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An International Faulkner Not Solely for His Age, but for All Time

As Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica states, writers die not only physically, but also spiritually, when their works no longer get read or debated – dooming them to merely chance, brief mentions on their birth or death anniversaries. William Faulkner, however, is an enduring writer who has succeeded in arresting both readers' interest and critics' appreciation not only in his lifetime, but so far for the five decades since his passing away.

His outstanding, many-faceted spiritual legacy has enabled him to stand the test of time, marked by several rows of impervious radical shifts in literary taste and of challenging critical insights. His protean literary craftsmanship has enabled him thus to win his bet against those overtly critical or just skeptical about the endurance of his literary creed and the prospects of his innovative high-modernist achievements to prevail and elicit critical interest. Suffice it to say that, for scores of meaningful reasons, Faulkner's creative works and his equally stupendous life have continued to elicit a significant number of valuable contributions.

Not unlike the lasting reception of Hermann Melville's literary endeavors, the enduring attention paid to Faulkner is even more telling in our post-postmodernism and post grand-theory age, which seems to have not affected his centrality to the American South studies. Moreover, while subjected to some unsympathetic, when not overtly inimical, critical tests at home in the United States, the cornerstone quality of William Faulkner's literary achievements manages to endure pretty much unaffected overseas, worldwide, testifying to his longstanding impact on the cohorts of Eastern and Western writers and readers.

The 2013 "International Faulkner" conference, organized by Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania, was intended to

provide an academic opportunity for scholars to address the American writer's response to diverse racial, war, religious, mythical issues, as well as the various critical approaches to his oeuvre, the narrative techniques that he used. It included the quintessential keynote speech made by Professor Hamblin on the international standing of Faulkner, as well as contributions of scholars from all parts of the world, in the true spirit of the yearly East-West "cultural passage" conferences organized by the LBUS' Department of Anglo-American Studies. The enthusiastic response of researchers from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Western and Eastern Europe, as well as from America is living proof of the critical interest taken worldwide in Faulkner's spiritual legacy by those who not only admire, but also love it for all its lasting merit.

The Editors

The International Faulkner

ROBERT W. HAMBLIN
Southeast Missouri State University

Abstract

For much of his writing career, William Faulkner was considered primarily if not exclusively a “Southern” writer, focusing on the characters, conflicts, and history unique to his native region, the American South, specifically Mississippi. In recent years, however, fueled by the translations of his major works into more than 40 languages, there has been a groundswell of interest in viewing Faulkner from an international rather than a regional perspective. This paper will examine several of Faulkner’s techniques and themes that validate a global approach to his works.

Keywords: Southern, regionalism, race, narrative techniques, translation, influence, universal

From Rectangles to Triangles: Faulkner's Geometries of Redemption

SÄMI LUDWIG
UHA Mulhouse

Abstract

William Faulkner is a modernist whose oeuvre has been analyzed in detail and from many points of view that focus on myth, Biblical references, genealogy, history, the Gothic, issues of race, incest, idealism, existentialism, etc. More recently, critics have even found postmodern structures in his writing. Except for Irwin's work on repetition and Peter Brooks's on narratology (and maybe Benson's on "narcissistic arithmetic," or possibly Tinker¹), however, formal structures in Faulkner have not been much discussed, although formalism is usually considered an important aspect of modernist aesthetics. In this paper I will analyze geometric motifs in *Absalom, Absalom!* and in the short story "Delta Autumn." I will suggest that they are connected to some of Faulkner's main concerns. Thus we have parental letters and university textbooks that indicate rectangles of binary repetition compulsion (two-and-two), which stand for the imposition of inherited relationships. These structures are opposed to trinities and narrowing triangles promising escape from this predicament—an alternative pattern of discontinuance that often comes at the price of disappearance. In Faulkner's work this pointedness shifts the focus to a revisionist kind of utopian reality associated with Christian redemption.

Keywords: William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*, "Delta Autumn," repetition, doubling, narratology, interaction, patriarchy, determinism, formalism, modernism, geometry, circles, rectangles, triangles, trinity, Christianity, virginity, fertility, knowledge, redemption.

The Continuum of Benjy's (Non) Awareness in
Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* via Kelly's Theory of
Personal Constructs and Various
Written Representations of Sound Patterns

CLEMENTINA MIHĂILESCU AND ERIC GILDER
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Abstract

The paper analyzes Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury*, starting from the assumption that since some psychic dimensions are not easily made conscious due to their possessing a low degree of cognitive awareness (as indicated in the "unthinking" character of Benjy), a consideration of various unitive representations of extant sound patterns and rendered mental images/imaginings therein can aid in rendering these opaque psychic dimensions explicit. Then they will be placed into a Personal Construct Theory (PCT) framework to bring forth further submerged construct-ends (represented by brothers Quentin's and Jason's operating constructs) to the surface.

Keywords: Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, psychic awareness, stylistic and image analysis, simultaneity, personal construct, psychology analysis (George A. Kelly).

“To Helen, Swimming” or Poetry Unveiled

SORIN ȘTEFĂNESCU
Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu

Abstract

The paper looks at *Helen: A Courtship*, a sequence of sixteen poems written by William Faulkner as a young man, and attempts a personal reading of the first one, “To Helen, Swimming.” The author starts his investigation from the premise that criticism attempted to dismiss Faulkner’s poetry as unremarkable relying too much on what it could deduce from the poems and too little on what it could induce into them. After briefly establishing the circumstances leading to the writing of this sequence, a line-for-line analysis of the poem is endeavoured, covering most of the paper.

Keywords: “failed poet,” Lyotard, “grand narrative,” “little narratives,” conventional, modernist, tropes, syncretism, synesthesia.

“You’re like me”:
Flem Snopes and the Dynamics of Citizenship in
William Faulkner’s *The Town*

SHELDON S. KOHN
Zayed University

Abstract

Readers and critics of William Faulkner’s *The Town* have often accepted the pronouncements of Gavin Stevens and V.K. Ratliff as authoritative conclusions about the Snopes family in general and Flem Snopes in particular. Richard Godden’s “anti-Ratliffian” reading of *The Hamlet* offers a new path for readers to consider how the limitations and interests of these narrators shape their views. Flem can thus be seen as reflecting the tactics and language leading families have long used to maintain their positions of privilege in Jefferson’s social structure: an insider, not an outsider. In Chapter Ten, following the robbery of Uncle Willy Christian’s drug store, Flem takes advantage of circumstance to stake claim to social position while also delaying his unfinished business with Mink for twenty more years. Gavin holds a leading role in the dynamics of citizenship in Jefferson. He arranges for Uncle Willy to get a shot of morphine before the police investigation begins. Montgomery Ward offers Jefferson a dagger to Flem’s mirror. Unlike Flem, he does not understand that Jefferson does not tolerate overt corruption; all corruption must be covered by the veil of civic virtue and justice. Although Gavin loudly proclaims his fidelity to truth, come what may, he tells Flem exactly what must be done to ensure that Montgomery Ward does not get tried in Federal Court. Thanks to Sherriff Hampton’s lax security and general incompetence, “someone” takes the key to Montgomery Ward’s studio and replaces Kodak developer fluid with seven gallons of moonshine whiskey. With there no longer being any need to

produce pornographic images for a conviction, Montgomery Ward will be sent to Parchman, just as Flem wants; the reputations of Montgomery Ward's customers will not be soiled. At the end of Chapter Ten, Flem visits Gavin's office to return the key to Montgomery Ward's studio. In a moment of clarity Gavin tells him, "You're like me." As is often the case in the novel, Gavin's statement is true, though not in the way he intends. Flem the autodidact has learned his lessons well, and he offers the clearest image of what it really means to be a citizen in Jefferson.

Keywords: William Faulkner, *The Town*; Gavin Stevens; Flem Snopes; Yoknapatawpha County, citizenship

The Culture of Miscegenation
in Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

WEN-CHING HO
Feng Chia University

Abstract

This article aims to examine the racial politics of miscegenation in *Absalom, Absalom!*, which I perceive as a sexual synecdoche for slavery or caste. In the 1936 masterpiece, Faulkner places the theme of miscegenation against the backdrop of slavery and the Civil War, and he intends, among other things, to use the Sutpen story as a fictional representation of the malaise at the heart of antebellum South. Indeed, as Faulkner would later say at the University of Virginia, *Absalom, Absalom!* is a “condensed and concentrated version of a general racial system in the South” (*Faulkner in the University* 94). In the astonishingly rich and complex story of the Sutpen household, the problem of miscegenation starts with Thomas Sutpen’s repudiation of his first wife and their son Charles Bon upon discovery of her “tainted” blood. But the ruthless patriarch has no scruples mixing with the Negro woman he brings back from Haiti, thereby begetting a mulatto daughter named Clytemnestra. To the proud Sutpen as to the white South, white woman-black man miscegenation is even more horrible than incest. Henry, Sutpen’s white son, practically inherits the father’s attitude toward racial mixing, now that the young man, while coming to grips with the upcoming incestuous union between Bon and Judith, has to murder his half-brother to prevent the threatening miscegenation after learning that Bon is part Negro. In his imaginative reconstruction of the Sutpen legend, this episode interests Quentin Compson most because it has a crucial bearing on his own experience. Significantly, Henry’s love of Judith parallels his love of Caddy. Further, Quentin’s interest arises from Henry’s

ability to act decisively for the sake of family honor—to protect his sister from the Negro, who happens to be his brother. Finally, in piecing together the Sutpen legend of incest and miscegenation, the reader has, along with Quentin, come to realize that Quentin's frantic obsession with Caddy's purity is in part motivated by the contagious threat of miscegenation.

Keywords: William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*, miscegenation, incest, synecdoche, slavery, racism.

The Civil War and its (Hi)story:
William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished*

IULIA-ANDREEA MILICĂ
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Abstract

It is difficult to find, even nowadays, another event in the history of the United States to have led to so many and diverse literary productions. History, turned into fiction, has been represented, re-constructed, challenged, and re-fashioned to suit different ages, different interests and different vantage points, from the sentimental and melodramatic to the tragic, mythical or ironic. The objectivity of the scientific endeavor has been repeatedly undermined by the subjectivity of literature, but, in spite of this obvious transposition from history to literature, many literary texts have claimed truthfulness, reliability and accuracy because Southern literature, from its beginnings rooted in the plantation/historical romance, used history as justification of its social and economic system and then, after its failure, as source of meaning and understanding of Southern paradoxes. In the context of this interplay between history and fiction, William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished* is listed among the novels dedicated to the Southern experience in the Civil War. Long dismissed as a less important novel, *The Unvanquished* is not merely another War novel, but a subtle and meaningful investigation of how history is created, remembered, transmitted and how the "story" of a historical event has the force to unite individuals and sustain them in moments of failure, defeat and "historical terror" (to use Mircea Eliade's terms). The aim of our paper, therefore, is to trace the mechanisms of storytelling and to show how history is replaced, in the human conscience, by myth and how this newly fashioned fictional representation of reality has the tendency to take over the historical fact and influence the

behavior of the Southerners living through the War and conditioned by its legacy.

Keywords: *Civil War literature, history, memory, myth, Southern identity, revenge, initiation.*

“Bad Health Is the Primary Reason for All Life”:
Diseased Characters, Decayed Society

CRISTINA CHEVEREȘAN
University of Timișoara

Abstract

Dealing with various mental and physical issues to be found in Faulkner’s not-so-imaginary county of Yoknapatawpha, the paper will focus on two novels with different scopes and reputations, yet similar spatial and temporal frames: *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *Sanctuary* (1931). Famous for his complex plots and stylistic intricacies, Faulkner introduces the reader to the visceral, irrational heritage of the deep American South. Intertwining real and fictional geographies, he places individual (hi)stories within the larger History of the region, dominated by tragic failure, violence, resentment, resignation, and the general collapse of traditional values.

Retardedness, incest, castration, suicide, rape are by-products of a disillusioned and segregated society. Race, class, status, gender inequities insidiously underlie and shape Southern mentalities well into the 20th century. Deviant behaviors and their symbolic retributions are exposed as warnings against the unhealthy development of a nation which takes little care of its ‘marginal’ citizens, while it plunges into a destabilizing and often disquieting modernity. Published at the passage between two consecutive, yet very different (st)ages in American history, the hedonistically fulminant 1920s and the tragically decayed 1930s, Faulkner’s fourth and, respectively, sixth novels put forth unexpected insights into the portions of the self that used to lie comfortably hidden by the veils of tabooistic traditionalism.

Keywords: deviant, visceral, irrational, unhealthy development, marginal, mental, physical, degeneration, corruption.

A Mental Model Structure Approach
to a Faulknerian Character: *A Fable*

GABRIELA NISTOR
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Abstract

The essence of a novel is often focused on a character, which actually gives the measure of the complexity of its construction. A literary character is the result of the interaction of its *author*, the *narrative fiction*, and its *reader*, and the result is the *illusion* of a real person.

The *mental model* is the re-created literary character in the mind of the reader, according to the cognitive theory of Johnson-Laird. Merging the model of a Biblical myth (Jesus) and the stereotype image of some participant in WWI gave birth to Faulkner's most interesting *Homo Fictus* in his acclaimed Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winning novel, *A Fable*.

Keywords: cognitive theory, mental model structure, frame, literary character analysis, psychological perspective

Hardy's Wessex and Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha

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Independent Scholar

Abstract

Thomas Hardy's influence on William Faulkner is manifest when comparing the works of these two authors. Their effort to feed their narratives with elements of the cultures in which they were raised impregnates large portions of their prose. Not only is this evident when comparing the authors' real lives with the fictions they created but this is also manifest in the deep connections their characters have to the place they belong to. Other important similarities such as the role of nature, the cultural and social condition of isolated areas, the role of women as representative of counter-societal forces, the use of mythical elements, and the influence of Greek and Latin culture, are found when comparing Hardy's and Faulkner's works.

Keywords: fictional worlds, pastoral, agrarian, mythical elements, fate, nature, culture, tradition, Wessex, Yoknapatawpha.

A Critique of the Lithuanian Translation of William
Faulkner's Novel *Light in August*

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Abstract

The first work by William Faulkner translated into Lithuanian was his short story "Sunset," translated 36 years after the original was published. Translations of his other novels followed in the next years and are being translated up to date. The reason for such a late translation of Faulkner's works may be due to the strict communist regime, mainly the rigid Stalinist period and the years that followed. Another reason may be the oppression of national languages in the USSR, one of which was Lithuanian. However, Faulkner's books entered the libraries and bookshops of Lithuania in the years when Khrushchev and Brezhnev came to power. In that period, the Lithuanian language had not been regulated yet by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, as it is the case now. Due to this reason the translated text of Faulkner's *Light in August* contains an abundance of grammatical, lexical, morphological and other mistakes that can be regarded as such through the prism of today's achievements in Lithuanian philology and standardisation. Moreover, languages change over time, and almost half a century has passed since this novel was translated into Lithuanian (year 1965); thus it is understandable that the language spoken during the time of translation is rather different from today's language.

Keywords: Communist regime, oppression, literal translation, oblique translation, borrowing, calque, connotation, dialect, idiom, toponym, proper name