Vision's Immanence

Lurie, Peter

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

Lurie, Peter.
Vision's Immanence: Faulkner, Film, and the Popular Imagination.
Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.
Project MUSE., <a href="

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Notes

AT   Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*
Blotner 1984 *Faulkner: A Biography* (one-volume edition, 1984)
Blotner 1974 *Faulkner: A Biography* (two-volume edition, 1974)
CS   *Collected Stories*
SL   *Selected Letters*
SO   *Sanctuary: The Original Text*

INTRODUCTION: Adorno's Modernism and the Historicity of Popular Culture

1. Joseph Blotner, *William Faulkner: A Biography* (one-volume edition, 1984), 305. Cited hereafter as Blotner 1984.

2. Several references in Faulkner's fiction to silent and so-called art film, including specific directors, actors, and movies, suggest his sense of the aesthetic or political differences of such cinema from the commercial products of Hollywood. Sergei Eisenstein and Robert Weine, for example, appear in different moments as clear contrasts to the kind of movie associated with figures such as David Selznik or Joan Crawford. The Eisenstein and Weine references (in *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* and *Pylon,* respectively) each seek to convey something of silent film's uncanny or otherworldly effects. The "Wild Palms" section of *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* refers to an "Eisenstein Dante" as Charlotte and Wilbourne descend into the Utah mine and confront its scene of visual chaos (621). *Pylon* evokes Weine's classic German Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.* As the reporter appears for the first time, the narrator describes the way the other characters "were now looking at something which had apparently crept from a doctor's cupboard and, in the snatched garments of an etherized patient in a charity ward, escaped into the living world" (788; see *Annotations to Faulkner's* Pylon, 24–25). References to Hollywood or its leading figures such as Joan Crawford, conversely, evoke cheap, manufactured products like doilies and magazines (*If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem,* 636).

3. Faulkner's different tenures as a contract writer for the studios included extended periods of work at MGM in 1932, at Universal in 1934, at Twentieth Century-Fox in 1935 and 36, and several long-term contracts with Warner Brothers in the mid-1940s (Blotner 1984). In a 1936 letter to his agent, Morton Goldman, Faulkner proposed selling the rights to *Absalom, Absalom!* for $100,000 (*SL,* 96). See John T. Matthews, "Shortened Stories: Faulkner and the Market" for a discussion of Faulkner's extensive efforts at living off of his income from short fiction in the thirties.

4. Greenberg provides several examples of kitsch, including "popular, commercial art and literature with their chromeotypes, magazine covers, illustrations, ads, slick

and pulp fiction, comics, Tin Pan Alley music, tap dancing, Hollywood movies, etc. etc." ("Avant-Garde and Kitsch," 9). As we will see, many of these appear in Faulkner's high-modernist novels of the thirties (for Greenberg, versions of "genuine culture").

5. Another strong advocate for the modernist position of separateness from the realms of both mass culture and mainstream, modern society is Irving Howe. He famously described modernism as a "tacit polemic" that "must be defined in terms of what it is not" (*Decline of the New,* 3). In depicting modernism's "heroic" isolation, Howe declared that "the modern writer can no longer accept the claims of the world. If he tries to acquiesce in the norms of his audience, he finds himself depressed and outraged" (4). Although he writes here about modernism's position against traditional forms of high art, Howe also suggests that the modernist "polemic" was directed at modern consumer culture. "[M]odernist culture soon learns to respect, even to cherish the signs of its division" (4) from mass society. In the same essay, and in a manner similar to Huyssen, Howe asserted that "the modernist impulse was accompanied by . . . a repugnance for the commonplace materials of ordinary life" (17).

6. Since *The Great Divide,* theoretical notions of the split between modernism and mass culture have further been called into question by scholarship that addresses their mutual relationship, particularly in the period I will be discussing. Critics like Ann Douglas (*Terrible Honesty*); Rita Barnard (*The Great Depression and the Culture of Abundance*); and Michel North (*Reading 1922*) have described modernism and popular art as closely intertwined by the 1920s and, particularly, the 30s. See especially Barnard's introduction, "Literature and Mass Culture in the Thirties." In it Barnard cites three major reasons for the 1930s as a pivotal decade for breaking down the cultural divide between "high" and "mass" arts: the rise of proletarian literature; the increasing commodification and popularization of high art; and the fact that "the dichotomy between literature and mass culture [was] also negated and undermined by . . . writers who incorporated the language of mass culture into the body of their 'literary' work" (7). Though in a less direct way than Barnard demonstrates with West and Fearing, Faulkner's "incorporation" of the language of mass culture contributes to his work's breakdown of the great divide. Maria DiBattista offers a particularly helpful idea for approaching modernism in her "Introduction" to the collection *High and Low Moderns,* one that, as we will see has particular relevance to Faulkner. "[H]igh moderns, even those who openly espoused the novel as an art form," she says, "nevertheless regarded low cultural phenomena and entertainments unique to their times—the popular press, cinema, music hall, and the 'art' of advertising—as an inalienable part of modern life, hence unavoidable subject matter whose forms as well as content might be assimilated or reworked, playfully imitated or seriously criticized" (4–5).

7. Recently, in response to new understandings of globalization and the production of culture (both modernist and popular) outside of Europe and the United States, Huyssen has suggested other ways of considering modernism. Detailing cultural studies' tendencies to over-value popular culture, and seeking as well to recast his own "great divide" between modernism and postmodernism (the ways that postmodern studies see high- and mass-cultural postmodern texts readily incorporate one another), Huyssen encourages a new attention to medium, to the complexity of interaction between high literary modernism and visual and technical forms of culture. ("High/Low in an Expanded Field," 371).

8. I offer a necessarily truncated assessment of the modernism/mass culture debate

at the outset of my discussion because doing so provides a conceptual frame for my specific readings of Faulkner's novels. The theoretical stance that I offer here through figures like Adorno, Huyssen, or Jameson, although I do not refer to it extensively in the chapters themselves, informs my approach to passages and strategies throughout Faulkner's fiction. My introductory remarks are meant to establish a ground in a contested and still-emerging debate about ways of conceiving the actual historical relationship between mass culture and modernism.

9. Faulkner famously remarked about conceiving *Sanctuary:* "I took a little time out, and speculated what a person in Mississippi would believe to be current trends, chose what I thought was the most horrific tale I could imagine, and wrote it in about three weeks" ("Preface" to the Modern Library's 1932 edition of *Sanctuary,* reprinted in the Library of America's *William Faulkner: Novels, 1930–1936,* 1029–30; subsequent references to the "Preface" are to this edition). Many of Faulkner's public comments about *Sanctuary* deprecate it as a work that was "basely" conceived. Although the novel does indeed include sensational or lurid elements, it is less clear that Faulkner's motives for writing it were as bluntly mercenary as his comments in the "Preface" and elsewhere suggest. As my chapter on *Sanctuary* demonstrates, the novel's preface and its compositional history make clear that Faulkner's involvement with this novel was, in fact, more complicated than that. Ultimately, I argue that it is the book's revisions for publication in 1931 more than its original conception (as Faulkner here implies) that reveal some of the most deliberately commercial practices in the novel, and in Faulkner's writing.

10. I use this term at several points in my discussion of *Light in August* to refer to actions or institutions of forced enclosure or incarceration. It is a common terminology in D. A. Miller's Foucauldian study, *The Novel and the Police,* from which I draw some of the lines of my argument in my second chapter.

11. Two earlier studies of Faulkner take up the function of vision in his novels: Michel Gresset's *Fascination* and Hugh Ruppersburg's *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction.* Though their treatments of Faulkner's optical methods differ from mine, most notably in my attention to Faulkner's critical treatment of vision and its connection to mass cultural forms like cinema, Gresset and Ruppersburg's work attests to the central role played by sight in Faulkner's writing. Carolyn Porter's *Seeing and Being* also pays crucial attention to the reifying effects of vision in the experience of Faulkner's characters.

12. Due to several factors, the 1930s saw the continued perfecting of a studio production system that began in the 1910s. The rapid success of silent film through the teens and sound film in the late twenties before the Depression had already contributed to the consolidating of both economic and cultural capital in Hollywood. American domination of the world market for film had began earlier in the century with the wide distribution of films overseas; production became even more centralized in the twenties and thirties with the departure of many European directors and technicians for the United States. All of these developments contributed in the period to the continued growth of film's audience, which after the teens moved beyond its base in working-class, immigrant nickelodeons to national and international distribution. In the 1930s the further standardization of story material and production methods, the solidifying of genres, and the use of recognizable, "bankable" actors and stars all advanced the development of the industry and allowed the major studios (Paramount, MGM, Twen-

tieth Century Fox, Warner Brothers, and RKO) to capitalize on the expansion of the film market and to establish the classical Hollywood paradigm. Part of this process had to do with the notable increase in production in the 1930s. In response to the Depression and due to a decrease in demand, studios paradoxically produced more movies in the 1930s in order to offer double features (and lure back viewers), ushering in the production of the "B" movie. All of these developments contributed to the studios' factory-like approach, which in their peak years produced literally thousands of pictures. See James Monaco, *How to Read a Film,* 208–9; John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson, eds., *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies,* 246–7; Susan Hayward, *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies,* 356.

13. The most relevant work on this aspect of Hollywood cinema were the essays Adorno wrote or collaborated on with Max Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* In particular "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," offered as a response to Adorno's observations of Hollywood in the 1940s, was written in the roughly same period as Faulkner's modernist novels. It mounts Adorno's most rigorous attack on the standardized and reifying products of Hollywood.

14. Bruce Kawin suggests that due to Faulkner's linking of Eisenstein to Dante in *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*, "the sense of the reference is to a serious artist" ("The Montage Element in Faulkner's Fiction," 116).

15. Faulkner's brother Murry indicates that they were captivated by the new form of entertainment and that they went together to the Opera House, where films were first shown in Oxford, as often as they could (*The Falkners of Mississippi,* 49–51).

16. Faulkner worked extensively on the production, scouting locations, helping to cast Oxford residents as extras, and revising the script during the movie's shooting. He later wrote of the film's director, Clarence Brown, with whom he collaborated, that he was "one of the best to work with I ever knew" (Blotner 1984, 502).

17. Faulkner received a gift of the source of Griffith's film, Thomas Dixon's novel *The Clansman,* from his first grade teacher (Blotner 1984, 20). He also saw a theatrical version of the novel when it was performed in Oxford in 1908 (Blotner 1984, 33). Kawin makes the claim that Faulkner saw *Birth* (*Faulkner and Film,* 70). Though he does not provide direct evidence for his assertion, it is difficult to imagine the circumstances that would have prevented Faulkner from seeing the most notorious and heralded film of its time.

18. This period was bracketed, at its end, by the release of another wildly popular (and highly romanticized) vision of the South: David O. Selznik's *Gone With the Wind* (1939). Selznik's extravaganza displaced *Birth* as the most popular film of all time.

19. Although Faulkner's novels were critically successful and regarded very seriously, his more ambitious literary projects of the decade failed to reach a wide readership. Other than *Sanctuary (1931)* and *The Unvanquished* (1938), Faulkner's novels of the thirties sold extremely poorly. MGM bought the rights for the later novel in 1938, giving Faulkner a much-needed financial lift.

20. Faulkner's perspective and language here have much in common with another well-known attack on Hollywood, Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* (1939). West's negative social criticism, similar to Faulkner's, is manifest both in his protagonist's vision of "The Burning of Los Angeles" (Tod Hackett's unfinished painting) and in his narrator's account of southern Californian architecture: "The edges of the trees burned with a pale violet light and their centers gradually turned from deep purple to black . . .

But not even the soft wash of dusk could help the houses. Only dynamite would be of any use against the Mexican ranch houses, Samoan huts, Mediterranean villas, Egyptian and Japanese temples, Swiss chalets, Tudor cottages, and every possible combination of these styles that lined the slopes of the canyon" (61). Tod's longing to destroy the scene before him echoes West's invocation of the apocalyptic destructiveness of the seven deadly plagues in his title. It also resembles Faulkner's description of Los Angeles in "Golden Land," his own short-story version of the Hollywood novel. Faulkner's *Pylon,* the novel to which "Golden Land" is most closely connected chronologically, shares with West's *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933) a critique of another mass-market organ: the newspaper.

21. Faulkner's correspondence from the 1930s is laced with references to his frustration over his work in Hollywood and, specifically, to the demands on him financially and in terms of the labor that the studios extracted. Writing to Ben Wasson in 1932, he expressed consternation about his contract with MGM for *Turnabout.* Using a sharecropper analogy, he wrote, "Today I received a letter from Joyce & Selznik asking for their ten percent of this TURN ABOUT weekly pay. Do I owe it to them? and is there any danger of them coming down here [to Mississippi] and taking a tithe of my pigs and chickens and cotton?" (*SL,* 66). In 1937 he complained to his wife in a letter from Beverly Hills about the time demanded of him by another Hollywood contract: "Nothing has happened yet. As far as I know, I will be through at studio Aug 15 and will start home sometime during that week, though according to my contract they can give me an assignment and hold me overtime until I finish it" (*SL,* 101).

22. Several critics and theorists suggest the onset of the increasing role of visuality in modern social, cultural, and political experience. Miles Orvell, in his cultural history *The Real Thing,* traces changes in both lifestyle and epistemology wrought by the advent of photography and the cultural role in modernity of simulacra. Due to photography's widespread popularity and its broad dissemination through the late nineteenth century, the act of looking at reproduced images of objects or events (such as history) increasingly came to substitute for those objects' or events' "reality." See also Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs,* for a similar account of images of history, particularly Matthew Brady's early Civil War photographs. Several Frankfurt School thinkers describe circumstances of urban modernity that, ironically, appear in Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha. In "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Georg Simmel argued early in the century for the increased amount of sensory, and particularly visual, experience as a defining category of modern experience. See as well Siegfried Kracauer's essay "Photography" for an account of the way visual imagery distances history. Walter Benjamin's theory of modernity, finally, is especially apt to a consideration of the ways in which sensory experience and its role in social and cultural life can be materially altered by historical and technological changes. As he puts it, "During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well" ("The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 222). More recent accounts of these changes include Ben Singer, "Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism"; Susan Sontag, "The Image-World"; and the essays in Fredric Jameson's *Signatures of the Visible.*

23. Miranda Burgess argues that the southern romance and its "twentieth-century

manifestation," the narrative cinema, was based on the white male need to position the plantation heroine as the bearer of the desiring looks of white landowners and of black slaves ("Watching Jefferson Watching," 96–99).

24. Several film histories trace the predominance of racial stereotypes in early cinema. Among them are Peter Noble's extensive cultural history, *The Negro in Films;* Donald Bogle's *Toms, Coons, Mammies, Mulattoes, and Blacks;* and James R. Nesteby's *Black Images in American Films.* Michael Rogin, in his essay " 'The Sword Became a Flashing Vision': D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*" argues for a direct connection between Griffith's film and *Light in August* through both works' use of castration and the threat of black male sexuality.

25. See Hayden White, "The Modernist Event."

26. Bruce Kawin *Faulkner and Film,* 87.

27. Like the other novels I treat, particularly *Sanctuary, Pylon* mixes references to popular sensationalism with invocations and strategies of high-art, literary modernism. The overtness of *Pylon*'s references to figures like Eliot, though (its chapters with titles like "Lovesong of J. A. Prufrock"), operates to produce a very different kind of modernist approach than we see in the other novels of the decade. *Light in August, Absalom, Absalom!* and *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem,* that is, do not perform parodies of earlier modernist texts. In the case of the second half of the decade particularly, and in something of a chronological paradox, Faulkner's novels remain deliberately "high"-modernist works that respond to mass culture in ways different from those in *Pylon* and that have not been demonstrated by earlier criticism.

28. There are, of course, limits to this characterization. *Pylon* makes clear demands on readers and does so in an unfamiliar, "manufactured" language that, as Michael Zeitlin has shown, reveals its deep embeddedness in a modern and alienating urban experience ("Faulkner's *Pylon:* The City in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction"). In its weird, stylized prose, *Pylon* is in many ways a unique modern novel, both within Faulkner's ouvre and otherwise. It does not, however, extend that experimentation into its narrative structure, instead offering events that, with few exceptions follow chronologically. Importantly as well, *Pylon* is often regarded as one of Faulkner's "minor" works. Though the reasons for this designation vary, I suspect they have to do in part with precisely what is uncanny or odd about *Pylon* as Faulkner's only real city novel, as well as with its seemingly uncomplicated storyline.

29. As John T. Matthews puts it, "By then treating the narrative through a single focalization (the reporter), *Pylon* seeks to reduce effort, subject, and effect" ("The Autograph of Violence in Faulkner's *Pylon,*" 247). Though Matthews goes on to qualify this characterization, *Pylon* remains, with *The Unvanquished,* one of Faulkner's less fully ambitious projects of the decade.

30. The phrase is Siegfried Kracauer's. Kracauer makes this assessment of German historical films in his psycho-social study of German cinema and the rise of fascism, *From Caligari to Hitler* (52). He makes a similar case for the destructive cultural work that film performed in the Weimar period and that, he claimed, contributed to the rise of the Third Reich and to Hitler's campaign of historical erasure.

31. Fredric Jameson's critique of 1970s historical cinema centers on the use of nostalgia in contributing to the reification—and consumption—of history: "In nostalgia film, the image—the surface sheen of a period fashion reality—is consumed, having been transformed into a visual commodity" ("On Magical Realism in Film," 130).

32. In an instructive passage from the book, the narrator refers to "Hollywood which is no longer in Hollywood but is stippled by a billion feet of burning colored gas across the face of the American earth" (636).

33. My use of Jameson's theory of commodities in general, and of the commodity aspect of film in particular, follows from Marx's thinking in statements such as the following: "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour" (*Capital,* 1:320). In the same passage Marx offers another useful statement that informs Jameson's assessment of film and commodities: "There is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world" (1:321). It is this "misty," quasi-religious quality of film viewing that, for Jameson, contributes to its capacity for ready commodification and reification.

34. See Adorno's assessment of the coercive effects of film throughout his writing, in particular "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." See also Siegfried Kracauer's more specific attention to the visual properties of the film image in *Theory of Film:* "[F]ilm images affect primarily the spectator's senses, engaging him physiologically before he is in a position to respond intellectually," (158 and *passim*), as well as his essays in *The Mass Ornament.*

35. Jameson offers a far more sustained analysis of vision's "historical coming into being," as well as the appearance of that phenomenon as it is mediated by literature, in *The Political Unconscious.* His model for describing these is Conrad and the novel that has furnished one of my epigraphs, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus."* I will return to Jameson's discussion of these issues and this text as a way to extend my discussion of Faulkner's thirties fiction in my "Conclusion."

36. Adorno quoted in a March 18, 1936 letter to Walter Benjamin (*Aesthetics and Politics,* 123).

37. In discussions of Faulkner's early film treatments, such as *Absolution* and *The College Widow,* Kawin shows Faulkner taking up themes that informed his early novels (like *Sartoris* and *Sanctuary*) while applying them to market-friendly genres and settings such as romance stories and the First World War (*Faulkner and Film,* 71–74).

38. "The Montage Element of Faulkner's Fiction," 112–13, 123.

39. Like Kawin, Douglas Baldwin offers a more theoretical consideration of Faulkner's relation to film in his essay "Putting Images into Words: Elements of the 'Cinematic' in William Faulkner's Prose." Critics like Baldwin and I are indebted to Kawin's early work on Faulkner and film.

40. This aspect of the film image informs as well Kracauer's assessment of the links of cinema to dreaming. See *Theory of Film:* "The moviegoer watches the images on the screen in a dream-like state" (303); "To the extent that films are mass entertainment, they are bound to cater to the alleged desires and daydreams of the public at large" (163); and *passim.*

41. Choosing to write in a way that he thought was compromised, that is, but that he believed was necessary in order to sell books, Faulkner experienced a frustration with *Sanctuary* that extended to himself as a practitioner of the consumer culture he disdained. It is this scorn, I suggest, that returns at the end of the thirties in Harry Wilbourne (a potential surrogate for himself as a hack writer). For a similar take on

Faulkner's sense of guilt over these forms of writing, see Vincent Allan King, "The Wages of Pulp: The Use and Abuse of Fiction in William Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* [*If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*]."

42. I may clarify my perspective here by way of a similar account of Faulkner's, like other writers', unwitting but instructive reproduction of "the circulation of social energy." The term is Stephen Greenblatt's, which I encountered in Philip Weinstein's discussion of Faulkner and Toni Morrison in his chapter of the same name from *What Else But Love? The Ordeal of Race in Faulkner and Morrison.* Using Greenblatt's example of Shakespeare's *Othello,* Weinstein declares that "whatever else Shakespeare saw in his source materials (Cinthio's 1566 Venetian story), he saw a clash of race and gender . . . that illuminated the conflicts of his own culture. His play maximally dramatizes these conflicts, it is in the business less of resolving or correcting them than of getting us to register them" (165). The value of any representation of social conflict, Weinstein argues, is that writers' "achievement is inseparable from their own raced and gendered positioning and from their (always contestable) grasp upon the ferment of their times" (165). Faulkner's treatment of Joe Christmas, I claim, is clearly an expression of Faulkner's "contestable grasp" on historical ferment. If it reproduces some of the same negative effects of racial bias that it questions, this is not a measure of Faulkner's "failure" to control completely his texts' reception or effects. As Weinstein puts it, "Value resides in a text's ability to seize upon (to find imaginative form for) the subjective engagement of individuals with their larger culture's most significant certainties and doubts. That the seeing enacted in such texts is [socially and racially] positioned . . . keeps it from being innocent, making it simultaneously right, wrong, and precious" (165–66).

CHAPTER ONE: "Some Quality of Delicate Paradox"

1. Melinda McLeod Rouselle traces these allusions in her *Annotations to William Faulkner's* Sanctuary. Beginning with the title, she suggests references to *Measure for Measure* and Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1, 3). She also claims Conrad's *Nigger of the "Narcissus"* as a possible source for Faulkner's description of Popeye as possessed of "that vicious depthless quality of stamped tin" (181). Reading Horace as a Prufrockian figure is commonplace in commentary on the novel. Edwin Arnold and Dawn Trouard, for instance, cite Prufrock as a source for Horace's timidity (*Reading Faulkner's* Sanctuary, 28). See also Noel Polk, "Afterword" to *Sanctuary: The Original Text,* 299.

2. Gangster films proliferated in the period before *Sanctuary* and were an immensely popular genre. Its origins were in silent films such as *The Girl and the Gangster* and *The Making of Crooks,* both from 1914, and D. W. Griffith's *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912). The 1927 release *Underworld* was the first movie to offer midnight screenings to accommodate viewers. Moreover, the year before *Sanctuary*'s publication saw the beginning of the well-known gangster cycle *Little Caesar* (1930), followed by *The Public Enemy* in 1931 and by *Scarface* in 1932.

3. Polk, "Afterword."

4. Faulkner made these remarks in his "Preface" to the Modern Library's 1932 printing of the novel; they have been reprinted in the Library of America text, pp. 1029–30. Much has been made of the ambivalent quality of Faulkner's remarks about his original version of *Sanctuary* in the "Preface" and elsewhere. In particular, critics have

doubted Faulkner's sincerity in denigrating the unpublished novel as inferior to the 1931 version, especially as regards its pecuniary motives and sensationalism. See Gerald Langford (*Faulkner's Revisions of* Sanctuary) and Philip Cohen ("'A Cheap Idea . . . Deliberately Conceived to Make Money': The Biographical Context of William Faulkner's Introduction to *Sanctuary*").

5. This change is owed to considerations by Linton Massey ("Notes on the Unrevised Galleys of William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*") and Langford of the two texts (including Langford's "Introduction"), involving the corrected galley proofs, manuscript, and carbon typescripts. Since 1981 critics have more widely used Noel Polk's editorship and publication of *Sanctuary: The Original Text* as well as Polk's comparisons of the book's two versions. See Polk ("Afterword" and "The Space Between *Sanctuary*") and also Kevin Railey (*Natural Aristocracy*) for accounts of the ways that the earlier edition of *Sanctuary* prompts serious (re)consideration of the novel and its place in a crucial period of Faulkner's writing.

6. Polk suggests that this opening initiates both the novel's sustained motif of images of enclosure and its suggestions of Horace's emotional entrapment in his strained marriage ("Afterword," 301). In either reading, the scene offers an example of the earlier version's (modernist) perspectivism and its emphasis on Horace's interior life.

7. In his "Preface," Faulkner claimed he wrote *Sanctuary* in three weeks and with a deliberate eye toward mass-market tastes. Referring to the original process of conceiving the novel, he called it both "horrific" and "cheap," and he made a direct overture to readers to buy it: "I made a fair job and I hope you will buy it and tell your friends and I hope they will buy it too" ("Preface," 1030). However, in its resemblance to what must be seen as meaningful work for Faulkner in *Flags in the Dust* and *The Sound and the Fury,* as well as its treatment of Horace's troubled family relationships, his experiences with southern social reality, and an acute nostalgia, *Sanctuary* is not so readily dismissible as Faulkner himself asserts. Philip Cohen, in his thoughtful consideration of the "Preface," argues that comments like these suggest Faulkner's defensive response to contemporary critics who praised *Sanctuary* but who had failed to recognize the quality and innovation of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* ("A Cheap Idea," 54–55). That Faulkner maintained this attitude toward the novel throughout his life is evident in public comments such as that he wrote *Sanctuary* because he "liked the sound of dough rising" (Blotner 1984, 233), or that he "didn't like the book" (Meriwether and Millgate, *Lion in the Garden,* 55). Yet on at least one occasion, Faulkner also gave a strong clue to the disingenuousness of such commentary. Responding to a question at Mary Washington College about whether he would like to "repudiate" *Sanctuary,* Faulkner gave his standard answer: that it was "basely conceived." In the same response, however, he goes on to describe the other ways (besides writing) he had made money earlier in his life: "[W]hen I was footloose I could do things . . . I could run a bootlegging boat, I was a commercial airplane pilot" (*Faulkner in the University,* 90). Although *Sanctuary* does include patently commercial elements, the obvious falseness of Faulkner's remarks about piloting or running liquor suggests a similar deviousness to his reference here to *Sanctuary*'s "baseness."

8. On this point I disagree with the critical reading of this opening scene offered by Fredric Jameson, who sees this moment in the novel as exemplary of what he calls "the high modernist demiurge": "The opening of *Sanctuary* is in this sense canonical: its characters emerging before us in some strange 'always-already' familiarity as though

we were supposed to know who Temple and Popeye and the Virginia gentleman already were—yet here the familiarity is Faulkner's own, and not yet the reader's. He is it who has chosen to withhold the facts of the matter, and the (not terribly complicated) explanation for this prematurely climactic and coincidental confluence of his two narrative strands" (*Signatures of the Visible,* 132). My point is that the reader's familiarity with Popeye and the type he resembles was precisely what Faulkner counted on as he approached the novel. The "explanation" for what Jameson seems to consider a too-early discharge of the novel's narrative energy lies in both Faulkner's complicated understanding of consumer culture, and his recognition of readers' potential for a similarly sophisticated recognition of its function or effect.

9. Huyssen's book, and especially the chapter "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," described what he saw as a longstanding tradition of thought about modernism, particularly in the Frankfurt School. Huyssen at points offers a more comprehensive version of modernism and its relation to mass culture than he is often credited for, and one that he has recently revisited ("High/Low in an Expanded Field"). See also Irving Howe's assertion that the modernist artist "must confront the one challenge for which he has not been prepared: the challenge of success" (*The Decline of the New,* 16).

10. Faulkner had several reasons in 1930 to return to a novel that he thought might sell. Polk avers that "it may be that pecuniary motives were larger in [Faulkner's] mind when he revised [*Sanctuary*] than when he originally conceived and wrote it: in the months following the submission of the original manuscript to the publishers he got married and bought a house, so his decision to revise might have been an attempt to salvage a work already at hand which might make him some much-needed cash" ("Afterword," 295–96).

11. Both the original hardcover and later paperback editions of the novel became best-sellers. Each sold more than two million copies, and the book's success led to Faulkner's original contract in Hollywood as well as, ultimately, a film version of *Sanctuary,* released as *The Story of Temple Drake* [Paramount, 1933]). *Sanctuary* generated enough attention on its release that when Faulkner's original publishers of the novel encountered financial difficulty in the fall of 1931, the year of the book's release, Faulkner was considered a prime prospect for literary agents (Blotner 1984, 283).

12. As James Naremore puts it, "The Op recounts everything in deadpan fashion, as if he were making raw reports under pressure" ("Dashiell Hammett and the Poetics of Hard-Boiled Fiction,"57). He even possesses a mechanistic or inhuman detachment that for Naremore evokes the principle and apparatus of modern observation: "[E]ven though [Hammett] tells everything from the Op's point of view, he has been selective about how much subjectivity he allows us to see. The Op is a sort of *camera obscura*" (59). The Op and Popeye, that is to say, share qualities that are unique to the crime genre as a modern, mass form of writing, one that has its correlative in aspects of characterization.

13. John T. Matthews offers a similar perspective on the "mechanical" composition of *As I Lay Dying* in the context of his discussion of that novel's critique of commodification: "That *As I Lay Dying* is produced by the very processes it critiques may be seen in traces of reification in Faulkner's own comments about the novel. He referred to this novel as his tour de force and said that he could write it . . . exceptionally fast. . . . Composed with the hum of the University of Mississippi's power station in the background . . . *As I Lay Dying* takes on the sheen of a highly technical, even machine-

made object" ("*As I Lay Dying* in the Machine Age," 90). Faulkner's references to his act of writing *Sanctuary,* as well as passages in it describing artificial "electrical" lighting, suggest it as a novel that, perhaps even more than *As I Lay Dying,* acquires this technical or metallic "sheen."

14. George Grella offers several useful reflections on the gangster genre, including a reading of Burnett's novel that establishes a connection between Popeye and Rico and sees their abstract quality as part of their authors' critique of modernity. "[I]t seems quite likely that William Faulkner had read *Little Caesar* before he wrote *Sanctuary;* he is the only literary author I know of who used the gangster archetype (and his gangster, Popeye, has a lot in common with Rico) to suggest the breakdown of traditional order and the evil tendencies of anarchic modernism. Faulkner's Popeye is an obviously symbolic, and indeed allegorical character; in his own way Burnett's Cesare Bandello seems no less symbolic" ("The Gangster Novel: The Urban Pastoral," 194).

15. Grella refers to the "grotesque" mix of comedy and solemnity that makes "the gangster funeral a stock scene" (192).

16. The well-known comic strip "Popeye" was already in print when Faulkner published *Sanctuary,* and it may well have contributed to Faulkner's characterizations in the novel. See Rouselle, *Annotations to William Faulkner's* Sanctuary, 4. Popeye was also likely named after a Memphis gangster who attained notoriety in the twenties, Neal "Popeye" Pumphrey. Faulkner heard of him through a woman he met in a Memphis nightclub (see Blotner 1984, 176, and Arnold and Trouard, *Reading Faulkner:* Sanctuary, 5).

17. Like the other gangster novels I discuss here, *Louis Beretti* enjoyed wide popularity. It eventually sold over a million copies, and it appears on a list of the best selling titles for the period (Alice Payne Hackett, *70 Years of Best Sellers*).

18. Richard Godden describes this element of another subgenre, the prison novel, that is suggestive for my reading of *Sanctuary.* Referring to Horace McCoy's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* as well as James Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice,* he refers to the way in which the novels' use of first-person, confessional narration characterized much pulp, which, Godden asserts, "absorbed its public through empathy" (*Fictions of Labor,* 201). In his descriptions of Popeye at the novel's opening, Faulkner stresses his impenetrability or shallowness as a way of signaling to readers, I think, a resistance to the pulp habit of drawing readers into a character or story through empathy or identification. It is this which may have contributed to Faulkner's notorious answer to an interviewer's question about the novel. Asked about which character in *Sanctuary* he identified with, Faulkner evasively responded, "The cob."

19. It also reads like a stereotypical case study. Popeye's "bio" opens with "His mother was the daughter of a boarding house keeper. His father had been a professional strike breaker hired by the street railway company to break a strike in 1900" (388); it ends with Popeye as a child being sent "to a home for incorrigible children" after maiming a kitten and the statement "His mother was an invalid" (393).

20. At the same time, and embedded in Faulkner's language, is the split in his approaches to Temple and to the novel generally. Presenting Temple as an object of visual consumption and therefore rendered in a manner that makes her above all easy to "see," Faulkner also obscures Temple's image by a figurative use of language: the description of her "long legs blonde with running." In addition, and in a manner that also figures significantly in Temple's subsequent appearances, she is depicted *moving.*

Both of these aspects undermine Temple's static, visualized object-status. Faulkner's use of figuration in descriptions of Temple will recur, demonstrating Faulkner's modernist or literary strategy, but they function in a manner distinct from her appearance earlier in the book as an eroticized spectacle.

21. This last scene in particular draws attention to itself and to its thematizing of the act of voyeurism, compounding the scopophilic act. Faulkner does so by "refracting" it: Minnie's report of seeing Clarence Snopes spying on Popeye's act of watching Temple and Red (324).

22. It may well have been these qualities that prompted Edith Wharton, in an early reaction to the novel, to comment that Temple "is like a cinema doll" (noted by Ilene Goldman-Price; unpublished letter to Edward Sheldon, Edith Wharton Collection, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library). Feminist film theory has long treated this staple of cinema. As Laura Mulvey says in her seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," "In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to be looked-at-ness*" (750). Even in her "Afterthoughts" to this essay, Mulvey describes the role of women in classical film genres connoting a narrative function as the object of male desire similar to that of Temple's position at Goodwin's. "This neat *narrative* function restates the propensity for 'woman' to signify 'the erotic' already familiar from *visual* representation" ("Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 127).

23. I mean this as the negative aspect of the experience Jameson describes as "a commodity rush, [in which] our 'representations' of things tend[s] to arouse an enthusiasm and a mood swing not necessarily inspired by the things themselves" (*Postmodernism,* x).

24. Tommy's reactions to watching Temple's door resemble Vardaman Bundren's account of his own painful experience of window shopping in *As I Lay Dying.* Looking into the store window in Jefferson at the electric train he hopes to buy, he gives plaintive voice to the longings of consumers: "It was right behind the window, red on the track, the track shining round and round. It made my heart hurt" (142).

25. Faulkner articulates this idea expressly in the original version of the novel when Horace proclaims, "[S]ay what you want to, but there's a corruption even about looking upon evil" (*SO,* 72).

26. Discussing Faulkner's treatment of Temple's rape and her experiences at Goodwin's, Homer B. Pettey refers to the way Faulkner involves readers in activity similar to that of Popeye's and the other men. "Faulkner develops Temple's peril among the bootleggers in such a way that she becomes the object of perversion. He purposefully includes a urination scene to expose the sordid, voyeuristic world of Temple's entrapment. . . . The anonymous figure observing Temple could be any man, but it is also the reader. . . . The reader's predicament is that he cannot stand back and observe . . . objectively, but must also fix his gaze upon Temple. Thus, the text is fetishized and its reading sexualized by the reader" ("Reading and Raping in *Sanctuary,*" 72).

27. As Edwin Arnold and Dawn Trouard suggest of this scene, "the tell-tale cigarette smoke has led Temple, and the reader, to believe that Popeye is standing in the kitchen door. Faulkner, however, has fooled us: Popeye has been watching from around the

corner of the house, not the kitchen, and the smoke has come from Ruby's cigarette" (*Reading Faulkner:* Sanctuary, 52–53).

28. Drawn from the original text, the chapters at Goodwin's retain their uncanny or disorienting feel from the original edition. They may also be said to offer what portion of the earlier version Faulkner valued in their resemblance to the nonrealist qualities of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying.* Cohen argues that Faulkner resented contemporary critics' higher valuation of *Sanctuary* for its relative "accessibility" ("A Cheap Idea," 58). My purpose in highlighting the novel's obscure moments here is to suggest their difference from other sections of *Sanctuary* that present Temple in more conventional fashion.

29. Such aggressive "blending" of its discursive elements also resembles what for Richard Godden occurs in *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem:* "Striking against the inert blocks of 'Wild Palms,' 'Old Man' attempts through a violent intensity . . . to smash open the forms of reification" (*Fictions of Labor,* 221). Though *Sanctuary* does not break its narrative modes into discrete or alternating sections as does *Jerusalem,* it nevertheless offers readers a working through of two very different representational and literary strategies. As with the later novel, this contrast enacts a productive discord, pointing up and "smashing" reified models and forms.

30. Here I happily acknowledge the influence of my student in a tutorial at Harvard College, Jonathan Sherman, who used a similar term and treatment to describe the generic "emergence" and self-critique of an anomalous film noir, Joseph Mankiewicz's 1950 *No Way Out* in his undergraduate thesis, " 'We're Gonna Be Ready Tonight: Civil Rights and The Race Politics of Post-War Film Noir" (Harvard College, February 2003).

31. In the absence of a camera or other recording device, Horace makes use of Temple's faltering recollection of her treatment by Popeye. Tom Gunning argues for the importance of recording technology to the development of both modern policing and the detective novel, suggesting that the "indexical" nature of photography allowed the police to shift investigations of crimes such as rape away from criminals to a focus on the victim. As he puts it in his essay "Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives, and Early Cinema," "when photographs are approached as evidence, the issue rests less on a simulacrum of perception than on the act of recording, the retaining of the indexical trace. The body as the repository of evidence shifts . . . to that of the victim which holds evidence of the violence done to it" (37). Horace, though neither a photographer nor a forensics specialist, nevertheless encounters Temple at Miss Reba's in bed and half-dressed, a circumstance that underscores the sense of her exposure— her body as well as her story—as he arrives seeking information. As such, his investigation approximates something of what Gunning refers to as the use of the body in modern detection as a "repository of evidence."

32. Blotner refers to *Sanctuary*'s split "identity," if in a slightly different fashion than I describe it here. He suggests that with the novel, Faulkner "may have considered something like a three-horse parlay: a spectacular mystery-detective-gangster story, a commercially successful novel, and a work of art that would mirror the corruption of society" (Blotner 1984, 234). Blotner's reference to the "corruption of society" that the novel mirrored implies the evil of public figures like Clarence Snopes or the miscarriage of justice at Goodwin's trial. I submit that this "corruption" included something

of what Adorno refers to as "the social dynamic": the circumstances of cultural production that surrounded Faulkner and constrained him to write a book which, in its use of violence and transparent commercialism, troubled him.

33. Even physical sensation is repressed in the modernist aesthetic. Leonard points out the way in which Stephen, in a Foucauldian exercise of self-surveillance and denial, monitors his sensory experience, on guard against any unexpected physical response to his urban environment—a setting that teems with temptations like prostitutes and pornography. "Stephen's aesthetic theory . . . also creates a category of normativeness"(81). See also Howe: "Imperviousness of mind and impatience with flesh were attitudes shared by Yeats and Malraux, Eliot and Brecht. Disgust with urban trivialities and contempt for *l'homme moyen sensual* streak through a great many modernist poems and novels" (*Decline of the New,* 17).

34. See Faulkner's remarks asserting this in the "Preface": "I . . . sent [*Sanctuary*] to Smith . . . who wrote me immediately, 'Good God, I can't publish this. We'd both be in jail" (1030), as well as a nearly identical statement in *Faulkner in the University* (91).

35. Recall Huyssen's suggestion that for modernists, commodification and mass marketability were "the 'wrong' kind of success" (53).

36. Cohen describes Faulkner's ambivalence in the "Preface" as a cover: "The introduction's double-edged tone of contempt directed at Faulkner's readers and at himself represents a complex role-playing. By thumbing his nose at himself as well as at his public, he could soften the disdain he was exhibiting for their taste and perhaps avoid openly offending the audience he depended on for a living" ("'A Cheap Idea,'" 61). Cohen's reading of Faulkner's role-playing with *Sanctuary* squares with many events from the author's public life, and I agree that Faulkner's remarks about *Sanctuary* were often diversions from his real feelings about it. Nevertheless, there remains a trace of ingenuousness in Faulkner's comments about this novel that suggests at least a measure of scorn for its sources, motives, readers, and—perhaps above all—its role in Faulkner's career as the novel that first earned him recognition.

37. The passage I have in mind involves Jim on board the *Patna,* looking at the exposed throats of the pilgrims: "and in the blurred circles of light . . . appeared a chin upturned, two closed eyelids, a dark hand with silver rings, a meagre limb draped in a torn covering, a head bent back . . . a throat bared and stretched as if offering itself for the knife" (*Lord Jim,* 12).

38. It also makes more explicit Horace's earlier fantasy of violence and execution. When Horace first sees Clarence Snopes, Faulkner writes, "With the corner of his eye [he] . . . remarked the severe trim of hair across the man's vast, soft, white neck. Like with a guillotine, Horace thought" (298–99).

39. Adorno's treatment of the modernist work's formal "embodying" of its historical reality describes well this aspect of *Sanctuary,* and it offers a clearer way to connect it to mass art: "The unresolved antagonisms of reality appear in art in the guise of immanent problems of artistic form. . . . The aesthetic tensions manifesting themselves in works of art express the essence of reality" (*Aesthetic Theory,* 8).

40. This sense of the trial offering an occasion for again "viewing" Temple voyeuristically and erotically is clear in a fantasy of Horace's that appears in the original text: "[Horace] would sub-poena Temple; he thought in a paroxysm of raging pleasure of flinging her into the court-room, of stripping her" (*SO,* 255).

41. It is important to note that these specifically and, I would argue, deliberately realist passages are not in the original text. Along with Faulkner's deletions of many of the flashbacks and interior monologues, these additions reflect Faulkner's desire to make the revision more accessible and, potentially, commercial. In his account of the revision, Langford addresses this aspect of Faulkner's changes to the original edition: "[F]ar from reworking a lurid sex story into a more significant work, Faulkner seems to have had a single practical purpose—to turn a slow-moving psychological study into a streamlined drama ready for the cameras of Hollywood" (Introduction to *Faulkner's Revision of* Sanctuary, 7). Before the cameras, however, Faulkner needed to ensure that his novel would appeal to a mass readership—which of course the published version did. See also Cohen: "Indeed, Faulkner's revisions made the novel more commercially saleable" ("'A Cheap Idea,'" 56).

42. These sections also vary appreciably from their equivalent passages in the original text. In the original version, the scene of Horace at the window with Miss Jenny appears, but it is buried in a flashback and within several lines of dialogue. In a manner typical of the original edition, one that anticipates Darl Bundren (and recalls "Prufrock"), Faulkner approaches this moment through one of Horace's universalizing reflections. He shows Horace "thinking how man's life ravels out into half-measures, like a worn-out sock; how he finishes his days like a refugee on a levee, trying to keep his entrails warm and his feet dry with cast-offs until he becomes aware of himself, then merely furious trying to cover his nakedness; of the sorry pillar he runs to, the sorry post he leaves. . . . He was standing at the window beside Miss Jenny's chair, watching his sister and a man strolling in the garden" (*SO,* 32–33).

43. Goodwin himself is not actually visible as he burns to death. Faulkner does, however, include the screams of the man who presumably lit the fire as well as the image of the "five-gallon coal oil can which exploded with a rocket-like glare while he carried it, running" (384). Several aspects of the lynching passage are suggestive of Faulkner's lurid approach to the scene as well as, significantly, his understanding of the crowd. He indicates that Goodwin had been brutalized, perhaps sexually, before being killed, and shows the crowd's impulse to attack Horace for his role in defending him: "'Do to the lawyer what we did to him. What he did to her [Temple]. Only we never used a cob'" (384). Beyond implying the crowd's violent reaction toward men in positions like Horace's—that is, in opposition to the passionate vicissitudes of collective will—Faulkner makes clear a connection between the lynch mob and commerce, or the market. For the burning takes place in the same location Faulkner had earlier used as the scene for the onlookers at Tommy's body: the town square. "[Horace] could see the blaze, in the center of a vacant lot where on market days wagons were tethered" (384). Commercial activity and mass desire here become linked directly to a manifestation of violence.

44. As Michael Millgate puts it, "The extensive deletions made by Faulkner [in his revision] in no instance included anything that might be described as anything especially violent or 'horrific'" (*The Achievement of William Faulkner,* 115). In the case of the lynching scene and, as we will see, with others, the revision includes sensational and commercial material that Faulkner in fact *added.*

45. As I indicated earlier, in its belatedness and paucity of detail, this description also amounts to Faulkner's undermining of genre. Though it appears to fit into the formula for pulp crime fiction such as *Me, Gangster* or *Louis Beretti,* it also maintains its

distinctness from them by performing an abbreviated or shorthand version of a life story. Like much of the novel, in other words, it both performs and parodies conventions of generic fiction.

C H A P T E R T W O : "Get Me a Nigger"

1. Assessments of the novel's emphasis on acts of looking, on the part of both the characters and the readers, occur frequently in the novel's criticism. The most recent and most comprehensive of these is Patricia McKee's in "Playing White Men in *Light in August*" in her book *Producing American Races.* Though she is right to stress the acts of looking by the novel's white characters, I disagree with McKee's assertion that "In *Light in August* . . . it is mostly white men whose meaning is limited to their looks" (124), as my discussion of Christmas's appearance in the following pages will indicate. Irene Gammel refers to the appearance of Christmas at the mill and notes the use in the scene of a "multi-layered interaction of gazes." She also points out the way this trope engages readers' act of looking: "But Faulkner goes even a step further, since he constructs Joe as an object of sight in the reader's mind" (" 'Because He is Watching Me': Spectatorship and Power in Faulkner's *Light in August,* 13). Miranda Burgess's essay "Watching Jefferson Watching" pays particular attention to the novel's structuring of characters' acts of looking at Joe (99–102). See also Claus Peter Neumann, "Knowledge and Control in *Light in August*" (46). Michel Gresset suggests the potentially "castrating" looks of the men when Christmas dies (*Fascination,* 209–10). Though it is common to note the pervasiveness of watching in the novel, Gresset is one of the few to make the connection of that act to forms of violence and punishment.

2. It is worth pointing out that in Faulkner's account of it, the "audience" for the fire is, as it were, pan-regional as well as multiclass. This is because Faulkner understood that Americans of various regions and economic stations were susceptible to the imaginative vision of a murderous and hypersexualized black man—the way, in other words, that early cinema relied on generic images of the South to produce a national stereotype and idea. See Lary May, "Apocalyptic Cinema: D. W. Griffith and the Aesthetics of Reform" for an account of the rise of a multiclass audience for film after its original viewership in urban, working-class immigrants. See Michael Rogin, " 'The Sword Became a Flashing Vision': D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation,*" and Edward Campbell, *The Celluloid South,* on the capacity of early film to connect audiences of different regional backgrounds and interests.

3. Though it originally appeared in 1915 with enormous notoriety and success, *Birth of a Nation* was re-released in 1930 with similar trappings and responses. Its exposure to a second generation of viewers contributes to what I claim is its influence on Faulkner's thirties novels such as *Light in August,* and especially *Absalom, Absalom!* I will return to a full consideration of the massive impact of Griffith's film—both culturally and to Faulkner's consideration of historical cinema—in the following chapter.

4. Burgess's treatment of the "fantasy" of black rape that informed the romance locates its origin in plantation life and culture. Laura L. Bush also traces the myth of the black rapist in southern thought and social practice, though she points out that it functioned in a later historical context—the period in which events in *Light in August* take place—to enforce Jim Crow rules of power and segregation. "Both Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden know all too well this Southern script of a black male rapist who

ravishes a . . . white woman" ("A Very American Power Struggle: The Color of Rape in *Light in August,*" 491).

5. That Griffith deliberately played on this fear was evident in his manipulation of film aesthetics to create what he believed would be a particularly loathsome image in the scene of Silas accosting Elsie. Lillian Gish, the actress who portrays Elsie in the movie, commented on the role her fair coloring played in Griffith's decision to cast her and to film her scene with Lynch in a particular way: "At first I was not cast to play in *The Clansman.* My sister and I had been the last to join the company and we naturally supposed . . . that the main assignments would go to the older members. But one day while we were rehearsing the scene where the colored man picks up the Northern girl gorilla-fashion, my hair, which was very blonde, fell far below my waist and Griffith, seeing the contrast between the two figures, assigned me to play Elsie Stoneman (who was to have been Mae Marsh)" (quoted in Donald Bogle's *Toms, Coons, Mammies, Mulattoes, and Bucks,* 14).

6. Discussion of early film treatments of the mulatto appears in Bogle, *Toms, Coons, Mammies, Mulattoes, and Bucks,* 9.

7. The Klansmen's act of castrating Gus, Rogin points out, had originally been the culmination of a section of Griffith's film (" 'The Sword Became a Flashing Vision,' " 175). Excised in versions of the picture shown to northern audiences and of the film most viewers were eventually to see, the castrating sequence lay at the heart of *Birth*'s convictions about black sexual aggression. In "restoring" this act in his own depiction of vigilantism, Faulkner reproduced actual and historical instances of mutilation, as my later discussion of the Joe's death reveals. In doing so, he also points to the white fear of black potency evinced by Griffith's film and other manifestations of white racist hysteria.

8. Certain of these titles and my discussion of them follow Peter Noble's extensive and critical cultural history, *The Negro in Films.* See especially chapters 3 and 4, "The Negro in Silent Films" and "The Coming of the Sound Film."

9. The story of *Fair and Equal* concerns a wager between a northerner and a southerner about racial equality. To prove his liberal position, the northerner invites an African-American man into his home—who promptly attempts to seduce his daughter, then rapes and strangles his maid. Bogle discusses this film and its reception in *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks* (24–25). Although it was not reviewed favorably, the film's release nevertheless reveals a set of assumptions about black men which, if more widely believed in the teens, were not entirely discredited by the period in which Faulkner wrote.

It is worth noting that this image of the black buck or rapist, though powerful, was not as pervasive in early film history as the stereotype of the African American as a subservient, even comic lackey or "Uncle Tom." Bogle points to several early film versions of this type. One appeared as a black spy (for the South) during the Civil War in the film *Confederate Spy* (1910). Before he's shot by Northern troops, he expresses his contentment at dying "for massa's sake." In another film that actually uses this utterance as its title, *For Massa's Sake* (1911), a former slave sells his freedom to help offset his master's economic woes. See Bogle, chapter 1, "Black Beginnings: From *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to *Birth of a Nation,*" for a discussion of these and other films, including the original movie "Tom" in Edwin Porter's 1903 film of Stowe's novel. See also Noble on the weak or submissive black man in early film such as the Rastus comedies (28–29).

The seeming opposition of these two film types—black buck and Tom—may in fact be reconcilable. As cultural theory has shown, variant images or stereotypes may well be said to enable or to confirm one another, even, dialectically, to call one another into being. The image of the cowering or subservient "Tom" is the inverse of the aggressive and threatening buck. But the existence of the one in the popular imagination or subconscious "summons" its opposite forth, into material presence—revealing, in the case of the buck, for instance, what the comic type attempts to sooth or cover over. This seems a way to understand the appearance of divergent racial stereotypes in early film.

10. See Jack Temple Kirby's *Media-Made Dixie,* 39–42, for information about Page's politics and writing. He describes Page's "superimposing" of events from South Carolina during Reconstruction onto *Red Rock*'s supposedly historical account of Virginia. In doing so, Page relied on sources such as a Ku Klux Klan report of 1872 and sought to generalize (and falsify) accounts of the South after the Civil War. Kirby suggests as well that Page's correspondence indicated his support for actual incidents of violence toward blacks such as the riots in 1898 in Wilmington, North Carolina (42).

11. Even before Griffith took up *The Clansman* and turned it into what would become the most influential movie in history, it had offered a vision of black violence and sexual threat that easily translated to film. As Eric Sundquist describes the transition from novel to movie, he points to the facilitating role played in the adaptation by the iconic dimension of both the film image and Dixon's literary practice. "When Dixon's novel became *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915, the image of the 'Negro as Beast,' long a stock figure in the South and elsewhere, was visibly fixed as the icon to which almost any justification of Jim Crow could ultimately be referred" (*Faulkner,* 82). In this perspective, Sundquist shares with Burgess ("Watching Jefferson Watching") an awareness of the way southern ideology, whether directed through a racist myth or by the technical apparatus of the cinema, depended on an instrumentalizing of the look.

12. In its first four months, the book went through four printings. The title itself contributed to the novel's notoriety and success, as did the rumor of Van Vechten's "penetration" of Harlem social and cultural life in his preparation for writing it. For a discussion of Van Vechten's role in Harlem literary activity and of *Nigger Heaven*'s popular and critical reception—including responses by figures as varied as Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, and Gertrude Stein—see David Levering Lewis's study *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (184–89).

13. In his discussion of the Harlem novel, Eugene Arden describes the way popular writers contributed to a conception of the Negro from which Faulkner may have drawn his depiction of Christmas. Referring to sensationalist depictions of black male characters in a number of 1920s novels, including *Nigger Heaven,* Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* (1928), and Wallace Thurman's *The Blacker the Berry* (1929), Arden summarizes, "It is clear that by the end of the 1920s a stereotyped Negro of Harlem had been created, acknowledged, and assumed; his existence seemed confined to drink, sex, gambling, and brooding about racial matters, with an edge of violence always in view" ("The Early Harlem Novel," 112).

14. Perkins ("'Ah Just Cant Quit Thinking'") describes precisely the effect I am attributing to Faulkner in several ways with this novel, as with *Sanctuary.* The use of the razor in Joe's characterization, that is, immediately associates him with a range of popular cultural depictions of race. As a result, *Light in August* combines these popular, "low" cultural elements with Faulkner's willfully modernist, "high"-art strategies.

15. See also Martha Banta's fascinating article, "The Razor, the Pistol, and the Ideology of Race Etiquette." In it, she points to the way political discourse and cultural representations functioned in the North, and in particular in the early New York weekly, *Life* (which began in 1893 and is distinguished from Henry Luce's famous national glossy founded in 1936), to produce an ideology of manners that included codes for all forms of social behavior—including violence. Banta's essay has enormous interest for my analysis of *Light in August;* however, its treatment of American military history at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries as well as the influx of ethnic immigration in the same period as spurs to northern racist ideology are beyond the purview of my argument here. Her discussion of codes of violence, though, includes Faulkner's "renditions of how one's existential sense of social 'placement' is expressed by the choice of weapons used at those moments when the rules of etiquette governing one party's ideology of race relationships comes into conflict with another's code" (203). Joe's dilemma over whether to use his razor or Joanna's gun reflects, in Banta's analysis, one such "existential" moment in the novel with which Faulkner, no less than Joe, is struggling.

16. Faulkner's account of Joe's wandering echoes the historical fact of the Great Migration and injects a decidedly urban series of place names into his otherwise mythical Yoknapatawpha: "The street ran into Oklahoma and Missouri and as far south as Mexico and back north to Chicago and Detroit and then back south again and at last to Mississippi. It was fifteen years long" (563).

17. Hugh Ruppersburg points to the advent of cover art of this type in the "Spicy" pulp series as well as in *Black Mask* (*Reading Faulkner:* Light in August, 67). See also Tony Goodstone's anthology and its reproductions of those designs, *The Pulps.*

18. My account of this moment of interpellation or "hailing" by an objective, outside source in Joe's magazine draws on Althusser's model for ideology formation ("Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"). Though it is not clear what racial categories, if any, exist in the story Joe reads, Joe's subjectivity as well as his perceived social position are heavily mediated by dominant forms of ideology, as the language in this scene and subsequent events in the novel make clear. Whatever he imbibes in the detective stories, their effect seems to place Joe's subject position *outside* mainstream culture and as the perpetrator of a violent crime.

19. Faulkner's invoking of the novel genre in the context of Joe's reading a detective magazine implies at least the possibility of a similar comparison between Joe's reading matter and that of Faulkner's readers: *Light in August.* We may, then, also read the comparison in reverse, taking this reference as a cue to read Faulkner's novel "as if it were a detective magazine"—an approach I suggest in my later discussion of the novel's generic elements.

20. In this respect Joe strikingly resembles other Faulkner characters from the decade—notably the Tall Convict of *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem.*

21. In ways that differ somewhat from my reading, Burgess describes the resemblance of Joe's identity to Minnie Cooper's in "Dry September." For her, both are cinematically defined by their objectification: "Like Minnie Cooper, Joe occupies the position of the romantic heroine of narrative cinema, contemplating fatalistically his own abandonment to some external and authoritative gaze" ("Watching Jefferson Watching," 104).

22. Narrative cinema, that is, has a tendency to assert its illusory world as real and with a certain insistence of verisimilitude. Because telling Joe's story involves a con-

tinual tracking of him, an authoritative observation, as in this passage, I here conflate the functions of voice and eye. Faulkner's "silencing" of the action and hence of his narrator (who nevertheless speaks), is also suggested in moments that show the other senses abrogated by vision—as we saw in the fire scene. Alfred Kazin describes the novel as "curiously soundless" ("The Stillness of *Light in August,* 527). For a consideration of the overlapping functions of narration and looking in Faulkner's technique, see Hugh Ruppersburg, *Voice and Eye in Faulkner's Fiction* (10, 31–33).

23. In a manner that anticipates my later argument, it is worth pointing out that the dominant gaze that fixes and constructs Joe, in addition to being identified here with popular culture, also follows from his white male author. Though Faulkner's depiction of Joe reflects critically on commercial cultural effects and practices, we will see how Faulkner himself performs a similar manner of differentiating or defining him.

24. My reading of these sections of Joe's story is influenced by Hayden White's discussion of the modernist interrogation of the event. He describes the way in which, in Woolf's *Between the Acts,* Isabella Oliver's action of reading "leaks into" another physical event, "endowing it with a sinister, phantasmagoric aspect" ("The Modernist Event," 29). White goes on to say that when "events flow out of their outlines and flow out of the narrative as well [,] the effect of the representation is to endow *all* events with spectral qualities" (29). For White, that effect links modernist literary practice to film. It is this spectral "spreading" of Faulkner's narration of Joe at key moments that lends another filmic quality to his narration.

25. Philip Weinstein reads this section of Faulkner's novel (and modernist practice generally) as cinematic because of what he regards as its uncanny (what he terms "unlawful") treatments of space. Weinstein discussed Faulkner's spatial descriptions and Joe's movement as examples of modernism's cinematic affinities in "Anxious Knowledge: Modern Subjects in Uncanny Space," plenary address to the meeting of the Modernist Studies Association, Pennsylvania State University, October 8, 1999.

26. It is important to acknowledge here the role in my analysis of this element of suspicion. Since the novel's publication, readers and critics alike have presumed Christmas's role in Joanna's death, a reading that the book certainly encourages and that, given Faulkner's own references to Joe's act of killing her, seems reasonable. At least one critic, however, raises questions about the substance of Joe's guilt. Steven Meats, in an article titled "Who Killed Joanna Burden?" elaborates a theory of Joe's innocence that points to several gaps in readers' knowledge of events surrounding the crime. In particular, Meats looks at Faulkner's elision of the actual murder and the circumstantial quality of the evidence against Joe; he also raises questions about Joe Brown's shaky, self-interested testimony the evening of the fire. Additionally, Meats speculates, somewhat whimsically, about Joe's response to Joanna's aborted firing of the gun and suggests a reaction like instinctive self-defense that would have pre-empted Joe's act of killing her (273–75). Much of the book militates against Meats's analysis, however, including Joe's motive in a kind of despairing hatred and his possession of what appears to be the murder weapon—details that Meats acknowledges (275). Without replaying fully the terms of his analysis, I raise Meats's essay for its use pointing up readers' perhaps overly credulous response to the prospect of Christmas as Joanna's murderer. As we will see, assuming Joe as guilty reveals an uncomfortable fact about the novels' readers: their complicity with the racist dimension of many of the characters' thinking. In the discussion that follows, I demonstrate that much of the text's

power is drawn from these assumptions, a fact that Faulkner's narrative operations put into play.

27. See Martin Kreiswirth, "Plots and Counterplots: The Structure of *Light in August,*" (69). In *Faulkner and the Novelistic Imagination,* Robert Dale Parker also comments on Faulkner's use of generic strategies, both the mystery and the detective story, in initiating the murder narrative (88, 90–92).

28. In this respect, the novel emphasizes what Robert Champigny describes as the "ludic" aspect of the mystery genre: "Mystery stories are designed to sharpen the ludic interest. Either from the start or gradually, they delimit the content of the ending while keeping its particulars in the dark. As he reads the text for the first time, the reader is incited to wonder about not just what will happen but also what will have happened" (*What Will Have Happened,* 5). Part of that "wonder" in *Light in August,* I suggest, includes a vague anxiety or even dread that colors the reading of a novel set in the Jim Crow South and that, in its opening chapters, discloses a plot about the murder of a white woman by a character assumed to be black. In a way that anticipates my later account of the ideological and more troubling effects of Faulkner's novel, I should also here suggest that Christmas's story possesses an element peculiar to narrative generally. As Teresa de Lauretis has pointed out, desire inevitably plays a role in readers' or viewers' experience of narrative. Tracing the development in narrative theory away from the pure emphasis in early semiotics on the "logic, grammar, or a formal rhetoric of narrative" toward an understanding of the "structuring and destructuring, even destructive processes at work in textual and semiotic production," de Lauretis points to the agency of desire in our experience of, and constituting by, narrative operations (*Alice Doesn't*, 103–5). That desire, she suggests, possesses connections to aggressive, even sadistic impulses, structures of feeling and cathected desire that I submit also motivate readers' ongoing engagement with Christmas's story.

29. It also carries with it a sense of deathliness that Walter Benjamin, in his essay "The Storyteller," suggests is particularly novelistic. "The nature of a character in a novel," he writes, "cannot be presented any better than is done in [the] statement, which says that the 'meaning' of his life is revealed only in his death. . . . Therefore the reader must, no matter what, know in advance that he will share their experience of death: if need be their figurative death—the end of the novel—but preferably their actual one. How do the characters make him understand that death is already waiting for them . . . ? That is the question that feeds the reader's consuming interest in the events of the novel" (101). If ever a character appeared in a novel who makes readers understand that death is waiting for him, that character is Joe Christmas.

30. Kreiswirth comments on this moment, suggesting that "The question of murder now becomes subordinate to that of race and identity" ("Plots and Counterplots," 73) and, elsewhere, that "the ramifications" of Christmas's supposed mixed race "come to dominate, disturb, and ultimately deform the text" (72). Judith Wittenberg also hints at what I think is involved in Faulkner's attention to and manipulation of the detail of Christmas's race. Referring to Joe Brown's revelation and the sheriff's credulous response, she says, "In almost parodic fashion, race proves more important than murder and hearsay is quickly accepted as fact" ("Race in *Light in August,*" 159). Though she does not indicate what, exactly, Faulkner parodies, I suggest that at least one backdrop for the crime story Brown tells are the pop culture stories and images of blacks that, prior to the novel, had entertained or frightened audiences.

31. This is a variation of Meats's argument in "Who Killed Joanna Burden?" in which he indicates that Brown is able to divert the sheriff's suspicion onto Christmas by claiming that Joe is black (272). The most important part of Meats's approach, however, is his point about readers' willingness, like the characters in the novel, to take for granted Christmas's guilt: "[A]ny person, the sheriff or the reader, judging from evidence we are given *in the novel,* should conclude that Joe Christmas's guilt is an assumption and nothing more . . . [T]his assumption . . . proves something which Faulkner may have been trying to point out. 'Man knows so little about his fellows' (*Light in August,* 433), and yet on the basis of this insufficient knowledge all of us—the sheriff, Gavin Stevens, Percy Grimm, the community, the reader—are more than ready to pass judgment" (277). I contend that the reason for this readiness is Christmas's assumed racial identity as well as readers' exposure to popular depictions of racialized images of crime.

32. We might also call this a form of narrative "guilt." Though it engages readers' longing for suspense or drama, the novel's use of sensationalized violence also capitalizes on their underlying attitudes about race. It is this complicity or susceptibility, which emerges alongside the novel's compelling mystery, that Faulkner is interested in exposing.

33. In its manner of depicting Christmas and of manipulating the reader, the novel offers a version of what Peter Brooks calls the "animating component of (narrative) desire." Echoing, while also inverting de Lauretis's claims for the subjectivizing element of narrative, Brooks states: "Narratives portray the motors of desire that drive and consume their plots, and they also lay bare the nature of narration as a form of human desire: the need to tell as a primary human drive that seeks to seduce and to subjugate the listener, to implicate him in the thrust of a desire that can never quite speak its name" (*Reading For The Plot,* 61). Brooks's perspective on narrative desire sees it perform a subjugating of its audience. Considering the role of agency, which Brooks in this statement leaves unconsidered but which in the case of *Light in August* clearly excludes Joe, my own perspective is closer to that of de Lauretis cited earlier. Through its narrative strategies, that is, Faulkner's novel pointedly reveals that narrative desire's "name." In his descriptions of the murder and the townspeople's reaction to it, as well as in his manner of constructing a mystery out of Joe's narrative, Faulkner shows the nature of the desire of the crime story's different audiences—both the townspeople and the novel's readers.

34. Burgess, "Watching Jefferson Watching," 109.

35. If Christmas is perceived (or constructed) as threatening in this scene, that threat nevertheless is diffused or absorbed into the narrative's eventual subduing of him.

36. Using Balzac as a reference point, Miller states, "On the side of perspicacity, Balzac's omniscient narration assumes a fully panoptic view of the world it places under surveillance. Nothing worth knowing escapes its notation" (*The Novel and the Police,* 23). Yet Balzacian omniscience also fabricates its own limits. *Pere Goriot,* Miller points out, opens with an exhaustive list of the physical space of the *maison Vauquer;* when the narration moves to treating the novel's characters, on the other hand, it falters. But this constructed gap in knowledge is more apparent than real. "[T]he 'origin' of narrative [in *Pere Goriot*] in a cognitive gap also indicates to what end narrative will be directed. Substituting a temporal mode of mastery for a spatial one, Balzac's 'drama' will achieve the same full knowledge of character that has already been

acquired of habitat" (26). Faulkner's "drama," like Balzac's, will (and does) furnish the information about Christmas that here, at its outset, it is "missing."

37. As Miller describes it, this is an ideological effect that is peculiar to the novel form. Referring to his own shift in conceiving of omniscience as a policing element of novels (from earlier conceptions of it, for instance Flaubert's, as God-like), Miller writes, "It doesn't matter finally whether we gloss panoptical narration as a kind of providence or as a kind of police. . . . What matters is that the faceless gaze becomes an ideal of the power of regulation" (24). We will see the full implication of Miller's thinking in my discussion of the novel's later efforts to "regulate" or position Joe, as well as the connection of such efforts to the novel's violent ending.

38. James Snead similarly sees the reader's involvement in producing "arbitrary codes of dominance" such as those the text parodies in Kennedy. He says of the novel's manipulation of omniscience: "In *Light in August* Faulkner diverges from Fielding's omniscient narrators or Conrad's and James's unreliable ones by exposing omniscience as unreliability. The unreliability is an active deception. There is no deficiency, of either intelligence or perspicacity: the narrator is actively creating error. Society here turns arbitrary codes of dominance into 'fact.' To make matters worse, the reader helps accomplish the entire process" (*Figures of Division,* 85). It is this apparently "factual" quality to the black man's guilt in this scene (or that of African Americans generally), I suggest, that Faulkner's novel exposes as "arbitrary codes of dominance."

39. The matron's reactions to the dietician's "discovery" of Joe's "blackness" reveals this aspect of the orphanage and its bureaucratic efficiency at dealing with perceived differences among its charges. Without questioning the veracity of the dietician's story, she moves decisively: " 'We must place him. We must place him at once. What applications have we? If you will hand me the file. . . ' " (499).

40. Michel Foucault's account of the workings of the panoptic model includes all of these institutions, each of which figure in Faulkner's description of the building, as well as a reference to the extension of institutional gazing that applies well to Hines: "Heads or deputy-heads of 'families,' monitors and foremen had to live in close proximity to the inmates; their clothes were 'almost as humble' as those of the inmates themselves; they practically never left their side, observing them day and night" (*Discipline and Punish,* 295). In his discussion of Foucault's model of the Panopticon, Martin Jay describes this internalizing of the gaze. "Here [in the institution] the external look becomes an internalized and self-regulating mechanism that extends the old religious preoccupation with the smallest detail that was still immense 'in the eye of God' " (*Downcast Eyes,* 410). Jay's reference to Foucault's originary model in Christian theology and to God's surveilling eye resembles Hines's fanatical invocation to the dietician, his idea that her discovery of Christmas was "a sign and a damnation for bitchery" (493). Though not practical in this discussion, Joe's eventual adoption by McEachern and his rigid disciplining of Joe to learn the Christian catechism and to convert him to a strict Calvinist moral regimen further suggests the relevance to this novel of Foucauldian models of training the subject.

41. The opening of Dickens's novel bears much in common, imagistically, with Faulkner's description of the orphanage: "LONDON. Michaelmas term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. Implacable November weather . . . Smoke lowering from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snow-flakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the

death of the sun" (49). Though for different reasons than I do, Kreiswirth also finds an implicit connection between *Light in August* and *Bleak House.* In a rigorous reader-response analysis, he suggests that the various, unrelated strands of plot in Faulkner's novel, like those in *Bleak House,* produce an impression of "assimilation," or at the least, a longing for it: "*Light in August* . . . goes only so far in this direction. It pushes the reader toward a system of meaning, but then questions, subverts, and finally, unlike *Bleak House,* deconstructs it, replacing it with another system—only then to repeat the process once again" ("Plots and Counterplots," 70). This "deconstruction" or replacing one "system of meaning" with another, we will see, is the process of appearing to break down the novel's system of surveillance. The system put into its place is the effort to trace, against the grain of the novel's obscurity, the proper textual and social space for its protagonist.

42. My reading of this aspect of *Light in August* has been influenced by D. A. Miller's treatment of Dickens. Of particular interest is Miller's discussion of the fact that in Dickens's novels, institutions such as the orphanage (and the prison, the factory, etc.) serve as gathering places for those subjects for which that other major institution of social organizing—the family—cannot answer.

43. Referring to *Oliver Twist,* Miller cites Mr. Brownlow's cautionary advice to Oliver about his behavior and comportment as the stipulation for remaining in his home. " 'You need not be afraid of my deserting you [to Fagin's gang],' " Mr. Brownlow tells Oliver, " 'unless you give me cause.' " As Miller says of this moment in the novel, "The price of Oliver's deliverance from the carceral (either as the workhouse or as Fagin's gang) would be his absolute submission to the norms, protocols, and regulations of the middle-class family" (*The Novel and the Police,* 59). It is the affinity that both Dickens and Faulkner have for exposing the workings of socially ordering, subtly coercive institutions like the family or the law that Miller's approach to the novel form facilitates.

44. Michael Rogin cites Seymour Stern's record of this portion of the movie. See his " 'The Sword Became a Flashing Vision' " (175).

45. The beliefs that Griffith's film demonstrates were not, regrettably, limited to their representation in popular culture but were in fact quite real in Faulkner's lifetime. L. O. Reddick cites the rise in national statistics for membership in the Ku Klux Klan in the period following *Birth of a Nation* ("Educational Programs for the Improvement of Race Relations," 372). More specifically, Michael Rogin cites examples of the lynching and mutilation of southern blacks for sexual crimes in the first decades of the twentieth century. He points to a bold-print newspaper headline from Alabama from 1934 declaring that a black man was to be "MUTILATED AND SET AFIRE" in "EXTRA-LEGAL VENGEANCE" (" 'The Sword Became a Flashing Vision,' " 175). Faulkner's own experience with lynching was itself painfully, vividly direct. In 1909 he witnessed a crowd's lynching and castrating of a black man, Nelse Patton, for the murder of a white woman in Oxford (Blotner 1984, 32). This experience, I expect, marked Faulkner in ways that manifest themselves in *Light in August.* Thus, the novel critiques actual events of violence that occurred in Faulkner's lifetime as well as cultural phenomena and stereotypical thinking about race that contributed to that violence.

46. Wittenberg's essay "Race in *Light in August*" points to the way in which verbal classificatory systems in the novel such as those practiced by McEachern with the catechism move metonymically to acts of violence in ways that reflect on the text's own

efforts to "pinion" Christmas's elusive identity (152–55). She also claims, as I do, that the novel's mystery and fluidity surrounding Joe's racial identity serves to intensify readers' efforts to fix it: "Despite the invisibility of his imputed blackness, Faulkner's Joe Christmas is also pinioned by this distorted racial frame. . . . But essentially as indeterminate as Christmas may be, both the operations of the Symbolic order into which he is inscribed at an early age and a series of textual strategies serve to define and 'frame' him" (152–53).

47. The term is Carolyn Porter's. See her *Seeing and Being,* 252.

48. Porter sees a kind of deathliness to this silence and the siren that is encompassed by it. Life, in her materialist reading of the novel, is represented by the transmission of concrete bodily effects like hearing (and figured in the text by sounds such as the town's church bells or insects shrilling in the night). The emphasis on vision and soundless-ness in Christmas's final scene denies that sense of real, felt vitality. As she puts it: "To transcend the realm of hearing is to die" (*Seeing and Being,* 252).

49. See André Bleikasten, "*Light in August:* The Closed Society and Its Subjects."

CHAPTER THREE: "Some Trashy Myth of Reality's Escape"

1. The critical commentary on Faulkner and film is extensive, and though much of it is biographical, several critics take a more theoretical approach. Bruce Kawin's is the most comprehensive work on Faulkner's relationship both to Hollywood and to what he calls "the film idea," and his arguments about Faulkner, narrative structure, the visual construction of narrative, and montage in "The Montage Element in Faulkner's Fiction" (103–26) address similar concerns as those in the discussion that follows. John T. Matthews points to strategies in Faulkner's short fiction of "dissent" toward the film industry's approach to genres such as the war movie (see "Faulkner and the Culture Industry," 51–74), a claim I will be making about *Absalom, Absalom* and films of history. Miranda Burgess, in her reading of film and *Light in August* argues that in that novel Faulkner "self-consciously evokes the structuring of history by the tropes of romance (and especially by that specifically twentieth-century manifestation of ro-mance, the 'narrative cinema')" ("Watching Jefferson Watching," 99). Alan Spiegal describes the influence of Hollywood on *Sanctuary,* suggesting that, in addition to simulating the gangster genre, the novel emulates or reproduces film's "photographic space" in its own spatial descriptions: "The entire narrative surface of the novel seems to have been composed not just with any camera eye but with a specifically American camera eye" (*Fiction and the Camera Eye,* 156). All of these approaches take a more fruitful approach to Faulkner's cinematic imagination and its implications for under-standing his fiction than earlier, more literal readings of Faulkner's relation to film. Joseph Urgo, for example, argues in "*Absalom, Absalom!* The Movie" for a resemblance to Hollywood story meetings in the novel's "collaborative" acts of storytelling. In "Faulkner and the Silent Film," Jeffrey Folks suggests that Faulkner's depiction of silent, "histrionic" gestures on the part of his characters as well as his use of generic elements was a response to his experience watching silent film. See as well the recent issue of the *Faulkner Journal* devoted to this issue, "Faulkner and Film," edited by Edwin T. Arnold (Fall 2000/Spring 2001).

2. The reference in *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* appears in the context of a passage describing Charlotte and Wilbourne's trip from Utah on a bus. Wilbourne sees Char-

lotte asleep next to him, "her head tilted back against the machine-made doily, her face in profile against the dark fleeing snow-free countryside and the little lost towns, the neon, the lunch rooms with broad strong Western girls got up out of Hollywood magazines (Hollywood which is no longer in Hollywood but is stippled by a billion feet of colored gas across the face of the American earth) to resemble Joan Crawford" (636). Referring to the mass-produced, cheaply sold doilies on the headrests, Faulkner associates this product with Hollywood's product—in the figure of Joan Crawford, as well as in the Hollywood magazines. Hollywood's cultural imperialism, as well, is implicit in the passage. The other reference, in *Pylon,* is even more damning: "[L]ooking out through the falling snow she saw a kind of cenotaph, penurious and without majesty or dignity, of forlorn and victorious desolation—a bungalow, a tight flimsy mass of stoops and porte-cochères and flat gables and bays not five years old and built in that colored mud-and-chickenwire tradition which California moving picture films have scattered across North America as if the celluloid carried germs" (984).

3. Pointing to the popularity of war films in the 1930s, Matthews observes that one of Faulkner's own war-time stories, "Turnabout," includes references to the movies that imply Faulkner's awareness of the story's "filmability." In response to these references, Matthews suggests that "[Faulkner's] war story was already thinking self-critically about itself as a movie" (65)—a gesture I believe *Absalom* also makes, in an even more sustained and programmatic way ("Faulkner and the Culture Industry").

4. Faulkner's brother Murry indicates that Faulkner saw silent films regularly when growing up in Oxford. According to Murry, he and William went to the movies as often as they could, and typically the fare they took in were popular genre pictures like Westerns (*The Falkners of Mississippi,* 49–50).

5. In this discussion I have used Edward D. C. Campbell's cultural history, *The Celluloid South.* Campbell offers a comprehensive survey of the popular cultural forms and materials that led to the reception, in the first decades of the twentieth century, of film as a medium that extended the national susceptibility to the Old South myth. See especially the chapter "The Growth of Mythology," 10–15. It is also worth recalling in this context the other depictions of loyal or childish (and hence reassuring) slaves from early film history discussed in chapter 2.

6. Griffith's film would have been extremely difficult for anyone from the South to avoid, especially someone like Faulkner with an interest in representations of its history. Its release in 1915 was widely heralded—and reviled—and it was the highest grossing, most well-attended movie of its time and for the next quarter-century. It was also re-released in 1930, at a point much closer to the period in which Faulkner wrote his major novels, including *Absalom, Absalom!* Early in his life, Faulkner saw the theatrical version of a combination of *The Clansman* with Dixon's other pro-South, secessionist work, *The Leopard's Spots* (Blotner 1974, 1:115). Complete with a troop of horses on stage and ads featuring hooded horsemen, the production familiarized Faulkner with both the rhetoric and the imagery that informed Griffith's adaptation.

7. Griffith quoted in Michael Rogin, " 'The Sword Became a Flashing Vision': D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation,*" 150.

8. One of Griffith's most ardent admirers and an equally influential early filmmaker, the Russian formalist Sergei Eisenstein, was intensely committed to the political as well as aesthetic efficacy of location shooting. Filming his historical epic *The Battleship Potemkin* in Odessa in 1925, Eisenstein reportedly planned one of the most celebrated

sequences in film history—the massacre on the Odessa steps—after being struck by the atmosphere of the scene. In doing so, Eisenstein claimed, he was swept up with the same "spontaneous" fervor that motivated the actual revolutionaries of his story. See James Goodwin, *Eisenstein, Cinema, and History,* 59–60.

9. One of the reasons for the film's impact on audiences had to do with Griffith's scrupulous and detailed reproduction of key battle scenes, elaborate stagings that included actual Civil War–era uniforms, weaponry, and troop formations. Describing his approach to film realism and comparing it to that of theatre, Griffith wrote, "On the stage these so-called 'effects' are imitations at best. In the film play we show the actual occurrence and are not hampered by the size of our stage or the number of people we can crowd into the scene. If our story traverses to the battlefield we show an actual battlefield. If it means that 10,000 people were part of the conflict we engage 10,000 people, rehearse them in minute detail, and when we are ready we show you that scene as realistically as if you were looking down from a hilltop and watching an engagement of contending forces" ("The Future of the Two-Dollar Movie," 100). Of course, this thinking explains and anticipates the financial ruin—and critical scorn—Griffith incurred when he went on to film his historical epic *Intolerance* (1918) with thousands of extras and at a record cost for movies at that time. Nonetheless, it helps explain the remarkable avidity with which early viewers of his films, particularly *Birth of a Nation*, accepted his screen images as "real." Robert A. Armour has written of Griffith, "He knew that his medium had the potential for documentary effects even though he had never heard the word *documentary* applied to film" ("History Written in Jagged Lightning," 15). Thus the film's "alternative" to history appears ironic, predicated as it was on a formal realism that served to undermine its story's historical accuracy and truth.

10. Janet Staiger, "*The Birth of a Nation:* Considering Its Reception," 196.

11. The number of lynchings annually peaked in the 1890s at approximately 154; their occurrence declined in the early decades of the century, but only as a result of the disenfranchisement of blacks and the institutionalizing of racism in the South.

12. In his discussion of the reaction to *Birth of a Nation,* Michael Rogin describes the perspective of white northerners: "The rapid transformations of the North after the Civil War generated compensatory celebrations of the antebellum South. At the same time, the massive influx of immigrants from Southern and eastern Europe . . . created Northern sympathy for Southern efforts to control an indispensable but [supposedly] racially inferior labor force . . . When the Southern race problem became national, the national problem was displaced back onto the South in a way that made the South not a defeated part of the American past but a prophecy of its future" (" 'The Sword Became a Flashing Vision,' " 153–54).

13. United States Immigration Commission Report to the 61st Congress, 3rd Session, *Senate Document, No. 747;* quoted in Oscar Handlin, *Immigration as a Factor in American History,* 53–56.

14. In the first decades of the century, the concentrated ownership of property and means of production had become a source of popular concern and a defining political issue. As Lary May describes this element of responses to the film, "*The Birth of a Nation* touched a sensitive political nerve. In its message, the film called for an alliance of the common folk from the formerly warring sections to overthrow a tyranny based on Northern commercial corruption. This was indeed a relevant theme for the Democratic constituency in 1914" ("Apocalyptic Cinema," 45).

15. In his landmark study of German cinema, Siegfried Kracauer made nearly the same observation about the impact of historical films on the German national consciousness. Silent post–World War I films such as *Passion* (1919) and *Danton* (1921) cast the history of Germany's enemies, specifically France, in a negative light, altering events from the French Revolution in order to galvanize German audiences and distract them from their own more troubled past. "Designed for mass consumption," Kracauer writes of these movies, they "represent[ed] not so much historic periods as personal appetites and [they] . . . seiz[ed] upon history for the sole purpose of removing it thoroughly from the field of vision" (*From Caligari to Hitler,* 53; 52).

16. Peter Noble discusses these aspects of the film and the varied reactions to it in *The Negro in Film*s, 51–54.

17. There was other strenuous and vocal resistance to the early filmic depiction of blacks. Significantly, those objections came most often from black viewers who, like Robeson, understood all too well the inconsistencies between Hollywood film and real historical experience. Voicing those objections as well as the concern over the racial violence they feared a movie like *Birth* would incite, the newly formed NAACP in 1915 initiated a national movement to oppose exhibition of the film (see Staiger, "*The Birth of a Nation:* Considering Its Reception," 196–205). In the 1920s a vibrant culture of black cinema supported the careers of artists like Robeson and Oscar Micheaux. Micheaux's work, in particular his 1919 "answer" to *Birth of a Nation, Within Our Gates,* showed a resistance to the general celebration of films like Griffith's. Although it flourished in the black communities, especially in northern cities, the African-American movement was a decidedly alternative cinema; its impact could not have hoped to offer a block to white audiences' consumption of racial stereotypes and historical revision. See Jane Gaines, "Fire and Desire: Race, Melodrama, and Oscar Micheaux."

18. This was a conception that Faulkner specifically rejected in his novel's depiction of slave owning. Sutpen's violent subjugation of his slaves—evident in their manacled arrival in Jefferson (6) and his bloody contests with them in the ring (23)—as well as his "captive" architect offer a more authentic image of the rigorously coercive practices of slave ownership than the pacific vision of slavery offered by film.

19. Douglas Baldwin raises a provocative question about the connection between Faulkner's skepticism about film and his verbal experiment. He points to Faulkner's understanding of film's realist dimensions as capable of corrupting the popular imagination: "Faulkner's fiction repeatedly refers to Hollywood as a corrupt center of commercial film production whose cultural influence was spreading dangerously across the imagination of the continent. . . . The unspoken subtext to this imagery is Faulkner's own awareness of the increased cultural authority Hollywood's products were gaining as . . . 'accurate representations of life'; this occurred just as Faulkner (and other American modernists) were struggling with the very aesthetic and philosophical concept of verbal representation itself" ("Putting Images into Words," 37).

20. The effect on a reader that I am describing stands as an example of the kind of reaction Roland Barthes declares that he has to all writing: "I have a disease: I *see* language. . . . Hearing deviates to scopia: I feel myself to be the visionary and voyeur of language" (*Roland Barthes,* 161).

21. Fredric Jameson's assessment of what Barthes calls the "scriptible" resembles my approach to Rosa. Challenging language's cognitive function, Jameson refers to exam-

ples of writing that insist on language's sensory aspect. "[W]hat is scriptible indeed is the visual or the musical, what corresponds to the two outside senses that tug at language between themselves and dispute its peculiarly unphysical attention, its short circuit of the senses for the mind itself that makes of the mysterious thing reading some superstitious and adult power, which the lowlier arts imagine uncomprehendingly, as animals might dream of the strangeness of human thinking. . . . [T]his is why the more advanced and rationalized activity can also have its dream of the other, and regress to a longing for the more immediately sensory, wishing it could pass altogether over into the visual, or be sublimated into the spiritual body of pure sound" (*Signatures of the Visible,* 2). Like much of *Absalom* in its capacity to enrapture and its linguistic excess, the prose in Rosa's section clearly suggests its "dream of the other," its rejection of the specifically rational function of language for something irrational and sensory and the wish, potentially, to "pass altogether over into the visual."

22. In his description of "hieroglyphic" writing, Adorno offers a provocative account of film viewing that helps explain what I call the "filmic" effect of reading Rosa's voice. "While the images of film and television strive to conjure up those that are buried in the viewer and indeed resemble them, they also, in their manner of flashing up and gliding past, approach the effect of writing: they are grasped but not contemplated. The eye is pulled along by the shot as it is by the printed line and in the gentle jolt of the cut a page is turned" (Adorno, "Prolog zum Fernsehen," quoted and translated in Miriam Hansen, "Mass Culture as Hieroglyphic Writing: Adorno, Derrida, Kracauer," 86). I offer a similar reading of Faulkner's writing with Rosa—though I do so in reverse of Adorno's effort here.

23. A range of film theoretical approaches is useful here. Stephen Heath points up the unique force of the film image, referring to the "moment of sheer jubilation *in* the image (the spectator 'fluid, elastic, expanding')" (*Questions of Cinema,* 87). Kracauer claims that the "psychophysical correspondences" of random material details experienced when watching film place the viewer in a kind of reverie. Of this mesmerizing aspect of film he writes, "It is as if [film images] urged [the viewer] through their sheer presence unthinkingly to assimilate their indeterminate and often amorphous patterns" (*Theory of Film,* 158).

24. Faulkner's awareness of this manner of presenting southern history in popular narrative, both fiction and film, was evident in his statement in an early letter describing his interests in *Absalom:* "I use [Quentin's] bitterness which he has projected on the South in the form of hatred of it and its people to get more out of the story itself than a historical novel would be. To keep the hoop skirts and plug hats out, you might say" (*SL* 79).

25. Using Freud's formulations of loss and recovery from *Mourning and Melancholia,* Moreland suggests that Freud's assessment was "eventually taken much further by Faulkner" (*Faulkner and Modernism,* 28).

26. In describing Rosa's incapacity to move beyond her longing for a "pre-Sutpen" period, Moreland writes, "Thus Rosa in her 'eternal black' seems . . . one more example of a widespread, melancholic nostalgia for an idealized, prewar South" (29).

27. "Introduction" to *The Photographic History of the Civil War,* 16; quoted in Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs,* 79.

28. Describing this perspective, Handlin observes, "The war had been a great pag-

eant, in which the feats of the worthy ancestors of the people who looked back on it had never been marred by dishonor or betrayal, and which had led to the glorious end of the Union strengthened" ("The Civil War as Symbol and as Actuality," 136).

29. Trachtenberg's comments appear in the context of his account of the resurgence of interest in Matthew Brady in the thirties, a popularity, he suggests, that was based in a large-scale forgetfulness about the real causes (and effects) of the war (*Reading American Photographs,* 231). That romantic depictions of the Civil War continued to exert a powerful hold on the public imagination through the thirties was evident in the phenomenal success of both Margaret Mitchell's own novel of the South, *Gone With the Wind,* and David O. Selznik's film version of it.

30. Kawin implies a connection between the opening of *Absalom* and silent film through the language Faulkner uses to describe Quentin's (and the reader's) first encounter with Sutpen. He refers to the montage-like effects of Faulkner's use of oxymoron, the "collision" of language that characterizes phrases describing Sutpen and his slaves, such as "quiet thunderclap," "wild and reposed," and "peaceful conquest." As Kawin puts it, "one of the first and most arresting things that happens in *Absalom* is that the tensions of language embattled against itself (in dialectics, in oxymoron . . .) result in the *vanishing* of language and the appearance of the figure of Sutpen as an image in Quentin's mind's eye, an inner theatre which is, significantly, as silent as the films of his period" ("The Montage Element of Faulkner's Fiction," 123).

31. Though not for the magazines, and not merely for a new gown or a new chair, but more likely to meet the mortgage on Rowan Oak, his estate, Faulkner himself sought to capitalize on the market for southern narrative in the thirties. He did so, as well, with an eye on a specifically visual medium, proposing to his agent that he sell the screen rights to *Absalom* (letter to Morton Goldman, September 1936, [*SL* 96]). In this way Faulkner seems to have become the writer Quentin did not.

32. Unlike Rosa, as well as Shreve, Quentin earlier in the book offers an alternative to the romanticizing of southern narrative. This occurs in his endeavor to explain—and to understand—the basis for Sutpen's design in the complicated connection between racial, social, and economic hierarchies in the South when he narrates the story of Sutpen's "fall" into class consciousness, his rejection by Pettibone's servant at the door, and the decisive event of Sutpen's life: "He went to the West Indies" (184–97). Although ultimately his voice is suppressed by Shreve's, in this prior section Quentin offers the novel's clearest resistance to the other narrators' denials of history.

33. Collen E. Donnelly, "Compelled to Believe: Historiography and Truth in *Absalom, Absalom!,* 118; Robert Dale Parker, *Faulkner and the Novelistic Imagination,* 129, 139. This reference to the cinematic nature of this section of chapter 8 is Noel Polk's, and he bases it on his work with Faulkner's manuscripts for *Absalom*. In editing the manuscripts for the Random House "Corrected Text" edition of the novel, the version used by the Library of America, Polk notes that this section of the novel resembles Faulkner's film scripts from the same period: "As in his movie scripts, Faulkner formats this section of the novel by maintaining all of his margins flush left. Faulkner uses this format to suggest that this section is more visual than verbal, that Quentin and Shreve have finally surrendered their individual voices to a cinematic and virtually silent narration" (phone interview, 10 June 2001).

34. Jean Pierre Oudart, "Cinema and Suture," 35–47. Since its appearance, there has been considerable debate surrounding the notion of suture. Recent studies, such as

Richard Allen's *Projecting Illusion,* provide a background and contextualizing for the suture "argument" (see 34–39). Daniel Dayan, for example, points to the shot-reverse shot sequence as only one of several determinations of film narrative ("The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema," 31), a point on which Heath elaborates (*Questions of Cinema,* 92–93). I have placed the three theorists together here, despite their differences in approach, in order to provide an account of suture as a model that is comprehensive as well as apt to the narrative movement of Faulkner's text.

35. Dayan describes the central and constitutive role played in film by exchanges of characters' glances, a directionality of the gaze that viewers in turn take up in fashioning narrative. The shot in film is "an image designed and organized not merely as an object that is seen, but as the glance of a subject" ("The Tutor-Code of Classical Cinema," 28).

36. In a far more immediate proximity, but no less emphatic in its stress on the activity of looking, the scene between Sutpen and Henry in the tent hinges on the lingering stare shared between a father and his estranged son. Leading up to what might be one of the emotional climaxes of the book, when Sutpen lays eyes on Henry for the first time in four years and "*holds [Henry's] face between his hands, looking at it*" (291), this scene first shows Henry enter the tent, focalizing through his perspective when he salutes the man he does not yet realize is his father. Registering Henry's vague perception in the tent at night of "*a gray sleeve with colonel's braid on it, one bearded cheek, a jutting nose, a shaggy droop of iron-riddled hair*" (290), Faulkner's narration stresses the visual details Henry apprehends and that lend irony to this moment, if not also perhaps the only poignant image of Sutpen in the book. This insistence on characters' meaningful acts of seeing, in fact, pervades the entire italicized section of this chapter, and it includes readers' as well as characters' encounter with visualized scenarios in moments like this, or others that stress the *process* of vision—as when Henry and Bon sit, after Henry returns from meeting Sutpen, contemplating the coming of day in their campsite "*in the making light of dawn*" (293).

37. The popularity and ongoing influence of melodrama in early film history, and thus in the period of the novel's present-tense events, is a commonplace in theoretical and historical commentary. For a discussion of the centrality of melodrama to film in the period of the novel's events, see Guy Barefoot, "*East Lynne* to *Gas Light:* Hollywood, Melodrama, and Twentieth-century Notions of the Victorian," 95–96. For an articulation of the establishing role melodrama played in film theory, as well as in the genre's isolation from considerations of history, see Laura Mulvey, "It Will Be a Magnificent Obsession': The Melodrama's Role in the Development of Contemporary Film Theory," 121–22. The particular appeal to an emotional and romantic response that Shreve makes echoes strongly the stark visuals and equally striking moral oppositions favored by melodrama and early film, and by Griffith throughout his career (see May, "Apocalyptic Cinema," 29, 38). For an insightful discussion of contrastive lighting effects in theatrical and film melodrama and their connection to the genre's reliance on affect, see Martin Meisel, "Scattered Chiaroscuro: Melodrama as a Way of Seeing," 66–67.

C H A P T E R   F O U R: Screening Readerly Pleasures

1. My approach is a departure from what are themselves conventional readings of the novel's use of genre. "Wild Palms" has often been read as more "challenging" and

tragic, and therefore more modernist—or at least less commercial—than the more "popular," comic story in "Old Man." My own reading depends on specific uses of language within each section—specifically, abstract vs. realist practices—that reverse this alignment, as well as the striking but also different affinities within each section with film.

2. The novel is saturated with such references, and I treat several of them more extensively in the discussion that follows. At the outset, however, it is worth glancing at a few of the names, both real and fictional, of the novel's representatives of the culture industry. The convict's imprisonment follows his reading of "the Diamond Dicks and Jesse Jameses and such" (509), who wrote popular westerns and crime fiction. In the same passage from "Wild Palms" that describes "the lunch rooms with broad strong Western girls got up out of Hollywood magazines," Charlotte will be described as "resembling Joan Crawford" (636), a star of several 1930s vehicles. Early in his journey on the river, the convict registers his fascination with an icon of the silent cinema, Greta Garbo (596). And late in the novel, as Charlotte lies dying, Wilbourne, seeking solace and a way of understanding his experience, seizes on the author of a 1902 novel, *The Virginian,* which by 1939 (the year Faulkner published *Jerusalem*) had already prompted three film versions: "He was trying to remember something out of a book, years ago, of Owen Wister's, the whore in the pink ball dress who drank the laudanum and the cowboys kept taking turns walking her up and down the floor" (689).

3. Although the River itself does not appear in the novel's other section, "Wild Palms," its function as a metaphor for the couple's escape and their continuous movement, or for the images of liquidity and flow that characterize Charlotte, renders it an ongoing suggested presence in their narrative. Wilbourne's associations of Charlotte with water and with an overwhelming fluidity are apparent from their first meeting in New Orleans, as well as in subsequent descriptions that transport the River from "Old Man" to the "Wild Palms" narrative. Talking to her at the French Quarter party in the second section of "Wild Palms," a scene that locates their meeting on the River, "he seemed to be drowning, volition and will, in [her] yellow stare" (520). Later, in Chicago, her "unblinking yellow stare" produced "an envelopment almost like a liquid" (554). Charlotte's "yellow" gaze and its effect is repeatedly described—like the River—as overwhelming; the color of the River in "Old Man," in a manner that extends this homology, is also frequently described as yellow (592, 600, 602, 611).

4. Charles Hannon sees the influence of Twain, particularly, in Faulkner's treatment of the river, reading Faulkner's descriptions of it as an example of a modernist questioning of nineteenth-century realism. My own analysis suggests that Faulkner is engaged in both a modernist undermining of realism and what Hannon calls, using Fredric Jameson's language, a postmodern "infus[ing]" of his novel "with the forms, categories, and content of [the] culture industry" (Jameson, *Postmodernism,* 2; cited in Hannon, 143). My difference from Hannon is in my account of realism as one of the central strategies of "Wild Palms" (as opposed to "Old Man"), as well as at the book's use of popular cultural models in an effort to critique them. Modernist and opaque linguistic strategies appear in "Old Man," that is, as part of Faulkner's effort to frustrate or disrupt the realist approach of "Wild Palms."

5. As Michael Grimwood says of it, "the flood's meaning transcends its physical existence" (*Heart in Conflict,* 121). At first glance, Grimwood's remark looks similar to earlier "first-wave" readings of the novel that seek in it transcendent, universalizing

meanings—such as the River as an emblem for an omnipotent fate or for the continuous flow of time. Grimwood's interest, however, lies elsewhere. Rather than argue for the River's transcendent meaning, he situates the novel in relation to particular 1930s economic developments, such as reactions to the Depression, and to popular cultural practices and materials such as disaster stories and films (118–23). As Grimwood puts it, "[Faulkner] chose in late 1937 to write about a flood because it was then a topical, and proven, subject . . . He chose it, however, not because he assumed it might lead to popular success but because it *had led* to a kind of success. . . . In effect, Faulkner chose a flood as his subject so that he could invert a theme that seemed marketable. He chose to frustrate his audience's expectations, and his adversarial relationship with his readers is part of his subject" (122–23). Though less combatively, I see Faulkner likewise seeking to undermine his readers' expectations in their act of reading about the flood.

6. We have seen the way Faulkner's treatment of Popeye in *Sanctuary* works similarly to thwart readerly identification. My point here is that on at least one level "Wild Palms" works like popular fiction to involve readers with its characters; working against these conventions, "Old Man" limits that capacity for involvement.

7. One reason for this, which Faulkner could have anticipated, might be the ways in which the parody of adventure and heroism in "Old Man" could be misinterpreted— and misappropriated. In a development that proved highly ironic (at least in light of this discussion), the Hallmark corporation in 1997 sponsored a made-for-television movie of the "Old Man" section of the novel. Playing up the story's sentimental potential—and dramatically altering its ending, turning the convict into a romantic hero who at the end of the story goes free and falls in love—the film reveals the way the culture industry can find sentimental material where it wants to and when doing so serves commercial ends. The Hallmark production of "Old Man" is attributable to the tenacity of the culture industry to seize on seemingly melodramatic material without giving attention to the way the material is originally presented (ironically, as parody, etc.), as well as to appropriate the name of a canonical author.

8. Classical theoretical accounts of film viewers' subject-formation, although they anticipate my discussion of the River as a figure for the screen, are helpful here. Laura Mulvey's seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" follows terms for the specular formation of identity that Lacan elaborates in his mirror stage. The subject's recognition of itself in a mirror, which Mulvey elides with the viewer's contemplation of the figure on a screen, provides another model for what I see the convict experience when he "discovers" himself by looking at the River. For as we shall see shortly, when on the River he treats himself and the characters with whom he interacts there as projected or idealized versions of characters he has seen in film. Richard Allen, in *Projecting Illusion,* provides an extensive contextualizing of Mulvey's model of film viewing. Throughout his considerations, he returns to formulations that repeat the aligning of subject, mirror, and screen: "Although this spectator does not perceive her reflection in the screen-mirror (she has already passed through the mirror stage), her gaze is endowed with an omnipotence that is like the gaze of the child before the mirror" (141). It is the convict's "childlike" discovery of himself when gazing at the River that Faulkner's narrator stresses and that later will prompt for him an experience of cinematic, Lacanian mis-recognition.

9. In this respect he resembles Popeye in *Sanctuary,* another character whom Faulkner self-consciously indicates is a construction. Though we ultimately learn more

of the convict's thinking and inner life, like Popeye he owes his existence or identity to popular cultural materials. Like Popeye as well, he never acquires a "full" three-dimensional presence as do other characters in the novel.

10. Recall Murry Falkner's account of his and his brother Bill's fascination with the movies when they first appeared in Oxford in the earliest days of the medium (*The Falkners of Mississippi,* 49–52).

11. The watery, boundaryless world of the flood, in other words, resembles the fluid state of the unconscious, an area of mental life that has often been compared to the manner of articulation in movies. Film's dream-like feel and its approximations of the unconscious have been noted by its earliest observers, and they have as well informed the aesthetics of whole schools of film practice, such as that of the surrealists. Jean-Louis Baudry begins his classic meditation on film perspective, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," with a reference to Freud's use of an optical model for the unconscious (25), and the Freudian and post-Freudian understanding of film's resemblance to dreaming and the unconscious appears throughout film theory. See Christian Metz, "Identification, Mirror" and "The Passion for Perceiving," and Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film.* In addition to these examples from film practice and theory, there is Faulkner's reference to "the silver dream" of movies in the short story "Dry September," suggesting his own awareness of the affinity of cinema with the unconscious or dreaming.

12. Mitchell's novel was published the same year as Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936). Faulkner's biographies do not indicate that he had read it, though by the time he wrote *Jerusalem,* he certainly would have heard of *Gone With the Wind*'s own melodramatic excesses as well as the book's enormous sales. It was precisely the success of this type of treatment of the southern past that troubled Faulkner. Film images of a burning plantation had also appeared in the period prior to *Jerusalem,* figuring centrally in the Civil War sequences in *Birth of a Nation.*

13. Significantly, we are told that the convict does not fall under Hollywood's thrall, or even see a movie, until he is incarcerated (607)—a fact that hints at the sources for the convict's fantasies and that potently suggests the connections between a state of imprisonment and the condition of being captive to the Hollywood dream. This connection will return with even greater urgency in the close of the "Wild Palms" section, with Wilbourne in jail.

14. In addition to film melodramas, by the late 1930s this exposure would surely have included images from still photography and documentary film that detailed the plight of rural Americans in "disaster" areas like the Dust Bowl and Faulkner's South. Michael Grimwood suggests that the imagery of disaster in "Old Man" draws from Depression-era staples like the WPA-sponsored work of directors such as Pare Lorentz or photographers like Dorthea Lange (or in Grimwood's account, Faulkner's friend Lyle Saxon in his photographic and eyewitness account of the Great Flood of 1927, *Father Mississippi* [*Heart in Conflict,* 122]). As Grimwood also points out, documentary and melodramatic modes were not incompatible by the late thirties, despite their ostensible differences. Epitomized in films like Lorentz's Farm Securities Administration documentary *The River* and by John Ford's popular release *The Hurricane,* both from 1937, depictions of disasters like flooding evoked audiences' own economic as well as physical hardship during the Depression. Both kinds of depictions, however, presented viewers with experiences of disasters that, however much they might document or

symbolize their own real-life circumstances, motivated Faulkner's critical attention to documentary and melodramatic method. See Grimwood, 119.

15. Here we would do well to recall the filmic and melodramatic properties of Rosa Coldfield's section of *Absalom, Absalom!,* in particular her references to her own reaction to the Sutpen narrative as "*I, self-mesmered fool.*"

16. See Meriwether and Millgate, *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner, 1926–1962,* 132.

17. See Hannon's reading of the doctor's light as an analogue for the film projector: "Thus the terms of film and photo technology dominate the love story of Charlotte and Harry. . . . In the first 'frame' of *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* . . . the unnamed doctor descends the dark stairs of his beach cottage with a 'flashlight's beam lancing on before him'" ("Signification, Simulation, and Containment in *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem,*" 143).

18. In several ways "Wild Palms" resembles a subcategory of melodrama whose preoccupation with flight and movement has been effectively exploited by another Hollywood genre: the road movie. For a medium ontologically defined by its affinity for motion, the road movie has consistently demonstrated its lure. Classic pictures such as *It Happened One Night* and the Bob Hope-Bing Crosby road series, including *Road to Utopia;* revisionist or socially critical films such as *Bonnie and Clyde, Badlands, Easy Rider,* or even *Something Wild;* and more recent, highly derivative movies like *True Romance* and *Kalifornia*—all demonstrate the readiness of commercial as well as independent film to make use of the road genre and its tropes of travel and freedom. Travel and "the road" are, of course, longstanding conventions of literature, beginning well before film (and Faulkner) as early as Homer and including the picaresque tradition that Faulkner and other modern and nineteenth-century writers drew on. The difference between "Wild Palms" and these literary models is its resemblance to more contemporary popular cultural sources. Interestingly, the travels that the road movie conventionally depicts express concerns manifested by Wilbourne and Charlotte. Jack Nicholson in *Easy Rider,* for instance, explaining why Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda are a threat to the southerners they encounter, talks about their characters' "freedom" in ways that could apply to Faulkner's lovers: "Talking about [freedom] and being it, that's different things. I mean it's hard to be free, when you're bought and sold in the marketplace" (quoted in the Introduction to *The Road Movie Book,* ed. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark, 3). Despite their efforts at freeing themselves from bourgeois constraints, Wilbourne and Charlotte continue to find themselves tied to the commercial market. Steven Cohan provides suggestive terms for a consideration of Wilbourne and Charlotte's wandering, in particular their utopic treatment of travel and the American West. He asserts that the road movie functioned "to represent America as a utopic space in which the nation's citizens . . . feel 'at home' on the road by discovering, through their travels, the popular culture they all share" (*Road Movie Book,* 116). This seems to me as reasonable an explanation as any for the fact that, as they travel across the American West aboard a bus, Charlotte appears to Wilbourne to "resemble Joan Crawford, asleep or not he could not tell" (636). There, in Wilbourne's imagination, he finds the utopic fulfillment of his compulsive travel and longing.

19. The term is Richard Godden's. Describing Harry's watching, mistakenly I think, as a memory, Godden nevertheless provides extremely useful terms for understanding Harry's "consuming" of the images of Charlotte and her husband. "Harry ingests his

past, as another commodity for his own consumption, turning his narrative not into archives but into a hybridization of two popular forms—the movie and the pulp novel" (*Fictions of Labor,* 217). While Harry is certainly "consuming" these images, as he would a film sequence or a pulp romance, he is not "remembering" the scene with Charlotte and Rittenmeyer. Rather, he imagines or fantasizes their meeting (he was not there to witness it and thereby recollect it at a later time). Thus, what we see is Harry, the consumer, sitting on the bench fantasizing and producing the scene he would *like* to see. In doing so, Harry shows readers themselves in another of the novel's reflexive moments that I have earlier attributed to the mirror-like appearance of the River. Showing Harry watching the "movie" of Charlotte and her husband, providing this scene with its referent in popular romance, that is, Faulkner reveals to readers their own (accustomed) pleasure in generic, commercial forms

20. Melodrama's roots in the English morality play are helpful as a way to consider Faulkner's treatment of Rittenmeyer, at least as he is seen and represented through Wilbourne. Thomas Elsaesser, in his essay "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama," provides a comprehensive genealogy of the genre. Originating in the late medieval morality play and other oral and dramatic narratives, melodrama has as its most prominent formal element an emphasis on recognizable surfaces and character types: "The characteristic features . . . in this tradition are not so much the emotional shock-tactics and the blatant playing on the audience's known sympathies and antipathies, but rather the non-psychological conception of the *dramatis personae,* who figure less as autonomous individuals than to transmit the action and link the various locales" (69). Like the figure of Virtue in *Everyman,* or like the scorned husband in film, Rittenmeyer is brought on to the "stage" or "screen" of Wilbourne's imagination to demonstrate simple and undeniable decency. The role in which Rittenmeyer is "cast" has much in common with other standard plots and characters from melodrama, particularly the way he stands in for a set of assumptions about Victorian, bourgeois respectability.

21. This section of the novel also reveals, at its ending, another of Faulkner's unique spatial and perspectival constructions that resemble those of film and that are relevant to understanding Wilbourne. Leaving Audubon Park and traversing New Orleans in a taxi to the train station with Charlotte, Wilbourne is described as viewing his surroundings as they travel past him (as opposed to he himself moving). Leaving the park, "the scaling palm trunks began to flee past" (649). As the cab continues through the streets, we get another account of space seen from Wilbourne's perspective: "the scaling palm trunks fled constantly past" (649). Alan Spiegal, in *Fiction and the Camera Eye,* argues that spatial constructions which reveal a landscape that moves or shifts take on the impressions of filmed footage. This is so, he claims, because the only time that scenery or a landscape appears to us to move is when it is photographed and then projected in film. To Spiegal these descriptions are a hallmark of much modernist, "cinematic" fictional method; he refers to descriptions of this kind as "the refusal of the cinematographic novelist to recognize what he sees in terms of what he knows" (*Fiction and the Camera Eye,* 133). Spiegal might more properly refer to the *characters* in such novels who, like Wilbourne here, "refuse" to see reality in terms other than cinematic. The appearance of such so-called "cinematic" method in this passage suggests Wilbourne's romantic reluctance to "recognize" reality, produced, perhaps, by his viewing of melodrama.

22. From their inception until the efforts of filmmakers and civic leaders to "dignify" film production and exhibition, movies were predominantly an entertainment for urban, immigrant laborers. Lary May indicates that prior to the advent of the feature film and the "photoplay," audiences for the short subjects were almost exclusively working-class and foreign. "Laborers . . . comprised 70 percent of the 1912 audience [for movies]" ("Apocalyptic Cinema," 30). May also traces the cultivation of a new American middle-class audience for the movies. After 1912, "20 percent [of moviegoers] were now clerical workers and 5 percent were respectable bourgeois men and women. Without losing the original audience of immigrants, then . . . filmmakers . . . created a medium that cut across class, sex, and party lines" (30–31).

23. May refers to the way the "earlier one-reel 'shorts,'" unlike the feature film, were condemned by reformers of the cinema because they eschewed narrative and "merely titillated the senses" ("Apocalyptic Cinema," 29). This aspect of the short subject will return in my consideration of Wilbourne's version of film viewing at the novel's end.

24. Like Achilles' shield as it is forged by Hephaestus in Homer's *Iliad,* Charlotte's drawing is an example of ekphrasis; that is, it is a set piece within an oral or verbal narrative that describes a work of visual art. Like Achilles' shield too, it depicts motion in a static, pictorial image. Charlotte's drawing works in a manner similar to that of ekphrasis generally. Like other examples of classical ekphrasis, the drawing provides the occasion to address ideological or political content with which the narrative proper around it is ill at ease. Through its effect on the miners, Charlotte's drawing introduces a political meaning or effect that Faulkner's novel may not have intended. As a work that deals in both its sections with several aspects of production, labor, the marketplace, and wage earning, *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* may be considered a proletarian novel (or perhaps a parody of one). Yet its sympathies, as my analysis of this scene will reveal, are not with the side of labor. I am grateful to Jessica Levenstein for pointing out to me the ideological dimensions of classical ekphrasis.

25. Grimwood refers to this scene in his discussion of *Jerusalem*'s class divisions. He asserts that all of the novel's "laborers"—including the Cajun alligator-hunter, the Polish miners, the fisherman whom Harry sees from his prison window, and the Tall Convict and his fellow inmates—"belong to Faulkner's anonymous, 'enduring' class, whereas Harry belongs to the same self-pauperized 'leisure' class that Faulkner ordinarily perceived as his own" (*Heart in Conflict,* 102). Discussing the plight of the convict in "Old Man," Grimwood refers to the way he, like other Faulkner characters of the labor class, are conferred a measure of dignity through their capacity to suffer and endure but are not allowed, importantly, a willing resistance to the economic circumstances that require that suffering: "Faulkner assigned to his 'enduring' classes not revolutionary zeal but a long, patient submission in life" (104). Charlotte's drawing contributes to a "social discontinuity" that Grimwood claims Faulkner "liked," encouraging the miners' willingness to continue their submission to their exploitative treatment by the mining corporation and thus to maintaining their social and economic position.

26. Kawin, "The Montage Element of Faulkner's Fiction," 116.

27. Thomas L. McHaney, in *William Faulkner's The Wild Palms: A Study,* draws attention to Faulkner's revision (127–28).

28. Godden reads Faulkner's use of the prison-cell narration as similar to that of pulp novelists from the 1930s and early 40s such as James Cain and Horace McCoy, who

employed this strategy to represent "the cry of the little man raised against the market's invasion of every aspect of his life" (*Fictions of Labor,* 200). Godden's reading of the closed-room trope as a means to figure the encroachment on the individual by market forces (or his protest against them) differs from my reading of the novel's close. Unlike Godden, I see Wilbourne's imprisonment exemplifying the capitulation of "mass man" to the effects of mass culture on appetite and desire.

29. These include not only Wilbourne's act of "screening" the melodramatic scene he conjures in Audubon Park, but his proclivity for the pulp confessional stories he writes and, presumably, reads.

30. Charles Hannon refers to the cinematic terms Faulkner uses in suggesting Wilbourne's "filming" of Charlotte's death, such as the Kleig lights and the projector. Because Charlotte and Wilbourne pursue a postmodern strategy of simulation in their affair, "her . . . demise is only representable in terms reflective of simulation: [cinematic] projection and illusion" ("Signification, Stimulation, and Containment," 148).

31. As Adorno succinctly puts it, "The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory which . . . it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually promises is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu" ("The Culture Industry," 139).

conclusion: Modernism, Jail Cells, and the Senses

1. As Sundquist forcefully argues, efforts to read *The Sound and the Fury* in this manner must, of necessity, be retrospective. Sunquest's reasons for declaring this have to do with his study's major theme: the more fully historical treatment of southern racial conflict in Faulkner's later novels, specifically, the emergence into greater clarity and "consciousness" of the issue of miscegenation and its threat (see "The Myth of *The Sound and the Fury,*" in *Faulkner: The House Divided*). John T. Matthews, in *The Play of Faulkner's Language,* offers an account of *The Sound and the Fury* (and Faulkner's comments about it) as the occasion for Faulkner's contending with issues of bereavement in and through language. See especially the chapter "How to Approach Language."

2. Railey's analysis shares its emphasis on sensory experience with a number of materialist and historical interpretations of Faulkner, along with a Marxist critique of rationalization and capitalist exchange. Carolyn Porter offered one of the earliest and most compelling of these, in which Sutpen's attempt at a visionary, ahistorical transcendence—his disconnection both to other people and to the "stream of event"—marks him as a particular kind of historical subject and as deeply, inhumanly flawed. Porter points to the experience of hearing, epitomized in shared acts of speaking and listening and as a means of connecting materially to history, as a counter to Sutpen's visionary isolation (*Seeing and Being;* see especially "The Reified Reader"). Richard Godden and Pamela Rhodes Knight, commensurately, see Harry Wilbourne's color-blindness as the mark of his thorough conditioning (or rather, de-conditioning) by the forces of modern economic and cultural experiences: "Harry's color blindness is a symptom of his debilitation as a consumer, accompanying the way he views the world as a two-dimensional spectacle ("Degraded Culture, Devalued Texts," 113, n. 35)." John T. Matthews repeatedly refers to Faulkner's efforts with his thirties fiction to lend his

novels a sense of "embodiedness" and physical presence, one that counters the overly rational systems of commodity fetishism, abstraction, and exchange (see "*As I Lay Dying* in the Machine Age" and "Faulkner and Proletarian Literature").

3. Bruce Kawin asserts, for instance, that the first section of *The Sound and the Fury* relies on a "series of views" ("The Montage Element of Faulkner's Fiction," 118). As my discussion of Benjy's integration of sense perception indicates, this observation is only partly true.

4. Arnold Weinstein commented early on this quality of Faulkner's rendering of Benjy: "What is at stake [in the first section] is the appeal and intelligibility of feeling" (*Vision and Response in Modern Fiction,* 114).

5. I would submit in passing that despite Lukács's repudiation of *Theory of the Novel,* this work and even his later embrace of what he saw as a critical, socialist realism can offer ways of understanding Benjy and his relation to Faulkner's modernism. In his well-known response to Lukács, the essay "Reconciliation Under Duress," Adorno offers terms that are suggestive for both my reading of Benjy as an example of "the great moment" and later developments in Faulkner's critical treatment of vision. "The notion of the 'immanent meaning of life' from *Theory of the Novel* recurs [in Lukács's later work], but it is reduced to the dictum that life in a society building up socialism is in fact full of meaning . . . Hegel's criticism of Kantian formalism . . . is reduced to the simplified assertion that in modern art the emphasis on style, form and technique is grossly exaggerated—even though Lukács must be perfectly well aware that these are the features that distinguish art as knowledge from science. . . . What looks like formalism to him, really means the structuring of the elements of a work in accordance with laws appropriate to them, and is relevant to that 'immanent meaning' for which Lukács yearns" (*Aesthetics and Politics,* 152–53). It is the structuring of the elements of a work "in accordance with laws appropriate to them" in Faulkner's thirties modernism, in particular its formal characteristics and use of vision, that exemplify an art that Adorno says "is the negative knowledge of the actual world" (160). This development follows from Faulkner's earlier treatment of a character like Benjy and his more forceful sensory life.

6. Describing a later manifestation, and in their view a more heavily determined example of the quality I am here discussing, Rhodes and Godden refer to the Tall Convict's experience aboard the skiff in "Old Man": "Once out on the water, the convict is exposed to a systematic derangement that cleanses and abrades his body and senses. The . . . purgation expresses Faulkner's realization that the coefficient of commodity fetishism . . . is a flattening of perception itself" ("Degraded Culture, Devalued Texts," 102).

7. Porter, *Seeing and Being,* 263–64. As she says, "[He] embodies at one and the same time the transcendent seer and the calculating observer" (264).

8. See Porter, "Faulkner's America," in *Seeing and Being.* Kevin Railey is also concerned, in *Natural Aristocracy,* with the question of economic formations in southern history, specifically the debate about the role of market forces vs. a Jeffersonian plantocracy. See "Faulkner's Mississippi: Ideology and Southern History."

9. In addition to his intensely rigorous reading of Conrad's visualized and what he calls aestheticized style in *The Nigger of the "Narcissus,"* Jameson's reasons for his assessment of Conrad follow from a passage in *Lord Jim.* In an effort to explain his position, he quotes Marlow's statement at the beginning of the book about narrating

his story: " 'All this happened in much less time than it takes to tell, since I am trying to interpret for you in slow speech the instantaneous effect of visual perception' " (30). It is worth repeating in this context the striking similarity of Marlow's statement to that of Faulkner's narrator in the opening scene of *Absalom, Absalom!,* which points to Faulkner's own, perhaps more powerfully cinematic strategy in that novel: "It (the talking, the telling) seemed (to him, to Quentin) to partake of that logic- and reason-flouting quality of a dream which the sleeper knows must have occurred, stillborn and complete, in a second, yet the very quality upon which it must depend to move the dreamer (verisimilitude) to credulity . . . depends as completely upon a formal recognition of and acceptance of elapsed and yet-elapsing time as music or a printed tale" (17–18).

10. Karl Zender sees a prevalence of prisons in Faulkner's later writing, notably the Snopes trilogy, and argues that the confined room represents a shift from the more capacious spaces of mansions and plantations he had used in his early career. Zender claims that the Sartoris household in *Flags in the Dust* provided Faulkner "protection from the intrusions—both literal and metaphoric—of the modern world" (*The Crossing of the Ways,* 142). With *Flags,* this protection was largely for Faulkner's characters. Later it is the act of writing *The Sound and the Fury* that furnishes what Zender terms "a seemingly timeless aesthetic space" from which Faulkner depicts the ravages of modernity. I suggest that the prison setting makes its appearance much earlier than Zender claims and that it may be closer in function to the spaces of mansions and may say more about the circumstances of Faulkner's aesthetic creativity than Zender allows.

11. It is worth noting, even at this late stage, the analogy my reading affords between the jail cell as a site of production for both popular culture *and* modernism. As we've seen with the ending of "Wild Palms," Parchman offers the space in which Wilbourne, already a writer of pulp pornography, withdraws to pursue a melancholy, repetitive consumption of the images of Charlotte that he has "made." If Quentin may also be said to occupy a prison-like space in his dorm room, but one in which he engages in a modernist version of narrative invention, then the figure of the jail cell may appear as a final unifying figure for my argument throughout this discussion: that Faulkner's work throughout the thirties shows an inevitable and forceful link between the two modes of modern cultural life, high and low.