced Benbow's role in the novel's revision, he minimized the Negro murderer's role as well. But in Hollywood, the Negro murderer surprisingly regains the position he had in the earlier *Sanctuary* (a version that there is no indication that the studio had access to). There was clearly a narrative pressure even in the revised version of the novel suggesting that the competing "suitors" Benbow and Popeye have a particularly *racialized* counterpoint. Paramount's creation of the trial of the black defendant cannot be read as an arbitrary invention of the film industry; it is rather an inheritance of a partially screened racial dynamic at work in the 1929 *Sanctuary* that links masculinity and sexual potency with blackness. Nowhere is this link made more explicit than in the treatment of the character of Popeye and the in the instrument of his violence.

POPEYE, MEX, TRIGGER

Before anyone in the Hays Office had seen a rough cut of *The Story of Temple Drake*, a disturbing rumor reached Hays which compelled him to write immediately to Paramount head Adolph Zukor.

Information comes to me that some shots have been made by the studio in connection with the picture THE SHAME OF TEMPLE DRAKE which could not under any circumstances be shown; that these were taken with the knowledge that they could not be a part of the picture and when they are shown in rushes or otherwise the announcement is made that of course, they will not be in the picture. I am advised that the particular shots have to do with picking up and looking at a corn cob and follow after the scene of the rape. (Hays to Zukor)

Hays was well aware of the familiar studio strategy of evading Code prohibitions by planning contentious shots but neglecting to mention these shots in the screenplay, which had to be pre-approved by the SRC. Hays asked Zukor if he would, "as a special favor . . . cause in your own way such investigation to be made as will discover and by no chance hide the real facts." On the west coast, Wingate viewed the rough cut the next day, accompanied by Breen. The offending shots were indeed included. Wingate reiterated Hays's warning to Paramount, and took it a step further, writing that

It is our feeling that the sequence should be cut after [the shooting of Tommy] eliminating among other items the girl's scream, and the two or three shots in which corn cobs are shown. At the same time, it will be necessary to drop Ruby's line, the night before, "You can sleep in the corn crib." In other words, as far as the picture is concerned, the whole episode will be portrayed as taking place in a barn, without any reference to a corn crib or corn cobs. (Wingate to Botsford, 20 Mar 1933)

Three days after sending his letter, Wingate told Hays, "We have heard nothing from the studio, and so for the moment we are marking time on this matter, and hoping for the best" (Wingate to Hays, 23 Mar 1933). While we do see corn cobs in the crib before the "rape scene" in the final film, Paramount did not include any close-ups of them. Anyone unfamiliar with the novel would assume the Popeye character assaults Temple by conventional means.

The controversy over the corn cob for the Hays Office was not that it suggested a rape but that it *didn't*. Or rather, the problem was that the corn cob suggests rape by what was called "unnatural means." It was the

substitution of the corn cob for the penis, and the accompanying implication of male impotence, that caused the real trouble. The industry's anxiety over the depiction of male impotence plays itself out further in the representation of the character of Popeye.

From the first screenplay to produced film, Paramount's revised Popeye character is a virile anti-hero akin to the James Cagney role in *Public Enemy* (1931). After reading 1933 screenplay Paramount submitted to the SRC, Wingate assured Hays that "the character Popeye has been changed entirely . . . as George Raft will play the role there will be no suggestion of impotence or degeneracy. He is simply a tough character who takes what he wants" (Wingate to Hays, 3 Feb 1933). In the eyes of the Hays Office, "Taking what he wanted" —i.e., raping Temple—was not as problematic for the character as taking what he wanted in an "impotent" or "degenerate" way. The 1933 screenplay rechristens the Popeye character with the violent and phallic name "Trigger" as if to underscore the character's lack of any "lack."

But significantly, "Trigger" is not the first name that Watkins and Garrett created for the Popeye character: in the 1932 screenplay he is called "Mex." From the earliest studio conceptions, therefore, the writers sought to emphasize the male lead's racialized status by labeling him as Mexican. In *Requiem for a Nun* Faulkner would give Popeye an Italian last name—Vitelli—suggesting both possible mob-world ties and a status as "not quite white." Perhaps in an effort to avoid the Code's prohibitions against racial epithets, however, "Mex" was renamed "Trigger" in the later screenplay and the film. This substitution, of the phallic name for the racialized name, reveals the narrative's association between masculinity and non-whiteness.

Critics have maintained that despite the novel's pervasive associations between Popeye and blackness, he is not a racialized character. His black suit, his black eyes, his skin with its "dead, dark pallor" (5), his "black presence" (121), the fact he even "smells black" (7)—all are generally read as signs of an abstracted Evil not to be associated with black people per se. One reading in this vein stresses that when Temple refers to Popeye as "that black man" (49), she "implies no racial identification, but alludes to Popeye's sinister demeanor" (Arnold and Truad 51).

Certainly in the broader context of the Faulkner canon, Popeye's blackness, if racially symbolic, seems uncharacteristically oblique. Polk

suggests that Popeye is “at once the *reductio ad absurdum* of Horace’s darker sexual impulses,” but does not link this darkness to blackness in particular (“Space Between” 23). Diane Roberts argues that “violence [in *Sanctuary*] is less a race than a gender issue,” and that although “Popeye is described as ‘black,’ . . . he is not a black man” (139). Roberts adds, however, a compelling comment:

I somehow suspect that while Faulkner consciously wanted to turn away from the South’s habitual reading of rape as black, . . . the context of spectacular lynchings . . . mostly carried out to protect “that most sacred thing in life,” white womanhood, is the symbolic underpinning of *Sanctuary*. (139)

While Popeye is not a black man, in *Sanctuary* he occupies the familiar narrative position of the black male defiler of the white female. Faulkner’s and Paramount’s different deployments of the Negro murderer doppelganger and racialization of the Popeye/Mex/Trigger character support Roberts’ suggestion of racialized “symbolic underpinning” to *Sanctuary*.

Often scholars will bracket Popeye’s identity as “black” man by stressing that Popeye is not, ultimately, a man at all: he is rather a “nightmare,” a “phantasmagoria of flesh illuminated by electric light,” a “machine uninhabited by a ghost,” or a “mechanical jack-in-the-box” (Bloom 7–8). Faulkner’s text does consistently describe Popeye as inorganic: his face is “bloodless,” with the “vicious quality of stamped tin,” and his chinless profile is “like a wax doll set too near a hot fire” (5, 4). His hands are “doll-like” (5), his eyes “rubber knobs” (6), and his body “all angles, like a modernist lampstand” (7). Popeye’s reliance on the corn cob phallus in the rape of Temple only underscores his incorporeality. Faulkner once quipped that in the film Popeye should be played by Mickey Mouse (Bloom 7).

But these characteristics—Popeye’s corporeality and his racial identity—are, I would argue, crucially related. Popeye’s precarious corporeality can be read as a product of his precarious whiteness: his racial liminality makes his body difficult to read. How are we as readers to visualize the oxymoronic “dark pallor” of Popeye’s face, or the slight build that nonetheless bulges from his suit, and is described as gorilla-like? Because it is difficult to grant humanity to a character with

such a bewildering physicality, he comes to inhabit his world as doll, machine, or lampstand. When Tommy declares of Popeye that "I be dog if he aint the skeeriest durn white man I ever see," he is expressing an ontological crisis: how is Popeye to be racially classified? (19). He is, the novel assures us, not a black man, but he is not really a white man either, especially when sexually assaulting Temple. During the second rape of Temple at Reba's, Popeye's lips are described as "bluish" and "protruding" (159). When Temple recounts Popeye's attacks to Horace, she pictures herself as a school teacher and Popeye as "a little black thing like a nigger boy" (219). And when Benbow later imagines the assaults, he conjures up Temple, lying "with her head lifted slightly" while "she watched something black and furious go roaring out of her pale body" (223). Polk says of this nightmare that "there may be in Horace's mind some relationship between the Negro murderer and Popeye" ("Space Between" 21). It should be remembered as well that the corn cob revealed at the trial in the novel is stained with dried blood and is in particular a *brown* phallus.

Faulkner places Popeye in a space between whiteness and blackness, and his impotence can be perhaps connected to the mythology of the sterile mulatto. Hollywood, however, was anxious to stabilize the character as incontestably white and virile. This attempt to cast Popeye as white and virile had significant narrative repercussions, however. Popeye's racial identity and sexual prowess has a tremendous impact on our perception of Temple, who is defined in both novel and film by the sexual violence Popeye inflicts upon her.

WHITE TEMPLE, BLACK TEMPLE

The Hays Office was fundamentally conflicted about how Temple's sexuality should be portrayed; they wanted the corn crib scene to end with the shooting of Tommy and all later references to "rape" eliminated, but also asked that the film be purged of any sign that Temple was with Trigger voluntarily. Wingate suggested that in the final court scene "instead of Temple saying 'No, I wasn't a prisoner' it might throw more sympathy her way, and make her general story thread less censorable, if she were to say that she had been held practically a prisoner" (Wingate to Hurley). The suggestion that Temple be "practically" Trigger's prisoner rules out both the possibility that she definitively *was* his

prisoner and that the possibility that she was there fully of her own volition. Again, it would be easy to attribute this baffling ambivalence to the impossibilities of logical narrative construction under the Code—if it were not true that this ambivalence is already present in Faulkner's versions of the story. The 1932 screenplay describes that in her close-up before the corn crib assault, Temple is frozen not from fear but because she is "fascinated" by Trigger's slow advance. The rape then is not elided by a black-out or by editing techniques, but by a proposition, inherited from the novel, that there was no rape to elide because from the start Temple really desired the assault.

The 1932 screenplay introduces an early scene in which Temple admits her secret "problem" to Benbow. He asks her to marry him and she tells him she's not good enough for him. Immediately she fears that he will think she is not a virgin.

TEMPLE: (Reading what is in his mind) No . . . don't think that. I'm a good enough girl—technically. . . . But I'm not good enough for you. . . . there's a side of me that's bad, Steve, just plain reckless and bad. It's the side that bobs up when you least expect it . . . makes me attracted to things and to the kind of people you're bound to despise . . . Keep away from me Steve. I'm warning you. (first, fourth and fifth ellipses original)

The 1933 screenplay leaves out Temple's "technical" virginity and emphasizes instead the warring sides of her nature.

TEMPLE: I'm no good.

BENBOW: Don't be silly. . . .

TEMPLE: I can't explain. It's just inside me. (Hesitates; then warmly) I've wanted to marry you ever since I was little, but I won't. I can't.

BENBOW: (Soothingly) Hadn't you better tell me about it?

TEMPLE: (Struggling loose) No. No. (Realizing she has hurt his feelings). Oh, Steve. I do love you. Part of me does. It's like there were two me's. One says: "Yes, yes. Quick. Don't let me get away."

BENBOW: And the other? What does it say?

TEMPLE: (Eyeing him squarely) I won't tell you. (Bitterly)
 Or what it wants. Or does. Or what'll happen to it.
 (Unhappily) I don't know myself. All I know is I hate
 it . . . despise it! (She stops, then) I'm sorry. Good-
 night, Steve. (final ellipses original)

The studio advertised the film's treatment of a "split personality," depicting images of Temple (Miriam Hopkins) with two faces, cast in light and shadow, and including related quotations from "prominent psychiatrists."

Paramount's reading of Temple's story has much in common with the readings of many literary critics of *Sanctuary*. Temple's terrorizing, rape, and captivity have long been interpreted as, at best, a "discovery of evil" (Brooks) always latent within herself, and at worst, as a just reward, when a sexualized woman who toys too much and teases too long finally "receives what she deserves" (Schmuhl 78). One critic asserts that, "By her disobedience in going with Gowan and her refusal to leave the Old Frenchman Place, Temple initiated and stimulated the events leading to her rape" (Kerr 86). Contemporary scholars informed by feminist theory have thankfully challenged these readings.¹³ But the multiplicity of interpretations of Temple's character stems not only from critical misogyny but from an instability in Faulkner's portrayal of the character. Diane Roberts reads "what happens to Temple Drake" in the novel as "Faulkner's final dismantling of . . . the Southern Belle," and Temple does come across as a disintegrated figure (125). The studio strategy for depicting Temple—granting her the pathology of a split personality—was merely an literalization of the irreconcilable conflict Faulkner built into his Temple. This conflict is made particularly clear in his treatment of the vaginal hemorrhaging that follows the first rape and in Paramount's revision of it.

Blood is the only immediate evidence Faulkner provides of the first rape, and in the hours following the assault it is Temple's most material concern. Blood in *Sanctuary* is often invested with the taint of womanhood (compare it to Belle's rouge rag and "the bloody regurgitation" of the Negro murderer's wife's throat). Significantly, it is Minnie, Reba's black maid, who washes the blood from Temple's underclothes; she is an intimate witness to the horrors Temple has suffered. Minnie comments coolly that the underclothes are stained with "the most hardest blood

of all” to clean away (147). Reba suggests that Temple may want to give the soiled underclothes to Minnie, though she implies that Minnie will not wear them. Here we are reminded of Ruby’s earlier comment when Goodwin mocks her shabby nightdress: “Whose fault is it if this is the only one I have? Whose fault is it? Not mine. I’ve given them away to nigger maids after one night. But do you think any nigger would take this and not laugh in my face?” (75). Faulkner chooses to emphasize the sexual degradation of Temple and Ruby by giving them clothes that would be refused by black women. The taint of blood in Faulkner’s narrative is not only evidence of female degradation but also one that is tied in particular to racialization. What does it mean to be a white woman, the story posits, if a white woman’s purity can be questioned by a black woman?

Predictably, Paramount does not narrate Temple’s vaginal hemorrhaging; the narrative location of *blood Temple is anxious about* is newly occupied in the film by Trigger’s blood, which stains Temple’s hat when she murders him. Unpredictably, the studio chose to retain the scene of Minnie’s commentary on Temple’s underwear. In order to distance such commentary from the violence of the rape, however, Minnie in the 1932 screenplay becomes an unnamed black maid of the Drake household, and the scene occurs *before* Temple’s abduction:

An elderly NEGRO butler watches a NEGRESS (his wife) iron underthings.

NEGRO: Them’s purty.

NEGRESS: They need mendin’. Miss Temple’s sho hard on her things. And no wonder, Wid nobody to raise her ’ceptin an old grandfather that kaint see past his own spec.

NEGRO: I thought Judge Drake was pow’ful strict with Miss Temple.

NEGRESS: (Chuckles) If he done her laundry like I do he might know more about that chile. Yessuh, if you want to understand somebody just ask the pusson who does their washin’.

It is unclear just what sort of knowledge the maid gleans from Temple’s underthings—are they torn from fending off aggressive suitors or from

giving in to them? Are they stained with semen or with blood? The studio was content to leave the question open; in any case, Temple would be viewed as corrupted *prior* to her trip to the Old Frenchman place. The only revision the studio made to this scene in the second screenplay was the removal of the husband's line about Judge Drake; apparently protecting the Judge's reputation as a guardian was more important to the studio than protecting Temple's reputation as a virgin. The Hays Office was troubled by the scene, however, even in its revised form.

The line spoken by the colored laundress are [sic] possibly susceptible of an innocent interpretation. Nevertheless, the fact that she practically repeats the same idea twice, seems to be rubbing it in to the point of reaching out for a salacious interpretation the second time. (Wingate to Botsford, 27 Mar 1933)

The Hays Office asked that the scene end in the word "chile," and the line does not appear in the film. The Hays Office may indeed have worried about the "salaciousness" of the comment, or it may have been worried about the source of the comment: a black female witness to a white woman's sexual life.

Faulkner's novel is filled with just such black witnesses to less than ideal white behavior: the black man who declares, "Gret Gawd, white folks" after discovering Gowan passed out and covered with filth on the train platform (35); Narcissa's driver, Isom, who drives Horace home after taking Ruby to the hotel (123); and the "young negress in her underclothes" on "the second story balustrade" who witnesses Popeye and Temple's arrival in Memphis, suggesting Temple's new occupation (142). Faulkner's positioning of these black witnesses imply that Temple's "fall" is a fall from whiteness—the Paramount film implies that this fall had already begun before the first rape.

By moving the scene of the black maid critiquing Temple's impure underthings to a moment before Temple's encounter with the Popeye character, Paramount's revision makes explicit what Faulkner's novel only gestures toward: that the rape is not really a rape, that Temple's purity was always in question, and that the violence inflicted upon her actually worked to reveal a less-than-white identity that was always a

part of her nature. Faulkner again and again compares Temple's "putty face" to a "small pale mask" (58) or a "small dead-colored mask" (104), with "eyes calm and empty as two holes" (69). As well as a mask, she is likened to a toy—a "doll-faced slut" (59) with a head "like one of those papier-mâché Easter toys filled with candy" (69). Before the first rape Temple even sits like a doll, with "her legs straight before her, her hands limp and palm-up on her lap" (104). Throughout her harrowing time at the Old Frenchman place and at Reba's she must carefully maintain this doll-like mask—this *white* mask—with careful dustings of pale face powder. This action is not only a pathetic performance of gentility but is an anxious attempt to cultivate her whiteness when it is most threatened. Temple's efforts do not stem what is depicted as a rapidly dissolving self, however, as is evidenced in the moment when the pale, red-haired girl examines her own reflection: "It was twilight; in a dim mirror, a pellucid oblong of dusk set on end, she had a glimpse of herself like a thin ghost, a pale shadow moving in the uttermost profundity of a shadow" (148). And later, after night falls, she undergoes another transformation: "She wore a too-large gown of cerise crepe, black against the linen. Her hair was a black sprawl, combed out now; her face, throat and arms were gray" (150). Later still she cannot find her image at all in the clock face (153). So in this sequence Temple transforms from white, to pale and shadowy, to black and gray, to invisible. That this loss of self is linked to Temple's loss of innocence is only half right. Temple disintegrates because her selfhood is coupled to her virginity precisely through her identity as white woman.

With his novel Faulkner manages to show this corruption, this dismantling of white Southern womanhood through rape, without allowing this corruption to be perpetrated by a black man (which would invest the black man with a considerable degree of power) or a white man (which would implicate white patriarchy in the corruption of white women). The racist and sexist logic follows that if raped by a black Popeye, Temple is victimized, and if raped by white Popeye, Temple is so culpable in her own victimization as to become a victimizer herself. Because the novel allows Popeye to occupy a liminal racial space, Temple's racial identity, and the nature of the crimes against her remain, within a racist sexual economy, unknowable.

Paramount did finally release *The Story of Temple Drake*. Breen, who had once declared the film “no worse than hundreds of others that have been produced in recent years” (Breen to Wingate) later came into power at the PCA and declared the film Class I, “which means that release of the picture be halted now and that no additional contracts be taken on” (Breen to Hays).

As Faulkner had with *Requiem*, however, Hollywood would revisit the story of Temple Drake. As early as 1945 Paramount began to consider remaking *Sanctuary*. By this time rival studio Warner Bros. considered the author to be “our William Faulkner” but still balked at the prospect of adapting the novel. After reading his studio’s coverage of the novel, Warner Bros. story editor Ellingwood Kay marveled at Paramount’s decision to take on *Sanctuary* in the first place, commenting, “I can’t imagine how they ever cleaned it up” (Kay to Trilling). Of course this was long after the genre of abjection employed by the Hays Office had evolved to its form under the PCA. Paramount would wait until after the effective dissolution of the Hays Office to remake the story, combining the plots of Faulkner’s *Sanctuary* and *Requiem* for the 1961 film *Sanctuary*.

To his publishers at The Modern Library Faulkner wrote, “You know what I was saying when I wrote *Sanctuary*, don’t you? I was saying that women are impervious to evil” (qtd. in Wesson 15–16). It was this quality, Faulkner argued, that enabled Temple to sit so “so quiet and serene” at the Luxembourg Gardens, all of the horror of her experience “like water falling on a duck’s back and sliding right off.” In this comment Faulkner betrays an attitude very much akin to Benbow’s. Temple’s ability to relate the story of her rape as “one of those bright, chatty monologues which women can carry on when they realise that they have the center of the stage” so horrifies Benbow he imagines she’d be better off with a quick death in a gas chamber (216–21). One suspects that Faulkner’s and Benbow’s awe at Temple’s “imperviousness” is related to a frustration that Temple was not more easily destroyed. What is destroyed, however, is Temple’s identity as unassailably white.

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NOTES

1. The term “Hays Office” will be used to describe the MPPDA as a whole, the branch it supervised, the Studio Relations Committee (SRC), and the branch the SRC became in 1934, the Production Code Administration (PCA). The term “the Code” will be used to refer to the Motion Picture Production Code of 1930.

2. Trotti was an assistant to Jason Joy, executive of the SRC. Like many Hays Office employees, Trotti would eventually leave his position to work for the studios; he wrote many screenplays including *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1938) and *The Ox Bow Incident* (1941).

3. Trotti later adds, “You also might want to keep in mind another new book — D.H. Lawrence’s last book called ‘The Man Who Died.’”

4. This adaptation eventually became the MGM film *Today We Live* (1933).

5. Compare this to the \$100,000 Warner Bros. would pay Marc Connelley for the screen rights to *The Green Pastures* in 1936; *Sanctuary* was a popular novel, but had nothing like the name recognition of Connelley’s hit musical.

6. Wingate, the former head of the state of New York censorship board, was then an executive of the SRC.

7. The Hays Office crackdown on studio production beginning 1934 required a greater emphasis on the performance of concealment, and found a vehement actor for this performance in Breen. In this way the ushering in of the PCA should be viewed less as a radical change in the industry’s mode of production and more as a new articulation of a old generic formula.

8. Watkins had been a crime reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* in the twenties, and is best known today as the author of the underworld drama *Chicago* (1926), the play on which the later musical was based. Paramount likely saw Watkins as a good fit for the sordid *Sanctuary*. Garrett was an old hand at literary adaptation; he worked on the screenplays for Warner’s *Moby Dick* (1930) and Paramount’s *A Farewell to Arms* (1932).

9. This continuum of revision includes Faulkner’s sequel *Requiem for a Nun* (1951) and Paramount’s 1961 film *Sanctuary*, which drew on plot elements from both the novel *Sanctuary* and the novel *Requiem*.

10. Paramount was faithful to the agreement, but this didn’t stop independent exhibitors from eventually running print ads selling the film as based on “William Faulkner’s Famous Novel ‘Sanctuary.’” See Wilstach to Wingate.

11. See Gustafson for a thorough examination of the economics of purchasing pre-sold properties in the Studio Era.

12. Another Code prohibition that may have had some bearing on this decision: “The courts of the land should not be presented as unjust. This does not mean that a single court may not be presented as unjust, much less that a single court

official must not be presented this way. But the court system of the country must not suffer as a result of this presentation.”

13. See Roberts.

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