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Faulkner Adapting Faulkner:
Gender and Genre in Hollywood and After

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Résumé

Cette dissertation propose un nouveau récit des expériences de William Faulkner à Hollywood afin de réévaluer la deuxième moitié de son œuvre de fiction.

Dans ses premiers projets de scénarios de films, Faulkner a choisi d'adapter des œuvres de fiction qu'il avait publiées antérieurement. À la lumière de l'utilisation du genre —autant des films que des personnes— par les studios d'Hollywood pour organiser la production et le marketing des films, la fiction de Faulkner apparut soudainement comme perverse et ses représentations de la masculinité comme homoérotiques. Dans les premiers jets de *Turn About* et de *War Birds*, Faulkner s'approprie les normes du genre hollywoodien pour nier ces connotations sexuelles. Ses révisions ultérieures révèlent un recul systématique par rapport à la perversité d'Hollywood et au genre du *woman's film*, au profit de la performance de la masculinité propre aux *war pictures*. Ses révisions réimaginent également des matériaux qui sont au cœur de son œuvre de fiction.

Quand il se remet à écrire de la fiction, Faulkner répète cette approche narrative dans des nouvelles telles que "Golden Land" et "An Odor of Verbena," deux récits qui rompent avec les pratiques et le style de ses premières fictions majeures. Les conséquences découlant de cette influence hollywoodienne—une volonté d'éradiquer toute connotation sexuelle, l'adoption authentique plutôt qu'ironique du mélodrame générique, et une rhétorique morale explicitement construite comme une négation d'Hollywood—se manifestent plus tard dans des textes aussi divers que *The Reivers*, Compson Appendix, ou son discours de réception du Prix Nobel.

Vues sous cet angle, les dernières fictions de Faulkner deviennent une composante essentielle de son œuvre, fournissant une base nouvelle pour réexaminer la place des genres narratifs populaires, du genre et de la sexualité dans son cycle de Yoknapatawpha.

Abstract

This dissertation offers a new narrative of William Faulkner's Hollywood experiences and uses it to initiate a reevaluation of his middle and late fiction.

In his earliest screenplay projects, Faulkner chose to adapt his previously published fiction. Read in light of Hollywood studios' reliance on gender and genre to organize film production and marketing, this fiction suddenly appeared perverse; its portraits of masculinity, homoerotic. In his draft screenplays for *Turn About* and *War Birds* Faulkner appropriates Hollywood genre norms to negate these sexual connotations. His revisions reveal a pattern of recoil from Hollywood perversity and the woman's film; and of an embrace of the war picture's performance of masculinity. They also re-imagine materials central to Faulkner's ongoing fictional project.

Faulkner later repeats this pattern of response in such stories as "Golden Land" and "An Odor of Verbena," both of which break from the defining practices and styles of his earlier, major fiction. The consequences that follow from this Hollywood influence—an effort to extinguish sexual connotation, an authentic rather than ironic embrace of generic melodrama, and a moral rhetoric explicitly constructed as a negation of Hollywood—later manifest in texts as diverse as *The Reivers*, the Compson Appendix, and the Nobel Prize acceptance speech. Viewed in this light, the late fictions become an essential component of his oeuvre, offering a new site for re-examining the place of popular genre , gender and sexuality in the Yoknapatawpha saga.

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For

Darleen Crane

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”We can understand a work only if we have

understood that to which it responds"

—Paul Ricoeur

Introduction

In November 1931, buoyed by his New York reception in the wake of *Sanctuary*'s publication, Faulkner wrote a jubilant letter to his wife Estelle to announce that he was writing a film script for Tallulah Bankhead. He was to be paid ten thousand dollars and would likely "go out to the Coast, to Hollywood" to work there (*SL* 53). In retrospect, it seems clear that this film project was a flight of Faulkner's imagination, but it was not a story cut from whole cloth. Popular writers were in demand in Hollywood at the time, and the scandalous *Sanctuary* had made Faulkner seem like one worth taking a risk on. So it is perhaps unsurprising that, less than one month after Faulkner wrote his letter home to Estelle, Sam Marx, the head of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's story department, began looking into the possibility of offering Faulkner a job at the studio.

Despite his initial enthusiasm over writing for the screen, Faulkner hesitated when Marx's offer finally arrived. Back now in Oxford, he was pressing to finish the manuscript of *Light in August*; only when a final text was typed and mailed, he explained to his literary agent, Ben Wasson, would he feel free to move west. He held to the hope, however, that "maybe I can try the movies later on" (*SL* 59). As it turned out, "later" arrived almost immediately. *Light in August* was sent off in March 1932, and by mid-April, Faulkner had accepted a position as a studio writer with MGM. He reported to work on May seventh.

Faulkner's first stint in Hollywood proved short and generally unpleasant. When the famous director Howard Hawks finally hired him to write a screen adaptation of Faulkner's published story, "Turnabout," he was enthusiastic but soon discovered he would need to create a role for Joan Crawford. He did so, offering only minor protests, but when his father died suddenly, he left to attend the August funeral and completed the draft revisions in Oxford. Consciously or not, he used the occasion to break his ties with MGM, returning to California for only a few weeks in October to complete a third draft of the film before going back to Mississippi. Once there, he received intermittent pay checks as he completed several ongoing projects, including *War Birds*, a full screen-adaptation of several previously published Sartoris stories. But by May of 1933, he was no longer employed by the studio.[1]

However brief, Faulkner's stint at MGM stands at a turning point in his career as a writer. On the one hand, it marked the beginning of his career as a professional screenwriter, a career he would pursue on and off for twenty years. By the fifties, he had worked as a contract writer for most of the major studios—MGM, Universal, 20th Century Fox and Warner Brothers—and had produced material for more than fifty different film projects. For some of these projects, he penned only treatments, but for others he wrote through several stages of a production. Although Faulkner often claimed he was only a script-doctor and Hawks remembered him most for his talent at scripting dialogue on-set and his knack for improvising staging, Faulkner was a well-rounded dramatic writer who completed many polished screenplays that reveal a subtle grasp of Classical Hollywood conventions. If

the quality of Faulkner's Hollywood writing is surprising, its sheer quantity is astounding. For *Today We Live*, he produced three finished drafts all of which substantially restructured and one of which substantially re-imagined the basic story. These drafts combined with the treatments and other screenplays written during his tenure at MGM amount to hundreds of pages of finished text. The representative drafts of the Warner Bros. projects *The De Gaulle Story* and *Battle Cry*, which have been published in the *Comprehensive Guide to the Brodsky Collection*, likewise fill two large volumes of that series. And these are only a fraction of Faulkner's Hollywood output. The critical challenge posed by this large body of work, is to determine what the accomplished but generic screenwriting might tell us about the composition or function of the canonical novels to which they remain corollary.

Yet, for all the apparent professional accomplishment within the film career launched by his MGM contract, Faulkner's career as a novelist seems derailed by that same contract. He would continue to write fiction; indeed he would publish ten more novels before his death. Still, of those books, only one—*Absalom, Absalom!*—would be embraced by scholars and critics as unquestionably canonical. Writing in 1947, Edmund Wilson identified *Pylon* as the beginning of Faulkner's late style. It is also the first he wrote after beginning work as a screenwriter. While shifting theoretical concerns have recently brought some later books—*If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*; *The Hamlet*; and *Go Down, Moses*—toward the center of the critical discussion, these texts remain exterior to the core canon of books written prior to 1932. Could hack writing for film produce so dramatic a change? And if so, how?

This dissertation began as an effort to answer these questions. As I began my project, however, I discovered a problem. Stated bluntly, the state of scholarship on Faulkner's film work was rudimentary enough to prevent an immediate consideration of the late fiction. Far from examining the late fiction in light of what we know about Faulkner's screenwriting, my dissertation would itself have to take up the screenwriting and develop an account of Faulkner's film career before attempting to see if traces of that career's influence might be found in the late fiction. This task seemed overwhelming. Most of the writing Faulkner did in Hollywood is unrecoverable, lost in the quick give and take of the sound stage. To the extent that fragments are preserved, they bear the marks of minor, non-literary works for hire despite their professional accomplishment. Questions typical of this area of research—How do we valorize Faulkner's contribution to film history? or How might we define Faulkner's screenwriting as literary? or How might we re-describe Faulkner's literary modernism as "cinematic"?—had repeatedly run aground in these shallow waters and bore little relevance to my principal concern. I wished to discover, as much as was possible, if writing material for the screen, whatever that material was and regardless of its final quality, altered Faulkner's composition of subsequent fictional narratives, and if I discovered it did, to determine how and to what extent?[2]

Ultimately, my efforts to respond to these questions developed in relation to a reduced corpus and to two distinct fields of scholarship. Choosing a corpus, which is to say, intuiting which projects would have been most likely to have exerted an influence over Faulkner's fictional practice, is a

difficult task. Yet choosing was necessary, and so, given my interests in Faulkner's writing, I decided to focus my attention on those screen projects in which he would have been implicated in writing on both sides of the media division separating fiction and film. I therefore chose to examine the projects in which Faulkner adapted his published fiction to the screen with two caveats. First, I excluded the adaptation of *Absalom, Absalom!* undertaken in the forties and only tangentially related to its ostensible source. Second, I excluded the adaptations of "The Brooch" and "Shall Not Perish" for television written in the mid-fifties.[3] What remains is Faulkner's first two screenplays written for MGM during his first Hollywood contract. The first of these, *Turn About*, adapted "Turnabout" and is the only script written by Faulkner based on one of his published stories to be filmed and released into theatres. The second, *War Birds*, adapted several Sartoris stories from the war narrative at the heart of Faulkner's first Yoknapatawpha novel, *Flags in the Dust*.

Of the scholarly fields relevant to this project, the first is the body of scholarship discussing Faulkner's screenwriting and film career. These previous works staked the territory I entered and needed to speak to in the end. The second dealt with the history of Hollywood filmmaking practice. Quite simply, I needed to understand where Faulkner worked, and more importantly, what and how his supervisors and colleagues would have expected him to write. Finally, I needed some model for coordinating my analysis of the transformation of source materials into dramatic form, their revision across drafts, and ultimately, back to the fiction as a trackable

influence. I adopted Ricoeur's model of narration as a framework for this purpose.

The Critical Situation

Any attempt to understand the relationship between Faulkner's literary and film careers must take account of the fact that Faulkner typically denied their interpenetration. This denial manifested in two stages, both of which are familiar to Faulkner's critics. First, in numerous letters and reported conversations, he expressed the fear that Hollywood ruined him for literary writing. In each case he then dismissed the possibility, often citing a recently completed story as evidence to the fact. He did this most famously while working with Malcolm Cowley on *The Portable Faulkner*, writing that "that damned west coast place has not cheapened my soul as much as I probably believed it was going to do" (Cowley 36–37). That Faulkner found the denial of Hollywood influence was useful, should, however, act as a critical red flag: if the denial were worthwhile, the interpenetration, or at least the appearance of interpenetration, of the two realms of writing must have been significant enough to merit disavowal.

Yet, to date, Faulkner's critics have for the most part adopted his two-part response as their own. On the one hand, most scholarship proceeds as if the composition of the novels, however much it may have been hemmed in by monetary and time constraints associated with Hollywood, developed under a literary sensibility operating largely in isolation. In this light, Faulkner's screenplays are deemed worthwhile and interesting solely as

biographical asides or contextual material. Although implicit and most visible in its silence at moments when a turn to or acknowledgement of film seems appropriate and likely to be illuminating, this assessment has emerged as a consensus in Faulkner studies. Like Faulkner's own assessment of his relationship to Hollywood, however, this consensus is threatened—and perhaps driven to be reasserted—by the possibility that writing for Hollywood may not have been incidental, that it may, in fact, have led to the stylistic decline of the late phase. Frederick Karl, for example, argues that while working in Hollywood immediately prior to and during World War II, "Faulkner was being drawn into a different kind of mental activity from what he had experienced in his work in the 1930s. . . . He flattened out, he directed sentiments, his work became heuristic, reductive. . . . he was interpenetrated by Hollywood (Karl 711). Karl's resonant story of Faulkner ruined by a Hollywood system known to ruin talented writers sits uneasily alongside the generalized uninterest in the possible interaction of the fiction and screenwriting, yet, the tension between the two notions, which together echo Faulkner's own process of denial, lend the critical consensus a persuasive force.[4]

Of those few critics who have taken Faulkner's screenwriting seriously and have attempted to understand its relationship to the fiction, the most important has been Bruce Kawin. Although Joseph Blotner's essential biography discusses Faulkner's Hollywood experiences in detail and describes much of the screenwriting, Kawin's work remains a touchstone for scholars interested in that screenwriting. Indeed, Kawin's *Faulkner and Film,* which was published in 1977, has been praised as the only available

"sustained reading of Faulkner's relationship to cinema" (21) for more than three decades. More important still is his *Faulkner's MGM Screenplays*, published in 1984, which makes much of the screenwriting done during Faulkner's first contract in Hollywood—both treatments and scripts—available for study. Because this material documents Faulkner's initial attempts to understand and to adapt to the new field of writing, this publication remains the single most important volume available for critics interested in the film writing. The strength of Kawin's study lies in the research project that underlies them. In preparing these books over the span of many years, Kawin examined studio records and "thousands of pages "of scripts and film treatments (*FF*2). He also conducted interviews with the directors, producers, and actors who knew and worked with Faulkner. The material he unearthed proved extremely rich, and edition of screenplays made possible much of the subsequent discussions of Faulkner's film career. As a result, any legitimate account of the interpenetrations of Faulkner's screenwriting and fiction necessarily arises from Kawin's turn to the archive.[5]

Oddly enough, the promise of Kawin's work has not been realized, not even by him. Instead, scholarly examinations of Faulkner's Hollywood career have generally followed three tracks, none of which has proven successful. The most common approach has been to examine the existing film adaptations of Faulkner's fiction. Indeed, five of the contributions to the *Faulkner Journal*'s special issue on "Faulkner and Film" do so, and Kawin himself devotes several chapters of *Faulkner and Film* to this kind of analysis. The problem with such an approach is easily stated: of the most discussed film adaptations of Faulkner stories, only *Today We Live* was actually scripted

by Faulkner, which is to say, only in this project did Faulkner have *any* role in adapting his prose for the screen. As a result, studies of the film adaptations, while aiming to redirect scholars' attention toward Faulkner's Hollywood career, have actually shifted their attention away from the core issue of how Faulkner wrote for the screen. At their best, studies of such films as *The Story of Temple Drake*, *Intruder in the Dust* or any of the many other adaptations of Faulkner's narratives by others can provide invaluable insight into Faulkner's reputation and the popular appropriation of his fiction, but at their worst, the discussions offer mere assessments of fidelity to the original and amount to nothing more than a complaint about insensitive filmmakers sullying Faulkner's genius. What these studies can never provide is insight into how Faulkner wrote for the screen and how that activity shaped his literary writing.[6]

The second approach is largely observational and aims to identify repetitions of and allusions to the fiction in the available screenwriting. Unsurprisingly given his familiarity with the archival documents, Kawin has been quite active in this arena, and he finds links everywhere. To his eye, *The Big Sleep*, *The Road to Glory* and *Turn About* all repeat characters or scenes from *The Sound and the Fury*. The implicit "religious preoccupations" of books like *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Sanctury* "are played out in the open in much of his Hollywood work" (3). *War Birds* develops the narrative of *Flags in the Dust* and points the way to *The Unvanquished* and, thus, "properly belongs in [the] cycle of works on inhabitants of the mythical Yoknapatawpha County" (3). In fact, by the end of *Faulkner and Film*, Kawin has proposed such extensive interpenetrations between the screen dramas and prose fictions that the

distinctions separating the two fade from view in his assessment of the film writing. What is left is a single corpus of apparently equally valuable writings. To cite only one example, speaking of *Turn About* and *The Road to Glory*, Kawin claims that "one *could not* examine" the theme of brother-sister relationships "in Faulkner's fiction without relating the discussion to these scripts" (154). And yet, despite the many allusions and repetitions he claims to find, Faulkner scholars as a rule consider *The Sound and the Fury*, *Santuary*, *Absalom, Absalom!* and the rest of the fiction independently of the screenwriting. Identifying echoes and allusions provides a basis for reconsidering this practice, but mere identification won't provoke a change. What is required is an account of how the screenplays' borrowings offer insight into the source texts, or even better, how these prior borrowings might shape Faulkner's subsequent narratives. What is required in other words is a conception of the relationship between the screenwriting and fiction that can speak to or at least speculate about the process of composition.

The third and newly dominant approach to the film work attempts to provide such a conceptualization. Again, Kawin's *Faulkner and Film* provides and early example of this approach and its dangers. In this book, Kawin attempts to account for certain film-derived techniques he sees in the major fiction by turning to the writings of Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein and using them as an analytic tool. Kawin claims, for example, that it is the cinematic practice of montage that allows the "dynamic suspension of conflicting elements" in *The Sound and the Fury* to be "accepted on its own terms, not as a way-station on the road to synthesis, but as a revelation and viable state of mind" (*Faulkner and Film* 11). He adds that cinematic montage

"focuses all th[e] energy" pent up in Faulkner's modernist prose (12). Two problems dog Kawin's efforts here. The first is that in attempting to find cinematic antecedents in major novels like *The Sound and the Fury*, Kawin discounts the screenwriting he has spent so much time examining. The problem here is chronological: the major novels were written prior to the Faulkner's Hollywood experiences. The second problem arising from Kawin's approach stems from his definition of the cinematic framework in distinctly literary terms: montage for him is an equivalent of literary metaphor and simile.[7] Presented in these terms, it loses much of its claim to *cinematic* distinction, and Kawin's resulting analysis is circular. Faulkner's highly metaphorical prose imitates a montage that itself imitates metaphor. If this is the case, then it is not clear what a turn to cinema adds to our understanding of the fiction.[8]

The most recent and most significant analysis of Faulkner's relationship to the cinema offers a different account of that relationship. Peter Lurie's *Vision's Immanence: Faulkner, Film, and the Popular Imagination* argues that Faulkner participated in the visual culture associated with an emergent technological modernity of which cinema was a major constituent, and that this participation shapes his fiction. Lurie stresses Faulkner's concern with "the attitudes and tastes of the market for commercial art" as well as his modernism's "heavily mediated" relationship to popular culture (2). This emphasis allows him to position Faulkner's fiction on the borderline between high-art modernism and a technologically-driven, visual modernity. Lurie situates his own work in relation to Kawin's by pointing out, as I have above, that Kawin takes "formal elements of Faulkner's novels as literary versions of

filmic devices" (21). He then distinguishes his work from Kawin's by emphasizing both his interest in Faulkner's critical stance vis-à-vis the popular, mass-oriented cinema and his own "more extensive appeal to theory" (21). And indeed, the scale of Lurie's appeal to theory as a means of establishing Faukner's novels' relationship to film and other popular media is without precedent.

Broadly speaking, Lurie's theoretical framework fuses deconstructive literary theory and Frankfurt School-derived film theory. His literary perspective, which draws directly from works by Roland Barthes, D. A. Miller and Frederick Jameson and indirectly from many others, is well-known to his readers and, therefore, largely implicit. His film theory is less well known and therefore more overt. Although drawing variously from the works of Christian Metz, Laura Mulvey, and Guy Debord, Siefried Krakaur, Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel and Theodor Adorno—all key theorists in film studies' turn to early cinema in the eighties and nineties—provide the perspective necessary for considering Faulkner's relationship to modern, market-driven, visual culture. Together, this matrix of literary and film theory provides multiple vectors for considering the ways in which Faulkner's experimental, modernist novels reflect and reflect upon their cultural moment. Deftly applied by Lurie, it allows for a series of clear-sighted analyses of several major novels that have remade the critical terrain. This shift is highlighted by the fact that, following the publication of his book, the annual Yoknapatawpha Conference, for the first time in its history, repeated a theme, taking up anew the question of how to discuss Faulkner's relationship to screen entertainments.[9]

Yet, however much Lurie's work has provoked a return to the Hollywood question, it also repeats approaches that had hampered earlier scholars' efforts to understand Faulkner's relationship to Hollywood. Perhaps most significantly, Lurie, like Kawin, avoids discussing Faulkner's screenwriting.[10] Instead, he reads Faulkner's fiction against a theoretically-derived notion of a mass, visual culture of which Faulkner is assumed to be aware through his early film viewing and his general placement as a participant in a twentieth-century modernity. The content of this visual culture is neither clear nor stable. At times it manifests as a preference within the fiction for visual imagery, images of vision and cinematic metaphor. At others, it registers as a multi-layered historical construction of race through film, or formal dislocations of space typical of cinematic practice. Together these various approaches to the fiction produce readings that situate the novels in a complex, urban culture and, as readings, mark a clear contribution to the existing criticism. But as a commentary on the interaction between these novels and the film practice Faulkner knew firsthand, the abstraction of visual culture away from screenwriting encourages a move toward precisely the allegorical reading practice Lurie refuses to embrace in Kawin's work.[11]

Equally important is the ahistoricity of Lurie's turn to early and silent cinema for his image of film.[12] Although as a child and young adult, Faulkner watched silents, he worked in the talkies. Far from incidental, the shift to sound initiated industry-wide changes in production and exhibition that producers, distributors and audiences believed had completely remade the cinema both narratively and visually. More basically, it created Faulkner's job: the introduction of synch sound created a need for scripted dialogue the

studios could not meet without an influx of new literary talent. More generally, sound pictures raised the cost of film production and exhibition; films authored by literary figures or adapted from known literary works, could command higher ticket prices in the newly converted movie palaces and were less likely to flop than unknown stories by unknown authors. Lurie's turn to silent cinema—and especially *Birth of a Nation*—allows him to set Faulkner's fiction against popular racial discourses circulating at the time. Yet, it simultaneously displaces the conversation away from the screenplays and treatments written for a sound cinema that emerged nearly fifteen years after Griffith's film was released. In such a discussion, the screenplays are no longer an important intertext for the novels. They are simply one aspect of their multi-media cultural context—and given their basis in print, a minor one.[13]

Together Kawin's and Lurie's studies map the major trajectory of scholarly efforts to account for the relationship between Faulkner's fiction and Hollywood film practice, efforts that point toward an ever-further remove from the documentary traces of Faulkner's film work.[14] There have been exceptions. John Matthews's "Faulkner and the Culture Industry" and Dallas Hulsey's "'I don't seem to remember a girl in the story': Hollywood's Disruption of Faulkner's All-male Narrative in *Today We Live*" both focus attention directly on Faulker's screenwriting and explore how Faulkner transforms prose narrative by rewriting it as Hollywood drama. Yet, even these works do not consider how writing dramatic narrative for the screen affected Faulkner's subsequent composition of prose fiction. Which is to say, neither finds a way to bridge the divide separating Kawin's archival research

from our developing knowledge of the novels which preoccupy Faulkner scholars. And so, we are left with the biographical critics' conviction that Hollywood ruined Faulkner, but without any credible account of how that ruination came about. My study differs from this critical context in two key way. First, I situate Faulkner's film experience in in the context of contemporary Hollywood practice. Second, I focus specifically on Faulkner's composition of screenplays.

The Hollywood Context

When Faulkner first travelled to Hollywood in the early years of the Great Depression, he did so for economic reasons. Studio salaries were among the highest in the country, and for writers like Faulkner, studio contracts were a way to survive and pay off debts without abandoning their literary profession. The inflated wages imposed, however, a far less exalted role of the writer and a very different writing practice than they were used to. Richard Fine in his excellent study of screenwriting, *Hollywood and the Profession of Authorship, 1929-1949*, describes this mismatch of expectation and calls the stories about the pernicious effects of screenwriting on the artist the "legend of the Hollywood screenwriter." According to Fine, writers who pursued a literary career as novelists or playwrights while working in the Hollywood studios were confronted with two very different notions of what it meant to be a writer. As literary figures, these authors perceived themselves as independent, creative and intellectually engaged; but as screenwriters, they were simply one low-level component of a highly structured division of

labor. Production not creation was the rule of their days. Dissatisfied, they spoke of their life in Hollywood to friends and colleagues living elsewhere, and a standard tale soon emerged of the talented artist's ruin at the hands of the philistine showmen running the studios.

Although Fine is sympathetic to the contract writers' plight and recognizes that the bleak daily grind of scriptwriting could easily overwhelm more literary pursuits, he insists that the legend of the aspiring writer debased by the Hollywood system—a legend in many cases tinged with and fed by a self-validating snobbishness—captures only one aspect of work in the studio story department. More to the point, it reflects the dissatisfactions of writers who shared " the beliefs, attitudes, and values attendant to the identity of the 'writer'" that they had learned in a New York publishing culture (104). There they were celebrated as intellectuals and the authors of privately owned texts that friends working in theatres and publishing houses paid for the privilege of producing. In Hollywood, they would be contract employees writing—often collaboratively—westerns, women's weepies and, at least once in Faulkner's case, wrestling pictures. These were works for hire over which they exerted no control. Their descriptions of the mismatch between their New York-based publishers' culture and the Hollywood model of film production—what became Fine's legend of the Hollywood screenwriter—resonated widely and seemed to mark both a divide between high and low cultures and, more generally, the displacement of writing by a consumerist, visual culture that privileged popular over cultivated taste.[15]

Perhaps because he was also something of an outsider to New York publishing culture, Faulkner seemed to reject this legend. However much he

disliked Hollywood and fretted over its influence on his writing, he insisted throughout his career that it was the writers' relationship to money and not their scripting of films for Hollywood's popular, mass audience that was degrading and destructive. In 1953, for example, he insisted that:

> It's not pictures which are at fault. The writer is not accustomed to money. Money goes to his head and destroys him—not pictures. Pictures are trying to pay for what they get. Frequently they overpay. But does that debase the writer? (Quoted in Fine, 8)

Later in life, Faulkner returned to the same theme when speaking to a group at the University of Virginia. In response to a question, he points out that:

> There's some people who are writers who believed they had talent, they believed in the dream of perfection, they get offers to go to Hollywood where they can make a lot of money, they begin to acquire junk swimming pools and imported cars, and they can't quit their jobs because they have got to continue to own that swimming pool and the imported cars. (Faulkner, *University* 102)

Here "Hollywood" plays something of the role that Flannery O'Connor ascribed to MFA programs: both test the talent and drive of young writers. Those who lack either or both, fail. Faulkner concludes his remarks by pointing out that writers who are talented and driven may make a "compromise" by going to Hollywood in order to make money but that they can do so "without selling [their] individuality completely to it" (Faulkner, *University* 102). Much of Faulkner's expressed fears about working in Hollywood arose from his suspicions that he might be failing to survive such a compromise. Thus, these comments reveal as much about his doubts over

his own sense of his evolving talents as they do his judgments about Hollywood's influence.

However much Faulkner and other writers may have objected to Hollywood's production system, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which that system made good business sense for large film companies of the period. By the early thirties, a series of financial crises had nearly driven many of them into bankruptcy. They had invested heavily in theatre chains in the twenties, first to acquire them and later to equip them for the exhibition of sound films. This enormous outlay of capital had forced the consolidation the independent film producers, distributors and exhibitors that had proliferated in the mid and late teens into a small group of vertically integrated monopolies that, through collusion, succeeded in developing a standardized and profitable film industry. However, this consolidation had also made them more vulnerable to the financial instabilities of the Great Depression. Facing insolvency, their interest in film was purely instrumental, and this was even more true for the Wall Street bankers running the conglomerates when they fell into or were close to receivership. Because ticket sales generated the majority the firms' revenues, exhibition was at the centre of their business model. Corporately owned film studios were expected to produce formulaic movies that could be counted on to keep ticket sales high. The film studios existed not to make great cinema but to generate a steady stream of generic potboilers carefully designed to appeal to mass taste. Art had nothing to do with it.

Importantly, no studio could produce all of the films needed to fill screening schedules, especially once the double-feature became an

established exhibition practice in the early thirties. Schedule slots that had previously been filled by one film, now required two. As a result, theatres needed as many as three hundred features per year to keep their theatres running at maximum capacity (Balio 8). To meet this suddenly increased demand, the film corporations, whose theatre chains were regionally organized and did not compete outside of major urban centres, rented their films to each other on special terms, effectively pooling their films. Generic differentiation organized the studio productions and facilitated pooling by preventing duplication and waste. MGM, for example, could focus on the production of large spectacle pictures, confident that studios like Warner Bros. and Universal would provide enough B-level gangster and horror pictures to fill the second slot in their theatres' double bills. These other studios would also share in the profits from any MGM hits by renting them at the special rate and showing them in their theatres. Genre, thus, coordinated the production and marketing of films across studios informally but reliably. Even within studios, film budgets were allocated in terms of genre, and in the years after Faulkner's arrival in Hollywood, when production began to be organized through the unit-producer system, groups of producers' responsibilities were defined in terms of the kind of film they produced. Even on the smaller scale world of the soundstage, genre organized individual projects, providing the legion of writers, camera operators, set designers and costume designers an idea of what the finished product should look like. Faulkner's marginal, often unsuccessful efforts to write for the screen were a part of this system, and so they, like everything else, would be shaped by the generic norms and expectations that organized the industry.

At its most basic, genre films display a simplicity of form derived from their commitment to classical narrative patterns. For example, in his essay, "Genre Film: A Classical Experience," Thomas Sobchak stresses the extent to which all Hollywood genres preserve a "classical structure predicated upon the principles of the classical world view in general and indebted to the *Poetics* of Aristotle in particular;" (Sobchack 103). This classical structure shapes both the form of Hollywood films and the thematic implications of the diegetic worlds they create. He writes:

> There is always a definite sense of beginning, middle, and end, of closure, and of a frame....It is a closed world. There is little room in the genre film for ambiguity anywhere—in characters, plots, or iconography. But even when seeming ambiguities arise in the course of a film, they must be deemphasized or taken care of by the end of the film. (Sobchack 106-7)

Thomas Schatz, in his important study, *Hollywood Genre*, likewise highlights the fixed arrangement of generic plots into an establishment, an animation and intensification, and a resolution. Importantly, this simplicity of narrative progress served generic familiarity, a set of conventions that ultimately served the goals of marketing. Hollywood genre was—and remains—a formal procedure of repetition and variation that generates and emphasizes the viewer's sense that a particular film imitates in a satisfying way an earlier, original text. This original text is rarely identifiable, rarely a single text, consisting instead of an ever expanding "body of stories" which together suggest a shared original. This body of stories constitutes "the 'material' out of which, the 'content' of a genre film can be made" (Sobchack 104). Our sense

of a genre is our sense of the field plotted by a group of similar films that together suggest this content.

Because so much of Hollywood film production is generic, many film scholars have attempted to describe and to explain the evolution of the various genres of film. These approaches largely take genre filmmaking as a fact of Hollywood film production and work to identify visual and narrative norms or to trace changes in a genre's conventions over time. Neale's *Hollywood Genre*, especially the surveys that occupy its latter half, is a strong example of this approach. Barbara Klinger's *Melodrama and Meaning* is another, although she chooses to highlight how the boundaries of a given genre—i.e. viewers' sense of the content of the field plotted by a given set of films—vary across time. The sheer quantity of this sort of genre scholarship is astounding, and it can seem as if every genre, subgenre, or genre hybrid imaginable has been described, categorized and situated in relation to larger historical moments.

Yet, if this vein of genre scholarship seems comprehensive in its scope, individual studies tend to zero in on and describe a very specific groups of film. As a result, this enormous body of work can also appear piecemeal. For example, Klinger's research into adult melodrama of the 1950s (a very tightly defined subgenre of women's pictures) remains invaluable years after its publication for the ways it models an archival approach to genre. Yet, beyond this methodological model, her study offers little insight into film practices outside the clearly defined subgenre she takes as her object of study. Women's pictures from the 40s or 60s, for example, are, in her frame of reference, distinct and oddly unrelated.[16]

In his important essay "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Genre," Rick Altman attempts to develop an alternative methodology which would allow genre scholars to overcome this limitation. His model provides a means for specifying the choices Faulkner had to make when adapting his sources. For Altman, genre poses at least two different kinds of problems, and he draws upon structuralist theory in order to distinguish between them, proposing that genres must be understood in both semantic and syntactic terms. For Altman, semantic elements are the pieces of familiar content that could be assembled into "a list of common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations, sets, and the like" (Altman 31). Examples of items for this list include the frontier dialect in westerns, the hoop dresses in moonlight-and-magnolia melodramas, the busy dressing rooms at curtain call in a backstage musical. These are the elements that most genre studies have focused on. Syntactic elements, by way of contrast, are the various "constitutive relationships between undesignated and variable placeholders"(Altman 31). These elements of genre are structural and, therefore, less concrete. If semantic elements are the list of common traits, the syntax is the genre's typical arrangement or pattern of the semantic with a particular genre. When they possess a "coherent syntax," genres can remain recognizable across time despite variations in their semantic elements (Altman 39). Without this sense of a syntax, a semantic variant of an established genre risks being understood as the emergence of a new genre or subgenres.

Faulkner began work at MGM with an assignment to write a wrestling picture and famously walked out of screenings because he already knew how it would end (Blotner 772-3). Soon after, he began writing war pictures

quickly and correctly. A short while later, he was asked how *Sanctuary* should be adapted. He said it would be a great Mickey Mouse cartoon and then proceeded to suggest which characters in the novel could become which characters in the Disney pantheon (*SL* 65). In both episodes, he displays a sure sense of genre that cannot easily be accounted for in terms of our present understanding of his film viewing. Yet he could and did rely on his feel for genres as a means of navigating the scriptwriting he was called upon to do in Hollywood, especially when working on the war pictures he preferred. This knowledge of war pictures was semantic insofar as it rested upon his knack for battle scenes and the jostling banter of men on the front, but it was just as often syntactical. His contempt for the wrestling picture stemmed from his dislike for its arrangement of narrative, not for wrestling itself, and the comedy of his jokingly proposed, cartoon adaptation of *Sanctuary* depended upon his grasp of the currents of anarchic sexuality and criminality running just beneath the surface of a typical Disney short. If neither of these brief episodes displays a profound knowledge of syntax, his treatments and scripts for war pictures do.

Framing the Film-fiction Divide

In the following pages, I focus only on Faulkner's time at MGM and the two war scripts he wrote for Howard Hawks: *Turn About* and *War Birds*. Both adapted Faulkner's previously published fiction for the screen, and I will identify the patterns of response to Hollywood filmmaking practice preserved in these narratives, specifically their response to genre. These

responses, transported back to the fiction, will constitute the influence I explore in the later fiction. Such an account will necessarily address both Faulkner's composition of screenplays from prose fictions and his deployment of cinematic techniques in the composition of subsequent fiction. Together these activities form a loop in which writing is read and used as the basis for future writing which is in turn read…and so on. Although susceptible to diachronic description as a linear oscillation between writing and reading, this compositional loop is, simultaneously, a web of synchronic activity in which writing operates as reading and vice versa in a crisscrossing of multiple texts. To be successful, my account of Faulkner's screenwriting must find a way to coordinate and clarify this knot of activities.

In developing a model within which to undertake this work, I have relied heavily on Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, a monumental study that has much to say about cycles of reading, composition and rereading. Ricoeur's model of narrative is synthetic in the sense that it tempers certain poststructuralist insights into the play of language and the textuality of our experience of the world with formalist and ethical conceptions of the relation of the text to the world. His principal insight is to fracture the mimetic function of narrative into three parts which together exceed the bounds of the narrative's text. These three aspects of mimesis—which he names the prefiguration, configuration and refiguration of the plot—enlist the events, sources and experiences that precede the narrative into the act of narration as well as act of reading and assembling that narrative in a mind.

The passage from Faulkner's responses within this project to a critical framework I will require in later chapters hinges upon a coordination of the

formal characteristics of Faulkner's texts with an industrial history of Hollywood genre that will be managed in terms of Ricoeur's discussion of traditionality. Ricoeur turns to the problem of traditionality near the end of his discussion of the second aspect of mimesis, which is the configuration of narrative as an organized plot. Configuration or emplotment names for Ricoeur the activity of organizing a narrative and stands in relation to plot in the same way that structuration stands in relation to a structure. It represents an effort to focus attention on the activity of producing narrative and emphasizes its contingency. The tension between the inchoate world of action—the patterns, expectations, histories, formal possibilities, etc. that support narration—and the organization of its elements into a coherent narrative constitutes the discordant concordance of configuration, a tension he compares to that existing between the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic and between the *discours* and *parole*.

Traditionality is one aspect of the prefiguration, which Ricoeur describes as the discordant, paradagmatic world of action. Specifically, it names the pre-existing formal expectations that manifest as a system of textual rules, genric norms and exemplary texts. This nexus of form, genre and type is one conduit of history into narrative. In practical terms, genre only becomes traditionality when it is mediated within the configuration. It is, in other words, a textual feature and not an aspect of the narrative's context. An elaboration of the historical situation may be necessary but the mediation of genre, for example, will only be visible within the bounds of the narration. Its position within a narrative—in the organization of events, the

configuration—constitutes the narrative's stance toward its history and offers one of the text's principal conduits of intelligibility for its audience.

Ricoeur's central discussion of the mediating function of plot accords nicely with his suggestion near the end of his life that translation was a key concern in his work even if infrequently called as such. Plotted narrative, what he calls configuration, always connects and mediates between earlier and later understandings of events and experiences. Most importantly, this thought emerges from emplotment's "mediating function." Ricoeur explains that emplotment—the arrangement of events within a narrative during the act of composition—operates as a mode of thought accessible to the reader. Specifically, Ricoeur argues that a story, to be a story, "must organize [events] into an intelligible whole, of a sort such that we can always ask what is the 'thought' of this story" (Ricoeur 65). The pattern of response to Hollywood I aim to identify can be figured, I believe, in terms of this "thought of the story."[17]

This and other observations lead to his conclusion that there is a thought embodied in the narrative text's configuration of events. This plotted thought offers an angle from which to trace and to analyze how narration responds to and produces change in the world beyond the text. This world beyond the text—the prefiguration and refiguration of his model—is run through with other narratives and other texts and, indeed, is fundamentally "textual" is the sense that is always ready to be configured into narrative. Yet it is distinguishable from any particular narrative or group of narratives insofar as it remakes the object of narrative. This world is reshaped through configuration, not simply in the space between the first and last pages of a

story (in the sense of imagining a world or telling of the past), but in the spaces beyond the text in which we act.

This sense of narrative "thinking about" its sources and contexts underpins my examination of the relationship between Faulkner's film career and his later fiction. Writing screenplay adaptations of his published fiction, Faulkner was presented with a specifiable prefiguration that broadly speaking encompassed the concrete limitations he worked within and his reactions to those limitations. The limitations include both those plot details of his source story he took as fixed and the studio's expectations of what the source should look like as a film. His reactions include his investment in particular aspects of his sources, his hopes for the screenplay and his recoil from the studio expectations. Together these limitations and reactions can be understood as a kind of solution-to-a-problem devised by configuring the plots of the screenplays. In plotting, Faulkner discovers and creates a workable balance between these conflicting demands that is identifiable as a "thought" about the problem or situation. In Faulkner's case, the thoughts plotted in *Turn About* and *War Birds* ask questions such as What is the literary? What is the cinematic?—and respond to these questions in terms of genre and gender. In other words, while writing for Hollywood, Faulkner was reflecting—in narration, not narrative—on a knot of issues that would preoccupy him as a novelist for most of his career: high v. low culture, the relationship between men and women, the basis of art as distinct from that of popular cinema. Although I state them as dichotomies, his thinking about these questions in the screenplays is multivalent and complex. It is these

thoughts that play a role in the narrative shift typically associated with the late style, not any borrowing or adaptation of material direct or indirect.

What I am suggesting by offering Ricoeur as the starting point for a discussion of Faulkner's screenplays is that Faulkner's replotting of a source narrative in specific screenplay does more than reveal his practical accommodation of prose narrative to the constraints of screen drama. It simultaneously reveals his attempt to mediate between his previous and emerging, historically-bound conceptions of the relationship between fiction and film. To use an example that I will explore in greater detail in the coming pages, the tension pulling at the narrative seams in the second draft of *Today We Live* is more than a sign of the difficulty of adapting the story "Turnabout" to the screen. It is an expression of Faulkner's revised conception of what it means to move narrative across the film-fiction divide. Initially, the challenge was simply how to move narrative material from one medium to another. In adapting this story, however, Faulkner discovers that the narrative material itself and not simply the medium of narration created difficulties. An account of the details of Faulkner's plotting and replotting of source material *Today We Live* offers an initial step toward transcending the either-or of his later denials of cinematic influence and a better understanding of how his prose and dramatic fictions interconnect.

Chapter Preview

The chapters of this dissertation develop chronologically, moving from early works to later ones in an effort to narrate the development of the

relationship between Faulkner's screenwriting and fiction. Yet, each also considers a set of questions that together offer an account of the terms around which that relationship operated. Toward these dual ends, my first two chapters work as a piece, establishing the basis for all that comes after. Together they argue that Faulkner's efforts to adapt his own war fiction to the screen quickly became an effort to silence—first in the screenplays and later in the fiction—the queer connotation found lurking in the published stories.[18]

In chapter one, I examine how Faulkner's first effort to adapt his published war fiction to the screen in the MGM project *Turn About* unearthed unexpected problems in the source story's representation of masculinity. What in his fiction had seemed like playful jostling between men who performed their masculinity in a variety of fashions, looked in the light of Hollywood production norms alarmingly queer. In *Turn About*, the queer connotations of the source story were highlighted by a generic shift from the war picture to the woman's film mandated by the assignment of Joan Crawford to the project. Faulkner recoiled from these connotations and from the generic conventions that made them visible, refusing to remake his source material as a woman's film, choosing instead to write two distinct narratives within the screenplay: one, a love story starring Crawford, the other a war narrative that preserved his source story relatively unchanged.[19]

In chapter two, I turn to *War Birds*, Faulkner's second attempt to adapt his published war stories for MGM. In this project, the queer connotations plaguing the Sartoris stories he chose to adapt are dealt with quite differently. Adopting the structural norms of Hollywood genre as the organizing principle of his screenplay, he recasts the relationships between the principal

characters in order to affirm heterosexual and patriarchal communities. In the process, the status of the outlaw heros of his source stories is completely changed. The reckless John Sartoris dies now as a consequence of his sexually connotative relationship with his commanding officer. Meanwhile, his equally reckless brother Bayard becomes the defender of marriage, family and the laws of the community.

Together these first two chapters describe the two-stage dynamic I take to define Faulkner's initial Hollywood experience. First, the rereading of previously published fiction in light of the new context of Hollywood filmmaking practices recasts benign source material as sexually suspect. Faulkner's screenplays register a recoil from these connotations and the filmmaking norms that support them at the level of plot. Second, in subsequent rereadings of his fiction, sexual connotations are anticipated and conventions of Hollywood filmmaking are deployed in order to contain them. Stated in Ricoeur's terms, this dynamic constitutes the screenplays' thought about the relationship between Faulkner's fiction and film work.

In chapter three, I shift my attention away from Faulkner's adaptation of his fiction to the screen and consider instead how he adapts the dynamic I've traced to the subsequent fiction by way of two short stories. In both cases, stories that respond to the Hollywood experience initiate a significant change in Faulkner's fictional practice. In "Golden Land," Faulkner allegorizes the homosexual panic[20] central to the two-part dynamic I've described in a story about a family's attempt to profit from sexual scandal. The homophobic violence of the story is unique in Faulkner's work and offers an initial indication that one consequence of his Hollywood experiences may be a

retreat from the connotative portraits of masculinity typical of his earlier fiction. In "An Odor of Verbana," I consider Faulkner's repetition of *War Birds*' climactic scene as a turning point in Sartoris family history in order to reaffirm the patriarchal community. I specifically explore how this repetition of scene produces a shift in Faulkner's representation of war.

Chapter four suggests something of the consequences of this final rejection by considering the turn toward sentimentality in the late fiction. On the one hand, the world of men, once stripped of its sexual dangers, seems dull. Its stories lack the intensity we expect from Faulkner's fiction. On the other, the world of women is rich with emotional stakes that, as biographical evidence suggests, Faulkner took quite seriously. My discussion of the appendix to *The Sound and the Fury* suggests that these new and different intensities are linked by negation to Faulkner's experience of writing woman's films and that the body of scholarship addressing film melodrama might offer the best avenue for exploring that link. I then conclude by suggesting that this turn to melodrama may underpin the moral discourse often taken as characteristic of the late style.

Gender and Genre in *Turn About*

Most novelists and playwrights who came to work in studio story departments at the beginning of the Depression perceived themselves as thoughtful and creative artists and experienced their time in Hollywood as an assault on that identity. Unable or unwilling to cope, many left, returning east. Those who stayed were largely forced to adapt to the studio system as they found it. There were, however, exceptions. Rare talents such as Preston Sturges succeeded in forging new identities for themselves as writer-directors or writer-producers who could make claims to authorship that resembled—as much as was possible within the Hollywood system—the creative authority with which they were familiar from the literary worlds of publishing and theater. Others formed working relationships with influential directors who respected their novels or plays and shielded them from the worst abuses of the industrial story department. William Faulkner, who maintained a friendship with Howard Hawks for most of his career, was one of these lucky few.

As Richard Fine's excellent study *Hollywood and the Profession of Authorship, 1929-1949* makes clear, however, no one who worked in the Hollywood studios while pursuing a literary career as novelist or a playwright, not even those benefiting from special privileges or patronage, could avoid the challenge of balancing two very different notions of what it meant to be a writer. As literary figures, authors perceived themselves to be

independent, creative and intellectually engaged; but as screenwriters within the studio story department, they were simply one low-level component of a highly structured division of labor. Production, not creation, was the rule of their days. Those who wished to maintain their literary careers necessarily developed strategies to keep the bleak daily grind of scriptwriting from overwhelming them. The most common strategy "lay in drawing a distinct line between movie work and serious writing" (Fine 156). Some of the most successful at this—Fine calls them "literary schizophrenics"—were Nathanael West, William Faulkner, James M. Cain, and W. R. Burnett, all of whom subsidized on-going careers as novelists with their contract screenwriting.

Speaking of his own efforts to navigate the disparity between screenwriting and his experimental fiction, Nathanael West emphasized the importance of not mistaking the studio film for a vehicle of serious ideas. He believed that fighting to make studio films convey a message, especially when the film had a large budget, exhausted writers' energy leaving nothing "for their own work." He further claimed to prefer writing low-budget films precisely because he never misunderstood what they were worth. He writes:

> I don't mind those C movies at Republic. …This way I can write 'Pardner, when you say that, smile,' and 'You dot dot dot mean?' and it's relatively painless. …This way I give them a fair day's work and can still concentrate on what I want to write for myself (Quoted, Fine 156).

In these few precise words, West first evokes the popular Hollywood genres of the western ("Pardner, when you say that, smile") and the romantic melodrama ("You dot dot dot mean?") and then uses them to organize his

response to the competing demands of writing novels and writing films. The distinction between generic and non-generic fictions separates his serious experimental fiction from his contract screenwriting.

Faulkner's attempt to keep a clear division between his prose fiction and screenwriting were both more vexed than West's and less tied to conceptions of genre. In part this surely arose because a distinction between generic and literary fiction was less available to him: his novels drew too much upon popular generic forms—war stories, mysteries, gangster stories, southern romances and others. Absent this ready division between different kinds of texts, Faulkner instead cultivated his sense that screenwriting was simply a paycheck and generally shunned the expensive tastes and social habits that would increase his dependence on Hollywood contract work. As a result, he could rely on the physical separation from the west coast afforded by his frequent returns to Oxford, Mississippi, to organize the conflict between screenwriting for money and writing novels for posterity.

Yet, writing in Hollywood had put him in close contact with the studios' elaborate system of genre and, in the months after his first stint at MGM studios, Faulkner seemed willing to draw upon this system for material when his other writing projects stalled. In a 1934 letter to his agent Morton Goldman and published in Blotner's *Selected Letters*, for example, he speaks of a vague plan to write "A Child's Garden of Motion Picture Scripts" which was to be a "burlesque of the sure-fire movies and plays, or say a burlesque of how the movies would treat standard plays and classic plays and novels, written in the modified form of a movie script"(*Selected Letters* 79). Although suggesting the project out of desperation—he was having

trouble writing new material—his appropriation of the marketing-department adjective "sure-fire" suggests a gleeful enthusiasm, even if only momentary, that is surprising given that the core of Faulkner's screenwriting experiences prior to writing the letter, nearly all of which had hinged on adapting his literary texts into film texts, had been negative.

By this point, Faulkner had witnessed both the debacle of *Sancturary*'s release by Paramount as *The Story of Temple Drake* (1933), and MGM's release of his war story "Turnabout" as *Today We Live* (1933). In both cases, the published texts shared numerous features with established Hollywood genres, which would, seemingly, have facilitated the process of adaptation. Yet, Hollywood's genre conventions, as he quickly learned, entailed much more than formal arrangements of plot, character and setting; genre organized production schedules, star personae, marketing strategies and industry conceptions of the movie-going audience, among other things. The generic content and tone in Faulkner's stories touched only minor aspects of this elaborate institutional system and could facilitate their adaptation in only minimal ways. Problematically, these same texts generated a series of tensions—in the case of *Sanctuary*, relating to censorship, in the case of "Turnabout," to star personae—that had ultimately required their complete transformation during the process of adaptation.[21] In Hollywood, *Sanctuary* became the story of Temple Drake's redemption on the witness stand; "Turnabout" a formulaic romance.

The traces of these recent experiences register in the restatement of his plan for "A Child's Garden": he will not burlesque the formulaic pictures after all, but instead their method of adapting plays and novels, a very

different thing indeed. The first proposition parodies—and thus celebrates—popular cultural objects of uncertain value, the second laughs at their apparently pernicious relationship to a literary culture that Faulkner prized. Yet, strangely, although Faulkner's proposal sets Hollywood genre and his use of popular genre in his fiction at odds, it simultaneously expresses a desire to fuse them within one series of texts.

This incidental letter and a project hastily proposed but never undertaken suggest the extent to which Faulkner sought to deal with his Hollywood experiences—as he had done previously with both his lie experiences and the troubled history of his celebrated postage stamp of land— by incorporating them into and transforming them through his fictional process. This urge to write through his experience suggests that Faulkner's approach to negotiating between the demands of composing screen drama and prose fiction may be textual rather than biographical, by which I mean, it may be visible in the arrangement, form and texture of of his published narratives. What's more, it may be most clearly visible as a response or reaction to Hollywood's elaborate system of genre.

In the pages that follow, I will argue that in Faulkner's first screenwriting project—his adaptation of the short story "Turnabout" for MGM—his conception of the distinctions between what might be called the literary and the cinematic was established in stark terms legible as an interplay of gender and genre in his second screenplay draft.[22] I will develop this argument in three stages. In the first, I will establish the textual and historical contexts that inform and make possible my subsequent analysis. Specifically, I shall identify the generic placement of key texts and describe

how Faulkner, in translating his narrative from one to the other, was forced to confront his fiction's relationship to the Hollywood cinema's system of popular genre. While his previous encounters with that system as a spectator and, more generally, as an inhabitant of 20th century America's modern, visual culture had been oblique and, therefore perhaps, trivial, this now direct encounter with Hollywood filmmaking practice as a practitioner within the system was not. Quite to the contrary, it touched upon core concerns of his fiction and provoked a response that both shaped his sense of Hollywood genre and organized the narrative strategies he would deploy in many of his subsequent screenplays.

In the second stage of my argument, I shall read the key texts produced during Faulkner's effort to adapt his short story in order to make visible Faulkner's sense of Hollywood genre and his organizing narrative strategies. Most importantly, this analysis will identify how Hollywood genre practices situate gender and sexuality as markers of the difference between literary and cinematic narratives within Faulkner's conception of the two media. I shall then close in my final stage by demonstrating how Faulkner's conception of Hollywood cinema in terms of gender and sexuality—a notion likely perceived as an inaccessible aspect of the author's intention—persists as a retrievable textual feature of his screenwriting.

Taken as a whole these sections will suggest how the pattern of narration I identify in the second section may stand as a model for how Faulkner's prose fictions and Hollywood screenwriting interact subsequent to the *Turn About* project. Indeed, I shall argue that these narrative patterns constitute the signposts by which we may trace the relationship between

Faulkner's screenplays and subsequent prose fictions. As such, this final section sets the stage for my consideration of Faulkner's remaining MGM screenplays and later fictions in the following chapters.

Historical and Textual Situation

The general contours of Faulkner's experience during the *Turn About* project are familiar. Summarized briefly, Howard Hawks, the brother-in-law to MGM executive Irving Thalburg, read "Turnabout" in *The Saturday Evening Post* in early 1932. He quickly optioned it and assigned Faulkner to adapt it. Faulkner was enthusiastic and wrote the first draft of the screenplay in complete isolation in only five days. This first draft transposed the narrative of the source story more-or-less intact, and Thalburg sent it into production where it was rechristened *Turn About*.[23] According to Hawks, Thalburg liked Faulkner's script so much that he demanded that Hawks not "muddy it up by changing it" (Kawin, *Faulkner and Film* 76). Soon, however, Thalburg, in an about face, notified Hawks that Joan Crawford, one of MGM's biggest stars, was being assigned to the all-male war picture, and Faulkner was now to write a second draft, providing her a starring role. Faulkner wrote the new draft in Oxford, Mississippi, where he had returned to look after his father's funeral and to settle his affairs. Back in Hollywood and after discussions with Hawks, he wrote a revised third version that became the blueprint for *Today We Live*, the name of the film MGM released in March 1933.

During this scripting process, Faulkner produced three complete drafts of the screenplay. In addition, Edith Fitzgerald and Dwight Taylor wrote a

final shooting script, and Anne Cunningham wrote a long treatment of the story from "the woman's point of view" (Kawin, *MGM* 106). In what follows, I will limit my discussion to three texts which together may be taken as representative of the key steps in the scripting process.

The first of these texts is the source story, "Turnabout," optioned by Hawks and adapted by Faulkner. This story tells of an American aviator in World War I, Bogard, who meets a drunken British naval officer, unsubtly named Claude Hope, sleeping on the street. Assuming he's shirking his duties, Bogard brings Claude along on his next bombing raid where, to Bogard's surprise, he proves a capable gunner. Claude is equally surprised when Bogard unwittingly lands his plane with an unexploded bomb hanging from the wing and invites him to come along on a boat run. Bogard accepts only to discover that Claude, despite his carefree demeanour, works on a small, high-speed torpedo boat and that his missions are both physically demanding and extraordinarily dangerous. Full of newfound respect, Bogard sends him a case of scotch, and later, enraged over news of his death on a mission, undertakes a reckless bombing raid against a chateau he wishes were full of "all the generals, the admirals, the presidents and the kings" (509) he blames for the young seaman's death.

In this, "Turnabout" is typical of much of Faulkner's early war fiction, which, to use terms from Donald M. Kartiganer's important discussion of Faulkner's representations of war, celebrates military battle as "as a kind of quintessential experience for men" (Kartiganer 627), operating as "a nostalgic rehearsal of an already mythologized past" (635). For Hollywood filmmakers at MGM, this nostalgia would have made the story especially appealing as

the subject of an adaptation: during the thirties, Hollywood war films were in a period of transition in which "Victorian codes of valor, honor and duty often co-exist[ed] with revisionist verisimilitude in the treatment of battle scenes and in the use of 'hardboiled' language" (Neale 128). Faulkner's text, which fused a nostalgic tone with a prose rich in crisp, physical detail, encompassed both aspects of this transitional moment. This fusion suggests the extent to which Faulkner's narrative interests—at least in his early war stories—positioned him to write within the war genre.

The second representative text is *Today We Live* (1932), the Crawford vehicle MGM eventually released into theatres. This film begins not on the streets of war-torn France but in the home of Crawfords's character, Ann. She is serving tea to the American student Bogard, played by Gary Cooper. She has grown up with the sailors from the short story. Ronnie is her brother; Claude, the ward of her parents. Claude loves Ann, and she promises to marry him when Ronnie suggests it would make him happy. The two boys leave to fight in the war, and Ann plans to join a nursing crew that will put her on the front near their regiment. Between their departure and hers, she falls in love with Bogard who joins the air force to please her. Ann leaves and, from the front, learns that Bogard has died. Grieving, she begins a sexual relationship with her still-fiancée Claude hoping to save him from an alcohol-fueled descent into nihilism. When Bogard, who is still very much alive, finds her, she rejects him because of this relationship. At this point in the film, events from Faulkner's original war story begin to appear: Claude flies in Bogard's plane and Bogard takes a trip on Claude's torpedo boat, although now they do so to compete for Ann's love. The film then ends, not as the

story had with an affirmation of Claude's masculinity through his violent death, but with Claude and Ronnie sacrificing themselves during a torpedo run order to save Bogard's life and to leave Ann free to marry him.

The differences between this film and Faulkner's source narrative are stark. Although the film and the source story share characters (Ronnie, Claude, Bogard), major events (the bombing and torpedo runs, Claude and Ronnie's deaths) and a setting, *Today We Live* has become the story of Ann's romantic struggles during a time of war. The extent of the transformation is obvious to even the most casual viewer, perhaps most strikingly in the changes to the film's causality. In such books as *Narration and the Fiction Film* and *The Classsical Hollywood Cinema*, David Bordwell has demonstrated that "character-centered…causality is the armature of the classical story" (*Classical Hollywood* 13), which is to say that, in a classical film, to determine why characters do what they do is one way to define what kind of story the film tells. In *Today We Live*, what characters do and why they do it has been remade fundamentally. To cite only the most important examples, in "Turnabout," Bogard brings Claude along on the bombing raid to "show him some war" (484); in *Today We Live*, he brings him because he's jealous of his relationship with Ann and hopes that he will be killed in battle as his last two gunners had been. In "Turnabout," Claude invites Bogart on the torpedo run as a sign of respect for his skill as a pilot; in *Today We Live*, Ann invites him through Ronnie so that he can see that Claude deserves her love. Finally, and most importantly, in "Turnabout," Claude dies in the line of duty, ground up by the war machine that makes him a man without recognizing his individual

worth; in *Today We Live*, Claude sacrifices himself in order to save Bogard's life and to free Ann to marry him.

With these changes, *Today We Live* replaces problems of war with problems of love. No longer is this film in any significant way about men proving themselves and earning each others' respect through war. It is about the conflicted feelings of a woman, the suffering it causes her, the conflict it produces in the men around her, and her efforts to arrive at an honorable solution to the trouble. Stated as a question, the core narrative motivation of the film has become, Can this woman be with the man she loves without betraying the man she's with? Faulkner's story about men becoming men through battle has become a romance film about the problems of a woman living—and most importantly, loving—in a time of war.

This overt attention to the problems of a woman is symptomatic of one of the determining features of Hollywood film production in the thirties. Studio bosses at MGM and elsewhere strongly believed that women, and especially what Tino Balio calls "the 'average citizen's wife'" (2), played a deciding role in determining which movies families and young couples chose to see. Reformers and other advocates of movie censorship agreed. Under pressure to address this segment of the audience directly, studios developed a loosely organized genre of woman's films, "a type of motion picture that revolves around an adult female protagonist and is designed to appeal mostly to a female audience" (Balio 235). There were various subsets of these pictures but all turned on the suffering of a disgraced or unfortunate woman, and all attempted to understand what a woman thinks, what she feels, and how she responds to typically female problems. Most often this meant love,

its misfortunes, and its abuse in the pursuit of wealth. All told, the genre accounted for "over a quarter of the pictures on Film Daily's Ten Best" in the first half of the thirties. MGM was a major producer of the genre and was renowned for a steady stream of A-list woman's pictures of which it produced more examples than any other studio. In 1939, the studio capped the decade's filmmaking with "the biggest woman's attraction of them all," *Gone With the Wind* (Balio 235).

Once Crawford was assigned to the "Turnabout" adaptation, all the weight of this studio history and production policy was brought to bear on Faulkner's screenplay. During her time at the studio, Crawford was a fixture of MGM's woman's films and had ridden the crest of the genre's popularity in the early thirties to become one of Hollywood's biggest stars. In early films like *Possessed* (1931), she established her persona as an independent woman, who, by sacrificing her dignity, by becoming a fallen woman or gold-digger, managed to improve her class, a change visible in the new opulence of her clothing and home furnishings. As that persona developed and solidified, she became a woman "who through choice or circumstance was forced to survive in modern society on her own." The problems she faced as she struggled to survive and to acquire furs and jewels "were what were thought to be 'woman's problems' in the 1930s: finding the 'right man,' being in love with the 'wrong' man, raising children, and earning a living in a man's world" (Allen, Quoted in Balio 241-2).[24] Whatever role Faulkner wrote for Crawford would necessarily repeat and reinforce this persona, and indeed, the release film clearly characterizes Ann as a woman in love with the wrong man and struggling to survive on her own in an emblematically modern war.

Initially, however, the best means to meet these expectations was not clear, and in the second draft of his screenplay, entitled *Turn About* and published in Bruce Kawin's *Faulkner's MGM Screenplays*, we see Faulkner attempting to craft a revised narrative that would do so. Because Crawford was one of MGM's signature stars, *Turn About* would now necessarily turn around her star persona, a persona grounded in the conventions and concerns of the woman's film. In other words, for *Turn About* to serve as a vehicle for Crawford, the war picture Faulkner hoped—and reasonably expected—to write would necessarily shift toward—and in some respects become—a woman's film.

For her part, Crawford realized the extent of the changes that would have to be made to Faulkner's first draft in order to create a role for her, and she attempted to minimize the damage. According to Hawks she asked that Faulkner avoid sentimentality and write her dialogue that was as clipped as the men's. Although this story, told many years after the fact, may be apocryphal,[25] Crawford's request speaks directly to the extent of change the generic shift her assignment to the project would entail. As Sarah Kozloff has discussed in her study of classical film dialogue, the woman's film was marked "by a certain style of dialogue" and "by talkativeness"; she further explains that "there are few, if any, scenes of silent physical action" (241).[26] Because Hollywood films broadcast their generic placement through stylized dialogue—this is the basis for Nathanael West's evocation of the C films at Republic in his letter and the central claim of Kozloff's study—Crawford could rightly expect that the revised script would replace the restrained dialogue of the first draft with the wordy, emotional declarations typical of

the woman's film. In this, however, she was, surprisingly, wrong: the studio allowed Crawford to speak like the men, a reminder that, to take up the terms of Paul Ricoeur's explanation of the contingency of traditionality in the revision of narrative, even the most basic of studio products resulted from a "rule-governed deformation" (70) of generic norms and not their strict application.

As the final cut of *Today We Live* demonstrates, however, deviation from the norms of the woman's film within the dialogue was not to be repeated elsewhere in the production. However much Crawford the actor aimed to prevent a complete reworking of the screenplay, Crawford the star was a studio property to be deployed in a carefully crafted generic narrative. Faulkner's second draft of *Turnabout* clearly aims to meet these requirements, to give his MGM bosses what West had called "a fair day's work," but in important ways it fails to do so. In this draft, Faulkner deviates substantially from his source story in order to invent cinematic narrative appropriate to a woman's film without meeting the studio's expectations of what a woman's film should be. He seems to sacrifice central aspects of his source story in the service of studio commercialism while failing to strike the notes of glamour and romance that make successful studio products so pleasurable. This "orphaned" material in the second draft—which is neither derived from "Turnabout" nor incorporated into *Today We Live*—offers an unobscured view of Faulkner took to be a successful cinematic narrative.

The Second Draft and Male Sexual Panic

The second draft of *Turn About* suggests that much of Faulkner's early notion of the cinematic evolved from his recoil from the demands of the woman's film and, more specifically, the gender associations evoked by the genre. In his first draft, Faulkner had demonstrated real skill as a dramatic writer, but this skill was largely technical. For example, "Turnabout" emphasizes narration over story in a way familiar from Faulkner's larger body of work. Thus, dialogue is mostly reported indirectly, and the drama develops through a narrator's oblique and, at times, obscure presentation of events. To adapt the story and script in the first draft, Faulkner needed to translate this indirect discourse into dialogue and the reported episodic narrative into action organized into scenes. The first draft's success is signalled by the fact that Hawks and Thalburg could, upon reading it, imagine a process by which a dramatic film might be made from the script.

Regarded objectively, the second draft presented similarly technical challenges. Crawford's persona had been carefully cultivated through variations on a formula. In writing the second draft, Faulkner needed simply to harness his compositional skills to that formula in order to devise fresh occasions for Crawford the actor to perform "Crawford" the star. This proved difficult however: inventing scenes to showcase glamourous gowns is not the same as translating narration into dialogue because the first evokes gender associations that clash with the source story's subject matter. Indeed, to the extent that Crawford's persona implicated Faulkner in her public performance of femininity and drew his attention and energies away from the

story's performance of a masculinity dear to him, her assignment to *Turn About* rendered ostensibly technical problems quite personal.

Our first hint that this was the case comes from Faulkner's much-quoted response to Crawford's assignment. Told the news, he replied, "I don't remember a girl in the story" (Blotner *Biography* 781). However we might read this response—whether as contempt for Hollywood's disregard for even basic aspects of source material or as an expression of a stubborn sexism—one thing is certain: it accurately focused attention upon gender, which was the principal issue at stake in the revisions MGM was demanding. Within Hollywood's industrial practice of film production and marketing, the shift from the war picture to the woman's film required by Crawford's star persona was understood as—and was deemed desirable because it was—a shift from a male to a female genre.

The attention to gender provoked by this generic shift would prove particularly difficult to manage in part because of the source story's peculiar presentation of masculinity, especially the narration's representation of Claude through diction that compares him to women. In the story's opening paragraphs, for example, Claude looks "like a masquerading girl," has a mouth "like a girl's mouth" and a displays "girlish delicacy of limb" (Turnabout, 475-6). Likewise, near the end of the story, Bogard notices Claude has "girl's wrists" (506). These descriptions are startling, yet this diction works primarily to distinguish Claude's masculinity from that of the other characters and does so in coordination with a variety of other procedures. The vocabulary of age, for example, is also used: when Claude falls asleep, he does so, not at an adult, but with "the peaceful suddenness of babies" (480).

Nationality—Bogard is American, Claude British—marks the same distinction. Ultimately, these multiple markers of difference cancel each other's specificity and foreground the more general field of masculinity which is the subject of this drama of recognition.

From its initial encounter between two differently masculine men, the story develops through a highly patterned organization of event that emphasizes and reinforces the parity between their two styles of gender performances. Events are evenly balanced, allowing each man the opportunity both to demonstrate his masculinity and to recognize the other's openly and without complication. To the extent that their demonstrations of masculinity manifest as a competition, it is honorable, respectful and non-violent. Within this patterning, these descriptors of femininity—and of age and nationality—operate as negative space against which variations within the field of masculinity become visible.

Far from an anomaly in Faulkner's fiction, this approach to masculinity is given a comparable—though not identical—expression in the novel *Absolam, Absolam!*. There, a similar diction is used to establish distinctions within the relationship between Henry and Bon. Thomas Loebel notes, for example, that, in their relationship, "femininity is readable and constructible even while it is entirely a performative masculinity. Henry's love for Bon is at once entirely masculine, unspoken, and signified particularly as such by the feminized description of Bon" (Loebel 91).[27] He concludes by suggesting that the question posed by their relationship is "how masculinities morph in love in relation to each other" (Loebel 91).[28] With only change of names, Loebel's comments apply just as well to "Turnabout."

Although a shorter, less sophisticated work, the relationship between Claude and Bogard enact "entirely a performative masculinity" but develops in terms of a distinction marked by femininity. What's more, Bogard's reckless effort to exact a symbolic vengeance for Claude's death at the close of the story suggests that their relationship might be understood as expressing love in much the same way that Bon's and Henry's does.[29]

Crawford's assignment to the *Turn About* project upsets these carefully managed tensions. At the basic level of narrative conflict, the binary relationships between Bogard and Claude in the source story are now necessarily transformed into a triangular romance:[30] Bogard and Claude will now establish their relationship through their competition for Ann's affections rather than through a drama of mutual recognition. This change has provoked disagreement among critics. In his article "'I don't remember a girl in the story: …," for example, Dallas Hulsey argues that the complications of plot that result from the effort to script a romance narrative for Crawford enrich the source story (76), while Matthews reads a hint of the way patriarchy exerts itself through capitalism and property rights (63, 67). But I would suggest that these complications are just as likely to confuse the male relationships and hedge them around with panic by providing a visible object to the connotations of the source story's diction. Words that had marked apparent differences between two masculinities, now signal Claude's effeminacy, and Bogard's unexplained interest in a girlish boy rather than the girl played by Crawford now raises the specter of homosexual attraction.[31] The drama of recognition has been transformed into a competition by the

presence of women, and as a result, intimate male bonds not mediated through women become sexually suspect.[32]

Bogard's and Claude's relationship is not, of course, homosexual. It may be paternal. It may be fraternal. It may be simply camaraderie of the sort fostered by and necessary on the battleground. Yet, neither is their relationship in any obvious or definitive way immediately distinguishable from homosexuality. Quite to the contrary, the intensity of the two men's move toward mutual respect for each as "men" fosters an ambiguous intensity of feeling that is not only liable to being mistaken by the reader as an expression of taboo homosexuality; it is in fact misunderstood as such within the story itself.

When Claude invites Bogard to accompany him on a torpedo run, Bogard and his friend McGinnis believe that he does not truly participate in the war and, therefore, is not truly a man. They suspect that he ferries officers back and forth to their boats, that he operates the "ship commanders' launches" or, worse, that he simply "fetch[es] hot water from one ship to another. Or buns" (477). Bogard's interest in this effeminate sailor is ripe for misreading, and McGinnis, who perceives these possibilities quite clearly, decides to play a joke on Bogard. So when Bogard arrives at the wharf to meet Claude for the boat run, he receives a package from McGinnis containing "a new yellow silk sofa cushion and a Japanese parasol, obviously borrowed and a comb and a roll of toilet paper." A note included with the package reads: "Couldn't find a camera anywhere and Collier wouldn't let me have his mandolin. But maybe Ronnie can play on the comb. Mac" (494). With this package and note, McGinnis propose with shocking clarity that the

boat run is a romantic—and probably a sexual—encounter in which Bogard will woo the effeminate Claude to musical accompaniment provided by Ronnie.

In addition to foregrounding the possibility of reading Bogard's and Claude's performances of masculinity as homosexual attraction, McGinnis's pranks calls Bogard back from his approach toward a taboo sexuality under the cover of laughter. In doing so, he makes overt "the normally implicit terms of a coercive double bind" discussed by Eve Sedgwick in *Between Men* and *Epistemology of the Closet*. This double-bind arises from the fact that, at least in western cultures, "for a man to be a man's man is separated only by an invisible, carefully blurred, always-already-crossed line from being 'interested in men'" (Sedgwick, *Between Men* 89). Stated differently, the distinction between obligatory, sanctioned male bonds and censored sexual interaction is perpetually obscured, difficult to track, and always liable to be already transgressed. Because homosexual sentiments are often not readily identifiable in advance—"no man must be able to ascertain that he is not (that his bonds are not) homosexual" (Sedgwick, *Between Men* 89)—heterosexual men must continually monitor and be on the look out for suspect, censorable behaviour in order to ensure that they "are" rather than "are interested in" men.

Bogard understands quite clearly the regulatory function of McGuinnis's prank and its importance. The narration duly notes that his face remains "quite thoughtful, quite grave" as he considers it. By the same token, his response is definitive: he "rewrap[s] the things and carrie[s] the bundle on up the wharf and drop[s] it quietly in the water" (494). In doing so, he seems

to refuse the constraints of the double-bind without either transgressing or bowing to it. His discretion suggests that the prank rebounds on McGuinnis, perhaps pointing toward his vulgarity and indicating the extent to which his understanding of masculinity and men's relationships to each other is limited. If so, his response refuses, as John Duvall has claimed is typical of Faulkner's fiction, to "disavow homosexuality"(Duvall 53). Yet Bogard's response—however definitive and effective within the story—expresses a desire to move beyond the regulatory force of the double-bind that might be described as a wish. Unfortunately, outside of this fiction, the regulation of sexuality and gender is not so easily ignored.

As a result, Faulkner's source story risks a great deal by representing near-censorable male bonds in a near-censorable language of narration. In part this is a function of the war genre he writes within. As Sedgwick has pointed out, "the climactic moments of war novels can look, with only a slight shift of optic, quite startlingly 'homosexual'" (Sedwick 89).[33] Writing about Faulkner's war stories, Duvall has, likewise, pointed out the extent to which they resolutely decouple the perceived linkages between heterosexual masculinity and homosexuality, rendering their interaction more complicated and, therefore, more difficult to navigate. Specifically, he suggests that Faulkner's texts "unhing[e] the presumed conjunction of heterosexuality and masculinity. In other words, one can be a male and a heterosexual and still not be a 'man.'" (Duvall 53). As a result, the male characters are perpetually motivated to establish their masculinity by performing the fact that they are "men." Yet their performances continually signify in ways that risk being

read as homosexual. Thus further performance is demanded, and the cycle continues.[34]

In "Turnabout," Faulkner's use of feminine diction to describe characters compounds this generic effect and critics have taken note. Indeed, nearly all of the major essays dealing with "Turnabout" attempt to account for the story's close approach to the homosexual through the description of Claude, often making passing reference to Sedgwick's writing in the process. For his part, Matthews directly rejects the homosexual implication, asserting instead a heterosexual dynamic. Although he acknowledges that "Claude carries the disruptive mark of the drag queen, the carnival ('masquerading') transvestite" and that he is described in feminine terms, he claims that this means that Bogard's interest in the feminine Claude is heterosexual. In "'Turnabout' is Fair(y) Play: Faulkner's Queer War Story," D. Matthew Ramsey takes precisely the opposite tack. Setting the story in light of Faulkner's exposure to the Greenwich Village gay scene during the period of its composition, he advocates for overtly queer readings. He points out that "Faulkner's description of Claude hits upon nearly every 1930s stereotype of the English male homosexual (or *supposed* homosexual)" (Ramsey 76) and concludes that the textual and biographical evidence, "while not conclusive, is 'evocative' of 'a gay aesthetic' that helped at least to affect Faulkner's different figurations of masculinity and certainly had *something* to do with the writing of 'Turnabout'" (Ramsey 73). A few pages later, he claims the story may function through a double-discourse: "'Turnabout' is a story his friends, and 'hip' Villagers would 'get,' but that regular readers of the *Post* would surely misunderstand" (Ramsey 75).

Neither approach to the story seems to capture the difficulty of the story's presentation of a mutually imbricated gender and sexuality. I find it difficult to accept, for example, Ramsey's final claim because the image of masculinity Faulkner is developing in the story stands too close to his personal gender ideal to seem to allow for a coded address to queer acquaintances. To link that performance—even indirectly—to an existing, culturally taboo, sexual community seems like a kind of sabotage; I don't believe Faulkner would do so. By the same token, there are sexual risks implicit in Bogard and Claude's efforts to understand each other, risks that, although confined within in the fiction, are real enough to merit attention. And so, it seems that the story's relation to homosexuality might be better described by lifting terms from Loebel's discussion of similar issues in *Absalom, Absalom!*. That novel, he writes, "is less invested in heteronormativity than are many of its readers. Or rather, while it is entirely invested in a patriarchal sex/gender system, the means of reproducing that system are not only (and perhaps not even at root) heteronormative and biological" (Loebel 100). Faulkner's text, he argues, remains resolutely patriarchal and heterosexual while operating in ways that exceed ordinary senses of the heteronormative. This analysis applies as much to the marginal "Turnabout" as it does to the canonical *Absalom, Absalom!*.

Ramsey claims that Faulkner's friendships with gay men and his exposure to a New York gay scene "had *something* to do with the writing" of the "Turnabout." I agree. Homosexuality is the unnamed and unnamable "something" the fear of which regulates heterosexual men's gender performance. Ramsey's article, although it aims primarily to explicate the gay

meaning and contexts of the text, actually succeeds in spelling out the fearful homosexual implications lurking in the narrative's representation of an intersubjective masculinity. In doing so, Ramsey reveals quite clearly the anxieties latent in its representation of gender and indicates how Faulkner's tale invites being understood as censurable and provides a catalogue of evidence—both textual and biographical—that might be brought to bear to support that understanding. As such, Ramsey's analysis speaks not to the story's "gay meaning" but to the "the normally implicit terms of a coercive double bind" around which its exploration of masculinity is woven. He traces how and why Faulkner's tale of heterosexual masculinity risks appearing as a tale of taboo homosexuality. In short, Ramsey's fearsome, unnamed "something" described in the context of the story's composition becomes, when transposed into the new context of the story's adaptation at MGM, precisely that region of narrative, marked out with all the force of the double-bind, that Faulkner's screen story could never be.

In the source story, when the double-bind rears its head, it may be dismissed out of hand. This is the allegorical meaning of Bogard's response to McGinnis's prank: sexual anxiety and the threat it invites may be cast away and ignored. This response functions in the story—Bogard's wish is granted—because the sexual anxieties of the narrative are carefully controlled by the narration. Most generally, for example, the feminine descriptions of Claude are, as I've already suggested, kept oddly abstract. Used as a sign for establishing difference between men and to provide a discursive landscape for their relationships along what Sedgwick call "the homosocial spectrum"

(*Between Men* 90), this diction is disconnected from nearly any sense of women (abstracted, ideal or otherwise).

More specifically, this suspect diction is dropped at key moments of the story. Immediately after Bogard has thrown the package into the water, for example, he sees "two men," who are quickly revealed to be Claude and Ronnie. Despite the narration's tendency to describe Claude using feminine diction, here, in the wake of McGinnis's prank, both are repeatedly called "men" and "boy," and their clothing is described in terms that emphasize a masculine negligence toward their dress. Claude's "rakish and casual cap" has been replaced by "an infantryman's soiled Baklava helmet." Ronnie smokes a pipe and wears an officer's warmer that is "soiled" and missing a strap and all its buttons (494-5). He has a face full of "profound gravity" a hand that is "hard, calloused" (494). The feminine diction that gives rise to McGinnis's prank is here absent, denying, in a sense, its meaning and defanging its threat.

A similar logic of refusal is at work in the opening paragraph of the story. There Faulkner writes:

> The American—the older one—wore no pink Bedfords. His breeches were of plain whipcord, like the tunic. And the tunic had no long London-cut skirts, so that below the Sam Browne the tail of it stuck straight out like the tunic of a military policeman beneath his holster belt. And he wore simple puttees and the easy shoes of a man of middle age, instead of Saville Row boots, and the shoes and the puttees did not match in shade, and the ordnance belt did not match either of them, and the pilot's wings on his breast were just wings. But

> the ribbon beneath them was a good ribbon, and the insigne on his shoulders were the twin bars of a captain. (475)

Ostentatious costuming is quite simply everything in this introductory description of Bogard. The bars of a captain, the wings of a pilot, and the ribbons of a hero are all interpretable by readers and by other men in the story as signs of relative status. However, this attention to details of clothing and the related emphasis on self-presentation directed at other men also risk being read as a kind of dandyism, especially given its juxtaposition with the feminine description of Claude and Bogard's unexplained interest in the young sailor. Indeed, Anne Goodwyn Jones has noted the opening paragraph resembles "a fashion show" (48).

The narration resists this fall into dandyism through a careful, implicitly masculine masking of ostentation with modesty. Thus Bogard's dress is oddly discreet. The fabric of his tunic and pants is "plain"; the leather, mismatched. Even the narration aims toward discretion: his pilot's insignia is "just wings" and his medal remains unnamed aside from the simple acknowledgment that it "was a good ribbon." Bogard's performance of masculinity is thus double: it is a product of *both* the overt, obvious signification of masculinity and glory through clothing *and* the denial of the significance of or even the awareness of these carefully constructed signs through a self-conscious plainness and modesty. Through these and related procedures the narration contains the disruptive power of the double-bind, recuperating these narrative events as authentic modes of masculine display despite the potential to read them differently.

This attention to costuming in "Turnabout" offers reasons for believing that the double-bind conjured by the story's performance of masculinity might have proven especially problematic for Faulkner as he set about adapting the story. Critics have largely accepted that Faulkner's early war fiction was intimately bound up in his personal performance of masculinity. In his youth, Faulkner's relationship to his masculinity was extremely vexed. Close to his mother, self-consciously short, in competition with his brothers, and full of artistic pretensions, he developed a talent for alternately embodying and skewering his emerging masculinity in ways that perpetually foregrounded it as an object of experimentation and role play. Sometimes he was the aesthete; sometimes, the drunk; sometimes, the hunter. His most important early role, however, was that of the young, battle-scarred man in uniform.

Faulkner's interest in war and soldiers was, of course, a common one among boys and men in the South. He had been raised on stories of the "Old Colonel" and of the Civil War; he had also surely internalized the Southern man's admiration of what Kartiganer, citing L. H. Harris, has called "the sword-point manner" (625).[35] World War I, when it began, had finally offered him a chance to take on the role of the soldier for himself, even if his path to service proved complicated and difficult. Ultimately, unable to get his parents' permission to enlist with the U.S. forces, he made his way to Toronto where he trained in a Royal Air Force camp. He never traveled to the front, never even made it through training. But this mattered very little to him because, as Lowe has pointed out, war had become "for Faulkner a central pole of masculine identity" (Lowe 73). And indeed, when he returned to

Oxford after the Armistice, his self-presentation as a man, as masculine turned around the various signs of battle: he wore a fake officer's uniform, spoke of plane crashes over Europe and affected a limp.[36]

Importantly, this public performance of masculinity played an important role in his developing sense of himself as a writer. James G. Watson comments, for example, that "the theatrical artifice inherent to war became a staple of the written world Faulkner set about making; theatrical performance became a strategy fundamental to its realization. Literally, he was writing himself into being then" (Watson 25). According to Watson, war provided Faulkner both a subject to write about and a method of writing: "the Great War provided…a metaphor (theater) and a method (self-presentation) congenial to his sense of himself as a *performer* and of a writing itself as a physical *act*" (Watson 31). The first of these claims is more-or-less self-evident. War is an obvious subject within Faulkner's writing even if its meaning or role within the plot is at times obscure. Likewise, Faulkner clearly presents war metaphorically as a theater. This is a central contention of Kartiganer's discussion of the war fiction in which he points out that "Faulkner's war consists of zany theatrics, gallant pratfalls: gestures so empty of serious military content that they become at once farcical and heroic" (632). It is less obvious, however, that biography and fiction might be interwoven in a drama of self-presentation in which Faulkner performs a self-affirming act of masculinity.

What this interweaving of biography and fiction might look like is made clear in the opening sentences of "Turnabout," quoted above. There men's military dress is clearly Faulkner's subject. Furthermore, its

presentation is theatrical, which is to say that it is intentionally legible as a costume representing a character. The passage is also an instance of self-presentation: the young Faulkner frequently wore pins, rings, coats and pants that identified himself as the pilot he pretended to be; he even went so far as to draw pictures of the items in letters sent back home to his parents while he was in training.[37] In these opening sentences, Bogard is to an extent a representation of the personally significant, masculine self-image. These opening sentences *perform* a mastery of the masculine ideal they represent. The off-hand facility of the narration's description enacts the narrator's participation in and hold on this masculinity.[38] Thus, in this passage, Faulkner simultaneously introduces specific male characters, represents an image of masculinity in which he participates in his daily life, and performs that masculinity by acting as its author. The result is a fiction, which—whatever its literary merits—stands in a complex relation to Faulkner's emerging sense of himself as both a man and as an author and which depends for its effect upon an overlap between biography and art.

Far from a passing fancy, this interpenetration of art and life—particularly as they pertain to notions of gender—continued for years in the war stories Faulkner told in conversation, wrote in letters and published in his fiction.[39] Only after WWII when he began to earn an established national reputation as a writer did he go silent and let this invented wartime past fall away.[40] Even then, he continued to incorporate references to war into his last novels and set *A Fable* on the French front. These and earlier novels, as well as his many published war stories, provided him with an enduring site for the representation and exploration of an image of masculinity he held dear. John

H. Duvall claims that the "man in uniform" serves as one of two sites available for "a sustained consideration of masculinity in the texts of William Faulkner" (Duvall 53).[41]

When Faulkner came to MGM, he brought with him this history of both representing a personal image of masculinity and performing that masculinity publicly through narration in "Turnabout" and in the other war stories written for magazines. These stories elaborated this masculinity in a world without women (as in "Turnabout") or through the rejection of a represented femininity.[42] Given this history, it seems unsurprising that the knot of generic concerns created by the recasting of his war picture as a kind of woman's film would present themselves to Faulkner in gendered terms. A love story turning around the concerns of a woman simply did not offer a forum for exploring the masculinity that preoccupied him in his war fiction and that drew him to write for war pictures. More importantly, Crawford's assignment disrupted the narration's careful management of the sexual anxieties inherent in the source story's performance of masculinity, in part because Hollywood genres were understood and organized in overtly gendered terms.

Segregation and Characterization in the Second Draft

In the second draft, Faulkner's effort to limit the impact of the generic shift away from the war picture and toward the woman's film manifests most overtly as a segregation of the source narrative from the love story he invents for Crawford. Although he creates a starring role for Crawford and the sort of

love story common to the woman's film, Faulkner refuses to integrate this story into the original war narrative. This segregation is visible globally in the fact that, while the male characters participate in and influence the causality of Ann's love story, Ann plays almost no role in and exerts very little influence over the men's story. Ann pines for Bogard, she struggles over her obligations to Claude, she yearns to please her brother. Yet, Claude and Bogard still meet and earn each other's respect in the same way they had in the source story and, importantly, they do so for the same reasons.

This segregation is likewise evident in the sequencing and arrangement of scenes. The only unbroken section devoted to Ann's story opens the script and constitutes an elaborate introduction to Ann's childhood and the death of her parents. It also introduces the two principal elements of her love story: her promised marriage to Claude and Bogard's confession of love. This introductory narrative—which becomes, in altered form, the first half of *Today We Live*—is followed by the more-or-less intact story of Bogard and Claude' bombing and torpedo runs. During the section of the script devoted to this adapted source narrative, Ann's story advances only in the breaks between scenes and without altering the source story's fundamental structure.[43] This construction of two distinct narratives preserves the causality of the source story despite its juxtaposition with Ann's love story: as in the source story, Bogard brings Claude on the bombing raid to show him the war, and Claude brings Bogard on the torpedo run out of respect for his skills as a pilot. In short, by creating a generic division within the narrative—there are two distinct stories, one for a war picture, another for a woman's film—Faulkner preserves a space where his war story's exploration of masculinity

can proceed without being disrupted by the very different concerns of Ann's love story.[44]

Faulkner manages this segregation through a persistent recourse to delay and deferral. This becomes apparent in the early scenes through a series of missed encounters that prevent the advance of the central love story between Ann and Bogard. Bogard goes to tell Ann that he's joined the air force only to discover that she has left to join Ronnie and Claude at the front (*MGM* 166-67); after receiving a commission as an officer, he tracks her down near the front, only to discover she's moved to follow Ronnie and Claude on a new, secret assignment (*MGM* 173-74). At this point, he loses touch with her, their love story comes to a halt, and the source story begins. Despite two brief meetings—once after the bombing run and once again after Claude has been blinded in the torpedo run—the love story only restarts after the two narratives integrate in the final pages of Faulkner's draft.[45] Bogart receives orders to undertake a suicidal bombing run; Ronnie and Claude, by now aware that Ann loves Bogart, volunteer for the mission without his knowledge and die completing it in order to free Ann to marry him.

This recourse to deferral as a narrative strategy is striking because it recalls a principal method of Faulkner's modernist method during the thirties. This strategy was famously described at the end of the decade by Conrad Aiken in his well-known "The Novel as Form." Concerned with the "functional reason and necessity" of Faulkner's "queer sentences," which he considers "monsters of grammar or awkwardness," Aiken concludes that Faulkner's distortion of syntax and grammar results from a conscious and "elaborate method of *deliberately withheld meaning*, of progressive and partial

and delayed disclosure, which so often gives the characteristic shape to the novels themselves" (Aiken 137-38). It registers a concern with the form or organization of narrative rather than its content and an effort "to keep the form—and the idea—fluid and unfinished, still in motion, as it were, and unknown, until the dropping into place of the very last syllable" (Aiken 138). More generally, it aims "to tell us everything, absolutely everything, every last origin or source or quality or qualification, and every possible future or permutation as well, in one terrifically concentrated effort: each sentence to be, as it were, a microcosm." (Aiken 137). The effort to encompass all meaning by forestalling the final statement of meaning provides the basis of Faulkner's modernist intervention in the novel.

Faulkner's deferral of Ann's plot in *Today We Live* could not serve more different purposes. Far from a reach toward totality, it aims to limit the narrative's scope. Far from an attempt to foster multiple points of view, it attempts to limit the point of view to the one privileged in the source story. Far from an experiment at the level of the sentence, it manifests as a brute coordination of event in the service of suspense rather than of suspension. Ann's character is fully developed; her narrative inventive. Yet, Faulkner constrains them both by resisting their inevitable integration into the source narrative until the last possible minute. No experiment, this strategy reads as a simple refusal to join his adapted war story to the generic romance demanded by Crawford's star persona. This refusal is overt enough and the discord between the two narratives great enough to allow John Matthews to speak of "the injuries inflicted throughout [*Turn About*] by Ann's presence" (Matthews 69).

Readers at MGM—unlike Faulknerians—were likely less troubled with changes required in the source story than by the injuries Faulkner's narrative strategy inflicted on Crawford's persona. These were perhaps most clearly seen in the characterization of the role scripted for her to play. Of all of Hollywood's female stars in the thirties, Crawford was most closely associated with glamorous, opulent costuming. She starred in a series of fallen woman films—a subset of the woman's film especially popular in the late twenties and early thirties and in which Crawford had her earliest successes—in which "the stories revolved around the problem of obtaining furs, automobiles, diamonds and clothes from men" (Jacobs 11). She was identified with a "look"—broad-shouldered, narrow-waisted dresses— and was costumed by MGM's Gilber Adrian Rosenberg (known simply as Adrian), a designer famous enough "to be treated like a star" (Edward Maeder, quoted in Balio 92). To cite only one example of the importance of this relationship, the very year Faulkner was writing *Turn About* for her, Crawford wore a dress designed by Adrian in the film *Letty Lynton* (1932); following its release Macy's sold "fifty thousand inexpensive copies" of it (Balio 94)—and this at the height of the Depression. Stated bluntly, Crawford was a star because—and was the star whom—legions of women across America watched in order to learn how a modern woman might dress and carry herself.[46] In the manner of Hollywood stardom, this distinctive aspect of Crawford's persona—she was the star known for her glamour—was a sign of the seamless integration of her persona with the generic conventions of the woman's film. Crawford understood this aspect of her persona and, in a nod to its generic roots, seems to have linked it to the female-directed

sentimentality of her films.[47] MGM rightly expected Faulkner's screenplay to highlight and to accommodate this aspect of Crawford's persona.

The second draft does not, however, do so. Quite to the contrary, Faulkner scripts a fiercely masculine characterization of Ann that is decidedly atypical of Crawford's early star persona in both disposition and dress. Ann is introduced—in a scene famously borrowed from *The Sound and the Fury*—wrestling[48] with Ronnie and Claude at a creek. She is later shown pretending to be a soldier "with a sword improvised from a poker" (*MGM* 143). Although these early scenes were to be played by child actors, they established fundamental traits that persisted even in the older character played by Crawford. As an adult, Ann becomes aggressively pro-war and, when thinking about Germans, exclaims variations on "Kill them! Kill Them!" (149). Her presentation as a fire-eater, who because of her sex, will never be allowed to see war is so extreme that she ultimately seems to embody aspects of Faulkner's masculine ideal: the eager young man who misses his chance to prove himself in war through no fault of his own. And indeed, Kawin notes that Ann is "as committed to the war effort as any male" (Kawin 112).[49]

This ferocious support of war and violence is matched by Ann's preference for spartan, militaristic costumes which were completely at odds with Crawford's typical costuming. This preference stems from the link established early on between war-time rationing and costuming. Bogard is oblivious to the need to ration and is criticized by Ann for his ignorance. More importantly, his love for Ann—and hers for him—seems to spring from their arguments over his failures to economize at home in support of the war

effort. Especially when the conversation turns directly to Bogard's clothes—she criticizes him for not wearing khaki (Kawin 154)—these exchanges seem to urge a modesty in Ann's costuming that provides little occasion for her to wear glamorous gowns. The script then follows through on this suggestion: when the second draft refers to Ann's costume, it places her in a uniform. MGM, of course, would have none of this and sent over costumes designed by Adrian and asked Anne Cunningham to write a treatment of the film from the Ann's point-of-view in order to help Faulkner better understand and develop her femininity.

The combined effect of the segregation of the war story from the romance and of Ann's characterization is unsettling in ways that raise the questions of why Faulkner might have been so resistant to writing Crawford a love story, and what are we to make of his recoil from the generic demands of the woman's film in his second draft? We know that Faulkner had no compunction about writing for the popular, generic war pictures. By the same token, earlier novels like *The Sound and the Fury* and *Sanctuary* demonstrated his willingness to work with generic stories similar to those common in the fallen-women cycles of the woman's film. Why then should Crawford's assignment to the *Turn About* project provoke him to write so intensely against the genre of the woman's film? I suggest that the generic shift from war picture to woman's film transformed the initial technical challenge of adapting a prose fiction about men at war into a screen drama about the same into a highly personal confrontation with gender performance. In addition, this confrontation produced a reaction recognizable as male homosexual panic. Specifically, Crawford's assignment did more than insert feminine

concerns into a story that Faulkner devoted to an exploration of men's relationships to each other. Much more threateningly, her presence *dismantled* the peculiar basis of the source's exploration of masculinity, causing it to run afoul of the sexual double-bind implicit in all performances of male heterosociality. The result was an anxiety that encouraged Faulkner to confound problems of gender with problems of genre and which, I believe, might serve as a reasonable accounting for the extremity of his resistance to the conventions of the woman's film and the persona of one of its greatest stars.

Generic Conception of Media Divide Between Literary & Cinematic

In his article on "Turnabout" and its adaptation, John T. Matthews has drawn attention to Crawford's place within the screenplay, speaking of "the injuries inflicted throughout [*Turn About*] by Ann's presence" (Matthews 69). Although I have indicated some disagreement with aspects of his analysis, Matthews's analysis of Faulkner's resistance to Crawford's assignment is astute and points the way to my closing remarks about the *Turn About* project. Drawing on Teresa de Lauretis's feminist revision of apparatus theory, Matthews reads this injury as a product of Faulkner's ambivalent response to "the will to closure and coming together demanded of the Hollywood formula romance" (69). In various features of Ann's characterization and the overt artificiality of the ending, he finds a recognition of the double position of the female spectator under patriarchy and within classical cinema; and an implicit, albeit rudimentary, critique of

"the assembly line of the culture industry" (69). Matthews thus places *Turn About* within an on-going discussion of spectator activities within contemporary film studies.[50] What interests me most about Matthews's account, however, is the observation that launches it. Matthews first describes Ann's presence "as the transformative force of the cinema...in Faulkner's narrative. That is Joan Crawford *is* the movie" (67). In Matthews's discussion, this important claim provides the turn to feminist theories of the cinematic apparatus as a technology for taming the threat of the feminine.[51] For my part, I prefer to emphasize the extent to which the injury of Ann's presence can be understood as the trace of the media distinction Faulkner worked across while scripting his adaption. In *Turn About*, the distinction between cinema and literature was transformed by his response to the generic shift necessary to accommodate Crawford's star persona manifesting as a conception of the relationship between the cinematic and the literary.

To understand why this is the case, it is useful to imagine the three texts I have summarized as a Venn diagram of three overlapping circles. One circle stands for the source story, another for the release film. Together, these two figure the conflicting obligations Faulkner worked under while translating his own fiction into screen drama. The first figures those literary aspirations, however great or small, expressed in the source story; the last, the shifting genre expectations under which Faulkner worked while developing a film from that story.

These two circles overlap to the extent that the story and the film share some characters and story events. Yet the exchange of material between them is most often mediated through the third circle which stands for Faulkner's

second draft of his adaptation and which overlaps both of the other two. On the one hand the overlap between the screenplay and the source story points toward aspects of the source that likely motivated Hawks to option the story and facilitated Faulkner's quick composition of his skilful first draft. These features include the story's abundant action sequences involving modern technology as well as its mix of nostalgia and hard-boiled detail typical of the war pictures of the time. To the extent that these features are typical of Faulkner's other war stories, this overlap suggests characteristics of Faulkner's fiction which made it a desirable object of adaptation. On the other hand, the overlap between the screenplay and *Today We Live* captures those aspects of Faulkner's adaptation that met the studio's expectations for the project and were preserved in the final film. These include events and characters carried over from the source story as well as some portions of the narrative Faulkner invented to create a role for Crawford. These two areas of overlap offer abundant material for considering how Faulkner's talent as a writer led to specific kinds of success as a screenwriter. And indeed, much scholarship on Faulkner's career in Hollywood has considered precisely these indications of shared content and technique in Faulkner's fiction and film works.

I would suggest however that these areas of overlap also mark out precisely those instances where Faulkner's working conception of cinema—what content he believed constituted viable film narrative and how it ought to be developed—is obscured. Cinema is a collaborative art, and at any point where Faulkner's screenplays feed into a final film, it becomes difficult, given the absence of reliable accounts of day-by-day production activities, to

determine whether the material under analysis in fact represents Faulkner's work. As a result, these successes offer little evidence of the aims and ideas at play in Faulkner's work as a screenwriter. By the same token, the importance of the prose fiction to any scholarly account of Faulkner's work means that this fiction tends to overshadow the specificity of the screenwriting whenever there is a repetition of story material or technique in the screenplay. To date, Bruce Kawin has pursued these repetitions more diligently than most in his effort to establish Faulkner's screenplays as legitimately literary texts. Yet, his efforts have born little fruit, and in general, where there is repetition between fiction and screenplays, the fiction captures the available critical attention. Most often the implication—and frequently, the stated conclusion—is that writing for film was a distraction from the literary fiction. Stated plainly, neither area of overlap can offer any vantage upon Faulkner's notions of what constituted a successful, adapted, dramatic narrative—call it a conception of cinematic narrative—that framed his compositional activities when writing for MGM.

Furthermore, what I am describing as a conception accords well with Paul Ricoeur's notion of the thought arising from a narrative. In his discussion of mimesis in *Time and Narrative,* Ricoeur emphasizes the role of plot in mediating between an existing tradition and the expectations of readers. As a result, plotted narrative, or what he calls configuration, always connects and mediates between earlier and later understandings of events and experiences. Given this mediating function, Ricoeur argues that emplotment—the arrangement of events within a narrative during the act of composition—operates as a mode of thought accessible to the reader,

claiming that a story, to be a story, "must organize [events] into an intelligible whole, of a sort such that we can always ask what is the 'thought' of this story" (Ricoeur 65). As a feature of plot, this thought is textual and, thus, independent of any mental process of the author identifiable as an intention and discoverable through interviews, letters or biographical research.

What I am suggesting by offering Ricoeur as the context for a discussion of Faulkner's conception of the relationship between cinema and literature is that Faulkner's replotting of "Turnabout" as *Turn About* does more than reveal his practical accommodation of prose narrative to the limitations of screen drama. Which is to say, the tension pulling at the narrative seams in the second draft of *Today We Live* is more than a sign of the difficulty of adapting the story "Turnabout" to the screen. It is an expression of Faulkner's revised conception of how the movement of narrative across from one medium to the other transforms that narrative in ways that may be discerned as a pattern. These plotted conceptions of the cinematic and the literary offer an initial step toward transcending the either-or of his later denials of cinematic influence and a better understanding of how his prose and dramatic fictions interconnect.

When Faulkner began scripting the first draft of his adaptation, media surely organized his conceptions of the two modes of narration. As I've pointed out, certain features of "Turnabout"'s organization surely facilitated the adaptation of the story into dramatic form: the balance established between the bombing raid and the torpedo run, for example, or the segmentation of the story into numbered scenes. Others likely created difficulties. The published story relies, for example, on narrative voice rather

than character dialogue or represented action to advance the plot. To work as screen drama, the content of this voice needed to be transposed into visual signs and dialogue. In short, the differences between writing screenplays and short stories manifested primarily as a technical division between prose and dramatic presentations of a common narrative. Faulkner navigated this challenge with relative ease, producing a war picture from his war story with little alteration.

When Crawford was assigned to the project, however, this conception was transformed in two distinct ways. First, conceptions of the cinematic and the literary no longer track the divide between the presentation of a common narrative in two media. Instead, they now mark a generic distinction: on the one hand rests *both* the war narrative of both the source story *and* the first draft of *Turn About*, which explore masculine performance in a world without women; on the other the love story of *Today We Live*, which sets women's issues at the centre of the narrative and recasts the men's relationships as a competition for a woman's heart. As historical categories, this generic division between the war picture and the woman's film is clearly implicated in a series of industrially-derived but culturally-relevant categories that give it meaning. Of these the most important is gender, a division that emerges as a choice between the foregrounding of male characters or female characters, male genres or female genres as foci and organizing principles in the revised narrative of the second draft. This palimpsest of gender and genre implies—to the extent that Crawford "is" the movie, and by extension, the "movies" or the "cinematic"—a more general distinction between the classical Hollywood film and something else, only vaguely defined—call it the "literary" or the

"serious"—that encompasses not only the published short story but the type of filmmaking suggested by the first draft as well. The result is a series of equivalencies in which war pictures stand for masculinity which stands for the literary and in which the woman's film stands for femininity which stands for the cinematic. This layering of independent but interconnected conceptions is significantly more complex than a merely technical division and invites the confusion of gender and genre I've traced in the second draft.

Second and more importantly, Crawford's assignment to the *Turn About* project transforms the original media distinction by making such distinction an object of Faulkner's narration within a single text. This difference between film and literature had initially passed between the source story and the adapted screenplay. The passage from fiction to film was thus signalled by the movement from one text to the other. After Crawford's assignment, the division between kinds of story—between male war pictures and female love stories—occurs within the screenplay text itself. The love story required by MGM and constructed to conform to a celebrated star of the woman's film now shared textual space with the source story's war-time exploration of masculinity. In this context, the adapted source story, despite its organization as a screen drama, reads in comparison to Ann's narrative as synonymous with the original published story. Faulkner's effort to plot this double narrative, to assemble it as an intelligible whole, necessarily organizes itself as a response to this formerly extratextual media distinction. *Turn About* negotiates the challenge of integrating or coordinating a female character into a story about men, a love story into a war story, and this effort, because the divisions of genre and gender now track the contact between the two source

media, negotiates a relationship between fiction and film, between the cinematic and the literary. I will have more to say about this contact in later chapters.

The evidence of *Turn About* suggests that Hollywood's system of film production, distribution and exhibition, in which formal characteristics of narrative carry perceptible gender connotations that were organized in terms of genre, became implicated in Faulkner's adaptation of his fictional performances of masculinity. Indeed, in this screenplay, he seems to stage his encounter with the demands of classical cinema as scenes in this on-going performance. In this way, the plotting of narrative in *Turn About*, its organization and configuration as a discordant whole, constitutes a template for negotiating the relationship between fiction and film in Faulkner's practice of composition. This thought turns around the interpenetration of gender and genre—a double meaning that persists in the French *genre*—intrinsic to Hollywood filmmaking in the classical period, and shapes both his subsequent efforts to write screenplays for MGM and his efforts to write prose fictions for publication.

Fiction To Film: *Flags in the Dust* and the War Picture

Faulkner's fiction had been closely aligned to Hollywood's war pictures since at least 1927.[52] That year, Faulkner began writing the two novels in which he first sets stories peopled by characters who lived in ways he knew from his childhood in a small Mississippi town. The materials he invented in the process effectively mapped out the textures, sensibility and broad contours of the major fiction. The first of these books, *Father Abraham*, tells of Flem Snopes's rise and fall in Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson. This tale clearly captured Faulkner's imagination and became a source for many characters and events in his subsequent stories and novels. Yet, *Father Abraham* would only reach a final form in the forties and fifties with the publication of *The Hamlet*, *The Town*, and *The Mansion*: after several months of intense composition, Faulkner set the Snopes story aside in order to focus exclusively on the other novel he had begun, *Flags in the Dust*.[53]

A tale of the Sartoris family's struggle to live under the burden of their collective memories of war, *Flags in the Dust* tells of Bayard Sartoris's difficult return following the Armistice of 1918 from the European front where he has watched his twin brother John die in a dog fight with the Germans. The novel detours into Horace Benbow's seduction of the married woman, Belle, and his sister Narcissa's marriage to Bayard. Likewise, Bayard's grandfather and his Aunt Jenny find numerous occasions to ruminate over stories of the Civil War. But its core is Bayard's struggle to deal with the traumatic memory of

his twin's death in battle. Faulkner worked feverishly on this knotted narrative throughout the summer and fall of 1927, and by October, he had finished the initial draft. Revisions complete, he circulated *Flags in the Dust* among publishers, all of whom recoiled from its complicated weave of disparate stories. When a much-reduced version was finally released as *Sartoris* in 1929, it marked the first appearance of his Yoknapatawpha county and was followed in quick succession by the publication of *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Sanctuary*, and *Light in August*. The war-haunted narrative of *Flags in the Dust* thus stands as the acknowledged well-spring from which Faulkner's major fiction flowed.[54]

Importantly, Faulkner's tales of John's death and Bayard's return home closely aligned his fiction to a newly resurgent genre of the Hollywood war film. Indeed, the very summer that Faulkner was writing his first draft of *Flags in the Dust*, Paramount Pictures released the critically acclaimed *Wings*, a film that for the first time shifted the war film's attention upward, away from the trenches and into the air, the very space Faulkner's novel and, later, his stories were populating with fictional pilots. *Wings* established the viability and the popularity of the cinematic arena Faulkner would repeatedly write within across the full span of his career as a contract screenwriter.[55]

Although war had figured in the imagery of the cinema from its beginnings, its earliest forms offered little that would have invited Faulkner's interest as a writer. The earliest war actualities of military parades and cavalry charges were non-narrative and generally unscripted. Military spectacle only began to develop its basic narrative form and early visual strategies in D. W. Griffith's one- and two-reel Civil War films. Griffith's *Birth*

of a Nation (1915) solidified the template of these early shorts into a fixed narrative formula. In *Birth* as well as in those films that stood in its shadow, men fought wars to protect women from the violence of racial and foreign aggression. Of course, overt resonances exist between Faulkner's fiction and *Birth of a Nation*'s portrait of racial differences, regional conflict and the South's vision of its past,[56] yet Griffith's representations of war bear little resemblance to Faulkner's war narratives, especially those he wrote for the screen. Quite to the contrary, Faulkner's narratives align themselves with a post-war revision of the war picture largely defined in opposition to Griffith's film.[57]

This generic revision emerged only in the twenties and was provoked by the appropriation of Griffith's narrative as a framework for the propaganda films produced in coordination with the U.S. Government after the country's entry into World War I. Soon after the war's end, American journalists and other public figures began to question the images promulgated by these films and, through them, "United States participation in the war" (DeBauche 170). In response, Hollywood sharply scaled back its production of war-themed pictures following the Armistice. When in the mid-twenties the genre returned to popularity, it had been reconstituted as the site of a "second reaction" to a war already receding into the historical past (DeBauche 194).[58] These new films laid greater claim to realism and drew upon "the participation of veterans in nearly all phases of the creative process" (192). They likewise shifted attention away from the large-scale geo-political issues allegorized in the propaganda films and onto the life of "the ordinary soldier." They focused on "his bleak and muddy life in the

trenches...showing basic training, mail call, and soldiers going over the top" (171).[59] This resurgence and transformation of the combat film reached its peak with the release of films such as *The Big Parade* (1925), *What Price Glory?* (1926), and *Wings* (1927).

When Faulkner arrived in Hollywood in 1932, the interest in this revised war picture had not yet ebbed. So, it is unsurprising that the studios would allow him to write war scenarios. His short stories shared the Hollywood war picture's interest in the harsh details of soldiers' lives, and just as importantly, they came from the pen of a man who still at this late date claimed first-hand experience of the war. Faulkner's fiction thus seemed perfectly situated as source material for Hollywood's revised war pictures, and after a bungled first assignment to a Wallace Berry wrestling feature and two treatments for films—one about India and another a romance that scandalized studio readers with their near-approach to *Sanctuary*'s squalor—Faulkner set to work writing about the Great War.

One of Faulkner's earliest original treatments, "Absolution," bears a striking resemblance to *Wings*, suggesting that Faulkner was not only familiar with the revised war picture , but also that he may have taken *Wings* as a model. In *Wings*, two boyhood friends—John and David—are rivals for the love of a rich young woman. They go off to war together, David dies, and John shoots down a German plane in revenge. He does not realize, however, that the German plane was stolen and that David, still very much alive, was piloting it back from behind enemy lines. Home at war's end, John meets David's parents and then, rejecting the woman David and he both loved as unworthy, settles down with the girl next door.[60]

"Absolution" repeats Wings' narrative near-exactly. In Faulkner's treatment, John and Corwin, two boyhood friends who are rivals for the same woman's affections, find themselves on the front as pilots. As in *Wings*, John is forced to shoot down Corwin's plane and later rejects the woman they both loved as unworthy. Faulkner complicates *Wings*' narrative by casting John and Corwin's relationship in terms of a fraternal rivalry and a class conflict; he also stages the final dog fight as a duel rather than a drama of mistaken identity.[61] Yet, the similarities are great enough to suggest Faulkner's familiarity and active engagement with the conventions of the revised war picture during his time at MGM and the details of one of its founding texts.[62] This engagement, which continued through the composition of "Flying the Mail," a treatment about pilots on the home front during the war, also suggests that similarities between Faulkner's war fiction and the conventions of the war picture might facilitate his transition to writing for the screen.

The *War Birds* project appears to have begun as a film treatment Faulkner wrote soon after finishing work on *Turn About* and was based upon two of his early Sartoris stories: "Ad Astra" and "All the Dead Pilots." Soon afterwards, and perhaps in response to this treatment, Howard Hawks hired Faulkner to adapt *The Diary of the Unknown Aviator*, a story published serially in *Liberty Magazine* in 1926 that told of a war pilot's exploits and suffering at the front. Faulkner accepted the assignment and began work on an adaptation in November 1932. He wrote from Oxford and submitted a finished screenplay by 12 January 1933. However, that screenplay, now called *A Ghost Story* and later *War Birds*, had little to do with the assigned source story.[63] In fact, Faulkner had retained nothing of it except the idea of a pilot's

diary sent home to his family after his death, which he used as a device to frame the adaptation of the Sartoris stories he had first developed in the earlier treatment.

The resulting narrative displayed Faulkner's increasing familiarity and facility with the mechanics of film narration. Various technical aspects of the script—its visual development of narrative and an inventive use of camera effects such as fades, cross-fades and super-impositions as well as Faulkner's increasing fluency with film terminology—spoke both to Faulkner's genuine commitment to writing a narrative appropriate for the screen and his growing mastery of the tools necessary to do so. Bruce Kawin goes so far as to conclude that *War Birds* is the "most complex and experimental narrative structure" Faulkner ever conceived for the screen (MGM 264). Hawks believed that a solid film could be made from the script if Faulkner would return to Hollywood to work on revisions. The studio was uncertain, however, and in the end, Faulkner chose not to travel back west, providing instead piecemeal contributions to other projects until taken off the MGM payroll. Soon after, Hawks set to work on *Viva Villa!*, and *War Birds* was consigned to the story vault.

The Source Stories

Faulkner surely had multiple reasons for returning to *Flags in the Dust*'s story of John's death and Bayard's response to it. The most obvious were financial. His father's recent death had increased his family responsibilities, and he was looking for ways to make money. Because *War*

Birds was based on two short stories, he would be paid for the movie rights for both of them if it were sent to production. A letter he wrote to Sam Marx in July 1933 seems to suggest that he believed the money would be paid even if the studio merely accepted the submitted script.[64] Yet, whatever his financial motivations, Faulkner's return to *Flags in the Dust* also speaks to his continued investment in the story of Bayard's response to his brother John's death in a dogfight at the front. Indeed, *War Birds* was only the most recent of Faulkner's several returns to and elaborations of this material in the years after that novel's publication.

In that novel, John's death, which occurs prior to the present-day events of the narrative, remains something of a mystery and is recounted twice. The first time, Bayard, who is confined to his bed by a cast, speaks to Narcissa of John's death. His narration is violent and aggressive: he grabs Narcissa's arm hard enough to leave bruises. Although fragmented, the tale lays out the basic details of John's death. His plane burning in the sky after a German attack, John "thumbed his nose" at Bayard who is flying nearby and "flipped his hand" at the German before leaping into the clouds (754). Bayard is deeply traumatized by the experience and, upon his return to Jefferson, stands as a figure for the incomprehensibility of the emotional and spiritual waste land caused by the war. His isolation is highlighted in the second iteration of the story of John's death: lying alone in a bed at night, Bayard remembers the event but has no one to speak with about it.

By the time he began working at MGM in the spring of 1931, Faulkner had written three additional stories, each of which elaborates upon Bayard and John's experiences as recounted in this earlier novel. Two of these stories

would have been fresh in his mind as he moved to Hollywood. The first, "Ad Astra," had been published in March 1931, only two months before Faulkner reported to work at the studio. Written in the months following the novel's completion, this story presents a portrait of soldiers' responses to the end of the war on the night of the Armistice. Set as the Armistice takes effect, it tells of a group of soldiers—one of whom is Bayard Sartoris—who drink, celebrate, and to a certain extent, mourn the close of the war. The story reads like a collage of voices: the men banter, reminisce and consider what their return home will entail. In an important side plot, one of the men has shot down a German pilot and, unable to kill him because the war is now over, decides to bring him home as a gift for his wife. By story's end, these voices coalesce into a nostalgic portrait of devil-may-care soldiers doomed to live in the spiritual wasteland created by the war. As a return to events first hinted at in *Flags*, this portrait offers an emotional context for the flippancy of John's dying gesture and adds credibility to Bayard's sense of dislocation after his return to Jefferson.

The second of these stories, "All the Dead Pilots," had been written in late 1929 or early 1930 and fills in details of John's character and of the events leading up to his death. John's death, we learn, was a product of a conflict with his commanding officer, Spoomer, who has begun an affair with John's French mistress. To keep John from ruining their trysts, Spoomer assigns him duties that will keep him on base. For his part, John sets Spoomer's dog free whenever the officer is gone. If Spoomer is on base, the dog goes to the cafeteria to eat garbage; if Spoomer's in town with the mistress, the dog heads off after him and John follows. The action is fairly ridiculous, and ends when

John humiliates Spoomer by stealing his clothes from the mistress's room, forcing him to return to base wearing one of her dresses. As punishment, John is assigned to a night-flying regiment where he is sure to die. "With Caution and Dispatch," an extremely minor, comic story, establishes that John cannot fly Camels, which are the kind of plane that his new regiment uses. It thus provides additional context identifying John's rivalry with Spoomer as the cause of his death.

War Birds

In *War Birds*, Faulkner picks up all of these variations on the scene of John's death and attempts to reconcile them in order to provide, for the first time, a clear account of the primal trauma driving the plot of *Flags in the Dust*. It does so by presenting a complicated, four-part narrative. The first part draws heavily on "All the Dead Pilots" and takes John's conflict with Spoomer as its central action. This story begins when John, newly arrived in Europe, becomes entangled in a love triangle involving a local woman and Spoomer. To escape the affair, John requests a transfer to his brother Bayard's unit at the front; but once there, he learns that Spoomer has been stationed there as well. John soon begins another affair, this time with a French woman named Antoinette, and soon discovers that once again he shares his lover with Spoomer. Quite a bit of business happens, much of it involving Spoomer's dog. In fact, the screenplay becomes quite repetitious. In the end however, John succeeds in humiliating Spoomer, as he did in the source story, by stealing his clothes while he's with Antoinette, forcing him to return

to base dressed as a woman. In retaliation, Spoomer sends him to fight in an ill-equipped forward unit where he is sure to be quickly shot down.

The second part of the drama presents the circumstances of John's death. It adapts the motif of duelling brothers first developed in Faulkner's treatment "Absolution." Now at his new unit and very angry, John is bent on defeating Spoomer and decides to fly off from his patrols in order to intercept Spoomer and shoot down any German planes before Spoomer can do so, thus establishing his own dominance and depriving Spoomer of battlefield glory. But Spoomer, relying on the privileges of rank, takes credit for all of John's kills. Furious, John decides to shoot down Spoomer's plane in a dogfight. Bayard, however, learns of his plans and flies after John each time he takes his plane from the hanger, intercepting him before he can attack Spoomer and forcing him to return to base. During one of their airborne duels a group of German planes catches them off guard, and John is shot down.

The third part of the drama draws heavily on the German subplot from "Ad Astra." In it, Bayard searches obsessively for the German plane that fired on his brother, ultimately finding and shooting it down in the hours immediately preceding the Armistice. In the hours immediately following the Armistice, he discovers that the pilot, named Dorn, has survived the crash and is sitting across from him in a bar. Dorn tells of his life, explaining that his family died because of the war and provoking Bayard to end his life. Bayard, however, refuses to kill him—it would be murder to do so now that the war is over—and instead brings him and Antionette, who has renounced Spoomer, back home with him to Jefferson.[65]

The final section, which presents Bayard's life in Jefferson after the war and thus returns to the subject of *Flags in the Dust*, serves as a frame for the war picture developed in the first three parts, and thus opens and closes the screenplay. In this frame narrative, John's son Johnny returns home from school after being picked on for his too-large family and demands that his mother, Caroline, explain who his Aunt 'Toinette and Uncle Dorn are. Caroline responds by showing him John's wartime diary. The events of the three-part war picture are its contents, and when they come to a close with Bayard sparing Dorn's life, the frame narrative recommences. There, in the screenplay's closing pages, we see how Antoinette and Dorn worked to adjust to American life by getting jobs, saving money, and ultimately becoming surrogate parents for Johnny. Caroline forgives Antoinette and Dorn for their roles in her husband's death. Johnny salutes Dorn, accepting that the rules of life on the front are different from those at home and recognizing that Dorn has loved him. Then in the closing scene, Bayard returns home, leaping a fence on horseback, while John's ghost flies overhead in superimposition.

From these brief summaries, it should be clear that Faulkner's screenplay remains faithful to the various events of his chosen source materials. John's leap to his death occurs much as it did in *Flags in the Dust*. His rivalry with Spoomer, likewise, develops much as it did in "All the Dead Pilots." The friends in "Absolution" are only metaphorically brothers and they duel for different reasons, but much of the action of this treatment is preserved in John and Bayard's dogfights. Only in the frame narrative do the events and characters of the screenplay differ significantly from the adapted sources. *War Birds* introduces characters not present in *Flags in the Dust*

(Antoinette, Dorn, Johnny) and changes the relationships between those characters it does adapt to the screen (Caroline is John's widow in *War Birds* but she is based on Bayard's wife, Narcissa, in *Flags*).

In my previous chapter, I explained how Hollywood genre conventions altered Faulkner's sense of what was possible within the confines of a war narrative. Whereas his published war story "Turnabout" was free to explore varieties of masculinity within the safe space of an all-male battlefield, his adaptation of that story as a script suitable for the star persona cultivated for Joan Crawford across a series of successful women's films revealed that much of the source narrative's playful male bonding could be seen as sexually suspect when translated out of its original form. The male characters' intense interest in earning other men's respect, adapted into drama and set alongside the love story invented for Crawford's character, suddenly seemed to evoke the homosexual; the varieties of their gender performance suddenly marked them as effeminate. In short, the juxtaposition of Faulkner's war story and the conventions of the Hollywood woman's film had entangled *Turn About* in the double-bind plaguing homosocial relations between men and provoked Faulkner to develop narrative strategies to contain these disruptions of his story. Viewed in light of this first screenplay project, the materials Faulkner chose to adapt in *War Birds* should give us pause. Like "Turnabout," these Sartoris stories represent young men engaged in elaborate performances of masculinity in order to prove themselves men to other men.

In the present chapter I intend to build on that analysis by showing how Faulkner dealt with similar problems quite differently in his second

screenplay project, *War Birds*. In this project, he chooses to adapt a group of source materials that stood at the center of his on-going fictional project. The screenplay would draw on the strengths of these materials, but it would also regularize them. A narrative that had developed piecemeal across several years in the fiction would in the screenplay find a complete and coherent statement. As in *Turn About,* however, these source materials ran contrary to Hollywood's generic norms and, again as in *Turn About*, the mismatch encouraged sexually-attuned readings that emphasized queer connotations in the sources. In *War Birds*, Faulkner again works to extinguish connotative materials but in a departure from his previous effort, deploys generic norms to revise the source narratives rather than segregate them. The result is a reimagining of a core narrative of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha saga as a popular generic product.

The Sartoris Twins and Queer Connotation

The sexual underpinnings of the Sartoris twins' war stories—treated as a distinct subset of Faulkner's fiction—have been usefully explored in two essays: Anne Goodwyn Jones's "Male Fantasies? Faulkner's War Stories and the Construction of Gender" and John Duvall's "Faulkner's Crying Game: Male Homosexual Panic." In her essay, which discusses Faulkner's war stories but pays special attention to their relationship to *Flags in the Dust* and *The Unvanquished*, Jones suggests that Faulkner has a double subject in these stories: he appears "to be caught within the structures of manhood and war" (Jones 53). In other words, Faulkner writing about war is

also writing about masculinity. Her larger point, which she explores in relation to *Flags in the Dust*, is that, because the narrative structures relating to these two topics are roughly the same, Faulkner inevitably narrates masculinity when narrating his war stories. To an extent, Jones is stating the obvious here. But she also points out that this doubleness—the sense that the events of war perpetually signify a version of masculine gender—fosters an anxiety that is legible in the narration of the stories. For Jones, this anxiety is related to absence of other, feminine modes of narration and the rejection of the feminine at the level of event.

In "All the Dead Pilots," the absence of women is clearly visible in John's rivalry with Spoomer. Ostensibly, John spars with Spoomer over John's London wife and later Antoinette, yet the women at issue are marginalized and strangely beside the point. The story broadcasts this in multiple ways. Most overt is the way the men's rivalry over the woman is minimized by being doubled by the men's fight over Spoomer's dog. Whenever he is angry at Spoomer, John lets the dog out, allowing it to eat from the enlisted men's garbage, which infuriates Spoomer. The dog and this subplot are given more space in the narrative than Antoinette and her story. More to the point, the narrator claims the story is about "the three of them, Spoomer and Sartoris and the dog"; Antoinette is given no mention (515). In a similar vein, John's London wife is introduced in a way which suggests she may be a prostitute, although John does not seem to realize this (514). This presentation undermines any romantic basis for their relationship. She is simply a placeholder, providing an occasion for John to be angry when Spoomer takes her away for two days. His anger, however, is a product of

hurt pride, not hurt feelings. In other words, however much men's relationships to a woman initiate the story, these episodes suggest that the story itself is about the relationship between men and the relative strength of their respective masculinities.[66] John fights Spoomer to prove himself a man.

Importantly, this focus on the relationship between men emphasizes homosocial rather than heterosexual bonds. Duvall's careful reading of "All the Dead Pilots" rightly identifies this emphasis as symptomatic of the story's violent, inflexible approach to male gender performance. In this story masculinity is a zero-sum game in which men become men by denying that status to others. Real men posses "a dominating masculinity" arising from their "power to feminize the other" (Duvall 55). Masculinity is, as Jones claimed, combat, a war. John, the central figure in this war between men, begins the story in the weak position of a cuckold, and he spends most of the narrative attempting to emerge from that position by dominating others in his turn. At times this happens in passing. When John beats a police officer near the story's end, for example, he continues until the man "began to scream like a woman behind his brigand's moustaches" (525). At other times, the domination is quite elaborate and involved. For example, after learning that Spoomer has gone away with his London wife for two days, a drunken John forces another soldier to wear Spoomer's tunic and a woman's garter belt while he boxes with him. Dominating this soldier by violently beating him seems to restore some of his wounded masculinity. The theft of the garter too is a kind of domination. It was taken from another soldier's kit. John's wife's nickname is Kit, a repetition of words that suggests

that John is reenacting his own cuckolding, only this time it is he that dominates by stealing symbolically another man's woman.

This violence is not, however, risk free. Quite to the contrary, when boxing with the soldier, John's "prodding at the garter with his finger" in the moment before the fight begins, the soldier's "woollen underwear showing beneath" his tunic and the description of their fists as "naked," all emphasize the sexual connotations of the fight between the two men. John's jostling with Spoomer over the dog is likewise sexually connotative, at only one remove. That these two pilots fight each other using a dog is amounts to an elaborate pun: John and Spoomer are engaged in a "dog fight." On the one hand, the pun draws attention to the men's failure to meet the demands of their duty: neither man takes to the air to battle their unit's enemy. On the other hand, the pun highlights the stakes of the men's rivalry, their battle to be "top dog." Speaking of "Ad Astra" and the danger of being shot from behind, Duvall claims that for pilots in Faulkner's war stories: "to be recognized as a man's man in this fraternity means risking penetration, yet to be penetrated is to be a woman" (Duvall 56). In short, the pun delineates a double danger related to male gender performance that exceeds the more obvious danger of being shot from behind, i.e. killed. Being a man means feminizing another man, risking in turn being feminized. At the same time, both dominating and being dominated depend upon a troubling homosocial intimacy. This is, of course, one version of the double-bind confronting heterosexual masculinity, and John, who Duvall claims consistently "devalues heterosexual fornicating in favour of homoerotic fighting," seems to run afoul of it (Duvall 60).

In most war fiction, violent, sexually connotative homosociality of this sort would likely counterbalanced by the attention given to the heterosexual identifications and behaviours of the men involved. But in Faulkner's war fiction and in "All the Dead Pilots" especially, the possibility of a heterosexual counterweight is specifically disabled. This effect arises in part from the way Faulkner's war stories—and the Sartoris stories in particular—decouple the "presumed conjunction of heterosexuality and masculinity." Discussing this effect, Duvall sets these stories in their historical moment by stressing the normative presumption that masculinity signifies heterosexuality and vice versa. Faulkner's war fiction undoes this presumption by recognizing sex, gender and sexuality as visibly distinct and independently variable qualities. In these stories, it is possible to "be a male and a heterosexual and still not be a 'man'" (Duvall 53).

Spoomer offers him a case in point. At story's end, he is transferred from his unit like John. But unlike John, he is taken from the battlefront and sent back to England, a country full of women and without "a man between fourteen and eighty to help him" (528). Stated in these terms, Spoomer's fate is ambiguous. The joke being told—and the speaker declares that he has "to laugh" when he thinks about it—suggests that Spoomer will be free to exhaust himself in a heterosexual bliss free of rivals. But the absence of male rivals on the home front also highlights that the sexually privileged Spoomer has been cut off from the arena of war in which soldiers become men. Duvall states the problem directly, writing that "the Spoomer who returns to England may be a male heterosexual, but he isn't a man" (60). In other words, Spoomer's exile to a home front dominated by women makes

impossible the common elision of sexual and gender behaviour. Back home, his "heterosexuality appears neither as a sufficient (or apparently necessary) condition of masculinity" (Duvall 60). For Duvall, who is interested in establishing the viability of queer approaches to Faulkner's novels and stories, the war fiction thus "opens out the question of masculinity in multiple ways" (53). Heterosexuality has lost its privilege, genital sex is no determinate of gender, and the relationships between men are rife with homosexual connotations.

Given the Sartoris stories' close ties to biography, however, I would suggest that, although Duvall is correct to note that "*Flags in the Dust*, 'Ad Astra,' and 'All the Dead Pilots' provide Faulkner the means to project himself into the homosexual world of the war pilots and in the war he never fought" (54), there is every reason to believe that the homosexual implications of that projection were unacknowledged.[67] A story like "Turnabout," for example, may demonstrate that "the more furiously men wish to define their masculinity in opposition to the feminine, the more distinctly we see male heterosexuality implicated in what it wishes to deny" (Duvall 49), and critics will rightly view this as a part of the story's value. But Faulkner is unlikely to. What's more, if his response to homosexual connotations unleashed in the *Turn About* project are any gauge, when the queer stance Duvall explores becomes visible—for example, during the adaptation of a story in the new context of Hollywood filmmaking practice—it will likely generate anxiety of exactly the sort noted by Jones.

But here, it seems important to make one final point. As described so far, the connotations are symptomatic of a profoundly homophobic

masculinity. Men assert their masculinity violently as a rejection of femininity, a rejection that risks being read as homosexual, and which in turn engenders more violence in an effort to further assert a heterosexual masculinity. This is the vicious circle created by the double-bind and sexual panic. Yet, Faulkner's early fiction is not so vicious as this. Quite to the contrary, that fiction can, in key moments, idealize loving interactions between men that, made unsafe and read as queer, can be quite shocking. One of the most moving of these moments occurs at the end of *Flags in the Dust*, when Bayard, grieving his grandfather's death, yearns nostalgically for the intimacy he felt on the battlefield with other soldiers.

Throughout the early sections of the novel, Bayard's efforts to live a normal life in Jefferson are stymied by his memories of John's death at the battlefront. Bayard's efforts manifest as a distinctly modern version of male gender performance that John Duvall has called "a hypermasculinity" (Duvall 54) and which operates through an identification with men and their interests and a separation from the domestic and the feminine. Both behaviours might be understood as holdovers from the masculinity found and celebrated on the all-male battlefront. Importantly however, Bayard's masculinity is increasingly vexed by troublingly sexual connotations as he rejects Narcissa and seeks solace in the companionship of other men. This shift is visible in the novel's very different presentation of the two iterations of the story of John's death. The first iteration, which I discussed earlier in the chapter, initiates Bayard's marriage to Narcissa and opens the possibility of a future outside the shadow of war. The second marks the end of that marriage, his withdrawal from society and his embrace of a remembered community of

men. Importantly for my purposes, the novel narrates Bayard's embrace of this community in sexual language of the sort that has troubled Faulkner's efforts to adapt other parts of his stories.

The second iteration of John's story is not spoken aloud. Instead, it is recounted in the flexible space between the novel's narration and Bayard's memories in a passage that approaches a free-indirect discourse. Bayard lies in a spare bed in the room of a man named Buddy, who has returned from the war having earned a service medal. Through the screen of Bayard's melancholia, John's story is narrated as Buddy falls asleep. In the tale's convoluted, metaphorical language, John's death begins to seem unreal, opening onto Bayard's confessed hope that he himself had died in the dogfight rather than his brother. In reliving John's death, he experiences the possibility of his own death as an occasion that would prompt love: if he were dead, John would be searching for him.(Faulkner 823–24)

This passage is dense and both offers the tale of John's death and expresses Bayard's complicated relationship to this memory. Complicating matters is the explicitly sexual imagery that is alternately homosexual and masturbatory. In Bayard's fantasy of receiving the German's bullets[68] and in his nighttime "fumbling" with "something chill and tubular and upright" which proves to be the barrel of a shotgun (824), this imagery is overt. The sexual connotations are further emphasized by the narration's repeated attention to Bayard's and Buddy's bodies and state of undress (822, 824). Less obviously perhaps, the narration describes Bayard's desire to share Buddy's breath. As Buddy sleeps and Bayard begins to remember John's death, he begins "within himself breathing Buddy's breathing." Later, his memory

played out and in a passage evoking his sweaty limbs, hot heart, rigid body and naked arms, Bayard recognizes that Buddy's steady breathing and his own panting are each "involved with the other" (824). These details communicate—and in a sense translate—Bayard's yearning for spiritual union with another man into tenderly physical terms.[69]

The queerness of these details is not, however, limited to their reference to a yearning for same-sex physicality that exceeds the compulsory homosociality constitutive of normative heterosexuality. They are also queer to the extent that their excess is not certain but connoted. Speaking of how connotation works, D. A. Miller has emphasized both its promiscuity and its insufficiency. One the one hand, connotation, especially homosexual connotation, is promiscuous because it "tends to recruit every signifier in the text" (125). A hint, a suggestion, a gut instinct that titillates enough to suggest homosexual meaning does not die out from lack of proof. It thrives, eliciting an never-ending search for that proof. On the other hand, that search is never truly successful. It finds evidence, yes. But that evidence is only more of those "excesses of connotation" that can never be eliminated "from signifying practice" (124). This accumulation of connotation cannot, however, transmute into denotation. As a result, the glaring homosexual meaning remains "unprovable" but "probable" (125) and becomes, oddly, an object of desire. The desire to decide the issue by finding proof is, of course, a desire to see the homosexual in the text. Yet, *containing* "excesses of connotation" homosexuality as much as is possible by presenting the homosexuality they sustain as "*a homosexuality of no importance*" is, according to Miller, a sign of "sophistication" and "achievement" of technique and craftsmanship (122). He

calls this sophistication and achievement "suspect," but it is also, at least to a fellow craftsman, an admirable display of skill to be desired.

What emerges is a complicated web of uncertainties. Homosexual meaning is only hinted at but is everywhere. It is unprovable, but it is probable. Its discovery signifies a sophistication of reading. Its containment or casual treatment, a sophistication of technique. Ultimately, Faulkner confronted the queer connotation of his source stories in terms of all of these uncertainties. The source texts do suggest (but only suggest) a desire for relationships between men that exceed the bounds of normative compulsory homosociality, likely because they express fantastically Faulkner's own efforts to inhabit an acceptable adult masculinity. And because of this, the connotations were likely panic-inducing. Yet, spotting these connotations while adaptating the stories also signified Faulkenr's mastery of a manner of reading his own work that he first encountered in Hollywood. Eliminating them would, likewise, signify his mastery of an important aspect of the Hollywood manner of screenwriting. New to the studios and hoping to support his fiction writing, Faulkner certainly desired, at least in these early months, to master this new trade. As such, sitting to adapt his Sartoris stories as *War Birds*, he was in the paradoxical—one might say "queer"—position of recoiling from the appearance of homosexual material he wished to find and to eliminate.

Hollywood Genre

In *War Birds*, Faulkner acts on his wish, and eradicating queer connotations appears to have been one of his central aims during the process of adaptation. And again as in *Turn About*, the process of eradication operates in relation to the constraints of genre. *War Birds* differs from *Turn About*, however, in that *War Birds* does not divide its narrative between a safe and a disruptive genre (e.g. a division between the war picture and the woman's film). Instead, *War Birds* uses genre to reimagine the source materials as an instance of the conflict between individualism and community values. In Hollywood film, this conflict is invariably resolved in favour of the community. The outlaw dies, the reckless youth learns the error of his ways, or the wilful bachelor or single woman marries. In *War Birds*, this affirmation of community will be used to eradicate or, alternatively, to repudiate sources of queer connotation.

In his essay, "Genre Film: A Classical Experience," Thomas Sobchack goes so far as to insist that "the only twentieth-century art that has consistently reenacted the ritual of reaffirmation of group values has been the genre film" (Sobchack 110), a process he see working in terms of a classical, Aristotelian catharsis. He writes that:

> The internal tension between the opposing impulses of personal individuation and submission to the group, which normally is held in check by the real pressures of everyday living, is released in the course of a genre film as the audience vicariously lives out its individual dreams of glory or terror, as it identifies with the stereotyped

> characters of fantasy life. But in the end those impulses to antisocial behavior...are siphoned off as we accept the inevitable justice of the social order: the group is always right and we know in our hearts that it is wrong to think otherwise. (112)

Viewers of a genre film identify with the struggles and aspirations of a character seeking to be an individual, experience his glories and his ultimate return to the fold. Sobchack takes this process as characteristic of the relatively simple but socially useful pleasures offered by genre films.[70] Interestingly, Sobchack chooses the war picture as his one specific example of genre films' cathartic affirmation of community, suggesting this segment of Hollywood production not only conforms to but typifies the process he describes.[71]

Thomas Schatz, an important critic of Hollywood genre and, more generally, classical Hollywood filmmaking, does not disagree with Sobchack's assessment. He explicitly links the repetitions and fixed forms of genre films to folk tales, claiming that both "serve to defuse threats to the social order and thereby to provide some logical coherence to that order" (Schatz 263). Because their fixed framework for repeating familiar stories, genre films necessarily offer a "closed world"[72] and "can be seen as a form of social ritual" (Schatz 261). In this sense, the formulaic repetition of conflicts that resolve in favour of the community can be seen as "society speaking to itself, developing a network of stories and images designed to animate and resolve the conflicts of everyday life" (Schatz 262).[73] For his part, Schatz takes this exchange between audience and production as bi-directional and refuses to judge the affirmation of community values that results, a refusal that sets

him at odds with critics more directly concerned with the ideological implications of Hollywood films.

An ideological approach to the process Sobchack and Schatz describe misses, to an extent, the point of their interventions. Schatz especially is interested less in the meaning of genre films than he is in the narrative processes that produces their meaning. Most specifically, he wishes to identify and to describe the ways the seemingly endless variety of generic plots all organize events by polarizing the narrative material. Whatever the immediate source of conflict in a genre film, it will be organized as a starkly defined conflict between a representative of the community and an individual living outside of the community norms. The plot will valorize both positions, exploring the appeals and difficulties of both, but by the film's close, the opposition between the two positions is resolved through the elimination of one of the poles by one of several fix means. He notes that "as a rule, generic resolution operates by a process of *reduction*" (Schatz 32). Focusing his attention on this "*oppositional* narrative strategy" and its resolution through reduction (31), Schatz identifies two strategies employed by generic narratives to reduce the polarized conflict that launches the plot to a single unified position identified with the community by film's close: the individual may be killed ("the elimination of one of the forces") or the individual may rejoin the community ("the integration of the forces into a single unit," typically through marriage). Because specific genres tend to privilege one of these strategies over the other, Schatz is able to organize Hollywood genres loosely into two groups.

Schatz calls the first group the genres of social order. In these films, the individual separated from society tends toward villainy. He may be a criminal who spurns laws or simply a troublemaker who sows chaos or threatens physical harm to others. The conflict between this individual and the community is resolved when the individual is eliminated, generally by being killed. Examples of genres of social order are the western and the gangster film, both of which are notable for climactic shootouts between "the law" and "the crooks." Schatz names the second group the genres of social integration. In them, the individual is often a youth, a misfit or a loner who has not yet (or has failed in some way to) socialize properly. Examples include melodramas and screwball comedies. In these films, the conflict is resolved when the outsider is incorporated into the community, often through marriage or the creation of a surrogate family.

Considering the plot of the war picture in light of Schatz's two categories, we can say that the war picture clearly operates as a genre of social order insofar as it eliminates the opposition to community values through a villain's death. Yet, interestingly, the narratives of many war pictures also focus on a young soldier's efforts to learn the ropes and to earn the respect of his new unit. This character's success indicates that a war picture may also operate as a genre of social integration in which an individual who has yet to earn his membership in the group is brought into the community through education.[74] Without making any claims to the specialness of this double-nature (perhaps there are other genres that regularly employ both generic forms as well), it seems that the narrative structures typical of the genres of social order *and* those typical of the genres of social integration are available

to makers of a war picture. In fact, the possibility of a double-affirmation of the value of community may constitute a key aspect of its syntax.[75]

Genre of Social Order

Turning now to the war stories that, when adapted, make up the bulk of *War Birds*' narrative, it becomes clear that "Ad Astra" and "All the Dead Pilots" run contrary to these same generic norms in numerous ways, despite the fact that semantic elements of the stories seem ripe for adaptation into the Hollywood war picture that Faulkner hoped to write. Their focus on the adventures of pilots on the battlefront, their emphasis on machinery, uniforms and the various signs and tokens of male honour, when translated to the screen, cue viewing habits appropriate to the genre. More generally, their emphasis on soldiers' lives and adventures to the exclusion of the large-scale national-political concerns that had been central to the war pictures prior to 1919, further aligned them with the particular concerns of the war pictures made in the thirties. Even considering the generic norms described by Sobchack and Schatz, the two Sartoris brothers seem well positioned to dramatize the polar opposition that structures a genre film's narrative. In *Flags in the Dust*, John is only a vague figure, but his battlefield death seems to anoint him one of the glorious war dead. He is a patriotic defender of community values. By way of contrast, Bayard is reckless and individualistic. He is a force of disorder who terrorizes his family, his neighbours and his wife. His death in the final pages, especially if set at the conclusion of a

conflict between his brother and him, would position him as the selfish villain of a war picture.[76]

Yet, "Ad Astra" and "All the Dead Pilots" seem to foreclose these possibilities. "Ad Astra," for example, makes Bayard something very different than a villain by recasting his recklessness as a symptom of the failure of community in the modern world. Far from an individual rejecting communal values, he becomes an emblem of the yearning for a community that no longer exists in the post-war waste land. By the same token, "All the Dead Pilots" eliminates the possibility of building John into a patriotic defender of community values destroyed by the war. In this story, John is no model soldier. He is as proud and as reckless as his brother had been in *Flags in the Dust*. John cares nothing for the war being fought around him and shows utter disregard toward his unit, distrusting them (520) and fighting with them in his anger (514-15). He steals planes (521) and ambulances (522), breaks into private dwellings despite knowing it is illegal to do so even on the front (519-20; 523-24); he beats a French police officer, pausing only to compare his feminine screaming to that of a "Gilbert and Sullivan pirate" (525); and he does all of this while bombs fall around him (521). Set in this context, John's death is—like his brother's—the kind of death that war pictures and other genres of social order reserve for threats to the community and which are read as poetic justice. John does not die because he is fighting for his country; he dies because he is fighting only for himself. Stated bluntly, in the short stories Faulkner chooses to adapt, both of the Sartoris twins reject and disrupt the community of soldiers (the unit) in pursuit of selfish personal

gains. Viewed in the light of the norms of Hollywood genre, both are likely villains; neither is a likely representative of the community.[77]

War Birds, however, resolves this crisis of villainy by redefining the twins' story so as to exaggerate John's individualism and rejection of all community standards and to cast Bayard as a responsible mouthpiece for and agent of the community's values and laws. If in the source materials, John and Bayard are very much alike, in the screenplay, John will become a villain while Bayard will become a staunch defender of marriage vows and the sanctity of life. Thus, *War Birds* casts its discordant source material in order to create the polar narrative structure typical of Hollywood's genres of social order.

In John's case, the change is made by stripping away all of the sympathy arising from his early presentation as naïve and hot-headed, positioning him unequivocally as a villain. In "All the Dead Pilots," John is egotistical and a drunkard, but he is also to some extent a victim. Spoomer has taken up with his lover, and John can do nothing about it because Spoomer uses his rank and authority, neither of which he has come by fairly, to keep him at bay. Importantly, John's anger at Spoomer, however much it is a sign of wounded pride (and it is very much that), is also a symptom of his naïvely romantic, Southern assumptions about love and honour. John's dalliances with women on the front and his rivalry with Spoomer are the youthful peccadillos of the scion of an old plantation family. Any details that might suggest otherwise are downplayed. The source story suggests, for example, that John may have married a woman in London three days before his deployment (and that his affairs therefore are adulterous), but it does not

dwell on this information, making only a passing reference midway through the second section of the story (314). John remains sympathetic.

War Birds does away with all of this sympathy, in part by introducing John after the presentation of his wife and his son. He thus appears first as the husband of a grieving widow and the father of a son who clings to his memory. His affairs are thus forcefully portrayed as a betrayal of his family. Furthermore, the screenplay emphasizes the wilfulness of John's betrayal through the device of the diary. The transition between the frame narrative and the war story is managed by Caroline and then, in a time-shift, John reading from the diary at the front as he writes. In the passages that are read, John ruminates over affairs he knows to be wrong. He first promises to remain faithful (289) then repudiates that promise, telling himself that "Caroline had rather have me a brave blackguard than a chaste coward." He denies he has any control over or responsibility for his behaviour, stating "I am just what I am. I didn't make myself" (291). Several scenes later, when the transition out of the frame is complete, the screenplay introduces John's rivalry with Spoomer in order to suggest that it results directly from a broken promise to Caroline. He has written that he will end his relationship with his latest mistress and remain faithful to his wife; he does not, and Spoomer then seduces the woman away from him (292-296). Staged in this way, the rivalry and John's death are presented as consequences of John's immorality. He is all villain and no victim.

These same scenes position Bayard as John's polar opposite, a defender of community values, especially those relating to marriage. No longer the reckless hot-head of *Flags in the Dust*, Bayard insists in these scenes

that John be reasonable and respect his marriage vow. He is sympathetic toward John's predicament, having advised him to wait until after the war to marry Caroline (286). But the marriage made, he berates his brother for being unfaithful (288). He even goes so far as to send John to bed in order to keep him from running after women while drunk (288). In a departure from the source material, this Bayard drinks without getting drunk and goes to bed early so that he will be rested for duty in the morning (290). The dichotomy established between the two brothers' characters is declared explicitly when an anonymous soldier remarks that the brothers "were always like that; the other one [John] getting in trouble, usually about women and this one [Bayard] getting him out and sending him home like a kid" (290). In this brief line, the narration bares its own device: these two brothers, so alike in the source material, have now been adapted into the two poles structuring the conflict of an oppositional narrative typical of generic screen stories.

This polarization of the brothers' roles shapes the meaning of the resolution of the narrative conflict. When in the climactic scene of his rivalry with Spoomer, John bursts into Antoinette's room, finding her in bed with Spoomer (who is hiding beneath the sheets), he behaves as a villain, not as a cuckold. In a telegraphic style, the stage directions tell how, after bursting through the door, he:

> looks about the room while girl cringes, watching him with terror. … John moves toward bed, the girl retreating, cringing, staring at him as he stops, swaying his face wild and stupid, looking into the bed. …Antoinette stares at John, her hand to her mouth, in terror. He looks at her, dazed, moves toward her as she shrinks back from him. He

> strikes her. She falls to her knees, clutching her legs. He strikes her again. She falls to the floor and lies there, looking up at him quietly, a stain of blood at her mouth. (321)

The violence of this scene is not foreign to Faulkner. Indeed, its brutality evokes something of the terror of Temple Drake's rape in *Sanctuary* (a connection which would surely have been a concern to studio readers if the screenplay had been sent to production). What is significant here, though, is the way the violence positions John Sartoris as a morally unsympathetic aggressor. No longer the naïve and romantic southerner jostling with a man over a woman in a duel structured by old-fashioned notions of honour, he is violent and stupid, brutally beating a woman while drunk. He is a less-sophisticated Popeye, and—given that he never pulls back the sheet and confronts Spoomer—a coward. This is precisely the kind of behaviour from which Bayard has tried to keep him.

As I have suggested earlier, Faulkner's return to the Sartoris stories as a source for *War Birds* situates the screenplay as part of his continued efforts to define the circumstances of John's death, and unsurprisingly, the polarized distinction between the two brothers used to structure the narrative unavoidably shapes *War Birds*' presentation of this event. In the middle section of the screenplay's war story (Part Two, figure one), the brothers participate in a series of airborne duels. Comprised of new material invented specifically for the screenplay, the section begins following John's reassignment to a night-flying unit when he regularly flies off from his unit in order to chase after Spoomer's plane. When he find him, he shoots down any nearby Germans fighters before Spoomer can, both proving he is a better pilot

than Spoomer and keeping him from earning the kills that on the front count as honour. (Spoomer tracks his kills on the hull of his plane.) Spoomer, however, pulls rank and, once back at base, takes credit for all the planes that John has shot down, besting John once again. Enraged, John decides to shoot down Spoomer's plane. Learning of John's plan, Bayard keeps track of John's schedule, and whenever his brother will have the chance to attack Spoomer, he flies out after him, intercepting him, outflying him and, ultimately, forcing him to land his plane. No shots are fired during the brother's dogfights, but John is always forced to land and always kept from killing Spoomer. When during their final dual German planes stumble upon the brothers, they work together to defend each other, but caught by surprise and outnumbered, they are at a disadvantage. John's plane is hit and catches fire, and Bayard must watch helplessly as John leaps from it to his death.[78]

Because of the polarized structure of the narrative, John's death in *War Birds* serves as a resolution of the conflict between the values the brothers have been made to represent. John, who abandons his unit to pursue a personal vendetta, is a lawless individual; Bayard, who works to keep his brother from becoming a murderer, is a lawful member of his community. John is an unrepentant villain, caught unprepared by German planes because he has cut himself off from the community of soldiers at the front, has turned against them, and has tried to kill one of their own. He has done all of this over the objections of his brother, who has acted as a role model and as a parent. His death is not therefore a tragedy. It is a consequence of his behaviour and it offers a fitting, even satisfying conclusion to his story. It feels like justice. This satisfactory sense of having arrived at the proper

ending—i.e., that the good has prevailed and the community has been re-established—is the principle outcome of Hollywood's genres of social integration and of social order.

As we have seen, the frame narrative had reorganized and redefined its source materials' critical presentation of domestic life in order to offer family as a refuge from the horrors of war. In doing so, it recast *Flags in the Dust*'s portrait of Bayard's life in Jefferson as a celebration of the curative powers of family. It remade that portrait into a narrative appropriate to a genre of social integration. By the same token, the story of John's rivalry with Spoomer has been remade to accord with the narrative patterns typical of genres of social order. What had been a humorous tale of a naive southerner's hapless rivalry with his commanding officer becomes in *War Birds* the story of two brothers—one a dangerous egotist, the other upstanding soldier—struggling with each other until the individualist brings death upon himself. In the process of adaptation, John has been transformed from a Faulknerian ideal to a villain. Bayard too has changed. In *Flags in the Dust*, he suffered from the incommunicability of his memories of his brother's senseless death while his recklessness and outrage stood as symptoms of the horror and tragedy of modern war. *War Birds* robs him of tragedy, recasting him a model soldier who suffers not so much from his brother's death as from his failure to keep him from bringing his death upon himself.

Importantly, these revisions simultaneously reorganize the troublingly connotative material of the sources so as to stigmatize the queer. Specifically, the bulk of the connotative material is consolidated in John's character, which makes his death the elimination of, not merely an individual

threat to the community of soldiers, but a queer threat. Interestingly, when she discusses the gendered anxieties that his war stories are likely to "evoke in Faulkner" (Jones 53), Jones suggests they shape the very narration of the tales. Although Faulkner may open up the possibility that masculinity might be constructed differently and without violence, he ultimately "reasserts it—though with considerable subtlety, and by displacing structures of war onto structures of narration. If he comes to the conviction that masculinity does not require material war, nevertheless he substitutes a war of words, and replicates the dichotomous structures of war in a gendered battle of tales and tale-telling" (25).

For her part, Jones is concerned with how this "war of words" develops across the war fiction. She traces the symbolism that reestablishes phallic authority and, toward the end of her essay, she explores the way men and women tell stories differently in *Flags in the Dust* and *The Unvanquished*. But the power of her claim begins to come to light only in her final pages, when she points out that the war of words fosters a turn to "dichotomous thinking"(Jones 53). Although she does not pursue this idea, the implication of what she says is quite startling: that Faulkner's way of representing masculinity, once translated into a *strategy of narration* in response to the anxieties the material creates, transforms into a structure for thinking about the world. In other words, Faulkner's conception of masculinity in war time encourages thinking in terms of binary, oppositional structures. Jones presses toward this idea, but I state it in this way—perhaps overstate it—in order to highlight the resonance between the strategy for narration fostered by the sexual anxieties she identifies and the genre film's oppositional narrative

strategy identified by Schatz and adopted by Faulkner when adapting the Sartoris twins' war stories for the screen.

This resonance becomes concrete in *War Birds*. There the generic opposition between the forces of order represented by Bayard and the individualism represented by John is mapped onto an opposition between straight and queer masculinities. The screenplay suggests the queerness of John's rivalry with Spoomer using a shadow play incorporated into an early scene of the screenplay: as John, frustrated that Spoomer has taken his mistress, writes his thoughts about the inadequacy of women, a woman's silhouette falls across the pages of his diary only to be replaced by Spoomer's (MGM 291-2). In short, Spoomer takes the place of a woman in John's mind. John reinforces this idea late in the screenplay: after he has decided to kill Spoomer, John declares that he has moved "beyond the world of women" (361).[79] The scenes that follow translate the source story's pun on John and Spoomer's sexually-charged "dog fight" into actual areal combat. In doing so, special emphasis is given on the sexual implications of their combat. When John and Spoomer briefly compete over who can shoot down more Germans, for example, Spoomer records his kills by painting high-heeled shoes on the tail of his plane. John records nothing; he can think only of Spoomer. Bayard's role as keeper of order in these scenes thus reads as keeping his brother from inappropriate interaction with men in situations which are coded as sexual. John's death at the close of the war story thus achieves two goals simultaneously. As I have discussed earlier, it offers a satisfying conclusion to the typical plot of a genre of social order. The individual who rejects the community and lives outside its constraints dies, leaving the community

intact, its values affirmed. At the same time, insofar as the queer connotations of the source story are maintained and consolidated in these scenes, John's death marks the death of a queer threat to heterosexual hegemony.

Genre of Social Integration

Turning now to the screenplay's frame narrative, it is possible to see that, here too, Faulkner revises his source material in order to dispatch the possibility of queer connotations. As I have mentioned, the second iteration of the story of John's death in *Flags in the Dust* is narrated in queerly suggestive language. Bayard's memory of his battlefield trauma is interwoven with his desire for union—certainly spiritual, perhaps physical—with the former soldier sleeping nearby. This scene caps—and in a sense can connote sexually because it caps—the novel's portrait of the insufficiency of domestic life on the home front. In this novel, soldiers, men cannot be happy in the woman's world of the hearth. Indeed, in the novel, the failure of Bayard's and Narcissa's marriage serves as an important gauge of Bayard's inability to return from the war spiritually and emotionally.[80] The link between the war and the marriage is established from the first moments of their relationship, springing directly from Bayard's attempt to tell of his life on the front, which seems initially to offer him some relief from his memories of John's death.

Following an automobile accident, Bayard is confined to bed and Narcissa sits with him, reading aloud. After some time, Bayard speaks, for the only time in the novel, of John's death. Bayard's telling is "brutal," "uselessly violent," "profane," "gross," and "bitter." He displays a "false and stubborn

pride," grins with "cruel teeth," and stares at Narcissa with "bleak eyes." Overwhelmed with emotion and suffering from Bayard's hold on her, which is "like steel," Narcissa faints (753-55). Although extremely violent, the context suggests that this exchange may in fact be purgative, that, confined to a sick bed, Bayard's war wound is being opened and drained by a caring, though put-upon, nurse. The dialogue exchanged between the two when Narcissa awakens suggests that she certainly believes in the curative effects of the tale. Bayard offers an apology, twice telling Narcissa, "I'm sorry" and adding "I wont do it again" (755).[81] Narcissa understands him to be apologizing for his reckless driving, which caused the accident and nearly killed him. Importantly, Bayard's car has, by this point in the novel, been established as a symbol of his inability to leave the war behind him because he drives the car as recklessly as he flew his plane on the front. His Aunt Jenny and his Grandfather try to convince him to drive slowly and in a manner appropriate for the dirt roads of Yoknapatawpha with their horses, buggies and pedestrians . Given the symbolism, their efforts stand as attempts to convince him to return home from the waste land. Narcissa's interpretation of Bayard's apology is of a piece with their efforts. She accepts his apology, asking him to confirm that he "wont drive that car fast anymore?" Her meaning is clear: she takes his speaking his tale and her listening to it to have released him from the traumatic memory's power. Free of the memory, he is finally able to return to his ordinary life in Jefferson and will thus drive his car more slowly.

Bayard, however, meant nothing of the sort. The "it" in his apology refers to whatever he has done to cause Narcissa to faint. What he takes that

to be is not precisely specified, but there are two possibilities: the physical violence of holding her against her will, which bruised her arm and caused her pain; or the narrative violence of telling her the details of his traumatic memory. Given how intimately these two possibilities are intertwined, it is likely that he apologizes for both. In effect, he thus promises never again to hurt her, and certainly not by speaking of John's death. As such his promise testifies to his every-greater alienation from life back home. He will remain haunted by his memories of war, but he will spare others by remaining silent about them.

This is exactly the opposite of Narcissa's interpretation of his words. Indeed, that Narcissa has so misunderstood him at first confuses Bayard: he responds to her question about his driving with the simple question, "what?" This misunderstanding is never resolved and becomes the fundamental feature of their marriage, which takes place as soon as Bayard is well enough to leave bed. As a result, their marriage becomes the arena in which the relationship between domestic life on the home front and a soldier's life on the battlefield is explored, ultimately suggesting that the soldier's return home offers no solace for the traumas of war.[82]

This pessimistic viewpoint culminates in one of the most extraordinarily executed set pieces in all of Faulkner's fiction: Bayard's failed night of possum hunting with Narcissa. Although enthusiastic at first, she is horrified when the first animal is killed, and Bayard and she leave the hunting party. The narration of their return home after abandoning the hunt is rendered in a heavily symbolic mode that suggests Bayard's complete alienation from the domestic life created by his marriage:

> ...the house among its thinning trees, against the hazy sky. He opened the gate and she passes through and he followed and closed it, and turning he found her beside him, and stopped. "Bayard?" she whispered, leaning against him, and he put his arms around her and stood so, gazing above her head into the sky. (788)

A pivotal moment in the novel, each detail is weighted with meaning. The fenced-in house suggests Bayard's entrapment. That he shuts the gate to close them in highlights his role in creating the situation. Narcissa, holding him and offering him her love, and Bayard simply staring up at the sky, the arena in which he fought his battles and watched his brother die stages physically the divide preventing their marriage from working: for her the marriage is a refuge offering love; for him, it is a boxed-in life set squarely on the ground. As the moment draws to a close, Narcissa pulls his face down toward hers and kisses him, but "his lips were cold and upon them she tasted fatality and doom" (788). In this moment, the incommensurability of their two worlds is presented as the fact of their situation. More importantly, Bayard, the soldier who survives the war, once back home is dead.

Unsurprisingly, this scene marks the end of Narcissa's attempt to help Bayard overcome his memories of war, a change made clear in the following paragraph. There we learn that from that night on, Bayard hunted alone, coming home late at night hoping to find only "the temporary abeyance of his despair and the isolation of that doom he could not escape." More tellingly, we are told he "went alone"—to hunt, of course, but more generally, into his life in Jefferson (788). He begins driving recklessly again, ultimately causing his grandfather's death. As the novel draws to a close, Bayard's downward

spiral and his family's failure to stop it end when Bayard, after fleeing Jefferson, dies in a plane crash. For her part, Narcissa repudiates her ties to her dead husband, refusing to follow Sartoris family tradition and name their son John or Bayard.[83] In short, by the end of the novel, although family still looms large in Jefferson society (as do the Sartorises), the hope that domestic life might salve the psychological wounds of war is a shambles. Soldiers lost in the waste land cannot, according to *Flags in the Dust*, be called back from the abyss by the comforts and love of marriage or of family.

Flags in the Dust's bleak assessment of the relationship between domestic life on the home front and the soldier's life on the battle field is repeated by Faulkner's amplification of the tale of John's death in the story "All the Dead Pilots." *Flags* had suggested that marriage cannot cure a soldier's war trauma. But this story will, in an echo of Bayard's "fatality and doom," redefine the source of that trauma, finding it not in war, but in the drudgery of life on the home front. Bayard's difficult return to Jefferson was, in the novel, caused by his damaging memories of the horrors of war; in the story, the difficulty is caused by a soldier's confrontation with the horrors of domestic life.

The story makes this point through its framing narrative. There we learn that John's story will be narrated by an Army censor who has read his last letter to Aunt Jenny, as well as by the letter sent home by an officer announcing his death. Looking to explain what death means to a pilot, this censor casts John's last months as emblematic of a soldier's view of war and life on the front. The narrator takes the absurdity and recklessness of John's rivalry with Spoomer as proof that the war—whatever horrors it might

entail—brought out the best in the "hard, lean men who swaggered hard and drank hard" at the front. For the censor, John's death is not a tragedy and is not a source of trauma. Although readers will see the war as a dark moment in history, he disagrees, insisting that the war was a truly bright moment "between dark and dark" and an "apotheosis of the race." (These periods of darkness which bookend the war, are of course times of peace.) The narrator argues that John was luckier than the young pilots who lived to see peacetime and return home. Those survivors now work behind desks, play golf , and live with "wives and children in suburban homes" (*CS* 512). They are the true war dead. Given these claims, it is no exaggeration to say that in this story the waste land is found at the home front, not the war torn front lines.

Flags in the Dust and "All the Dead Pilots" are a pair connected by their shared concern with the Sartoris twins' wartime experiences. Furthermore, they build upon each other, offering an image of the domestic life of the returned soldier. There is a clear line of development between the scene of Bayard, standing behind a gate he closes upon himself, staring at the sky while he wife tries to seduce him into accepting her love and the role of husband, and the scene painted by the Army censor of the war's survivors' living deaths lives behind desks and on golf courses. The novel's initial suggestion that marriage is incommensurate with the experience of war becomes a blanket rejection of marriage in the subsequent story.[84]

Because community is so often affirmed in Hollywood film through the establishment or restoration of a family, it should come as no surprise that *Flags in the Dust* and "All the Dead Pilots" run contrary to the norms of genres of social integration. In valorizing the alienation of a soldier from his

family and in equating domesticity with death, these source materials run contrary to the genre film's commitment to community, especially as symbolized by marriage and the home. Bayard comes back from war, wounded psychologically and feeling alienated from his family and community. Despite his marriage to Narcissa and the efforts of his grandfather and aunt, his sense of alienation only grows, and in the end, he dies alone, still struggling under the emotional burden of his wartime memories. Importantly, the novel portrays Bayard's recklessness and alienation sympathetically and with respect, so much so that Bayard, the former pilot, stands as something of a Faulknerian ideal. "All the Dead Pilots" repeats that ideal, labels it an "apotheosis of the race," and blames the bleak ordinariness of daily life back home rather than the horrors of war for the soldier's suffering.

War Birds corrects the discord between the Sartoris stories and norms of the genres of social integration by recasting the home front as a refuge where the lost souls of the war can form new families and build new lives. This is made clear from the opening scene of the screenplay, which establishes that the fundamental narrative issue is the legitimacy of a family and not a soldier's memories of war. In this scene which takes place after the Armistice, John Sartoris's son, Johnny, is fighting with two boys on the streets of Jefferson. The German pilot Dorn separates them and demands to know what is going on. Johnny explains that the boys had said that he "had a lot of fathers and mothers at [his] house" (scene 1, 277). In other words, his family seems to be *too big* to be a legitimate family. The story that *War Birds* will tell,

a story contained in the diary that Caroline, John's widow, will share with her son, explains this family and establishes it as legitimate.

This question of legitimacy is resolved after the twins' war story—which constitutes the bulk of the screenplay and explains where all the extra family members came from—comes to a close, and Johnny and his mother, Caroline, discuss their life after the war. As they do, we see scenes of Antoinette, Dorn, and Caroline each learning to be members of their unusual family despite their initial reservations. In scene 299, for example, Antoinette and Dorn return with Bayard to Jefferson after the war.[85] They do not, however, move into the Sartoris home because Caroline objects, telling Bayard that their presence will turn the house into "a mausoleum of your brother's infidelity and a memorial to his murderer!" (410). Over the course of the next fifteen scenes, we see, however, that Antoinette and Dorn are as devoted to Johnny as Caroline is. They spend time with him and eventually decide to take jobs in order to earn the money they need to buy him a pony. Moved by their love for the boy, Bayard argues with Caroline, insisting that Antoinette and Dorn are part of the family. He points out that Johnny "decided…himself" to call them his Aunt and Uncle (415), suggesting that their relationship to the boy is natural and that jealousy is keeping Caroline from seeing it. The sequence culminates with Caroline asking Antoinette to forgive her for excluding her from the family and acknowledging that John "is a part of all three of us" (416).

After the three adults have accepted the value of their unusual, extended family, the frame story concludes with Johnny learning to do the same. He tells Antoinette he's "not mad" at her for her behaviour in France

and salutes Dorn as a sign of respect (419). He then steps outside in time to see Bayard, returning home on horseback, "soar over [the front gate] and come up the lane" where Johnny and Dorn both salute him from the porch. Overhead, "the ghost of John's ship" appears with John inside, "looking down at them, his face bright, peaceful" (420). Through the power of family, it seems, men and women, Europeans and Americans, Axis and Allies, children and adults, the living and the dead, all of them can come together, peacefully and happily.

In short, these many reconciliations clearly affirm the coherence and usefulness of Johnny's family. Furthermore, they assert the efficacy of the domestic sphere as a tonic to the many and various leftover troubles of the war. This assessment stands in precise opposition to the stance taken by the source stories. Whereas "All the Dead Pilots" casts the home front as a cemetery of undead soldiers, *War Birds* shows the happiness of a family offering peace to the war dead and a new life to the war's survivors. Whereas Bayard closes a front gate in *Flags in the Dust*, locking himself into a marriage as if in a trap, in *War Birds* he leaps over the gate triumphantly in order to rejoin his waiting family.

The screenplay's emphasis on forgiveness makes this clear. Johnny forgives Dorn and Antoinette (418-420). Caroline forgives John, admits her love for him, and asks forgiveness for blaming Antoinette for his death (416, 417). Bayard accepts Dorn and Antoinette's place in his family (414). Even Bayard, who had flown side-by-side with John's ghost angrily searching for Dorn's plane in the final days of the war, now returns home with his ghost, both finally at peace (420). In short, over the course of the frame narrative,

every injury every character could have suffered because of John's adultery and his rivalry with Spoomer is acknowledged and forgiven. The result is the formation of a community—represented by the family—with no outsiders, no divisions. The child being picked on by others after school has been educated, has accepted authority, and takes his place among the others.

War Birds' frame narrative thus corrects the dissonance between its source materials and the norms of Hollywood's genre by pulling the many war survivors together into one happy, international family that stands in stark contrast to the troublesome sexual connotations eliminated in the battlefront narrative. At war, men obsessed with men cross lines and die, emblems of sexual transgression. At home, within the protective confines of the home and the larger community, children are educated, wounds salved. This home, unlike the homes in *Flags in the Dust*, is exclusively the domain of childrearing women, and the adults' lives centre around their efforts to teach John's child how to be an adult. Picked on at school, Johnny learns about his father as a means of becoming a full member of his family and, by extension, the local community. The importance of family to Johnny's education is oddly emphasized by the multiplicity of fathers and mothers established in the frame. Johnny has three fathers—Bayard, Dorn, and John—and two mothers—Caroline and Antoinette—all of whom he will learn are legitimate.

What's more, Bayard, the focus of the source material, is largely absent in the screenplay's frame, and when present, he advocates exclusively for the heterosexual family. Dorn and John are both ghosts: Dorn metaphorically, John literally. If these three fathers stand as models of various masculinities in the war story, they play no direct role in Caroline's and Antoinette's effort to

instruct Johnny in how to be a man. In short, there are no men to cause trouble by ruminating over their wartime memories of time spent with other men. Most tellingly of all, the sexually troubling physicality of Bayard's yearning for community with other men in *Flags*, drops away in *War Birds*: Bayard's restless desire for spiritual union with Buddy is transformed into a simple satisfaction with home life expressed by sharing space with John's ghost. The desired union is consummated only in (and with a) spirit. The frame thus shows even obscure possibilities of sexual connotation in the Sartoris source material being eliminated through the deployment of generic conventions of narrative. Whether Faulkner made this shift consciously or not is impossible to know. But whatever the case, the revisions he made while writing independently on material he selected accord exactly with the norms of the genres of social integration.

Traditions of War

In my previous chapter, I suggested that Faulkner's adaptation of *Turn About* provoked a change in how Faulkner understood his own fiction. Confronted with the task of adapting his source story to the screen, he was forced to reread that text in light of a new, Hollywood context. In the light of that context, his source story's portrait of masculinity would have appeared alarmingly queer.[86] His attempt to revise his first screenplay draft so as to isolate his source material from that new context is the story I tell of the double-narrative preserved in the second draft of *Turn About*. Now, in *War Birds*, a similar situation produces a very different story. Again, Faulkner

returns to and rereads previous fiction as part of a project of adaptation. Again, the chosen stories display a strong affinity with the war films being made at the time. Both focus on the grim realities of soldiers' lives and Faulkner's biography, which seemed to attest to the authenticity of these details, and so made the stories seem to be excellent choices for adaptation. In a departure from the experience of *Turn About*, however, *War Birds* does not preserve these source stories intact. Instead, it revises them, bringing them in line with the deep syntax of Hollywood genre. The stories had organized character relationships and story events in ways that celebrated reckless individualism over the community values, but as revised, they offer a paean to family and childrearing and transform a transgressive celebration of Sartoris bravado into an affirmation of the authority of the law.

What is odd about this change in adaptation practice is the qualitative differences in the source materials for the *Turn About* and *War Birds* projects. In *Turn About*, Faulkner resists, in every way possible, altering a source narrative that had been written only recently and operates outside of his ongoing Yoknapatawpha saga. In *War Birds*, he changes stories that are central to that saga and to which he returned and which he repeated obsessively throughout his major phase. Why would he fight to preserve the incidental narrative and revise so completely those that were central to his fictional project? I've suggested, by exploring the queer connotations of these stories' portraits of masculine posturing, that something like the homosexual panic I discussed in *Turn About* may be at work, but something more may be said about the process by which this panic operated during the adaptation by turning to Ricoeur's discussion of the dangers implicit in rereading.

Ricoeur speaks of rereading in the final volume of *Time and Narrative*. There he considers the paradoxical status of a narrative text as being simultaneously too little and too much. On the one hand, the plotted text attempts to give instructions that will determine how it will be read, and the reader attempts to follow them. Yet these instructions are always inadequate and operate in relation to "a certain degree of illusion" (III 169). On the other hand, the work displays a "surplus of meaning," a "polysemanticism, which negates all the reader's attempts to adhere to the text and to its instructions" (III 169). In other words, "what the work of reading reveals is not only a lack of determinacy but also an excess of meaning" that will lead the reader to accept "the perogative of reading," which is "to strive to provide a figure for this unwritten side of the text" (III 169). Whatever else Ricoeur may be speaking to in these moments (and again, his concerns are much different than mine),[87] his discussion here offers an account of the necessarily connotative aspects of reading in relation to narrative "polysemanticism." Summarized briefly, a reader of a plot (Ricoeur's configuration) discovers its thought about a world of action (prefiguration) from which it arises. This thought is indistinct insofar as the narrative offers insufficient instructions to determine its own reception (postfiguration) and promiscuous insofar as, supplanted by the reader's experiences, that reception speaks excessively about the world of action it represents and to which it responds. For Ricoeur, the complexity of this confrontation between "the fictive world of the text and the real world of the reader" (III 159) is mediated by previous experiences of similar confrontation. Reading shapes rereading.

The difference between Faulkner's adaptation of source material in *Turn About* and *War Birds* arises, I would suggest, from the sequence of rereadings involved in these adaptations. Faulkner worked in Hollywood under the shadow of two traditions, one literary, one cinematic. *Turn About* captured the clash between these traditions and revealed the strategies Faulkner developed to establish a momentary accommodation between them. In *War Birds*, Faulkner works under the shadow of this project and his experience of that confrontation necessarily shapes his initial rereading of his source stories in preparation for the adaptation. Reading these stories, he was not "Faulkner" the successful writer of elaborate fictions. He was Faulkner, the screenwriter familiar now with established codes of classical Hollywood filmmaking and especially with MGM's house style. It is these conventions—what Ricoeur describes as schema and traditions—that "from the start" form the "categories of the interaction between the operations [*operativité*] of writing and reading" (76). Faulkner reads the literary tradition of "Faulkner" through the lens of his previous experience of the generic tradition of Hollywood in preparation for writing his script. And the result, if my analysis of *War Birds* is to be credited, is a move beyond mere accommodation of these two traditions in a double-narrative. Instead, the queer "excess of meaning" or "polysemanticism" of the source stories, which had proved so disruptive in *Turn About*, is tamed by a generic revision of the literary source. In short, Hollywood genre unleashed queer connotation in one project, but is used to curb it in the next.

This shift in Faulkner's relationship to Hollywood genre and to his literary antecedents visible in *War Birds* suggests two things. First, *War Birds*

settles the previously indeterminate relationship between Faulkner and the war genre. As I have explained, the early fiction resonated with many aspects of this genre in the late twenties and early thirties. Yet, as I have also explained, the values celebrated in that fiction often ran contrary to the norms of the genre. In adapting the Sartoris twins' story to the screen, the contradictory terms of the relationship between these literary works and the Hollywood conventions they evoke are reconstituted—as they earlier had been in *Turn About*—as a narrative problem. *War Birds* resolves the problem by affirming the generic conventions and revising the literary sources to eliminate their deviations from it, a resolution that is motivated perhaps by the queer connotations of these same deviations. Second, it reminds us of the fact that a formal tradition, even Hollywood's, is "the living transmission of an innovation always capable of being reactivated by a return to the most creative moments of poetic activity" (Ricoeur I 68). *War Birds* shows Faulkner mining the deep syntax of Hollywood genre as a site of poetic activity. Embracing the forms of social integration and social order, he renews the Sartoris twins' stories by reimagining fundamentally the values they personify in his larger fictional world. The implications of this revision for his subsequent fictions will be the subject of my next chapter.

Film to Fiction: "Golden Land" and "An Odor of Verbena"

In the summer of 1970, Douglas Sirk, a German filmmaker famous for the melodramatic women's films he directed for Universal Pictures in the fifties, spoke in an interview about *Tarnished Angels* (1958), his successful adaptation of William Faulkner's *Pylon*. Although naming Faulkner "an early influence on his outlook" on America (Halliday 63) and claiming *Pylon* as a "favorite" book (Halliday 114), Sirk also noted that "the story had to be completely un-Faulknerized" in order to make his film (120). In thinking this, Sirk was not alone. From the thirties through to the sixties, many Hollywood filmmakers—directors, producers, and stars—were drawn to Faulkner's fiction as possible source material. Yet inevitably, something in the fiction proved inimical to the generic conventions of the women's films they often aimed to make, mandating its substantial revision during adaption. In addition to *Tarnished Angels*, films displaying this ambivalence toward their sources include *The Sound and the Fury* (Ritt 1959), *The Long, Hot Summer* (Ritt 1958), and of course, *The Story of Temple Drake* (Roberts 1933).

The source of this discord surely varied from production to production. In many instances, Faulkner's modernist approach to narration as well as his distinctive representations of class and race likely created problems for filmmakers wishing to address contemporary social conflicts within the bounds of a mass-market entertainment. Yet most often the

problem seems to stem from the very aspect of the fiction that first drew Hollywood's attention: its frank presentations of sex and sexuality. These promised to draw large audiences but were too scandalous to be filmed.

Sirk's interview, given long after he had left Hollywood, made his reputation and established his place in film history.[88] By speaking directly of the distance between his sources and his films and claiming to understand that distance as an instance of Brechtian distanciation, Sirk established himself as something other than a hack. He was an auteur working in the studio system making do with what was possible. His claim that he was simultaneously within and apart from that system suggested depths in the films that film scholars continue to explore.

One way of thinking about my argument in the last two chapters is that I am suggesting that Faulkner found himself in a position not unlike Sirk's. Faulkner the screenwriter arrives at MGM and turns to Faulkner the fiction writer—for convenience, let's call him "Faulkner"—as a possible source. The stories the screenwriter selects are "favourites" that had "an early influence on his outlook" on literature and life. But then, working on his screenplays, Faulkner discovers that "Faulkner" is, at least potentially, unfilmable, that whatever the stories meant to him personally, under Hollywood's gaze, connotation ran wild, thus turning them scandalous and offensive. Framed in terms of Ricoeur's three-part model of mimesis, this problem can be considered in terms of the thought that emerges from plot. A reader interprets and make sense of that thought—refigures it—in terms of or in light of their own context—but that refiguration, to the extent that it reconnects the configuration back to the world, always exceeds the

intentionality of that text. As Ricoeur writes, "reading is no longer that which the text proscribes; it is that which brings the structure of the text to light through interpretation" (165). This interpretation inevitably discovers “an excess of meaning” (169) that the reader ascribes to an implied author of the thought emergent in the refigured narrative. The “rules of composition” as well as the “choices and the norms that make the text” are understood “spontaneously” as “precisely, the work of some speaker, hence the work of someone.” In Ricoeur’s account, this implied author exists neither before the text nor in it, but instead, in the reading as “a solution to a problem” (162).

In Faulkner’s case, the distinction between the biographical author who wrote the source stories and the implied author responsible for the thought emerging from narrative is blurred. Thus Faulkner adapting “Faulkner,” in a sense, is caught in the gap between these two positions and confronted with the task of adapting not his own memory or experience of the selected source stories but of adapting a new Hollywood-informed reading of those stories. Faulkner’s deployment of genre as a tool to contain the connotations unleashed by this larger reading shaped his first two screenplay adaptations and trace out his recoil from what “Faulkner” had become. This process implies that Hollywood’s influence on Faulkner did not accumulate over time, but that it struck him full force during his very first screenplay projects.

In the present chapter, I offer support for and refine this suggestion by considering the two short stories in which Faulkner most directly reflects upon his early Hollywood experiences, “Golden Land” (written in 1935) and “An Odor of Verbena” (written in 1937). In considering the first of these, I

will briefly discuss the debate over the censorship of connoted sexual material that turned quite specifically around "Faulkner." These debates would have framed both studio readers' interpretations of Faulkner's screenwriting and Faulkner's return to his source stories. As such, they contextualize the arguments I have made about Faulkner's revision of his source narratives during the *Turn About* and *War Birds* projects. More importantly for my purposes here, they also serve as source material for aspects of the family drama, "Golden Land," Faulkner's only short story set in Hollywood. Faulkner's recasting of these debates as allegory constitutes a moment of reflection in which Faulkner assesses and comments upon the nature of his encounter with "Faulkner" and Hollywood's role in it. Then, turning to "An Odor of Verbena," I will suggest that Faulkner's return in fiction to the Sartoris lore he adapted in *War Birds* serves as the conduit by which techniques developed in the screenwriting are redeployed in the fiction in order to tame the sexual connotations that plagued his early adaptations. The result will be the reassertion of a heteronormative masculinity in the fiction.

Hollywood and Sexual Connotation

In 1932, Paramount Pictures, caught in financial straights dire enough to justify butting heads with studio censors, had officially rejected its conservative approach to story development and decided to seek out scandalous properties that were sure to be hits and would bring some stability to its balance sheet. On June 16, the studio bought the rights to

Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, a shocking move that registered across Hollywood. *Variety*, confident in the belief that "if a book or play is actually salacious in essence it is almost impossible to develop a proper story from it," declared that an acceptable adaptation of *Sanctuary* could not be made ("Hays Still on Trail of Dirt," *Variety* quoted in Ramsey, 17n).[89] Censorship in Hollywood, however, rarely worked in so clear-cut a manner.

In the early years of the classical period, censorship was common but fairly diffuse, falling into the hands of state censorship boards, city governments, even individual exhibitors.[90] Among these censors, opinions varied wildly over what constituted offensive material. Even more troubling for film studios was the fact that over time their various moral positions seemed increasingly at odds with the changing norms of the modern world. When the introduction of sound freed film from the limitations of pantomime, allowing it to address materials and situations previously reserved for the serious theatre, this disconnect became glaringly obvious, and by the early thirties, there was a general sense among filmmakers that the censors were "out of touch with moviegoers who flocked to the very films the censors condemned" (Doherty 106). Increasingly, individual filmmakers wished to have some flexibility in how they chose to present material addressed to adult audiences.

Studios, however, were caught in a bind. Film was legally a commercial product, not an artistic expression, and benefitted from no first amendment protections. Public outrage over scandalous films risked provoking legislative action, and studio bosses feared that a federal political response would likely be more restrictive than the existing piecemeal

censorship by states and municipalities. However unwelcome new legislation might be, the existing piecemeal censorship was deeply problematic when viewed in terms of film production. While censors could ban films completely, generally they did not. Instead, they simply cut offensive scenes from the distribution prints, which, as Lea Jacobs points out, often "created gaps in the narrative line" and "upset the 'matching' between shots." From 1928 onward, such cuts also "disturbed the synchronization of sound and image," ruining a technological effect studios had invested millions in creating only a few years before (Jacobs 32). An expensive A-list film whose narrative or sound sync was ruined by the cuts of local censors could easily fail at the box office. Worse, because the film would have been marketed as an example of a studio's style, the ruined film could tarnish a studio's ability to market future productions.[91] Studios were thus caught in the paradoxical position of preferring local censorship—insofar as it offered the least drastic means of tempering public outrage over cinema's perceived immoralities—while simultaneously opposing decentralized censorship, insofar is it kept them from ensuring the quality of the films marketed in their names.

Ultimately, the studios' solution was to begin censoring their own movies during production. To this end, studios compiled and organized the standards of local censor boards and began to use them when reviewing screenplays and commenting upon the working cuts of pre-release films. These compiled standards developed into what was later known as the Production Code. By making films in accordance with the guidelines of the Code, studios hoped to anticipate objections and to revise problematic scenes so as to avoid cuts by local censors. Although this practice seemingly

concedes to the censors' ideas of what constituted the proper subjects and content of popular film, this was not entirely the case. Instead, studio self-censorship served "as a means of defense against external interference in distribution and exhibition" (Jacobs 32). Just as important, because self-censorship happened during production, filmmakers were able to rethink the presentation of potentially objectionable aspects of their films and to find ways to suggest rather than show the objectionable material. It thus fostered a sophisticated approach to storytelling designed "for slipping material which had been defined as potentially offensive past the censor" rather than deleting it (Jacobs 51).[92] For writers and filmmakers with eyes tuned to connotative details and weighted situations, the Code actually served as a creative force. Thomas Doherty points out as much by quoting MPPDA secretary Carl Milliken's claim that the need to suggest narrative material rather than show it spurred literary ingenuity: "the Code is making dramatists out of writers" (120).

Although the practice of self-censorship and the mode of storytelling it fostered eventually became the established norm in the classical cinema, during its early years, the practice came under coordinated, public attack, especially the manner in which sexual themes were treated in the woman's film. Because they were directed at women, the films in this genre were a special preoccupation of censors and moral agitators. Cinemas (with their free mingling of the sexes and social classes) and the cinema (with its endless stories of the increasingly liberated modern women) had been the focus of moral reform efforts for decades. But now, given the troubling "taste for vice that was virulent among the gentler sex" and that "defied cultural

expectations"—or at least the expectations of moral authorities—calls for moral reform of Hollywood film became especially ferocious (Doherty 125). Under pressure from censors, the makers of women's films pushed more and more of their stories' principal plot materials off-screen, playing up "mental pictures of what lay just beyond the edges of the film frame" (Doherty 119). Audiences were equal to the strategy, of course, and revelled in stories they knew to be tales of sexual vice. Their enthusiasm confirmed filmmakers' sense that adultery, gold-digging, prostitution, and other official taboos were sure-fire subjects for films. The outraged response of public moralists was extreme, however; and studio censors "came to recognize the 'sex picture' as a type which posed difficulties" that had to be addressed more directly (Jacobs 33). The voluntary efforts of the studio to police their own films was failing.

This situation came to a head in January of 1932 when, only four month before Faulkner arrived at MGM, Joseph Breen, a powerful lay Catholic active in efforts to rein in the perceived immorality of the movies, began working at the Studio Relations Committee (SRC) as a special advisor. He was incensed by the sexual immorality of Hollywood films and aimed to tighten the enforcement of the Production Code. His ultimate goal was to see that films would no longer be able to make end-runs around its strictures by connoting rather than showing forbidden material. *Sanctuary* was the most notorious sex picture of the period, and Breen became directly "involved in the negotiations" surrounding its adaptation (Jacobs 30). So it is perhaps surprising that these negotiations hinged less on whether the film could be released (a censorial question) than on how controversial material might be acceptably presented (a creative question).

As a production strategy, this approach seems to have worked. According to Jacobs's discussion of the existing records from the negotiations, the SRC wanted to rewrite the novel's story to exclude the rape scene. There was also discussion over whether corn cobs could be shown anywhere in the film or not (Jacobs 37, 39).[93] The filmmakers circumvented these concerns by chosing simply to have the lights go out and a woman scream as Popeye (now renamed Trigger) begins to approach Temple. Lea Jacobs concludes that these negotiations indicate "something of the continual interplay between industry censors who strove to eliminate certain offensive ideas through ellipsis and the studio which generally strove to find some way of suggesting what could not be directly filmed" (Jacobs 39). The result is a scene that replaces censorable content with a gap that itself communicates the censorable content to sophisticated viewers. Changes made, *The Story of Temple Drake* was released into theatres in Spring of 1933 despite the wide-spread belief that no film could ever be made from the book.

Although the studios' connotative approach worked well as a strategy for evading censorship during production, it proved incredibly problematic to the extent that it necessarily operated as a viewing strategy as well. The difficulties arising from such a viewing strategy are usefully described in D. A. Miller's "Anal Rope," an examination of the paradoxically obvious yet absent homosexuality in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948). Miller notes that, far from directing the eye away from absent material, "connotation…excites the desire for proof" that the connoted meaning is true. As a result, the viewer is driven to sift the film for supporting evidence in a process that "tends to draft every signifier into what nonetheless remains a hopeless task" (129). His

point is rather straightforward. The very deniability of connoted meaning incites viewers' interest and engagement, and as a result, connotation "tends to light everywhere," corrupting surrounding material but without providing the denotative proof desired (Miller 125). Any viewer who understood the central events of *The Story of Temple Drake*, aided by their knowledge of the novel, did precisely this when watching the film. For them—and despite the excisions of objectionable material—the film was a tale of "gin and sex" (Doherty 108) that exemplified "the sexual contours of the extramarital vice film" (114). Censors and moral watchdogs, who are no less blind to connotation than ordinary viewers, unsurprisingly saw the film as confirming their "impression that an unending stream of decadence flowed from Hollywood" (105). It is therefore unsurprising that when he took over enforcement of the Production code in 1934, Breen withdrew the film from circulation permanently.

Bound in 1932 by his contract to MGM, Faulkner had been unable to work on Paramount's film and was thus shielded to an extent from the day-to-day arguments over the adaptation of *Sanctuary*. By the film's release in spring 1933, his time at MGM was over. Yet, as Matt Ramsey has noted, "throughout 1932 and 1933, the film, and thus the novel and author, were constantly in the spotlight...and despite the fact that Faulkner himself had nothing to do with the production, his own 'good' name was often dragged through the mud along with the film" (Ramsey 17). Gauging the tenor and strength of that context is difficult, but we can see it emerging explicitly in Anne Cunningham's comments on Faulkner's second film treatment, "The College Widow." Reporting to studio producers on the suitability of the story

for production, she writes that "Faulkner would obviously develop another SANCTUARY. It is an evil, slimy thing, absolutely unfit for screen production, in the face of current censorship . . . . . or at any future time" (*Faulkner's MGM Screenplays* 36). If this example can be taken as representative, studio staff understood Faulkner's work through a lens informed by the debates over censorship in general and Paramount's adaptation of *Sanctuary* specifically, and they were eager to quash any material that seemed likely to provoke the ire of the censors. They recognized that Faulkner's writing as already suspect and read with an eye tuned for sexual mischief.

There is also ample reason to believe *The Story of Temple Drake* would have loomed especially large over the *Turn About* project. Paramount, for example, optioned the rights to *Sanctuary* only days before Hawks met with Faulkner to discuss adapting his short story (Blotner 779). The project thus begins at the same time as the public uproar over Paramount's purchase. Just as importantly, all of the other major players eventually assigned to the *Turn About* project were directly implicated in the censorship debates as well. Irving Thalburg, who recognized that the audience for MGM's movies was adult and urban, had actively defended filmmakers' right to address through indirection materials interesting to adults but inappropriate for children and, as Faulkner was beginning work at the studio, was pressing forward with the production of risqué woman's films like *The Red Headed Woman* despite censors' objections. When Howard Hawks began work on *Turn About*, he too was fresh from a serious run-in with censors over his previous film, *Scarface*. Joan Crawford had scored an early success with the wildly popular *Possessed*,

a film that had been released without the approval of studio censors and which, like many woman's films of the time, had been widely denounced. Given these figures' involvement, the debates and negotiations around vice and sex perversion—especially insofar as they were at issue in *The Story of Temple Drake*—undoubtedly operated as an important context for Faulkner's earliest efforts at screenwriting.

These overlapping connections lend credence to the claims made in my previous chapter that sexual connotations in the fiction Faulkner used in the *Turn About* and *War Birds* projects defined the form of his adapted screenplay. It establishes that within the Hollywood context Faulkner's work was understood as being especially prone to connoting sexual perversity and its readers would have been unusually attentive to connoted meaning. It is reasonable to assume Faulkner would not have been unaware of or immune from the influence of this context.

Yet, in my previous chapters, I have specifically suggested queer connotation was at issue in Faulkner's first screenplay projects. I have not, however, established that queer connotation would have been an issue in these censorship debates. The question thus becomes, to return to and to paraphrase Miller, how do I think I know that homosexuality is at issue in the stories Faulkner chose to adapt?[94] At the most basic level, this framework rests on the fact that, at the height of the censorship debates, connoted sexual meaning frequently suggested—or at least left open the possibility of—a homosexual reading. Indeed, Dorherty quotes *Variety* claiming that "the theme of perversion" had by the early thirties become more or less synonymous with homosexuality (Doherty 120).[95] More to the point, the signs

and figures typically used to connote homosexuality during the period were not only *present* in the fiction Faulkner was adapting, they were *central* to its drama. Consider the description in "Turnabout" of the effeminate Claude in light of *Variety*'s description of the common practice of identifying a homosexual character through their association "with the upper ranks of the British class system" or through a voice that is "British in inflection or vaguely foreign in accent." Or consider instead the Sartoris twins. However masculine, these scions of American aristocrats were tainted with the Southern exoticism *Variety* claimed read as queer, noting that "now the male magnolia is getting play" (Doherty 121). But moving beyond these general tropes, Matt Ramsey has discussed Miriam Hopkins's casting by Paramount to star in *The Story of Temple Drake*. Queer in her private life, Hopkins was marketed by Paramount in publicity for the film in ways that played upon popular conceptions of contemporary queer sexualities (Ramsey 21-25). Examples highlighted by Ramsey include the emphasis placed on Temple's "'dual' nature" (26), which he sees as playing upon popular discussions of lesbianism at the time. He also draws attention to the lobby cards and publicity stills circulated for the film. These repeatedly show Ruby and Temple together even though the woman share almost no screen time together. What's more, these images show Temple "gazed upon by Ruby" while "almost entirely removing the male objects of desire" (27,29). In short, general Hollywood practice and the specific marketing of *The Story of Temple Drake* would have cast Faulkner's fiction in a light that accentuated its queer possibilities. These possibilities would have constructed what Miller calls "an essentially insubstantial homosexuality"; and yet, according to the logic of

connotation, that very insubstantially would have had "the corresponding inconvenience of tending to raise this ghost [of homosexuality] all over the place" (125) and would have risked "the implicit homosexualization of almost all the…male characters" in the stories (126).[96] Stated differently, in 1932, Faulkner's *Sanctuary* was at the centre of Hollywood's debates over sex perversion, an expansive concept which in the early thirties was understood as, at least potentially, homosexual. To the extent that Faulkner's fiction deployed narrative details used in Hollywood as code for homosexuality and that those codes were used in marketing *The Story of Temple Drake*, the connotative potential of Faulkner's fiction would have been further accentuated.

In this context, my description of Faulkner's efforts to adapt his own fiction makes more sense. When Faulkner arrived at MGM, Hollywood was entering into a debate over its place in American society and culture. Film's emerging, hybrid status as an art-commercial product was being challenged by reformists who saw it as mere entertainment to be regulated and, as much as possible, yoked to the service of the public good. Faulkner, to the extent that he was a novice screenwriter working on films in a marginal genre, would ordinarily have been a bit player in this debate. And yet, Paramount's desperate ploy to avoid bankruptcy through scandalous marketing and product by adapting *Sanctuary* had thrust his name and his novel into the centre of that debate. Stakes were high, and it is extremely unlikely that this controversy and the role his name played in it was unknown to him. And even if it were, the men and women working around him certainly knew of it and took steps to police his work. Although these concerns go unmentioned

in his letters, it only seems reasonable that Faulkner, working in these conditions, would have been especially—and perhaps overly—sensitive to the sexual connotations of his fiction while adapting it for the screen.

"Golden Land"

Interestingly, Faulkner's only short story to be set in Hollywood, "Golden Land," addresses both America's relationship to Hollywood and Hollywood's relationship to sexual scandal. First published in *The American Mercury* in 1936, it suggests that Faulkner not only responded to the context I've described while adapting his fiction for the screen, but also that he translated its primary concerns into his fiction after he left MGM. Stated differently, if in Hollywood Faulkner had learned to read his previous through a Hollywood lens, he returns to fiction-writing with his Hollywood experiences intact and, in "Golden Land," displays a stronger grasp of popular, sensational genre. The story thus offers insight into Faulkner's early attempts to situate himself in relation to what, by 1936, he would have understood to be an on-going career as a contract screenwriter. What emerges is a complex portrait of Hollywood that, however much it seems to situate the rural communities of Faulkner's fictional world as separate from the modernity of Hollywood life, reveals both his implication in that modernity and his continued preoccupation with the sexual anxieties I have identified as shaping his MGM adaptations.

"Golden Land" is divided into three numbered parts that recount the events of one day in the life of Ira Ewing, a self-made real estate magnate

living in Beverly Hills. In the first part, Ewing wakes up hung over from a party and goes down to have breakfast with his son and wife. The three argue over a newspaper story about Ewing's daughter, who is an aspiring actress caught up in a very public sex scandal. In the second part, Ewing visits his mother, a widow he has brought to Los Angeles from her home in Nebraska. She has learned about the scandal and asks Ewing for money to return home. He refuses to give it, citing her weak health, then leaves to be photographed at the courthouse for a story about the scandal he has arranged to have placed in the next day's paper. The rest of the afternoon he spends with his mistress on the beach. In the final part, the scene shifts back to Ewing's mother's home. Alone, she counts coins she has saved, knowing they are not enough to buy a train ticket home. As she does, she reflects over the corruptions of Hollywood life, her long-deferred dreams of returning to Nebraska to die, and her failed efforts to teach her grandchildren the value of hard work and endurance. In the story's closing paragraph, she stares out over Los Angeles, horrified by the way it lies "beneath the golden days unmarred by rain or weather, the changeless monotonous beautiful days without end" and realizes that she is damned to "stay here and live forever" (726). Her complete refusal of Hollywood values and her placement as the final speaker in the story suggests hers may be the dominant thematic voice.

Serious critical treatments of the story are few, but those that exist position it as a blanket condemnation of Hollywood culture much along the lines of those sketched by the mother. Joseph Blotner, for example, claims the story is "impregnated with distaste and revulsion" and suggests that "almost every paragraph seemed imbued with the unhappiness [Faulkner] had felt

while he was in California (Blotner 877). Frederick Karl similarly links the the story to Faulkner's biography, viewing it as an expression of Hollywood's "inexorable corruption" as well as "a screed of self-hatred" provoked by "his work in Hollywood" (539).[97] For his part, Edmond L. Volpe takes a step back from biography, calling the story "a moral fable" offering "Faulkner's analysis of the corruption of the American myth." The rural values and frontier hardiness upon which they are founded have been replaced, he argues, by dreams of empty, effortless pleasures. Hollywood "comes to epitomize" this change (Volpe 208). Together, these critics understand the story as a signpost marking Faulkner's growing disaffection with the Hollywood career upon which he would come to depend financially and that fits more or less seamlessly with his later denunciations of Hollywood's pernicious influence over literature and life.

Much of the force of this fable stems from the final scenes of Ewing's mother alone in her home, dreaming of leaving Hollywood and returning to her home in the prairies. Unlike her grandchildren, she clings to values "learned through hardship and endurance of honor and courage and pride," a concatenation of terms commonly evoked in Faulkner's celebration of the benefits of rural life (722). Her assessment of the divide between the America of myth and the America seen on film is born out and given force by the tragedy of her final words. As the story closes, she realizes that her home is lost. She will never leave the unnaturally beautiful Hollywood hills and, as a result, will be denied the dignity of confronting death, the final hardship awaiting her. The silent, motionless grief she expresses standing at her window contrasts starkly with the exaggerated luxuries of her son's west

coast life. He is a drunk, a profligate spender and he keeps a mistress. With his successful business, nightly parties, multiple homes and servants, he is the very image of the successful Hollywood magnate. Unsurprisingly, Blotner and Karl have little good to say about him. Blotner compares him to the "monsters" Popeye and Percy Grimm (878); Karl reserves the word monsters for the children, but insists Ewing "does not demonstrate one saving grace" and blames the weakness of the story on "the sustained unpleasantness of the protagonist" (539). Given the contrast between the mother and son and the resonance between the mother's world view and many of the concerns of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels, Ewing's mother seems positioned to speak not only for an America lost to her son's west coast life but for the story too. Her criticisms—as the critics note—are the story's as well.

Of the critics who speak of "Golden Land," only Bruce Kawin connects the bitterness of its critique to Faulkner's screenwriting rather than his experience of Hollywood more generally. In "Sharecropping in the Golden Land," he argues that the short story reflects the incompatibility of Faulkner's modernism and need for authorial control with Hollywood's commercially driven factory process. He imagines Faulkner in script conferences, seeing cuts and hearing demands for rewrites, and resenting the "waste of all that good writing." He goes on to ask "what synthesis between author and not-author could he discover" in this process (204)? To Kawin's eyes, there is none. Committed to his modernist vision and demanding enough authority to bring it to pass, he could only endure, like Ewing's mother, in a world he would never fit into.

Departing from these critics' assessments, I would like to suggest that the narration's presentation of the protagonist, Ewing, complicates the story's response to Hollywood. Ewing is a man stretched between two places and two views of the world just as much as his mother is. If she is attached to a faraway past and confused by its connection to the present, he is committed to the present and grappling with its connection to the past. As the story opens, for example, he remembers his mother's home and reflects over the values she tried to force upon him, and he does so before he thinks about his daughter's situation. Importantly, the influence of these memories over him remains strong enough to merit rejection: as he wakes up and prepares to leave his bed, Ewing rehearses for himself the story of his escape from Nebraska and his frustrations with his mother's stubborn refusal to adapt to her new home (704). He does not succeed, however, in resisting completely their pull, and they remain nearby, offering a frame within which he might understand or organize his current situation if he so choose. The narrative suggests as much with his daily visits to his mother and when he lies on the beach with his mistress. There he watches the young people living Hollywood lives, noting that they are "beautiful as gods and goddesses, and with the mind of infants" (721), before realizing, to his apparent surprise, that he prefers the rippled, veined thighs of his aging mistress. In a world of youth and newness, he is still drawn to the old, the past. Ewing is not trapped in Hollywood, however. He choses to remain rather than to return to his mother's rural paradise of "honor and dignity and pride" (723), chooses instead to make the most of where he is. To the extent that Blotner and Karl are right, this choice place Ewing on the wrong side of the story's critique. Yet

also, to the extent they are right and Ewing reflects aspects of Faulkner's own biography—his mother's disdain for Hollywood when he brought her there, his disconnection from his own stepchildren, his sense of the dangers of easy luxury, his drunkenness—Ewing's attempts to profit from the Hollywood's debaucheries are likely as important as his mother's desire to leave them, and the story's critique of Hollywood, much more complex than they allow.

To make sense of this complexity, it is necessary to consider the scandal involving Ewing's daughter. Ewing describes the situation to his mother during their visit. He points out that his daughter Samantha was caught by the police, naked with another woman and a filmmaker in a hotel room. As he finishes this story, he suggests that "maybe they were all just having a good time and were innocently caught," but he does not actually believe this is the case (713). His daughter has been working as an extra in films, but she has bigger dreams. She has changed her name to April Lalear and now wants to see it emblazoned on Hollywood marquees. Ewing knows this, and so he recognizes that it is possible that the two women were "trying to blackmail" the filmmaker "into giving them parts in a picture; that they fooled him into coming there and arranged for the police to break in just after they had taken off their clothes; that one of them made a signal from the window" (713). The attempted blackmail a failure, Ewing accepts that his daughter may have then created the sexual scandal in order to push herself into the spotlight and, eventually, a film role.

Ewing does not know whether this is the case, but he knows that sex is the common currency of Hollywood, something the narration makes clear to the reader as well. For example, Ewing's daughter is first introduced in terms

of the sex scandal she may have created: a newspaper headline announces she "APRIL LALEAR BARES ORGY SECRETS" (705). Ewing's son too, is introduced in perverse sexual terms: first, dressed in "a woman's brassière and step-ins" (706) and later "apparently naked save for a pair of straw-colored shorts" (706). Similarly, when Ewing is on the beach, the world is reduced to a collection of sexualized bodies: first those of the young—"young men in trunks, and young girls in little more"—and then the thighs of Ewing's mistress (721). In such a world, the question of whether Samantha's orgy was real or a trick misses the point exactly. The newspaper stories of Samantha's scandal appeals to Hollywood sensibilities because it *both* offers salacious material *and* proclaims that it is about something other than vice. The orgy was (not) an orgy and (never) really happened. Samantha's sexual degradation is simultaneously overt and absent, and that is the appeal. This point is made by the photos printed in the newspaper. These "documents" of the scandal signify without showing the acts in question. In them, Samantha "stared back or flaunted long pale shins" (705). This is not exactly connotation but it comes close. What is at issue is a jousting for celebrity and a negotiation for a film role. The scandal is simply business.

Of all the characters, only Samantha's brother, who like her has been raised in and has internalized Hollywood culture, understands this business of vice. When his parents argue over his sister's behaviour, he insists they call her by her stage name, "Miss April Lalear of the cinema, if you please." He then insists that they stay out of her way, "Don't interfere with the girl's career" (709). The campy irony of his comments takes nothing away from his insight. In Hollywood, the empty scandal-that-is-not is the key to success.

Ewing intuits some of what his son knows but has no ready sense of how this business works. He hopes to profit from his daughter's situation and organizes his day around a scheduled appearance at the courthouse. He is not, however, going there to support his daughter or even to see her. He is going to be photographed for a story he has arranged to be placed on the front page of the next day's papers. The content of the story is not mentioned, and this is to the point. The paper mock-up presented by his secretary has been "laid out to embrace the blank space for the photograph" (715). Only the caption naming Ewing the father of April Lalear and identifying his real estate company's name and address are actually written. Ewing is only concerned about the size of the reserved space. The photograph and the scandal are publicity, not news, a point driven home by the "halfpage ad" that will appear on page fourteen and the fact that "a thousand extra copies" of the edition will be printed and sent out to a mailing list provided by Ewing.

In this, the story's presentation of the sexual crisis driving its narrative as a business opportunity dramatizes the film studios' complicated relationship to vice and censorship. In both this story and the film studios in which Faulkner worked, sex pictures sold because they were salacious, but were able to be sold because they connoted rather than showed vice. Studio response to censorship was thus a kind of moral spectacle in which they made much of winkingly not presenting offensive material to the public. "Golden Land" allegorizes that process in Ewing's implication in the two worlds of the story. He is part of the Hollywood culture that manages scandal for profit. Yet, he also understands his mother's world—call it Nebraska or

simply not-Hollywood—a world that clings to values it takes as traditional and is outraged at the debauchery of Hollywood life. Ewing, like the studios, uses scandal as a stage, posing for photographs that will be accompanied, we can assume, by a story revealing his dismay over his daughter's moral failings. (What else could the story be?) And he plays this role on this stage in order to sell a product.

Based on this sense of the story's meaning, I would agree with Kawin's intuition that much of the story's simmering anger stems from Faulkner's experiences writing in the studios and not simply living in the very different culture of the west coast. I would go further, however, and suggest that the anger of the story does not merely simmer. Quite to the contrary, the story directs it toward two aspects of Faulkner's fiction that, although originally tacit, were brought to light during his attempts to adapt it to the screen.

The first arises from Faulkner's implication in Hollywood's censorship debates by way of Paramount's adaptation of *Sanctuary*, a novel for which Faulkner had written an introduction only months before arriving at MGM.[98] In this notorious piece of prose, Faulkner denounces the novel as "a cheap idea" whose sole purpose was "to make money" (Faulkner, *Essays* 176). Speaking of his writing process, he claims to have taken "a little time out, and speculated what a person in Mississippi would believe to be current trends, chose what [he] thought was the right answer and invented the most horrific tale [he] could imagine and wrote it" (177). Later, when he learned the book was to be published, he had second thoughts and rewrote the novel in galleys at great personal expense so that what was "terrible" would not give reason for "shame" (177). He concludes the introduction by saying, "I hope you will

buy it and tell your friends and I hope they will buy it too" (Faulkner 178). The process Faulkner describes is, from first lines to last, directed toward boosting sales, and its steps are clear: generate scandalous material in order to sell books, revise the book to obscure the scandalous material, then sell the book in terms of its refusal to wallow in vice.

Replace the word "book" with "film," and this apology summarizes Ewing's, April's and Voyd's hypocritical approach to sexual scandal in "Golden Land." More importantly, it prefigures Paramount's controversial purchase of Temple's story as a means of avoiding bankruptcy. Elizabeth Binggeli has argued that Faulkner's introduction reveals the resonance between Faulkner's and Hollywood's approach to Temple Drake's story as well as between his approach and Hollywood version of censorship more generally. She writes that Faulkner's attempt to be both "the naughty peddler of obscenity and the high-minded artist…had exactly the effect that the Code had in terms of studio narrative" (95). "Golden Land" captures some of this resonance in its drama where it manifests in Ewing's self-recriminations and the narrative's generally bitter tone.

Second, if "Golden Land" shows Faulkner dramatizing and criticizing the censorship debates that shape his first screenplay projects, it also captures the angry violence of his recoil from the homosexuality conjured up by that context's rereading of his fiction during adaptation. In short, the strategies of narration I have described in previous chapters are allegorized in narrated action in this story. "Golden Land" stands apart form the rest of Faulkner's fiction in its representation of homosexuality in two ways. First, although, much of Faulkner's fiction is open to queer readings—critics such as Duvall,

Loebel, and Polk have shown as much—this queerness is never explicit. It resides instead in what Miller calls "the shadow kingdom of connotation" (Miller 125). Bon, Emily's beau, Quentin, Claude and others may be read as queer, and as Duvall has pointed out and I discussed in my last chapter, the narration seldom disavows queer readings. But neither will it denote the characters' queerness.

In "Golden Land" however, Ewing's son is introduced through two scenes which signify a queer, seemingly gay sexuality. In the first scene, Ewing remembers once putting his son, who had arrived home drunk, to bed. As he undresses him, Ewing discovers that Voyd is wearing women's underwear. In the second scene, Voyd sits in the sun, tanned, near-naked and "scented faintly by the depilatory which he used on arms, chest and legs" (707). When he speaks with his father he displays "an insolence that was almost feminine" but which quickly becomes "completely feminine" (709). In both scenes, he is described as closely attached to his mother. Thus, a large number of details together signify in common code that Ewing's son is queer. If these codes are unusually overt they remain flexible enough that critics have read them, perhaps wilfully as not explicit.

Yet, in a stark departure from the typical pattern of Faulkner's fiction, these descriptions are then followed by a direct declaration of Voyd's sexuality: Ewing, while arguing with his wife, calls his son a fag or faggot, yelling, "Maybe next you will tell me that I made my son a f—" (708). It is thus while writing of Hollywood that Faulkner, for only time in his fiction, directly names a character a homosexual. Curiously, however, this naming is in a sense redundant. Voyd's given name is an obvious deformation of

"void," and thus draws attention to the void in this man. If critics have drawn attention to moral, intellectual, or aesthetic voids in his character, the story, which as a rule emphasizes characters' bodies, directs our attention to the physical. Voyd has a void that is a literal hole in his body, the anus, the rectum, and a man's hole, as Leo Bersani has pointed out, is always gay in our culture's dominant view. Ewing thus names Voyd gay *a second time* by calling him by an epithet. The redundancy emphasizes not Voyd's sexuality, but Ewing's disgust at that sexuality. This in itself is noteworthy.

Ewing's dialogue also highlights the second of the short story's departures from Faulkner's typical treatment of homosexuality. Whereas queer connotation goes largely unremarked in other fictions, in this story, the directly identified homosexual is twice subjected to homophobic violence. In Voyd's first appearance, for example, Ewing, after discovering his drunken son in bra and panties, begins beating him "with grim and deliberate fury" (706). He stops only when his angry wife intervenes to protect the boy. In a similar vein, Voyd's second appearance in the story concludes with an intimately described beating, again at the hands of his father. Angry at Voyd's flippant commentary on his sister's situation, Ewing grabs his son by the face, interrupting him in mid-speech. Again his wife intervenes, but this time, Ewing grabs her and holds her in his other hand out of the way. As Ewing stands there, wife in one hand, son in the other, goading his son to finish what he had be saying—"Go on…Say it"—the narrative lingers over the effects of Ewing's attack on Voyd's body. We are told that "Voyd's mouth puckered and slobbered in his father's hard, shaking hand" and that "Voyd could say nothing because of his father's hand gripping his jaws open."

Voyd's body is "writhing and thrashing" and he "made [a] slobbering, moaning sound of terror." The moment carries on for two paragraphs, ending only when Ewing "flung Voyd free, onto the terrace" (709). Voyd flees and never again appears in the story except in his grandmother's brief memories of him as a presexual child.

The violence of Ewing's attacks and the narration's fascination with their effects are shocking enough to merit careful consideration. The first point to be made is that the queerness denoted here is specified as perversion, which is rarely the case elsewhere in the fiction.[99] Volpe picks up on this, calling Voyd a "cringing, useless sexual pervert" (209). Blotner and Karl, although less strident than Volpe, specifically refer to his homosexuality and develop readings that assume Volpe's gloss of the term. Interestingly, only Kawin—jaded perhaps by too much time watching Hollywood films?—avoids treating sexuality as shorthand for moral judgment, writing instead (and more accurately) that Voyd "is a bitch" (200). Yet, in avoiding the homophobic judgment, Kawin also papers over a central thrust of the narrative. Voyd's homosexuality operates as the matching pair to his sister's orgy-as-blackmail. More importantly, as Blotner, Karl and Volpe eagerly explain, his perversion, like hers, serves as the sign of Hollywood degeneracy as a whole. The narrative thus positions the violent attacks on Voyd as resistance to cultural decline, justifying them as reasonable expressions of disgust and frustration.

If, as all the critics I've discussed argue, this story expresses Faulkner's frustrations regarding Hollywood, then the terms of that expression likely speak to the nature of those frustrations. And if that is the case, then the man

whose close friend and literary agent was an openly gay man[100], after only a short while in Hollywood was ready, for the only time in his fiction, to picture the brutal beating of an openly gay man and to take that man as a symbol of all that was wrong with that "west coast place." What's more, there is reason in the description of that violence itself to believe that this is the case. Remember, Voyd's name suggests empty spaces and connects him with the emptiness Ewing's mother finds in Hollywood. But juxtaposed with his slobbering mouth, the name suggests something much less abstract. Ewing grabs hold of Voyd, the symbol of Hollywood, and what he sees is a gay man's wet, dripping hole. My description seems like a coarse pun, a bit of play, until we remember Faulkner's own colorful description of Hollywood as "the plastic asshole of the world" (quoted in Baldwin, 35). "Golden Land," like Faulkner's quip, suggests that asshole was gay and that Faulkner found the fact horrifying enough to justify, at least within the bounds of subsequent fiction, violence.

It is this same horror and recoil that I have suggested shaped the screenplay adaptations Faulkner wrote for MGM in his first trip to Hollywood. In those projects, the selected short stories, once situated anew into Hollywood contexts, have the homosexual connotations implicit in their characters' masculine jostling highlighted. In *Turn About*, the generic shift that emphasizes them is resisted through the organization of a double narrative that segregates the men's and women's stories. In *War Birds*, the queerly connotative relationships between John, Bayard and their fellow soldiers are consolidated onto John's character who, in a nod to narrative norms of Hollywood genre, is cast as an outsider and killed. Now, in his only

story to be set in Hollywood, it is Faulkner who makes the "connoted queer" step into the light where he will both emblematize the American decline Faulkner would speak about repeatedly in his later years and suffer homophobic violence that allegorizes Faulkner's recoil from queer connotation in Hollywood.

"An Odor of Verbena"

To date, "Golden Land" has held a marginal place in criticism of Faulkner's work. Yet, I would like to suggest that this recoil from queer sexuality provides the necessary context for understanding Faulkner's late return to the Sartoris family in the seven stories collected as *The Unvanquished*, a return mediated by his earlier return to the family's stories during the *War Birds* project at MGM. And indeed, Faulkner's letters to Goldman during the composition of the first six of the stories suggest that, however much they differed from the war pictures he wrote in Hollywood, his screenwriting experiences shadowed their composition. In late winter or spring 1934, for example, Faulkner had proposed writing "A Child's Garden of Motion Picture Scripts." By late spring he had written "Ambuscade." In early summer, he reported that he having trouble "cook[ing] up" the final three stories in the series. Soon after he travels to Hollywood to work on *Sutter's Gold* for Hawks; when he returns in August, he quickly finishes all three. He writes "Golden Land" not long after that. Although written three years later, the last story in the collection, "An Odor of Verbena," was actually written in Hollywood.

Back in 1933, when Faulkner was finally free of MGM and, more importantly, of the clause in his contract that gave the studio ownership of anything he wrote while in their employ, he had been eager to turn back to fiction. By summer, he was claiming in a letter to Ben Wasson to be "hot with a novel"(*SL* 73). Later, in an October letter to Harrison Smith, he claims to "have been at the Snopes book" (the still lingering *Father Abraham*) and to have caught hold of another "bee": a book to be called *Requiem for a Nun* (*SL 75)*. By February 1934, however, he had set both books aside and begun yet another novel, *Dark House*. That book would eventually grow into Faulkner's masterwork, *Absalom, Absalom!*, but when he first arrived at the idea, it seemed like one more step in a near constant shuffling of projects that indicated how much trouble Faulkner had in settling on and writing a novel after his return from Hollywood. He was unsure of himself and grasping at ideas.

Unable to make progress on a novel and hoping to avoid returning to Hollywood, Faulkner spent much of his time writing stories and submitting them to magazines. He completed "A Bear Hunt" and "A Mule in the Yard" and eventually began to write Sartoris stories. The first, "Ambuscade," was sent to *The Saturday Evening Post* in Spring 1934. Soon after he finished the second and, by June, with the third now in hand, was speaking of what he imagined to be a series of six set during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Unfortunately, the *Post* declined to pay the 10,000$ he requested for the series. So Faulkner, increasingly desperate for money, set them aside and accepted a brief screenwriting contract from Hawks. Back in Oxford after several weeks in Hollywood, he set back to work on the series with energy and completed

the last of the six by October. These stories marked something of a personal victory for Faulkner, ending his brief experience of writer's block and ushering in the creative period that would culminate in the publication of *Absalom, Absalom!*. With only minor revisions and the addition of the concluding tale, they were collected as *The Unvanquished* in 1938.

Faulkner was keenly aware of these currents of popular culture running through the series, and this awareness surely fuelled his criticism of the stories when he realized their sale would not earn enough money to forestall his return to Hollywood. Yet, his early work on *Absalom, Absalom!* had also set him on guard against their inadvertant use. For example, when Faulkner wrote to propose *Dark House* to Goldman in early 1934 (roughly the same time he began work on the Sartoris stories), he explains that the novel's double-structure as a story about telling stories provides a method for resisting the influence of popular images of the antebellum South: Quintin's "bitterness" toward and "hatred" of the South will allow him to "keep the hoop skirts and plug hats out" of the book (*SL* 79).

Hoop skirts and hats were of course are on full-display in the six stories written in 1934. The series revels in its nostalgia. In a shift, however, "An Odor of Verbena," the concluding story written a little more than two years later, retreats from this nostalgia and takes it as the site of its narrative conflict. In this story, the old order of popular antebellum legend gives way to a new system that remains much debated by critics. The source of this changed perspective can in part be traced to Faulkner's completion of *Absalom, Absalom!*. In that book and especially its second half, nostalgic

images of the Old South had been rendered horrific; Faulkner's return to his own antebellum narratives was surely informed by that text.

Yet, strangely, the previous work referenced by "An Odor of Verbena" is not *Absalom, Absalom!*. Instead, Faulkner quotes the climactic scene from *War Birds*, casting it as the point marking the rejection of the old order. The repetition of scene was first remarked by Kawin in *Faulkner and Film*.[101] Understandably, Kawin whose project seeks to establish the screenwriting as a legitimate object of critical study, focuses on establishing the priority of the screenplay in Faulkner's process of composition, arguing that "An Odor of Verbena" provides "a conclusive example of Faulkner having used screenwriting as a trial ground for later fiction" (*MGM* 263). Faulkner's use of the scene far exceeds the mere repetition of an event tested in a screen narrative. Instead, writing of the Old South, apparently in the wake of his monumental *Absalom, Absalom!*, Faulkner bypasses that text, returning instead to his earlier revision of the Sartoris twins' story as the screenplay *War Birds*. Yet in that return, visible as a reenactment of the climactic scene of that script's war narrative, a series of deviations appear. The earlier revision is itself revised and in a way that suggests that the story aims to reestablish masculinity as non-feminine and non-queer. Stated bluntly, "An Odor of Verbena" quotes a screenplay to correct damage done to the early fiction in and by Hollywood.

Heterosexual Masculinity Restored

Although one of Faulkner's most popular books, *The Unvanquished* sits uneasily in the critical assessment of his oeuvre. While Cleanth Brooks considers the stories a valuable entry point into Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County and a thoughtful portrait of Southern consciousness during and after the Civil War, most other critics disagree.[102] Michael Millgate has described *The Unvanquished* as "distinctly a minor work" (170). David Minter names it "less than major literature" (146).[103] This conflict was reflected in Faulkner's own uncertainty about their value. He had devoted a great deal of energy and imagination to the stories: in a letter to Goldman, for example, he speaks insightfully of the conflict between his idea for the series as a whole and the development of the individual tales, speculating about the need to imagine backgrounds for the characters. Yet, when the *Post* offered less money for their publication than he asked for, Faulkner rails against what he has written, declaring that, if he is to write "trash" as part of a "pulp series," he expects to be well paid (*SL* 84).[104]

Complicating assessments of the series is their close approach to Hollywood and popular literary productions of the interwar years. Their nostalgic images were staples of the "moonlight and magnolia" melodramas of the thirties, literary examples of which include Stark Young's *So Red the Rose* (1934) and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936). Cinematic examples include Warner Brothers' *Jezebel* (1938) and MGM's adaptation of Mitchell's novel.[105] Studio executives immediately saw the similarities and,

thus, the stories' potential appeal if adapted. Soon after the volume's publication, MGM purchased the movie rights to *The Unvanquished*.[106]

Yet, if critics are uncertain of the collection's value, the importance of the final story as a transitional text marking a departure from practices typical of the earlier fiction seems well established. In "An Odor of Verbena," old Bayard Sartoris, now a young man studying at university, learns that he must avenge his father's murder by his business partner, Redmond.[107] Returning home he is urged by Drusilla (his father's young widow) and the men of Jefferson to confront and to kill the murderer in a duel. Bayard refuses to do so: instead, he enters Redmond's office unarmed, allowing the man to fire at and miss him twice. Overcome by Bayard's actions, Redmond quickly leaves town, while Bayard, victorious and free of blood-guilt, returns home to be scolded by Aunt Jenny for foolishly risking his life.

Old Bayard's refusal to enact vengeance plays out in summary as a mix between a tall-tale and a parable. An impetuous but virtuous young man courageously risks his life to preserve what he believes is right and, against all odds, survives. Bayard's courage and his luck are outsized, and his survival affirms the ultimate victory of good. Importantly, it also establishes him as a man. Cleanth Brooks's early commentary describes his confrontation with Redmond as "the concluding act in his long initiation into the moral responsibility that goes with manhood" (92). John Irwin makes much the same claim in more overtly Oedipal terms, writing that: "Bayard has proved himself a better man than his father; he has supplanted that overpowering, debilitating image of the father in the life of the son by psychically doing away with the threatening father-surrogate" (Irwin 58-59). Whatever their

critical basis, these critical commentaries correctly emphasize the story's central concern: establishing the proper basis for a post-war or modern masculinity. This story thus returns to the questions of masculinity that vexed Faulkner's attempts to adapt his early war fiction at MGM. And interestingly, this return registers as a break from the early fiction's representation of war.

This break is most clearly presented in Donald Kartiganer's important discussion of Faulkner's war fiction. Shifting the critical debate away from the story's family drama, he calls old Bayard's tale "a major transitional text in Faulkner's treatment of war" (637). He argues that war serves as "an occasion for gesture" (619) in Faulkner's fiction and that "An Odor of Verbena" reimagines what that gesture might accomplish. In the early war fiction, gesture is typically reckless and inconsequential: examples include old John Sartoris's fatal attempt to steal anchovies from Union troops in *Flags in the Dust*[108] and the death of Hightower's grandfather at the doors of a chicken coop in *Light in August*.[109] Detached from and irrelevant to "the violent reality of actual battle" (619), these gestures typify a peculiarly modern take on Southern history which encourages men to strike allusive poses visible as a "sword-point manner" (625). Old Bayard's refusal of vengeance in "An Odor of Verbena" offers a sharp departure from this conception of gesture insofar as it produces a change. More than that, if in the early fiction, gesture had been merely a performance, a spectacular striking of a pose, in this story, gesture is performative. Old Bayard's confrontation of Redmond *enacts* a system of masculine authority.

Importantly however, the masculinity enacted by this new gesture is not itself new. It is merely the old system reaffirmed. Anne Goodwyn Jones

underscores this point in her response to Irwin's claim that old Bayard escapes the law of the father in the story's climactic scene. She writes that "if Bayard's narrative rewrites war stories, it gives up only the guns; if it rewrites the oedipal story, it gives up only the penis. What remains are the structures of war and the patriarchy." In her next paragraph, she concludes that "Bayard now possesses, then, not postpatriarchal but simply patriarchal power." (Jones 30-31). What is at stake then is not patriarchy but, instead, the sword-point manner as a legitimate instrument for and sign of patriarchy. "An Odor of Verbena" suggests the manner is not legitimate by rejecting it in favour of those values celebrated by Ewing's mother—honour and courage and pride—in her closing denunciation of Hollywood in "Golden Land."

In 1938, of course, Hollywood would have been an important context for understanding the sword-point manner, especially insofar as it relates to the Sartoris family. The war stories that Faulkner chose to adapt in Hollywood romanticize playful, devil-may-care acts of war that typify the sword-point manner. This manner is central to Ronnie's gleeful enthusiasm during the bombing and torpedo runs in "Turnabout," and John's leap from his plane in *Flags* is emblematic of it. More importantly, the performance of manhood Faulkner wished to celebrate in adapting these stories to the screen was defined by these gestures. And yet, the gestures that communicated the masculinity he valued also generated much of the queer connotation that proved so disruptive to Faulkner's screenwriting efforts. In *Turn About*, for example, the detached gestures of the sword-point manner appears effete; the soldiers' playful acts, boyish and flirtatious. In *War Birds*, John's rivalry with Spoomer seems to offer sword-point gestures as expressions of his over-

investment in his relationship with his commanding officer, a relationship that is consistently developed in situations coded as sexual. *Turn About* preserved these gestures by a enforcing a generic division of narrative material, but in *War Birds*, he makes more sweeping changes to his materials, adopting Hollywood's generic norms in order to structure the Sartoris twins' story in a way that limits connotative possibilities. Interestingly, he also stages the climactic scene of that screenplay as a rejection of the sword-point manner typical of the earlier war fiction.

In that scene, young Bayard, who believes he has shot down and killed the German pilot responsible for his brother's death, finds himself standing before that pilot, Dorn, in a bar after the Armistice. Armed, angry, caught up in a bar fight, it would be easy for Bayard to kill the pilot, but he chooses instead to spare his life, casting his gun through a nearby window, which breaks in the shape of a star. The scene and the events leading up to it are over-wrought but its implications are, as a result, fairly overt and have been explicated by Kawin: in this scene, Faulkner discovers how to escape "the compulsive fixations and destructive inheritance that so regularly (at least in Faulkner's work) force him into tragic repetitions and hopeless quests for oblivion; it is a story of how to find peace, in fact, how to create it" (MGM 261).[110] Importantly, young Bayard's refusal to kill Dorn, like old Bayard's refusal to kill Redmond, enacts—or re-enacts—the law by recognizing that killing "will be murder now" that the the war is over (*MGM* 391). As such, it remakes masculinity as something other than recklessness.

More than a mere departure from the sword-point manner, the staging of the scene clearly casts Bayard's gesture as an explicit rejection of

recklessness as sign of masculinity.[111] When Bayard last confronts Dorn, his quest for vengeance has been emptied of its original meaning: his vengeance was fulfilled when he downed Dorn's plane. What's more, any remaining anger he may feel—for example, his sense that because Dorn has survived, he has somehow failed—has been spent in the fistfight the men start when they first meet and realize who they are. Indeed, by the close of that fight, which by then includes all of the men in the bar, Dorn saves Bayard from being killed by a bayonet. The result of this sequent of events is that, when Bayard stands before Dorn in the final scene, their anger with each other and any debts of honour either may have are exhausted. Bayard has neither reason nor desire to kill Dorn. He is ready to make the peace Kawin speaks about by throwing away his gun.

Yet, the scene does not immediately end and Bayard does not throw away his gun. Instead, Dorn, a prisoner, a widower and hopeless, begins to taunt Bayard. He hands Bayard his gun and tries to provoke him to violence. This taunting is reckless and suicidal, and most importantly, like John's jump from his plane, it is a pose.[112] Dorn's bravery in the face of death is of the same sort as the posturing of the soldiers wandering the post-war waste land glorified in stories like "Ad Astra" and "All the Dead Pilots." It is the sword-point manner, and in taunting Bayard, Dorn invites him to participate in this particular performance of masculinity. In refusing to kill Dorn, Bayard rejects that manner.

Old Bayard's confrontation with Redmond borrows much of the staging of young Bayard's confrontation with Dorn. Old Bayard like young Bayard refuses to exact blood vengeance, casting away the gun he is meant to

use. Redmond like Dorn attempts to transform a confrontation between men that has been structured in terms of law into a duel between violent rivals that attests to the bravery of both participants. And in both scenes, the sword-point masculinity typical of the early war fiction is thus rejected and a new masculinity based on communal law and the patriarchal family is introduced. What is different in "An Odor of Verbena," however, is that the rejection of that manner, which in *War Birds* had been staged as a rejection of one kind of masculinity in favour of another, is staged as the rejection of a queer femininity. In short, the queer, feminine threats to heterosexual masculinity which proved so vexing in Faulkner's efforts to adapt his fiction to the screen and for which "Golden Land" angrily denounces Hollywood culture are identified with the sword-point performance of masculinity and are now disabled through a rejection of that manner of performance.

Our first inkling that this is the case emerges from the substitution of a woman for a man as the mouthpiece of the version of masculinity celebrated in the early war fiction. The men of Jefferson, although they live under the old code of honour and its dueller's ethic, are relatively silent. Although offering guns and volunteering to confront Redmond on Bayard's behalf, they generally wait quietly for Bayard to act. Drusilla, however, speaks forcefully for this old masculine code. Two months before his father's death, Bayard, who is about to return to university, stands alone with her on the porch of their family home. Speaking in tones that evoke nostalgia for an antebellum dream, she explains how her husband and Bayard's father is a war hero and a leader. In explaining his way of life to Bayard, she argues that:

There are worse things than killing men, Bayard. There are worse

> things than being killed. Sometimes I think the finest things that can happen to a man is to love something, a woman preferably, well, hard hard hard, then to die young because he believed what he could not help but believe and was what he could not (could not? would not) help but be. (474)

With this speech, Drusilla summarizes the sword-point masculinity celebrated in the earlier stories of the collection and takes that code upon herself as a felt passion.

Her commitment to this code extends beyond her words, however. Indeed, she is intent on providing Bayard with a means to accept that code as his own. Her speech finished, Drusilla offers herself to Bayard, turning to him and exclaiming "Kiss me."[113] When she demands this kiss, Drusilla transforms her nostalgic description of the sword-point manner into a means of masculine performance available to young Bayard in the present. She invites him, in a sense, to prove himself a man and to live well by, first, loving her and then, presumably, dying young, an opportunity that will soon present itself in the wake of his father's death. As a result, when Bayard is later called upon to choose between being "*what I think I am*" or being like his father (466), that choice is no longer, as it had been in the climactic scene in *War Birds*, merely a choice between two kinds of masculinity. It is now a choice between "*what I think I am*" and the kind of man Drusilla, a woman, would like him to be. When Bayard refuses the duel and rejects the sword-point manner of his father and of John Sartoris, that refusal now stands as a refusal of a feminine-identified position.[114]

In the earlier war fiction, the rejection of the feminine had enabled a playful performance of various masculinities in the safe space of the published short fiction. In Hollywood, however, the all-male world of the battlefield risked connoting taboo intimacy between men. This was the problem Faulkner's first two screenplays were organized to address. Faulkner's generic organization of *Turn About* tamed the connotative force of the signs of masculinity by limiting their context. By keeping women and their stories at bay, the division in that screenplay between the narrative of the woman's film from that of the war picture allowed the men to prove themselves men by strutting around in uniforms, committing courageous follies and laughing in the face of danger without seeming to be interested in men. *War Birds* likewise reins in the queer connotations of John's reckless behaviour by organizing his story according to the structural norms of a genre of social order. Recast as a villain, his recklessly detached, inconsequential gestures no longer signal his masculinity; they express the justice of his death. "An Odor of Verbena" addresses these same problems in the fiction by structuring Bayard's rejection of the sword-point manner Drusilla advocates for as a rejection of the queer.

Drusilla first appears in "Raid." Her fiancé has been killed in battle, and now, alone with her mother and younger brother in their home, she cuts off her hair and begins wearing pants like a boy. Far from mere masquerade, she displays enough skill with horses and guns to fend of a large group pillaging soldiers. What's more, by the end of the initial series of stories, her mother reports that she has spent the better part of the war fighting as "*a common private soldier*" in a regiment commanded by Bayard's father (449). In

"Raid," Drusilla explains her behaviour, defining it in part as an explicit rejection of conventional gender roles. More importantly, she suggests it provides the vantage necessary to imagine a sustainable life beyond their limits. Speaking to Bayard, she says:

> Living used to be dull, you see. Stupid….you grew up and then you fell in love with your acceptable young man and in time you would marry him, in your mother's wedding gown perhaps then you settled down forever more while your husband got children on your body for you to feed and bathe and dress until they grew up too;…Stupid you see. But now you can see for yourself how it is… (387).

Drusilla has clearly begun seeing for herself and her developing vision is apocalyptic. Its bases are the "fine battles" in which men are killed (keeping them from "getting children") and the fire that burns up "the house and the silver" (which occupy too much of women's time). In her mind, Drusilla's dress and manner participate in nothing less than the undoing of the established world of gender relations in order to clear ground for a new order. This razed social space is the "nothing" she thanks god for delivering.[115] However, the first six stories of *The Unvanquished* follows a comic pattern—"normalcy is turned upside down for a while as a way of ensuring its permanence" (Gray 227)—and at war's end, Drusilla's behaviour will become the object of scrutiny and correction. Specifically, in "Skirmish at Sartoris," the women of Jefferson learn that Drusilla, back now from the front, is living at the Sartoris home and working in their fields. They organize themselves and force her to marry Bayard's father.

In her subjugation to convention, Drusilla succumbs to a fate generally avoided by Faulkner's earlier women. Caddie, Lena, and Temple all operate outside established roles, and their deviance from them—Caddie playing in the creek, Lena's shameless pregnancy, Temple's sex drive—initiates the narratives they inhabit. None of them, however, submits to tradition. To the extent they suffer, they suffer at the margins of society. This marginality incites narrative while keeping them empty figures: the narrative speaks toward their position but manages only to represent society's approach toward what remains a position outside of discourse. Caddie, who retreats perpetually before her brothers'—and her author's—attempts to narrate her, is the exemplary instance of this approach to characterization. Drusilla does not escape narrative. Indeed, her story becomes precisely the "dull" and "stupid" tale she believed the fire and bullets of wartime had brought down. What's more, in "An Odor of Verbena" she embraces the old order she had fled from during the war, seeming the very image of the antebellum lady and endorsing the most rigid, the most archaic expression of masculinity.

And yet, something in her subjection reads as false. Millgate wonders if Drusilla's embrace of antebellum, patriarchal values might be taken as their parody before suggesting this is probably not the case (169). Gray rejects the unity of her characterization altogether, faulting her construction as "confusingly multiple" (235). Cleanth Brooks takes her as tragic and "unsexed" (92). What these responses point to is that, while Drusilla has taken on the conventional role of a Southern Lady, it doesn't fit, and she plays it badly. When Drusilla seduces Bayard, for example, her melting femininity contrasts sharply with her evident "power to control horses" (474). The

duelist's ethic likewise seems excessively fierce when she speaks it: Aunt Jenny claims it is the babbling of "a poor, hysterical young woman" (482).[116] Yet, I would suggest that these and other discordances are not failures in her characterization; they *are* her characterization, and so, the mismatch between her sense of herself and the role she plays resembles what Judith Butler, speaking of Luce Irigaray, calls *miming*.[117]

In miming, an a-conventional subject position—in this case Drusilla's elaborate self-portrait in "Raid"—emerges "within the system" of convention through a repetition of its terms. At its most effective, this repetition "calls into question [the system of convention's] systemic closure and its pretension to be self-grounding" (Butler 45). Drusilla's characterization suggests a similar dynamic: she fulfills the role that has been forced upon her but in ways that expose its falsity. Indeed, this is the implication of the verbena she continually wears. Although seemingly a sentimental means of recognizing Bayard's decision to spare Redmond's life, the flower is notable for masking the smell of horses and courage, the very things that she sought as a young, queer woman and that as a lady, she must visibly reject. As such the flower embodies the discord between the person she once "saw for herself" during the war and the role she now must play. To the extent that readers register the mismatch between her present social role and her personal experience of identity, Drusilla is queer, and Bayard's rejection of the performance of masculinity she has advocated for is a rejection of that queerness.

The final duel between Bayard and Redmond thus simultaneously addresses three problems which arose during Faulkner's adaptation of the war fiction. Refusing to fire upon Redmond, Bayard rejects the sword-point

gesture that underpinned the troublesome performances of masculinity in that fiction. Because these gestures have been defined as a "feminine" position, their rejection likewise reestablishes masculinity as a patriarchy privileging relationships between men. Finally, and most importantly, by now translating the queer connotations that had plagued men's relationships in those adapted fictions onto a queer women, rejecting that woman's *version* of masculine gender performance stands as a rejection of the queer. This last point is driven home by the narration's removal of Drusilla, who appears to have lost her mind, from the scene of the story. Hearing of Bayard's chosen manner for confronting Redmond, Drusilla leaves Jefferson, "a poor hysterical woman" beaten down by a grief she lacks the strength to withstand (482). Her departure removes the queer threat she posed to the newly reestablished patriarchy. What remains is a renewed masculinity, again an affair between men, and once again operating unencumbered by femininity or by panicked encounters with the queer.

Conclusions

Viewed in light of "Golden Land" and my earlier discussions of *Turn About* and *War Birds*, "An Odor of Verbena" seems to mark the conclusion of Faulkner's struggle to cope with the consequences of his Hollywood experiences. Arriving at MGM, Faulkner had watched the sexual tensions of his recent fiction laid bare under the lens of Hollywood's debates over censorship. His own fiction held a central place in this debate and, however isolated he was from the controversial adaptation of *Sanctuary* undertaken by

Paramount, those debates clearly shaped his return to his fiction. Stories of men jostling with each other in a playful performance of masculinity suddenly appeared quite different. The narrative structure of the adaptations he scripted suggests in fact that the queer connotations of these performances needed to be contained, and in an effort to do so, Faulkner responded to these problems of gender and sexuality in terms of genre.

After these first two screenplay projects, Faulkner largely stopped adapting his own fiction. As he worked more frequently with experienced screenwriters—most notably with John Sayre on *The Road to Glory*—the anxiety and panic governing his early responses to Hollywood's narrative genres seems to settled. Yet, those early responses left a mark on his imagination. Tracing out that mark and its influence on his subsequent fiction has been the task of this chapter.

In "Golden Land," that influence registers in the allegorization of Hollywood's relationship to scandal. As Ira Ewing navigates his family drama, the primary aspects of Hollywood's marketing of vice are identified and criticized. Just as importantly, that influence registers as the homophobic violence directed at a queer character who is treated as a product of and emblematic of Hollywood movie culture. The bitter anger of this story speaks to the force the tensions I've taken as shaping Faulkner's earliest encounters with Hollywood still exerted over his imagination years later.

In "An Odor of Verbena," these tensions again surface as the object of narrative and again do so in terms that evoke Hollywood. The capstone of the cycle of Sartoris stories that Faulkner began early in the major phase and continued in the immediate wake of his first contract at MGM, this story

returns to, and in a sense resolves, the problems created by Faulkner's attempt to adapt his war fiction to the screen. If these adaptations had unearthed the queer connotations of characters' playful, all-male performances of battlefield masculinity, this last Sartoris story squashed these connotations by reasserting a heterosexual patriarchy. Repeating the climactic scene from *War Birds*, the story rejects the troublesome sword-point gestures of the earlier performances of masculinity. More importantly, it redefines these gestures as feminine and queer, which is to say, as poses, as inauthentic. The story thus enacts the only available solution to homosexual connotation: it simply asserts that it does not exist.[118]

To the extent that the story is successful, "An Odor of Verbena" marks the end of the dynamic I have tracked in my previous chapters. It seems therefore to mark the divergence of Faulkner's screenwriting and fiction. Yet, the contact between the two was not without consequences. "An Odor of Verbena" re-establishes a patriarchal masculinity and thus reentrenches Faulkner in his early conservative social values. Yet, however much the story reaffirms an older masculinity, the narration that asserts it is noticeably changed. This change is registered in the resonance between the values underpinning Bayard's refusal to fire at Redmond and the values espoused by Ira Ewing's mother in the closing section of "Golden Land." Speaking of these values and the way the mother ruminates over them in that earlier story, Edmond Volpe notes "a distinct change in Faulkner's narrative style, a style that will characterize some of his later short stories" (206). My next chapter will take up this observation by considering how the response to

Hollywood brought to a crisis and resolved in these two stories might play a role in what critics have understood as Faulkner's late style.

Later Fiction

Faulkner's last novel, *The Reivers*, opens with a fairly simple comic story. In this tale, Boon Hogganbeck bursts into his boss's office hoping to borrow his gun in order to shoot a black co-worker named Ludus. Refused, he steals his co-worker John Powell's gun, firing at and missing Ludus five times before he can be stopped. Little harm is done, the punishment is light, and life in Jefferson, as befits a comic tale, returns to normal.

The details of the story, however, complicate matters by figuring general problems to which Faulkner returned obsessively throughout his career. John Powell, we learn, has entered manhood by buying his gun from his father and having his wife sew it into a pocket inside his overalls. He entered society by forming a gentleman's agreement with his boss and co-workers to act as if they are all ignorant of his gun, a gun about which all of them already know everything there is to know. Conflict arises because Boon breaks the agreement and uses the gun to attack a black man who called him "narrow-asted," a term Boon believes constitutes a criticism of his "private tail." This tangle of masculinity, sexuality, knowing ignorance and the intractable problems of gender and race, when presented in the regional but intensely allegorical language of this chapter, read as "Faulknerian." Yet, the story fails to introduce a "Faulknerian" novel.

During the major phase, Faulkner would surely have narrated this story through Boon. Filtered through the consciousness of a man angry over a

public assault on his masculinity by a black man, the theft of a gun sewn into a married man's pants and the failed violence of the five shots would have been macabre, violent and highly sexualized dramatization of the racial foundations of Southern (or perhaps American) masculinity. We find moments in *Light in August* and *Sanctuary* similar to what I imagine this one could be. As narrated, Boon's story is flat. It seems aware of—but numb to—the drama it might be, which is another way of saying this late novel recalls but fails to achieve the intense effect of the major fiction.[119]

More to the point, the lack of intensity stems from a blindness to the sexually connotative imagery of male gender performance. The gun in the pants, the wife's sewing it there, Ludus's talk of Boon's private tail: all these go undeveloped, and Ludus's one-sided duel plays out as a toothless joke. It is, therefore, significant that the story's oddly non-transgressive pantomime of masculine gender play repeats the basic events of the standoff between old Bayard and Redman in the climactic scene of "An Odor of Verbena," a scene that itself repeated the climactic confrontation between young Bayard and Dorn in *War Birds*. Boon's duel differs from these other two, however, in its drastically lower stakes. In *War Birds*, when young Bayard casts aside his gun, his gesture caps the screenplay's efforts to repudiate the sexually suspect life of his reckless brother John. In "An Odor of Verbena," when old Bayard casts aside the gun before his confrontation with Redman, he reasserts a patriarchal masculinity while freeing it from the queer connotations that plagued its earlier manifestations in the war fiction adapted in Hollywood. Now here, in his last novel, Faulkner repeats the scene again. But whereas the first two iterations were sensitive to connotative dangers lurking in masculine

gender performance they portrayed and were eager to contain them, Boon's story simply ignores them. Boon is a simpleton and a fool, and he fires his gun. But his actions are without drama, and neither they nor the narration risk or achieve anything. The law and the community in this iteration of the scene are beyond threat, and neither the violence nor the sexual misunderstanding that provokes it disturb anything. Yet, in light of my previous chapters, the lack of stakes and general flatness of Boon's story in the face of previously disruptive connotations seems less a symptom of failure than evidence of a narrative success. It declares that the once ominous double-bind that hounded Faulkner's first months at MGM has been overcome.

The opening incident in Faulkner's last novel thus raises an interesting possibility. Queerly connotative moments abound in the major fiction, and Boon's tale suggests that they are specifically absent from the late fiction if, a gun is just a gun, not an index. Furthermore, the repetition of the failed duel in Boon's tale suggests that Faulkner has mastered strategies for avoiding the double-bind implicit in heterosexual masculinity that he developed in response to his early Hollywood experiences. Could therefore the perceived "failure" of the late fiction be linked to an extinction of queer connotations from its representations of male characters in response to the Hollywood experience?[120] My sense is that this may in fact be the case, but if it is, then the extent to which queer readings underpin the successes of the major fiction is seriously underacknowledged in current criticism.[121] That said, if Boon's tale shows Faulkner deploying a strategy for limiting queer connotation with

casual and dull efficiency, it also registers an interesting departure from his recoil from the woman's film.

Consider Boon's response to his failure to shoot Ludus. As the scene comes to a close, Boon's "big ugly florid walnut-hard face wrung and twisted like a child's," and he comes close to crying. His near-tears suggest that, however numb this narrative may be to modernist intensities or to male homosociality, it is not numb to other, less laudable effects. Indeed, this scene embraces more or less directly the much-maligned intensities typical of popular Hollywood women's films of the thirties, forties and fifties. What's more, even a cursory reading of the late novels reveals that all of them repeatedly do the same. Take, for a different example, a line of dialogue from *The Mansion*: "Gavin. Gavin. I love you. I love you" (457). Or a scene set in the Snopes's living room described in *The Town*: "I had never seen her touch him until now, sprawled, flung across his lap, clutching him around the shoulders, her face against his collar, crying, saying, 'Daddy! Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!'" (286). Or this sequence of dialogue, also from *The Town*:

"Mister Gavin. Mister Gavin. Oh, Mister Gavin."

"Linda, Do you want to marry me?"

"Yes! Yes! All right! All Right!"

"Listen to me. Do you want to get married?"

"You mean I don't have too?"

"Never if you don't like."

"I don't want to marry anybody! You're all I have, all I can trust. I love you! I love you!" (169-70)

These passages are emotionally overwrought, yet all of them are offered in Faulkner's texts with sincerity, and all of them are likely to provoke embarrassment or contempt in even moderately sophisticated readers. There are dozens of lines and scenes like them scattered throughout the late fiction. Worse, most are given pride of place at the very centre of the novels that contain them. For the most part, these melodramatic moments have stood as signs of literary failure and feed our sense that the late novels that contain are "'sentimental,' 'moralistic,' 'discursive,' 'diffuse,' and just plain bad" (Towner 4).

Interestingly, Faulkner did not see this emotional excess as a problem. In *The Reivers*, Boon's near tears helps to neutralize the sexual possibilities of the scene by affirming its comic register and by identifying Boon as unmanly and therefore outside the troubling performance of masculinity his actions reference. More directly, Faulkner's letters reveal that he responded to instances of the late fiction's sentimentality with a readerly excess of his own. For example, commenting on *The Town* in a letter to Jean Stein he wrote that "It breaks my heart, I wrote one scene and almost cried. I thought it was just a funny book but I was wrong" (Blotner 1615). His seriousness, which we might otherwise doubt, is suggested by the repetition of this remark several days later in a telegram to his editor Saxe Cummins. The problem for us, of course, is that Faulkner's satisfaction with his emotional response is itself embarrassing. The hard-nosed, cigar-smoking, alcoholic bard of Yoknapatawpha County should not weep over the typewriter as a character kills herself to save her daughter the shame of having her mother publicly named a whore. And if he does, he probably shouldn't brag about it to his

mistress. But Faulkner's sentimental response to his story, as problematic as it is to critics invested in his rough-edged, high-modernist persona from the thirties, is suggestive of a lingering influence of his Hollywood screenwriting experience. In women's films of the sort Faulkner encountered writing for Hollywood, tears mark narrative success. In other words, in late novels such as *The Town* and *The Mansion*, Faulkner writes melodramatic stories typical of women's films and judges their success or failure in melodramatic terms.

That such a link between Faulkner's encounter with Hollywood and a shift toward melodrama in the late fiction might exist is first implied, oddly enough, by Edmond Wilson. In his famous review of *Intruder in the Dust*, Wilson, while attempting to account for the racial discourse of the novel, pauses momentarily to look back over Faulkner's career as a whole. As he does, he observes a stylistic shift initiated by *Pylon*. Wilson writes that:

> "from *Pylon* on…one of the most striking features of [Faulkner's] work, and one that sets it off from that of many of his American contemporaries, has been a kind of romantic morality that allows you the thrills of melodrama without making you ashamed, as a rule, of the values that have been invoked to produce them" (836).

Wilson does not speak of *Pylon* in terms of Hollywood, but the novel's connection to Faulkner's screenwriting career is well-known. Faulkner struck upon the idea for the novel soon after working with Hawks on *Sutter's Gold*; its narrative resembled the stories Faulkner had chosen to adapt at MGM; and it was the first novel he completed after beginning to work as a screenwriter. What's more, as soon as the novel was complete, Faulkner wrote "Golden Land," his only story set on the west coast and in which he excoriates

Hollywood's culture of scandal. *Pylon* is thus a novel that sprung from an imagination steeped in recent Hollywood experiences, and, if Wilson's judgment is to be trusted, it emerges from encounter different from what came before.

Wilson describes that difference as "melodrama." Just as importantly, he judges the moral thrill of the melodrama a *result* of Faulkner's narrative art rather than a sign of its *decline*. In this he diverges from later critics, for whom melodramatic success signals literary failure.[122] In my remaining pages, I aim to trace the melodrama Wilson observes to Faulkner's encounter with the woman's film and to suggest how Faulkner's attempt to deny the effects of that Hollywood encounter produces the moral language characteristic of the late style.

Before beginning, however, it is important to acknowledge a significant problem. Specifically, melodramatic or baroque excesses play an important role in the fiction of even the major phase, fiction that was written prior to Faulkner's time at MGM.[123] It is important therefore to be able to distinguish between the melodramatic elements of the Faulkner's literary practice and those melodramatic effects that might be traced back to Hollywood genre. I will say more about this in a moment, but for now, it is worth noting an overt change in the tenor and purpose in the novels' stance vis-à-vis melodrama during the major and the late phases. In the major phase, the novels evoke melodrama but that evocation is ironic and aims to refuse it or to critique it, as in *Absalom, Absalom!*. As a result, in Faulkner's experimental literary practice of the early thirties, the melodramatic reads as an aspect of his late Modernism's relationship to popular culture. In the post-

WWII novels, melodrama is no longer ironic, it is authentic, a change that registers in the embrace of the more specific generic practice of the woman's film. It is this melodrama—and Faulkner's paradoxical efforts to hide its Hollywood origins—that underpins the characteristic moral vision of the late phase.

While a variety of late works could serve as texts for my discussion, I will focus on the appendix Faulkner wrote for *The Sound and the Fury*. Written at the end of the second world war, this appendix stands at the border between a major phase that is coming to a close and a late phase that will look back to and reread the major novels, revising their content and their point of view. More importantly for my purposes, the appendix returns to a text that had already been stretched across the divide separating his fiction from his film work. When forced to invent a character and story for Joan Crawford in the second draft of *Turn About,* he began by adapting the scene of Caddy soiling her underpants at the riverside.[124] Faulkner had claimed that this scene was the origin of the entire novel. Writing for MGM, he remade it as the origin for the narrative he invented for Crawford, a star whose persona was intertwined with and dependent upon the generic conventions of the woman's film. The appendix thus returns to and revises a story hybridized by contact with Hollywood. Once recast as an introduction to a seminal work in Faulkner's oeuvre, Caddy's story manifests as part literary masterwork, part melodramatic woman's film. The text of the appendix captures this duality despite actively attempting to efface it. It emphasizes the literary cast of its source yet simultaneously derives much of its narrative energy and most of its moral force from the filmic influences. I will conclude by suggesting that

this push and pull between a Hollywood influence that enriches the fiction but operates under negation shapes the emblematic statement of the late style, the Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

Effacing Hollywood

As he was finishing his time at Warner Bros. Studio, Faulkner wrote an appendix for his first major novel, *The Sound and the Fury*. Written for Malcolm Cowley's *The Portable Faulkner* (1945), this appendix, entitled "1699-1945 The Compsons," concludes William Faulkner's major phase and offers a useful place from which to reflect upon his late style's relationship to his work as a studio writer in Hollywood. That the appendix might offer a perspective onto this relationship is suggested by the fact that Faulkner first offered to write the appendix while in Hollywood. Cowley, who had begun organizing his selections for the anthology, was having problems choosing an excerpt from *The Sound and the Fury*, and Faulkner wrote to suggest that the Jason and Dilsey narratives could both work well in isolation. Cowley rejected them both: the Jason section left too much of the story unresolved while the Dilsey section depended "too much on what has gone before" (Cowley 28). Still in Hollywood, Faulkner offered to write "a page or two of synopsis to preface" the Dilsey section. It would be "a condensation of the first 3 sections, which simply told why and when (and who she [Dilsey] was) and how a 17 year old girl robbed a bureau drawer of hoarded money and climbed down a drain pipe and ran off with a carnival pitchman" (31-32).

Cowley accepted the suggestion, and Faulkner agreed to write the text as soon as he arrived in Oxford, Mississippi, the following week.

Several weeks later, when Cowley received the manuscript, the cover letter revealed that, despite his return to Oxford, Faulkner feared that Hollywood would continue to exert an influence over his literary writing. He wrote: "it took me about a week to get Hollywood out of my lungs, but I am still writing all right, I believe," adding near the end of his letter that "I think it [the appendix] is really pretty damn good, to stand as it is, as a piece without implications. Maybe I am just happy that that damned west coast place has not cheapened my soul as much as I probably believed it was going to do" (Cowley 36-37). Having described it as "the magician's wand" that snapped the novel's "jigsaw puzzle" into place, Faulkner was happy enough with the appendix to insist that it be included with the novel when it was republished in 1946 (Blotner 1208).

The text's origins on the west coast and Faulkner's confessed fear that Hollywood's shadow would stretch far enough to blight his work in Oxford have played a much stronger role in shaping critical responses to the text than Faulkner's stated claim that he had produced the "key" to his earlier masterwork. Indeed, critics still tend to use events that are described only in the appendix—Benjy's castration or the Compson family's genealogical links to "the South"—to advance their analysis of the novel or to clarify its difficulties while rejecting the text itself, classing it as the first of Faulkner's many failed late works. Eric Sundquist, for example, writes that "the appendix exposes…that the muse of Yoknapatawpha was in decline," that it manifests a "ponderous, often absurd prose…characteristic of Faulkner's late

style" and "everywhere clashes with the novel" (4). Critical reception of the appendix thus approximates the paradoxical relationship between Faulkner's late fiction and his late commentary on the major novels as described by James Carothers: "whatever portion of Faulkner's nonfictional commentary the critic finds useful to supplement the texts of the 'major years'"—in my example, the additional Compson lore that explains and expands *The Sound and the Fury*—is used while the fiction itself is denigrated or ignored (Carothers 264).

The appendix is, of course, a jarringly different text from the novel it revisits and claims to disentangle. The novel's signal achievement is the dismantling of realist strategies for the representation of space, narrative, and consciousness; and thus, the very idea motivating the appendix—that Faulkner's earlier, modernist "unknowing" of the realist novel[125] might be summarized in "a page or two" in order to facilitate its mass-market anthologization—is surely objectionable to readers invested in the modernist project of the original book. Approached from the point-of-view of the major phase, the appendix rightly seems the absurd sign of an artistic sensibility compromised by the commercial considerations of a culture industry we see typified in Classical Hollywood moviemaking.[126]

The Compson Appendix offers us an opportunity to explore these traces of Hollywood's influence, and in fact, offers an allegorical image of the place of Hollywood in Faulkner's career. The most obvious of these traces in the appendix—and perhaps the most telling—is the one explicit reference to Hollywood near the text's midpoint. In the section bearing her name, we learn that in 1920, Caddy Compson married a "minor movingpicture

magnate" in "Hollywood, California" (Faulkner 745). The reference is brief, developed in only two sentence fragments and in passing. Furthermore, it lacks any apparent dramatic or thematic interest, not least because the marriage ends quickly and without conflict in a divorce "by mutual agreement." It is a Hollywood union without consequence.

The inconsequence of this second marriage stands out because the narration emphasizes Caddy's previous and subsequent liaisons. Caddy's earlier 1920 marriage to an "extremely eligible young Indianian she and her mother had met while vacationing at French Lick" (744) was first recounted in *The Sound and the Fury*. It provokes her brother Quentin's suicide and ends in an angry divorce that separates Candace from her daughter, while subjecting her to the controlling influence of her brother Jason. The reference to this marriage in the appendix evokes all of this previous conflict and suggests in its brevity that this central drama of the novel is too much to talk about and best passed over. Likewise, the elaborate narrative of the Jefferson, Mississippi librarian's discovery of a photo of Caddy posing as the companion of a Nazi staff-general, overshadows Caddy's Hollywood marriage by occupying most of the space devoted to her life in the appendix. Like the first marriage, this liaison with the German officer evokes a specific text in Faulkner's oeuvre, in this case the appendix itself. The photo brings Caddy's story up-to-date, which is to say, it makes the appendix's date of composition visible by identifying the limits of our knowledge of Caddy's story with the limits of the text's date and place of composition.[127]

Set between the two dramatic and evocative relationships, Caddy's marriage to the moving-picture magnate seems doubly inconsequential. It is

not only short and without visible conflict; it is also the only episode that does not evoke directly a piece of Faulkner's writing. It seems simply to occupy the narrative space and time between a marriage that figures the principal text of the major phase and a liaison that figures the first melodramatic, sensational text of what we now recognize as a late period of decline.

But then we notice that the Caddy of the photo wears "a rich scarf," that she's seen against a "Riviera backdrop" in "a picture filled with luxury and money" posed against a "powerful expensive chromium-trimmed sports car." We remember that the money on display is hers and not the officer's because the narrator has told us that, "when she vanished in Paris" three years before the photo was snapped, she was "probably still wealthy" (745-46). Where did a woman ostracized from her increasingly destitute Mississippi family get her money? From her Hollywood divorce? Recognizing this as undecidable and setting it aside—but our curiosity piqued—we might wonder how that same woman from Mississippi found herself on the other side of the ocean and on the wrong side of a war, and being curious, we might notice that her first documented international travel was with her Hollywood husband: their amicable divorce happened in Mexico. Once again, the roots of the damnation documented in the color photograph from a slick magazine seem to reach back to the Hollywood marriage. Then we notice *it*. The photograph. Caddy's story, which first came to us through the narrator's narration of that story, comes to us after her Hollywood marriage through the narrator's *description of a photograph*. More, the photograph is scandalous, like the photograph of Ewing's daughter in "Golden Land." After the Hollywood marriage, the technological basis of the

cinema mediates between Caddy's life and the narrative presentation of that life within the appendix and does so in a way that evokes central tropes of Hollywood marketing. Suddenly, Hollywood's influence on Caddy's story and its presentation in the appendix seems extensive and profound; more importantly, it seems to be denied.

What I am suggesting is that, taken together, these three liaisons allegorize the dynamic of alternating recoil and accommodation that defined Faulkner's initial experiences in Hollywood once the dangers of queer connotation have been removed. Most obviously, they capture Faulkner's fear that contact with film forms might reduce the literary intensities of the fictions, that the emergence of a film-derived language might mark the failure of his literary practice. The appendix captures his recoil from this possibility by offering only a brief, fragmentary presentation of the Hollywood marriage, foregrounding instead the marriages that figure of the major phase and the late phase. Hollywood's role in transforming the one into the other is largely effaced. It is this dynamic of rejection within the allegory that is echoed by Faulkner's insistence in this letter to Cowley that his time in Hollywood was without consequence in the composition of the appendix and in his relief that Hollywood had not "cheapened [his] soul."

Yet, whatever Faulkner's concerns, the significance of his contact with Hollywood is visible in the shift in media of presentation in the last marriage: a photograph presents a star in a wartime romance in Europe. Most obviously, this picture summarizes Faulkner's Hollywood experience as a writer of war pictures. Caddy, like the women he invented for the screen, lives the life of a woman caught up in a surely doomed romance in a time of

war. Less obviously but just as significantly, Caddy's place in the narrative repeats April Lalear's position in Faulkner's Hollywood story, "Golden Land." In both instances, the woman whose sexual exploits drive the narrative is made present-in-absence through the publication of a scandalous photograph. She is reduced to a sexual scenario circulated for the pleasure of its viewers who crave simultaneous horror and titillation. Importantly, this narrative strategy operates as a revision of Caddy's absence in *The Sound and the Fury*. In that novel, Caddy is famously not present, existing only as the fallen women remembered by her brothers. The appendix removes memory from consideration. What matters in this post-Hollywood text is what can be *seen*, a point driven home by Jason's and Dilsey's similar responses to the photograph: neither can see Caddy in it.

In the appendix's description of Caddy's marriages, we thus have a revision of Caddy's position in the original novel that replaces *memories* of a woman with of *images* of a woman. In this, it repeats April's representation in "Golden Land," a representation that operated explicitly in relation to Hollywood's commerce in sexualized pictures of woman. By repeating this procedure, the appendix cites that context as its own, a citation given historical weight by Faulkner's previous adaptation of Caddy's childhood as a source for Crawford's character in *Turn About*. Cinematic contexts for Caddy's story and for her representation in the appendix are, however, effaced in a sequence of descriptions that emphasize the literary aspects of her history. This drive to efface Hollywood's legacy echoes in turn Faulkner's insistence to Cowley and to others that Hollywood had no effect on his writing. In short, the appendix's narration of Caddy's marriage suggests that

Faulkner's return to his early novel is shaped both by his Hollywood experiences and by his efforts to write against those experiences.

Unpacking this double process is no easy task, but it will go a way toward doing so to define more carefully the contours of the film forms that seem to be in play. In this regard, it is significant that the appendix figures its encounter with Hollywood as an allegory of marriage culminating in the damnation of a woman. There are only two classical film genres that deal with marriage and only one that treats it in terms of a woman's suffering or fall: the melodramatic women's film typified by movies such as *Stella Dallas* and *Now, Voyager*. Could the allegorization of marriage indicate that the melodrama on display in these films is the operative point-of-contact between Faulkner's late style and his work as a Hollywood contract writer?

Melodramatic Morality

In the months before writing the appendix, the most important and successful films Faulkner worked on were film melodramas, most notably *To Have and Have Not* and *The Big Sleep*.[128] Although these two films are occasionally discussed as *films noir*, they were most notable upon their release for the on-screen romance between their principal characters and the off-screen characters between their principal stars (Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart). When discussing the success of the romance in *To Have and Have Not*, the director Howard Hawks credits Faulkner with staging "the device of the facing doorways, which made the casualness of [Bacall and Bogart's] encounters possible" (Kawin 4). In other words, he credits Faulkner with

working out the "structural issues, especially transitions" (Parini 284), underpinning a romance so well received it demanded a sequel.[129] The other films on which Faulkner worked in the months leading up to his composition of the appendix—sometimes extensively, sometimes in passing—and all of which were melodramas included *The Southerner* by the renowned French director, Jean Renoir, *Mildred Pierce* starring Joan Crawford, and *Stallion Road* starring Ronald Reagan. Together these films suggest what "melodrama" might have meant to Faulkner as he moved back to Oxford and began writing the appendix.[130] More importantly, since early criticism of this film genre examined the small set of films about female characters struggling in domestic spaces, and which claim films like *Mildred Pierce* as their antecedent, there exists an account of the "structural issues" available for translation into Faulkner's fictional practice.

The core group of these studies treats Hollywood melodrama as a semantic genre defined by particular settings, characters, thematic concerns, narrative structures and audience effects. Examples include Thomas Elsaesser's "Tales of Sound and Fury: Observations on the Family Melodrama," Barbara Klinger's *Melodrama & Meaning* and David N. Rodowick's "Madness, Authority, and Ideology in the Domestic Melodrama of the 1950s." Primarily feminist in their orientation, this approach frames a strictly defined and historically specific genre with identifiable subgenres. Aiming to rehabilitate its much-maligned object of study, it treats melodrama formally in terms of mise-en-scène and narrative situation. Typically, this analysis leads into an interpretation of individual films—and the genre as a whole—as a site of politically resistant, anti-bourgeois critique. When

politically motivated, this critical work pays close attention to: "Melodrama as social commentary, reading below the surface for irony, the false and expedient happy end, the symbolic significance of objects, the idea of self-reflexive style and distanciation, and pertinent themes" (Klinger 9). The result is a discussion of melodrama that emphasizes the importance of visual style and its relationship to ideology. For example, Thomas Elsaesser, in his important early discussion of the genre, claims that the bourgeois iconography of American melodrama is important because it is seemingly "predetermined and pervaded by 'meaning' and interpretable sign" (84). David Rodowick makes larger claims for the signifcation of the mise-en-scène, writing that it "did not so much reproduce as produce the inner turmoil of the characters" (243). His point is that the melodramatic woman's film stages dramas of ideological subjugation in which setting and situation determine character and plot.

Importantly, however, there is little in Faulkner's Hollywood experience that would suggest that his encounters with the woman's film developed in relation to such an understanding of the woman's genre. Instead, Faulkner's reaction to the woman's film—following Crawford's assignment to *Turn About*, for example—would have been shaped by the patriarchally defined femininity used to produce and market the films. By the same token, it was not until late in his Hollywood career that Faulkner's encounter with the woman's film was unmediated by another genre, either the war picture or the film noir. In other words, Faulkner would have understood the woman's picture as a generic narrative *added onto or expanding a film native to another genre* as a means of expanding its appeal. And indeed,

in both *Turn About* and *War Birds*, his source story is elaborated by the addition of a woman's narrative: in the first, Crawford's story, in the second, the frame narrative. His innovation in those projects was to use the woman's stories in a narrative strategy aimed at containing the queer connotation they had brought to light. The resistant feminism unearthed by the critics extricates the films from this context and thus has little bearing on Faulkner's sense of the genre.[131]

An alternative approach to the woman's film focuses less on reading the semantic features of the genre, attempting instead to redefine its melodramatic moments as a general mode of film discourse. Ben Singer's important reassessment of melodrama, for example, defines it as a cluster concept in which "the genre's key constitutive factors can appear in any number of different configurations. One might have two completely distinct combinations—sharing none of the same elements—yet both warranting the label melodrama" (54). In a differently grounded but closely related study, Stephen Neale has argued that "nineteenth-century [stage] melodrama, in all its guises, was both a fundamental progenitor of nearly all of Hollywood's non-comic genres, and a fundamental source of many of its cross-generic features, devices and conventions" (202). Working in the same vein, Linda Williams argues directly that melodrama is not a genre but an "aesthetic mode existing across many media and in certain interpenetrating narrative cycles" (12); art, she claims, is melodramatic when it uses conventional forms to generate "strong pathos and action that recognizes the virtues of suffering" (11). Together these approaches to melodrama redefine the term as a system of interlocking elements that permits nearly any film in the early Hollywood

period to be called melodramatic. Defined as such, melodrama becomes a discursive or media paradigm underpinning all non-comic expression within the Hollywood cinema of little use for distinguishing between various sorts of film. Troublingly, they suggest "melodrama"—a sign for intense emotional performance and stylistic excess—is in nearly all the ways that matter roughly synonymous with "Hollywood." Within their framework, to say that melodrama is the relevant contact point between Faulkner's late style and Hollywood moviemaking amounts to a tautology and begs a question: How could it not?

All of this scholarship relies heavily on Peter Brooks's study of nineteenth-century stage melodrama, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, and a return to that work offers a means to respecify this notion of melodrama as a mode of discourse.[132] Brooks argues that the impulse to melodrama arises from a general cultural shift which he traces to the French Revolution. Melodrama is a response to this crisis; it came "into being in a world where the traditional imperatives of truth and ethics have been violently thrown into question, yet where the promulgation of truth and ethics, their instauration as a way of life, is of immediate, daily, political concern" (15). Stated another way and using Faulkner's well-worn coinage, it comes into being when "the old verities" no longer hold but the need for them and the moral ballast they offer is pressing. What follows is a careful discussion of a genre attempting—impossibly—to straddle the abyss separating the "document" from "vision" (9) and which develops into an aesthetic and a world view defined by the "logic of the excluded middle" (15). This logic is Manichean and operates in terms of polarized narrative material. The value

of such a logic rests in its ability to clarify the moral stakes in a conflict in a world without the sacred.

How these stakes are clarified varies. Stage melodramas, for example, use a variety of means: a histrionic acting style, the narrative press toward ever greater suffering, the prevalence of *tableaux* that encapsulate the meaning of a scene in a held pose, an anti-naturalist representational scheme signifying an anterior, conventional sign-system. But whatever the technique, the aim remains the same: "to find, to articulate, to demonstrate, 'to prove' the existence of a moral universe which, though put into question, masked by villainy and perversions of judgment, does exist and can be made to assert its presence and its categorical force among men" (20). In so doing, melodrama calls for "a framework of strong justice" (204) and asserts a need for "an active, lucid confrontation with evil" in everyday life (206).

Interestingly, however, melodrama cannot name the content of what it asserts. Melodramatic narrative may insist that good and evil, right and wrong exist but it cannot reveal them. Instead, it can only make present what Brooks calls "the moral occult," a paradoxical term for a paradoxical idea. Melodrama asserts the existence of a transcendent, moral realm by revealing that realm to be inaccessible, hidden, occulted. The logic of melodramatic narrative always drives to the point whatever device it uses. It says: *meaning is hidden right there*.

What this looks like in practice can be demonstrated in a representative scene from the appendix: the librarian Melissa Meek's presentation of Caddy's photo to Jason Compson. This melodramatically named old maid performs a simple set of actions: "she entered…she opened

the handbag and fumbled something out of it and laid it open on the counter and stood trembling and breathing rapidly" (746). The fusion of short declarative sentences by a string of unpunctuated conjunctions emphasizes the directness and simplicity of the action, creating the impression of quick, nervous activity.[133] Yet, Melissa's meeting with Jason actually begins approximately two hundred and fifty words earlier when, with "two feverish spots of determination on her ordinarily colorless cheeks, she entered the farmers' supply store" (745). In the long separation between the first "she entered" and the second, the objects within Jason's store are documented in great detail and pressed to express meaning metaphorically. As is typical of melodramatic scenography, the objects seem paradoxically to mean excessively and without meaning any one thing specifically. As Melissa "enters," this place and these objects suggest a variety of ideas: gender transgression ("only men ever entered"), the subtle but definitive distinctions between "Mississippi farmers" and "Negro Mississippi farmers," and the interpenetration of absence (what is "not shown but hidden"), visibility (the values of crops that are only "approximately computable"), and the desire to buy. Furthermore, these divisions and relationships are morally tainted by the "gloomy cavern" that contains them, the "rank…blended smell" that permeates them, and the "tremendous iron stove," filthy with a hundred years of spit and tobacco, that warms them. Melissa Meek steps onto this stage and her deeds—to enter, to open, to fumble, to show—come to a stand-still as the stage and its props suggest the presence of moral implications to her activity. Yet, these implications are never defined, never developed, never even acknowledged. The Objects exude suggestions of meaning, highlight

that the scene is meaningful, but meaning itself remains hidden. This is exactly the melodramatic mode as Brooks described it.

For writers such as Balzac or Henry James, whose "deep subject" is "the domain of spiritual forces and imperatives that is not clearly visible within reality," melodrama offers "a complete set of attitudes, phrases, [and] gestures" conceived precisely to articulate the occulted domain of moral vision they wish to represent (20). The second half of Brook's study traces out how each writer responds to the "temptation" of a melodrama so exactly suited to his purposes. (It is a "temptation" because the attitudes, phrases and gestures are native to a "reductive, literalistic" (20) theatre; imported *directly* into their novels, the theatrical practice would be fatal to the fiction.) What he finds in James's fiction, for example, is the staging of scenes in which "hyperbolic conventional sign" tells much more about the character's consciousness than it is possible to know outside of the melodramatic mode (163). The result is James's development of a narrative technique that is "largely metaphorical, an extrapolation of the depths of motive and causes from seized and identified appearances" (178). By the final pages of his study, Brooks has identified the melodramatic mode as a metaphorical practice visible in opposition to "radically ironic and anti-metaphorical" writers such as Flaubert, Maupassant, Beckett and Robbe-Grillet. In contrast to this apparently small group, melodramaticists are, to Brook's eye, everywhere; Dickens, Dostoevsky, Conrad, Lawrence, and yes, Faulkner are among their number (198).

The drive to uncover the "depths of motive and causes" through "hyperbolic conventional signs" is, of course, on display everywhere in

Faulkner's fiction, including the appendix. And so, my attempt to connect the sentimental, melodramatic moments of the appendix specifically and the late fiction more generally appears caught at an impasse. The political specificity and ahistoricity of the criticism of the woman's film offers little insight into Faulkner's experience. Likewise, because Faulkner carefully read Balzac, Conrad and Dostoevsky and was familiar with the traditions of Southern romance and gothic fiction, Brook's melodramatic mode would appear to be an essential component of his *literary* inheritance and not a legacy of his time spent screenwriting. Strung between these two difficulties, Faulkner's contact with Hollywood film melodrama seems, as Faulkner claimed in his letter to Cowley, inconsequential and my allegorical reading of Caddy's Hollywood marriage as erasure is false.

Or this might be the case *if* the end of Melissa's story did not exceed Brooks's literary genealogy and, in doing so, highlight Hollywood's role in the transformation of the literary practice of Faulkner's late period. Driven to seek an acknowledgement of Caddy's photograph from Dilsey in Memphis by Jason's refusal to offer one, Melissa Meek is met once again with rejection: blind, the old woman has told her "I can't see it" (749). Alone she returns to the bus station and is swept up in a mass-become-water, an image often repeated in Faulkner's late fiction. The crowd dissolves into a "diurnal tide" of civilians, soldiers, sailors and "homeless women"—not real women, but an image of women as the organic contrary of a technological wilderness of transport systems and public spaces, women who are wandering wombs and pause only long enough to "drop their foals." Melissa, a small woman, not homeless but simply away from home, is swept up in this tide, "her feet

touch[ing] the floor only occasionally," recalling Rosa Coldfield from *Absalom, Absalom!*, another small woman with dangling feet, but a very different woman from Melissa who, by way of contrast, moves amid the harsh smell of the bus station's masses and not the soft smell of wisteria. Crying, Melissa is pulled from the tide and thinks of home where life is still "passion and turmoil and grief and fury and despair," but where a domestic space signified by "covers" on a bed and "the weightless hand of a child" provides a respite from the rush of crowds and public spaces. Still "crying quietly," she understands her situation and Caddy's photograph.

Melissa Meek's experiences are neither concrete enough nor Manichean enough to release the power of the *melodramatic mode* elaborated by Brooks, but they seem quite effectively to deploy the *pathetic structures* familiar from Hollywood women's films such as *Stella Dallas* and *Now, Voyager*.[134] In these films and in others like them, women suffer because of their sophistication or knowledge; and their tears signify a refusal to compromise rather than their victimization or innocence. Melissa resembles these women because she *knows* Caddy's story, and she *knows* what Dilsey knows about the story; like these women, she cries quietly because her knowledge—and by extension, she—remain unknown and unknowable to the people around her. She has become, in contrast to the photo of Caddy she carries around, present-in-absence. What she wants—and her tears are an expression of this desire—is to be acknowledged as the subject who is supposed to know.

Stanley Cavell's exploration of woman's films of the thirties and forties emphasizes precisely this aspect of melodramatic figuration. Building on

Brooks's work, Cavell suggests that the desire to "declare all" is preceded by "a terror of absolute inexpressiveness, suffocation, which at the same time reveals itself as a terror of absolute expressiveness, unconditioned exposure." He labels these poles "the extreme states of voicelessness" (43) and suggests that the intellectual force of these films arises from their desire to be heard, a desire he considers a response to scepticism. In this, Cavell's interests in the woman's film echo, oddly enough, Faulkner's expressed fears of Hollywood's influence. Intent on continuing to write—to express completely his literary imagination—Faulkner repeatedly confronts the terrifying possibility that writing for Hollywood has ruined or exhausted his voice. Significantly, Cavell identifies this double position, this central predicament of the woman's film, as a modern instance of genuinely philosophical thought, an idea he defends at length in numerous essays.[135] He alters slightly but significantly the meaning of the moral occult that Brooks takes as the product of the melodramatic mode.

What seems to be at issue here is the distinction between performance and conversation. "Declaring all" is a significant gesture within Brooks's theatrical conception of melodrama, not because it *expresses* the moral occult (it is by definition inexpressible), but because it *performs* expression and thus asserts the existence of the moral realm despite the absence of the sacred, despite the fact that it remains occulted. The moral occult manifests as the climactic moments of the drama in the catachresis of a tableau or a mute gesture that asserts figuratively that some thing: some vision exists even if its substance cannot be stated. What Cavell argues is that the woman's film, when deployed by artists of sufficient power, will not merely *perform* the

moral occult in a climactic moment but will, instead, introduce it as *an experience to be lived and shared*. Through their "negations of communication," these films will explore the nature of interpretation (169) and the possibility of meaning.[136]

It is precisely this movement from voicelessness toward communication of meaning that we see in the appendix. Melissa Meek knows *something* when she is alone in the library, and it causes her to act; she knows it when she enters Jason's story and after he has ended their conversation with a negating laugh; she knows it when she is speaking with Dilsey in Memphis, who ends their conversation by reference to her blindness; and she knows it as she cries, alone and unacknowledged, in the bus station. Yet, what does she know? In truth, she cannot say because she knows no particular thing. She simply *knows there is something there to know*. She knows of the existence of a thing that cannot be known, an occulted thing, a *secret* thing. And in secretly knowing a secret, Melissa Meek reveals the deep resonances between the closet, which Sedgwick has defined as "the secret of having a secret" (*Epistemology* 205), and the moral occult of the melodramatic mode as described by Brooks. In both cases, what is known is the existence of something unknowable.

Is it possible that this resonance between melodrama and the principal figure for queer sexuality accounts for some of the influence the woman's film may have exerted over Faulkner despite his distaste for the genre? Is it possible that his very effort to resist Hollywood readings of his fiction habituated him to the closet? He silenced queer connotation in *Turn About* and *War Birds*, lambasted Hollywood perversity and homosexuality in

"Golden Land" and displaced the troublingly effete sword-point masculinity of his early war fiction onto a madwoman in "An Odor of Verbena." Is it possible then, that these efforts to *closet* queer material highlighted in Hollywood facilitated his adoption of a melodramatic mode of narration that resembled the closet's structure? That this may be the case is suggested by the Appendix. There Faulkner returns to Caddie Compson's story—a story he repeatedly claimed was his favourite—but recasts it replacing the custodians of her story—originally three southern men—with a voiceless, closeted woman.

Moral Visions

Melissa Meek's voicelessness is not silence. She speaks but is hampered by an invisibility she can't escape. In this, she recalls another voice of the late phase, its most iconic in fact. I mean, of course, the "puny inexhaustable voice" of the closing moments of Faulkner's 1950 Nobel Prize acceptance speech. In that speech's four brief paragraphs, Faulkner, like Melissa Meek, steps into and addresses the swirling chaos of modern life. But unlike Melissa, Faulkner steps back from the swell to offer a ringing affirmation of the power of a voice, a poet's voice, to hold the fear of the apocalypse—and perhaps even the apocalypse itself—at bay. The logic of this affirmation is melodramatic, and is constructed by mapping a series of extreme positions that exclude the possibility of a middle ground. Initially these positions are only loosely coordinated. The "problems of the spirit" are set against the question "When will I be blown up?" Or alternatively, the

positions are so similar—"the human heart in conflict with itself"—as to suggest the choices they distinguish are too small to be credited. But then, as the third paragraph begins, the sharp contrast indicative of melodramatic thinking takes hold. "Love" is set against "lust," the "heart" against the "glands." The words pile up upon each other—"love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice"—reaching to express in ordinary language the "old verities and truths" without which, we are told, a man "labors under a curse." Then, in rhythms evoking a sermon or perhaps a ticking clock, the final paragraph offers a brief, post-apocalyptic vision of the future: man, alone in a blighted world, is saved by a poet who finds his voice and becomes "the pillar to help him endure and prevail" (199-120). The diction and tone of this speech is stirring and grand. It is rightly celebrated.[137] But it is generally unknown that it was also written as a response to Hollywood.

Faulkner had initially resisted the idea of travelling to Sweden to accept his prize, and so, when he finally accepted, he had little time to prepare his speech. So aside from some initial notes prepared in advance, he began drafting it on the first leg of his plane trip. In this draft, the defining ideas of the Nobel speech are laid out in the melodramatic pattern they will form in the final version. He speaks for instance of "the human heart in conflict with itself" and of a poet, who will not watch man die but will "help him lift his heart to endure and to prevail." More important however, is what is found in this draft but not in the final version: the fact that Faulkner develops these ideas while denouncing his experience "as a script writer at a Hollywood studio." In a long passage that provides a context for the

celebrated moral vision of the final draft, Faulkner writes that once in Hollywood:

> I began to hear the man in charge talking of "angles," story "angles," and then I realized that they were not even interested in truth, the old universal truths of the human heart without which any story is ephemeral—the universal truths of love and honor and pride and pity and compassion and sacrifice…they write not of the heart but of the glands; they write as though they stood among and watched the end of man. (quoted in Blotner 1357-58)

Here is the definitive statement of Faulkner's melodramatic late morality in draft form. Its key terms—like much of the late commentary on the fiction—are regularly cited as guideposts offering insight into the meaning of the fiction. Yet these terms develop not in relation to Faulkner's famous postage stamp of land or to the elaborate histories of Yoknapatawpha county or even to the coming of the airplane or the car, two emblems of encroaching modernity that appear throughout Faulkner's fiction.[138] They develop in relation to the Hollywood filmmakers whose influence Faulkner denied in his letters and his interviews and negated in his fiction.

In this, I think we arrive at a place where it is possible to look back to the thrilling melodramatic morality Edmund Wilson observed in *Pylon*. That novel was written in the first shadow of Faulkner's Hollywood experience. It brings us back too to the Hollywood story "Golden Land." In its closing section, the elderly woman from Nebraska offers a paean to traditional morality characterized by "honor and courage and pride" (722) and by "honor and dignity and pride" (723). Commenting on her speech, Edmond

Volpe hears an early instance of what will become the late style. He writes that this section of "Golden Land":

> exemplifies Faulkner's later stories in which language and syntax become a dominant narrative device, sometimes more important than character, plot, and dramatic scene. It is the manner of the mythmaker rather than the realistic storyteller. (206)

Ewing's mother speaks to denounce Hollywood and in so doing, discovers a manner of speaking characteristic of the late style. In denouncing Hollywood, she discovers her values, and these values too are characteristic of the late style. In denouncing Hollywood, Faulkner arrives at "Golden Land," the appendix, the Nobel speech. And perhaps, other instances of the later fiction.

To date such a possibility remains unexplored. The books published after the appendix are all considered minor works. As a result, Donald Kartiganer asserts that the story of the last years of Faulkner's life is "one of uneven yet unquestionable decline" (130). In his infamous but essential *Faulkner: The House Divided*, for example, Eric Sundquist summarily dismisses Faulkner's late novels as unworthy of critical attention, describing them as "the most disappointing fiction a major novelist could conceivably write" (3). Irving Howe described *A Fable* as "still another of those 'distinguished' bad books that flourish in America" (269) and *The Town* as the product of the an "imagination…too often distracted by the mottoes of his Nobel Prize speech" (283). This sense that Faulkner's skills as a writer were in decline is visible even in one of the earliest attempts to consolidate and organize Faulkner studies, Robert Penn Warren's *Faulkner: A Collection of Critical Essays*. In introducing an essay that considers *A Fable*, Warren concedes that the novel is

"a colossal failure"(17). The implication is that something less universal and less powerful is at stake in this late novel than in the earlier, major fiction. [139] Accounting for this decline it not easy. Yet, whatever cause seems right for the individual critic—drink, hack work in Hollywood or spiritual dislocation caused by too much travel—Faulkner's later fiction has, by implicit consensus, been largely moved "to the critical back burner marked 'lesser works'" (Towner 4).

In recent years, a few critics have made efforts to upend this critical consensus. In his important essay "The Rhetoric of Faulkner's Late Fiction, and It's Critics," for example, James Carothurs offers a pointed criticism of "a rather striking and little-noticed paradox" underpinning common critical assessments of these novels. He writes that:

> Over the last twenty years of his life Faulkner provided extensive and often invaluable commentary on his art while during the same period he also produced a body of fiction that his reputation, by most accounts, would be better off without. The current solution to this paradox is usually to employ whatever portion of Faulkner's nonfictional commentary the critic finds useful to supplement the reading of the texts of the "major years," while simultaneously lamenting, regretting, denigrating, ignoring, or otherwise condescending to Faulkner's fiction of the later period. (264)

Carothurs finds this solution unacceptable and suggests it is driven by a widely-shared distaste for the rhetorical, discursive qualities of that late fiction. He suggests, however, that this same discursive quality links the fiction to Faulkner's useful commentaries from the same period. Both

participate in an on-going project of self-revision that the governing paradox keeps from being adequately analyzed. Michael Millgate's "Faulkner: Is There a Late Style?" likewise stresses the rhetorical aspects of the late fiction and links them to a similar project of self-revision. Specifically, Millgate suggests the Nobel Prize "capped" Faulkner's major phase and shoved him prematurely into a period of lateness dominated by a process of self-reflection.[140]

I stand on the shoulders of these critics, agreeing with them and with Ricoeur who writes that, " we can understand a work only if we have understood that to which it responds" (III 172). And yet I differ from them in suggesting our critical gaze should not be focused exclusively on Faulkner's fiction. Faulkner's Hollywood experience was extensive, and it continued nearly to the end of his life. That experience loomed large as an object of self-reflection in his late correspondence and public statements. It looms equally large in the late fiction, cloaked only thinly by Faulkner's wish that it did not.

Following the publication of *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Unvanquished*, Faulkner made only occasional trips to Hollywood until, on the eve of the Second World War, he became ensnared in a disastrously long and arduous contract at Warner Bros.[141] Although some of his most well-known screenwriting occurred during this time— for example, he received on-screen credit for Warner's *To Have and Have Not* and *The Big Sleep*—Faulkner sank into the longest period of writer's block of his career and publishied no fiction. Everything changed, however, in the years after the war's end. His novel *Intruder in the Dust* was a success, and the movie rights sold for enough money to provide some financial stability. Malcolm Cowley's *The Portable*

Faulkner and *The Collected Stories* provided a healthy boost to Faulkner's waning reputation, while the Nobel prize awarded in 1950 solidified it. With this series of successes under his belt, Faulkner was suddenly, for the first time in years, free to hunt, to ride and to write as he wished. And he did. But he also took on new responsibilities, serving as a kind of "politico-cultural ambassador" during the early years of the Cold War, travelling the world for the US State Department (Millgate 272). He twice occupied a post as writer-in-residence at the University of Virginia. He even accepted occasional screenwriting contracts from Hollywood, most notably travelling to Egypt to script Howard Hawk's epic *The Land of the Pharaohs*. Despite these many obligations, Faulkner continued to write novels, among them *The Town* and *The Mansion*, which together completed his Snopes trilogy and brought the long in-progress *Father Abraham* to a close.

Conclusions

Negation has been, of course, the guiding principle of my discussion of Faulkner's earliest Hollywood experiences, and in this closing chapter I have explored the tail end of a narrative of Faulkner's career that began in those experiences. In those early years and in my early chapters, this story was of the negation of the queer connotations that the Hollywood context of reading brought out in the fiction Faulkner chose to adapt to the screen. In his first screenplay, *Turn About*, those connotations were checked by a rejection of the woman's film, Hollywood's dominant genre of film production. By refusing to integrate his war story with the woman's picture that would star Joan Crawford, Faulkner preserved his source narrative intact. The sailor's and the airman's playful performances of masculinity played out in the relative safety of a world cut off from women that allowed them to test themselves against each other through feats of war without raising the spectre of queer sexuality.

In his second screenplay, *War Birds*, the terms of this negation changed. No longer were the literary sources segregated from the Hollywood conventions that cast them in a queer light. Quite to the contrary, genre conventions framed an elaborate reimagining of the Sartoris twins' wartime experiences. In the source texts, the twins exhibited a reckless individualism antithetical to generic affirmations of community in Hollywood film. Viewed in light of the *Turn About* project, that same individualism, which was characteristic of the masculinity idealized in the early fiction, risked connoting queerness. The screen adaptation resolves both difficulties by

revising the source stories so as to conform with the deep syntax of Hollywood's genres of social order and social integration. John Sartoris was rewritten so as to shoulder all the problematic individualism and queerly connotative masculinity of the sources while his brother, his widow, his mistress and his killer, all became mouthpieces of community values. His death removes the threats he embodies from the narrative, leaving room for the others to teach his son how to live within the community he rejected. *War Birds* thus moves beyond *Turn About*'s simple negation of Hollywood as part of a recoil from the newly visible sexual connotations of the source fiction. In an affirmation of the affinity between Faulkner's fiction and the war genre, Hollywood narrative practice is appropriated in order to negate suspect sexual connotations. To the extent that the twins' experiences stand near the well-spring of the Yoknapatawpha saga, this adaptation of their story reimagined a significant aspect of Faulkner's ongoing fictional project.

That this negation of queer connotation through generic revision would influence Faulkner's subsequent fictional practice becomes clear in the two short stories I examined in my third chapter. In "Golden Land," Faulkner can be seen allegorizing the commodification of scandal that shaped Hollywood's filmmaking practice, film marketing, and their image of their audience and which manifested as a reading practice Faulkner was subject to as a screenwriter. Scandal was relegated to the shadowy world of connotation in Hollywood products and audiences were trained to find it through the hints and whispers of connotation. But once raised, the ghost of connotation appears everywhere. Reading in this context, Faulkner's fiction is awash in unexpected and (judging by his choices when making revisions) unwanted

sexual possibilities. Dramatizing this culture of scandal, Faulkner addresses the homosexual explicitly for the only time in his fiction. Naming the son of a Hollywood businessman gay, he then twice describes him being beaten. Queer connotation made flesh and given a name is met with homophobic violence. This story thus translates the problem of recoil and negation animating the screenplay adaptations of Faulkner's source materials into fiction. In turn, "An Odor of Verbena" improves upon this solution. In this story, old Bayard reasserts the heteronormative patriarchy of the early fiction but does so by rejecting the reckless gestures upon which it had rested. To the extent this gesture had been identified as queer, feminine, and as such, an empty and inauthentic performance of masculinity, the story restores the all-male world of the battlefield that *Turn About* and *War Birds* had worked to preserve.

In this final chapter, I have completed this story of negation, first, by connecting the missed intensities of the later fiction to the impotence of queer connotation in these texts. The masculine jostling that drove so much of the early fiction is reduced in Boon's opening story in *The Reivers* to play acting. With the queer dangers to masculinity apparently extinguished in the final episode of *The Unvanquished*, there is nothing at stake and no possibility of drama. I suggest therefore that a central characteristic of the late novels' "failure" may be the shift in tone produced by the recasting of Faulkner's sexual preoccupations so that they accord with the conventions of Hollywood genre. The late fiction thus marks the unhappy end of a story of the negation of queer connotation. Yet it also suggests a second story linking the negation of Hollywood—the *idea* of Hollywood—to the melodramatic morality

characteristic of the late phase. This story begins with the rejection of the woman's film in the *Turn About* project and culminates in the simultaneous appropriation of Hollywood narrative practices and the effacement of that appropriation in the narration of the appendix to *The Sound and The Fury* and the composition of the Nobel acceptance speech.

Together, these two stories constitute a new narrative of Faulkner's time in Hollywood that offers ground from which to reevaluate Faulkner's middle and late fiction. More specifically, they suggest that Faukner's efforts to extinguish homosexual connotation from his fiction and a turn toward melodramatic rhetoric—both of which are rooted in his Hollywood experiences—should play a central role in that reevaluation. To the extent that any such reassessment will necessitate a return to the major novels, I would suggest this new narrative offers the best means currently available of bringing Faulkner's screenwriting into relation with the fictional practice upon which his reputation stands.

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Notes

[1] For a full account of Faulkner's time at MGM see Kawin, "Introduction," *Faulkner's MGM Screenplays* and Blotner pp. . In addition to the screenplays for *Turn About* and *War Birds*, Faulkner worked on [provide list] in some capacity.

[2] The introductions for the publication of three screenplays on which Faulkner worked give a sense of the range of these difficulties. Faulkner worked through multiple drafts and at several stages of production in *To Have and Have Not*. Yet, much of his most significant work (the staging of scenes, example) seems to fall through the cracks of the actual screenwriting. His work on *Mildred Pierce*, while significant in terms of his own development—he seemed engaged with his idea for adapting the novel—were inconsequential for the film as developed by Warner Bros. His work is thus not reflected in the published screenplay or release film. Finally, *The Road to Glory* was clearly a milestone in Faulkner's film career insofar as he works closely with an experienced screenwriter on a project he liked and provided him with a valuable education on the nuts and bolts of Hollywood filmmaking. Yet the co-written script developed into a collaborative film project offers no obvious way for deciphering what Faulkner wrote or contributed.

[3] Cf. William Furry's "Faulkner in a Haystack: The Search for William Faulkner's Television Adapatations of 'The Brooch' and 'Shall Not Perish.'"

[4] Hollywood ruins Faulkner in this account which recalls images of the serious author floundering in Hollywood first popularized in the thirties and perpetuated today in film such as *Barton Fink*. The similarity is not farcically suggested. *Barton Fink* has been a repeated object of critical scrutiny by Faulknerians. Its attraction is two-fold. First, the film includes a character that is rather explicitly—but ironically—patterned after Faulkner. Second, the general pattern of the script—a literary writer unable to write the pap he's been asked to write—feeds into the critical consensus that Hollywood was uncongenial to writers. It feeds the critical consensus what it wants. For a good example of this approach see Scott Yarbrough's "Faulkner and Water Imagery in *Barton Fink*."

[5] The Brodsky Collection volumes are equally valuable but are less important to my project. The volumes focus on Faulkner's film career and document the entire process of composition of two of Faulkner's late screenplays for Warner Bros., *The De Gaulle Story* and *Battle Cry*. These projects begin after the Hollywood influence I identify is transported back to the fiction and are there beyond the scope of this discussion. They are currently be explored in a soon-to-be-completed dissertation by Stefan Matthew Solomon.

[6] Oddly enough, adaptation studies have played almost no role in this dissertation as they are primarily interested in conceptualizing the interrelationships between texts that are very differently connected than those I consider here and for different ends. Two excellent starting

points for reading in this field are Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* and Robert Stam's recent anthology *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation*.

[7] Kawin writes: "it is difficult, in film, to say 'this is *like* that,' unless the two things happen to look the same or can be handled in relatable ways" (*Faulkner and Film* 7). Through montage, a visual equivalency—what he calls "film metaphor"—is established.Although asserting that film metaphor "tends to work in a way different from verbal metaphor," he does not pursue this difference, emphasizing instead, through a discussion of Sergei Eisenstein's and Ezra Pounds's shared interest in asian ideograms (9-10), the extent to which montage imitates or mimics verbal processes. Indeed, to the extent montage manifests as a cinematic process rather than a literary analogue, it emerges as simply a "clash" of images or ideas. Montage does not have to be framed in this way. Eisenstein initially conceived it in terms of circus practices and behaviorist theories of stage performance. It might therefore be argued that metaphor provides a framework for refining this initial conception (rather than acting as its source). Indeed, one might argue that metaphor enters the discussion because, to approach montage in language, Eisenstein must approximate it through a discussion of metaphor. Against these alternatives—and surely there are others—Kawin's description of montage as an approximation of metaphor emerges even more strongly as *his* framework for subsequent discussions.

[8] Kawin wrote at a time when film studies was a nascent discipline. Film viewing had not yet been liberated from the theatre by home video, and film history existed as a composite of personal remembrance, interview and, for the lucky few, haphazard discoveries at cinemathèque screenings. By the same token, Faulkner scholars, a notoriously conservative group, were largely uninterested in a film career they saw as a detracting from the literary achievement. Kawin's work steps into this space, pursuing two goals at once. On the one hand, he salvages and circulates the archival documents upon which a criticism of the film career might develop, raising in the process the question, how do they relate to the fiction they reference? On the other hand, he addresses the fiction, asking how a career in the world of cinema might have shaped the major novels upon which Faulkner's reputation rests. These remain the questions that must be addressed by anyone attempting to properly understand Faulkner's Hollywood experiences.

[9] Proceedings forthcoming.

[10] In the first note to his reading of *Absalom, Absalom!*, he offers what I take to be an explanation of this choice. Summarizing the existing criticism, he praises several writers who "take a more fruitful approach to Faulkner's cinematic imagination and its implications for understanding his fiction than earlier, more literal readings of Faulkner's relation to film" (205). Read in light of his survey, the contrast between useful and non-useful approaches encourages a move away from a largely descriptive criticism typical of the adaptation studies

important in earlier treatments of Faulkner's relationship to film and toward an account of his "cinematic imagination." Readers of these earlier studies likely feel sympathy with Lurie's priorities: their long descriptions of differences between film and prose texts offer little sense of Hollywood film practice's interaction with Faulkner's prose fiction. Yet, the contrast also privileges criticism of a "cinematic imagination" over criticism of the cinematic texts that are the remnants of Faulkner's "relationship to film." He distinguishes a criticism of ideas and the criticism of texts. Stated differently, he calls for the abstraction of the critical object rather than abstract thinking about that object. For examples of adaptation studies see the *Faulkner Journal*. Beef up the rest of note with other sources. None of the studies of adaptation and context in *The Faulkner Journal*'s special film issue, all of which operate largely within Kawin's shadow articulate how the material they analyze interacts with the fiction. Even those who distinguish themselves from Kawin, Peter Lurie's fascinating *Vision's Immanence* provides the best example, lose its grip. Although Lurie manifests an impressive reading of the fiction, Hollywood, the actual screenwriting dissolves into a concept of visual modernity.

[11] Lurie's readings—like Kawin's—are allegorical to the extent they describe literary effects and devices *as if they were filmic*. This "speaking as if" is allegorical.

[12] The turn to early cinema and visual modernity as a method of understanding literary effects invites a certain circularity. For example, Bryan McFarlane speaking of Metz notes that film's "*embourgeoisement* inevitably led it…towards that narrative representationalism which had reached a peak in the classic nineteenth-century novel. If film did not grow *out* of the latter, it grew *towards* it" (12). In other words, speaking generally of cinematic narrative—like speaking generally of montage—creates a loop back to literature. How speak of Faulkner's evocation of cinema when our definition of cinema suggests it imitates the narrative procedures (visual presentation of scene, manipulation of point of view, etc.) that constitute Faulkner's literary heritage? Indeed, this circularity haunts Lurie's discussion even of the novel he takes as offering the clearest approach to cinema, *Absalom, Absalom!*. After discussing Quentin and Rosa, two characters who "evince[] a cinematic relationship to the South," and in a passage Lurie singles out for its focus on Quentin's status as a "witness" and a "viewer"—terms that emphasize his visual engagement with the scene—Lurie sees a "direct reference to the popular cultural market for … images of of the South" (121) in Rosa's suggestion that one day Quentin might "write this and submit it to the magazines" (*AA* 7). Coming at the high point of Lurie's discussion of the cinematic in this novel, the shift to written rather than filmed narrative should be jolting but is not. Within the abstract frame of visual modernity, the two are interchangeable. In creating this circle, Lurie's account arrives at the same impasse that plagued Kawin's earlier work despite his greater theoretical sophistication.

[13] It is worth emphasizing the extent to which the theoretical conception of cinema as a visual culture displaces historical accounts of film practice. Take for example Lurie's analysis of a passage in *Light in August*, which is celebrated for its use of "unlawful cinematic space.". In itself, this claim is well-grounded in a critical tradition. Parallel editing, for example, clearly violates viewers understanding of how one moves through space in the world, and critics such as Simmel and Benjamin have stressed the physicality of viewers' experience of cinematic space and movement through space. Yet, this critical description of viewers' experience of cinematic space has little to do with Faulkner's experience in Hollywood as a writer. Indeed, the Hollywood filmmaking, although recognizing that the manipulation of spatial norms was a necessary aspect of film narration, aimed to minimize them through a highly-regulated representation of coherent cinematic space. This coherence, like all fictions, was illusory, but when creating it—in screenplays, on the sound stages, in the editing rooms—filmmakers were thinking of how to heal, not rupture, space. Lurie's interest in unlawfulness is reasonable, but it pulls us away from the narrative processes Faulkner would have emphasized as a contract writer and might be expected to draw upon when later writing prose fiction. The problem I'm describing with this example arises from a conflict between theoretical and historical descriptions of film practice within the discipline of film studies which is itself historical. A young discipline, film studies's earliest attempts to describe film were dominated by a highly theoretical paradigm. This dominance was itself at least partially symptomatic of limitations on film viewing in a period before the availability of videotape or DVD. Films were necessarily analyzed from memory or from published reports by other viewers. In recent decades with an increased availability of texts for close study, a move toward textual histories of the cinema have been advocated by a series of critics. The most prominent and influential has been David Bordwell who has published a series of such works, the most important of which have been *Narration and the Fiction Film* and *The Classical Hollywood Cinema*. André Goudreault and Tom Gunning (whose work bears the stamp of Bordwell's influence) have encouraged a similar attention to textual histories in their studies of early cinema. These revolutions in film study date only to the mid-eighties and little of the theoretical apparatus generated in the periods defined by what Bordwell calls Grand Theory has been revised to account for the newly available textual information. Practically, this means that in cases such as the one I've mentioned in Lurie's text, cinematic space—which necessary disassembles a filmed space and action (*decoupage*) and reassembles it as a narrative space existing only in the sequence of images on the film strip (*montage*)—may be described as unlawful: there is no necessary relationship between the story space and any real-world space appearing in front of the camera or any imaginable real-world space that might be filmed. Indeed, the cinema has the power to construct completely fantastic spaces. Yet, within Hollywood, this freedom to remake space was—*as a rule*—left unexploited in favour of realist constructions of space.

[14] Despite having prepared many important archival documents for publication, Kawin's critical work is decidedly not informed by the archive. Instead, he merely interprets through a theoretical framework informed by modernist poetics. "Sharecropping in the Golden Land" offers a clear example of this practice. When dealing with archival documents—a screenplay, for example—he tends to apply the same framework, interpreting as if the document had the same standing as a published story or novel. As a result, his own work benefits very little from the archival research my dissertation has depended and which he made available.

[15] Interestingly, when conflicts were finally voiced publicly in the protracted labour conflicts of the mid and late thirties, they were all over economic concerns. Writers' demanded the copyright of their screenplays, a fair assignment of screen credit, and time to write independently. Although a quality of life issue, the last was economic to the extent it would consolidate any ownership rights won through the conflict. All of this was related to an effort to gain the legal rights as screenwriters that playwrights had earned when the Dramatists' Guild won the Minimum Basic Agreement, which conferred the author' privileges to playwrights, in 1927. These grievances led to the formation of the Screenwriters Guild in 1933 and a protracted labor conflict that would not be settled until 1941.

[16] By the same token, Faulkner's screenwriting accords well with the thirties war genre but is quite distinct from the war picture of the teens.

[17] Ricoeur emphasizes meaning. He contrasts, for example, notions of a literature offering "weakened images of reality" with a contrary notion of a literature that "depict reality by *augmenting* it with meanings" (80).

[18] Defining what I mean by "queer" and "connotation" is an important aspect of my discussion across chapters, and their definitions will shift as my argument develops. As a starting point and most basically, "queer" serves (in an echo of early 90s queer theory) as an inclusive term for various kinds of non-heterosexual material. Yet the term exceeds this basic definition upon its first use in Chapter One. There it will not describe non-heterosexual material; it will describe queer *interpretations* of material fostered by realities of reading a source text in Hollywood. To the extent that this "queer" material arises from a manner of reading it will appear that the manner is queer and not the material and that, in fact, the queer reading adds to a non-queer text. Yet, in another turn, that reading will find its proof in the text of the non-queer story. This cycle of tensions—is it the thing or the way of looking at the thing that is queer—is also queer, precisely because in it, the boundary between the "normative" and the non-"normative" dissolves. Indeed, as I will argue, it is precisely the normative reading strategies that Faulkner adopts that will produce the queer readings of his source stories. This cycle of tensions—a queer reading finding proof in a now-seemingly queer text—is what I call connotation, a concept I will develop in subsequent chapters in relation to the Hollywood mode of film production and and D. A. Miller's excellent "Anal Rope."

[19] As will become clear in my chapter discussion this double-narrative does not function as the plot and sub-plot found in typical Hollywood films.

[20] Homosexual is discussed at length in Chapter One. My frame of reference for the concept is Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "Toward the Gothic: Terrorism and Homosexual Panic" in *Between Men* and "The Beast in the Closet" in *The Epistemology of the Closet*. In "The Beast in the Closet" Sedgwick speaks of homosexual panic in relation to "the middle distance of male homosocial desire" (186). This middle-ground offers "basically heterosexual men" as passageway through the compulsory male relationships that constitute their masculinity. The benefits of access to adult masculinity comes, however, at a price: they must live with the "permanent threat" that this middle ground will be "foreclosed" (186), that they may at any moment and for no identifiable reason, find their necessary relationships to other men defined as homosexual. Panic is their response to this possibility.

[21] These tensions are multiple and will be dealt with in detail across several chapters.

[22] Quick note on the word "cinematic" and "literary." These are discursive terms that look to be reafying. I'm not because I'm not actually commenting on either concept in the abstract. Instead, I'm aiming to identify how in a specific period of writing, Faulkner mobilized specific notions of what each of these terms might be in order to establish a workable balance between the conflicting demands of each medium.

[23] For a brief description of this first draft, which remains unpublished, cf. Kawin MGM pp. 101.

[24] Crawford's persona remained remarkably stable, and as late as the mid-forties, when Faulkner would again write for her, this time in Warner Bros.'s *Mildred Pierce* she was still be marketed in the studio's pressbook in terms of her "remarkable knowledge of the inner workings of the mind and heart of a woman for whom life had gone bitterly wrong at every turn" and the fact that in life, as in her movies, she "came up the hard way, earning her success" (Schatz, *Boom and Bust* 200).

[25] In conversations with Bruce Kawin, Howard Hawks suggested that both he and Crawford attempted to play against her persona in order to preserve, as much as possible, the source story. Crawford, he reported, asked that her dialogue be unsentimental and as clipped as that scripted for the men. He claimed to have cried "Jesus Christ" when the "ludicrous outfits" designed for Crawford arrived on the set (MGM 104).

[26] Kozloff uses the term melodrama rather than woman's film. The differences between the two terms are difficult to pin down because they are closely interrelated. The more specific term is "woman's film" which generally names a generic construction of the twenties, thirties and forties (although films from other periods that explicitly appeal to woman as a distinct audience group can elicit the term). Melodrama refers more generally to similar films across a larger period of time. To a certain extent, the difference is between a term linked to a historically specific film practice—the woman's film—and a term that attempts to group

films with shared formal characteristics without reference to historical placement. For the purposes of my discussion, Kozloff's comments on melodrama apply without problem to the subset of woman's films within which Crawford's star persona developed. This same duality will arise in my fourth chapter.

[27] The relationship between performance and performativity is easily blurred (and perhaps not easily distinguished) so to be clear, performance is volitional and theatrical. Performativity is non-volitional and citational. In his "'That Ain't *All* She Ain't': doris Day and Queer Performativity," Eric Savoy captures this distinction nicely when he speaks of the difference between "doing gender and being gendered" (178). Savoy also brings shows how the queerness of a text can emerge from the way the performatives, and especially queer performatives visible in discrete excessive moments, disrupt efforts to perform or act out a coherent gender or sexual identity (174). Loebel's point addresses moments where the performative is not disruptive: in these cases excesses in the volitional performance can inadvertently disrupt the elision of masculinity and heterosexuality. For my part, my concern is exclusively with performance and not the performative because I am concerned with how Faulkner utilized writing as a theatre in which he performs a mastery of masculinity. To paraphrase Savoy, when writing, Faulkner is doing gender, not being gendered. His performance is conscious, aspirational, and, in Hollywood, is revealed to have been imperfectly executed.

[28] Loebel's article offers an interesting reading of masculinity in the novel. Love is about a subject's relationship to language which is simultaneously inadequate and too much (in that is fails and yet exceeds its inadequacy). For men, receiving language from the Father is (troublingly?) homoerotic insofar as it can involve identification with both the father and the abject object of his control.

[29] Cf. Jones who reads this relationship as a phallic demonstration of passion rather than felt emotion.

[30] The definitive statement of the erotic triangle organizing narrative is René Girard's *Deceit and Desire in the Novel*. Eve Sedgwick's adaptation of the structure as a way of understanding the taboo homosociality underpinning heteronormative masculinity can be found in *Between Men*.

[31] Ramsey's account of Faulkner's connections to gay artists in Greenwich Village, which is where he was staying when he conceived of "Turnabout," is convincing enough to believe that Faulkner would have been sensitive to the shift toward effeminacy resulting from the addition of a female character to his story. Hollywood certainly was: the queer implications of the story and screenplay unearthed by Matthews, Ramsey and Hulsey are all carefully extinguished in *Today We Live.* note the references.

[32] Far from mere speculation, plot changes in each of the subsequent drafts as well as the final cut of the film seem aimed at disavowing possible homosexuality. Yet, the problem proves

vexingly resilient. Although Claude and Bogard's relationship is ultimately rendered a safely heterosexual jousting over Ann's affections, Claude and Ronnie's relationship—and particularly their death, shoulder to shoulder at the helm of their boat—remains suspect.

[33] Examples include the hugging and crying over dead comarades. See Parker Tyler in *The Celluloid Closet* on *Wings* for example.

[34] Writing on the gothic, Sedgwick notes that "So-called 'homosexual panic' is the most private, psychologized from in which many twentieth-century western men experience their vulnerability to the social pressure of homophobic blackmail" (Sedgwick 89). Interestingly, this panic is "is specifically not about homosexuals or the homosexual; instead, heterosexuality is by definition its subject" (Sedgwick 116). This observation leads Sedgwick to conclude that "Panic is proportional not to the homosexual but to the non-homosexual-identified elements of these men's characters. Thus, if Barrie and James are obvious authors with whom to *begin* an analysis of male homosexual panic, the analysis I am offering here must be inadequate, to the degree that it does not eventually work just as well—even better—for Joyce, Faulkner, Lawrence, Yeats, etc" (EC Sedgwick 195, n. 23). To a certain extent, this dissertation attempts to rise to that chanllenge.

[35] Harris argued that Southern men lived double lives in which they were stretched between inherited traditions and modern realities. This double obligation fostered a theatrical approach to social identity in which men acted roles intended to convey figuratively the power and value of those traditions. She writes that "Nothing is more offensive to Southern men than to intimate that every man-jack of them is not as dangerous as when his favourite ancestor wore ruffles, knee buckles and a sword tied in his sash" (quoted in Kartiganer 624).

[36] These affectations are well-documented in all of the existing biographies and are described succinctly in Watson's "William Faulkner and the Theater of War."

[37] cf. Watson.

[38] In a different vein, Watson points out that Faulkner quotes his early lyric poetry written in a soldier's voice as epigraphs in his first novel *Soldier's Pay*. Incorporated without attribution, these quotations perform Faulkner's status as an artist—by quoting himself, Faulkner enacts his position as a quotable author—in much the same way that his narration of Bogard's performance enacts his mastery of that performance.

[39] Over time these fabricated stories of personal experiences evolved and his injuries migrated, sometimes involving legs, sometimes plates in his skull.

[40] Cf. Cowley's *The Faulkner-Cowley File*, 82. Cowley tells of writing an author biography for Faulkner that repeated many of the invented war experiences Faulkner had circulated early in his career. Without repudiating them directly, Faulkner asked that they be left out.

[41] The artist is the other.

[42] The relevant aspect of "Turnabout"'s performance of masculinity is usefully discussed in Anne Goodwyn Jones's "Male Fantasies? Faulkner's War Stories and the Construction of

Gender." Jones argues that "Turnabout" seems committed, at least initially, to the development of a "semiotics of gender" (49). She insists, with perceptible disappointment however, that the initial promise of the story's diction remains unfulfilled. Pointing to the variability of the diction, the reassertion of manhood as a product of war in the narrative event, and the embrace of weaponry as phallic image, she concludes that, far from unsettling established gender conventions, "Turnabout" "reject[s] and degrade[s] the feminine in order to lay claim to manhood" (24). In her discussion, Jones highlights this rejection of the feminine by setting the diction of the story against both the narrative event and the celebration of phallic weaponry. Although Claude's description as a girl opens up the possibility of a critical examination of masculinity, his presentation as a man through the events of the torpedo run and his skill with a machine gun on the bombing run reassert an essentialist, phallic masculinity.,

[43] In the published versions of "Turnabout," breaks between scenes are explicitly marked by roman numerals. Ann's story takes the fore and advances in the spaces between the scenes. cf. Hulsey's comparison of the cardinal points of the story's and the screenplays narratives, pp. 69-71.

[44] *Today We Live* goes much further to remove the danger of the double-bind. Most notably, the queer connotations of the all-male relationships are consolidated on the bachelor Ronnie, who is overly devoted to his sister and great friends with Claude. The two men's self-sacrifice, shoulder to shoulder at the end of the film reads as queer while ultimately eliminating that queerness from the film, clearing the field for Bogard and Ann's marriage. This same strategy of consolidation and elimination will be used by Faulkner to deal with queer connotation in his next screenplay project *War Birds*. I discuss this strategy in chapter two.

[45] Although these two meetings may seem to advance the love story, they serve only to reinforce its earlier termination: at the end of the second meeting, Bogard learns of Ann's sexual relationship with Claude and rejects her for it, calling her "filthy" and suggesting she likely has a similar relationship with her brother Ronnie.

[46] It, thus, comes as no surprise that when the pressbook for *Mildred Pierce* (1945) summarized the reputation Crawford had developed in the thirties, it lingered over details of her costume—the fur coats and hats, her high heels—stating that she "usually has a wardrobe to make most women gasp with envy." (Schatz *Boom and Bust* 201).

[47] cf Kawin, *MGM* 104

[48] cf. Kawin, *MGM* 112-115.

[49] Kawin misses the point here because he's looking for a way to say that Faulkner isn't being misogynist. So the fact that Ann is pro-war shows that she's just like the guys.

[50] It is worth noting the difficulty in deploying apparatus theory as an analytic tool for screenplays. A distinctive blend of psychoanalysis, Marxism and post-structuralism,

apparatus theory derives from a consideration of the organization of "the gaze" within a film. Although heavily abstracted, "the gaze" remains a construct grounded in the scene of exhibition. To discuss the gaze is to discuss the way flat-screen perspective, the phi affect, the framing, the decoupage and montage of images and various technical aspects of camera and projection technology direct, entrap, confound and deceive a passive audience (the seat of the gaze), especially as they do so in the service of dominant ideology. While written in anticipation of these, the screenplay does not participate in them. Neither do aspects of written narrative such as point-of-view or focalization provide direct analogues. Conclusions drawn from apparatus theory are thus provocative without being persuasive.

[51] This turn simultaneously abstracts the threat of the feminine and the injury of Ann's presence from its historical situation, reducing it to a more-or-less metaphysical threat to patriarchy.

[52] Faulkner wrote war fiction before 1927, most notably *Soldier's Pay*, his first novel. This novel is part of the group of post-war novels that includes *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *All's Quiet on the Western Front*. The Hollywood war picture was indebted to these novels but was distinct enough from it to offer an alternative that Faulkner's fiction will seem to align with.

[53] When Faulkner submitted *Flags in the Dust* for publication, the manuscript was rejected because its elaborate narrative was seen as too complicated. Faulkner's friend and agent, Ben Wasson, edited the text, reducing it to the story Bayard Sartoris's return from war. Faulkner neither assist with nor authorized these cuts although he gave Wasson permission to make them. The reduced novel was published as *Sartoris* in 1929, the same year as *The Sound and the Fury*. A complete and corrected version of Faulkner's manuscript has been edited by Noel Polk published as *Flags in the Dust*. It is the only version of the novel published by Random House and has been included in the Library of America edition of Faulkner's complete novels. Because my concern is with Faulkner's creative process and not the publication or reception history of the novel, I will deal only with *Flags in the Dust* here.

[54] The chapter, "The Great Discovery, 1927" in David Minter's *William Faulkner: His Life and Work* offers an excellent account of the relationship between this novel and the major fiction that follows.

[55] A trivial detail that further suggests Faulkner may have been aware of and drawn to this film: it's star was a member of the RAF and was marketed as such. Faulkner of course was also a member and, as late 1950, he was still susceptible to forming quick bonds someone simply for having served in this group. Blotner reports that when preparing for the Nobel acceptance speech, Faulkner survived some of his nervousness by spending time talking with a Butler who he was happy to discover had served in the RAF (Blotner *Biography* 1359).

[56] Note examples.

[57] The reasons are surely multiple, but it is worth noting that in those moments where Faulkner's fiction draws closest to the antebellum-postbellum narrative of the film—in

Hightower's hallucinations, in Sutpen's plan, in Bayard and Ringo's tall tale-like adventures—Faulkner seems incapable—or unwilling—to deliver the nostalgic, uncritical look back central to the genre as constructed.

[58] Film played a role of course in recreating the war as part of the historical past both by celebrating it and offering a retrospective treatment in framed narratives.

[59] While laudable, this verisimilitude necessarily had limits and experienced studio personnel were assigned to the projects to help adapt the soldiers' stories to meet "the need of the film industry to appeal to a broad audience" (172). Concretely, this meant providing occasions for spectacular battle scenes and the development of a romantic subplot (193).Say something about the first reaction and propaganda films. The key point is the way that the first wave put protecting women as the reason for war, e.g. *The Birth of a Nation* and *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.

[60] It is possible that Faulkner only knew of this film second-hand, but it seems likely he would have had the occasion to see it. An early sound production and a runaway success—it won best picture at the very first Oscars in 1929—*Wings* remained in distribution both in New York theaters and in traveling road shows for several years.

[61] The motif of brother's in combat is usefully explored in John Lowe's "Fraternal Fury: Faulkner, World War I, and Myths of Masculinity."

[62] The love triangles Faulkner invents to create a role for Joan Crawford in the second draft of *Turn About* likewise resemble the initial situation of *Wings*.

[63] I will refer to the screenplay exclusively as *War Birds*, the title under which it is published in Kawin's *MGM Screenplays* and by which it is therefore most familiar to critics. It is worth remembering however that the title page of that published script still reads *Ghost Story* and that Faulkner only ever thought of the script in terms of this title. Faulkner's chosen title emphasizes, I think, the extent to which *War Birds*, as a story about a ghost, is concerned with the way to deal with John Sartoris's troubling life and death. My reading of Faulkner's revision of his sources focuses on similar issues.

[64] To Samuel Marx (19 July 1933): "It was my understanding in conversation with Howard re. my last connection with the studio that the studio would pay me bonuses for all previous original material which they used, regardless of whether I did the adaptations or not" (*SL*, 73).

[65] Read in light of Sedgwick, Faulkner's heavy reliance on erotic triangles should alert us to the ways the heterosexual romantic relationships cloak and enable the competitive and primary homosocial relationships.

[66] John has been bested by a man introduced by the story as something less than masculine. Spoomer has received his position through the support of an uncle who has moved him up the ranks while protecting him from the dangers of the front (513).

[67] For reasons I touched upon in my discussion of the *Turn About* project, it seems unlikely that these stories's opening up of masculinity and sexuality are consciously done. Neither is it obvious that they would have been welcomed by Faulkner if they became visible. The war fiction was quite simply too closely connected to Faulkner's developing sense of himself as an author and as a man, and the Sartoris stories especially so. To add only one additional example to my previous discussion, when Faulkner's youngest (and favourite) brother, Dean, died in a plane crash on November 10, 1935, Faulkner arranged for the tombstone. He chose to have engraved on the monument the epitaph he had first written for John Sartoris in *Flags in the Dust*. (Blotner *Biography* 916-917) That he chose to do so despite his mother's objections—she felt the gesture was egotistical and turn attention away from Dean onto Faulkner—testifies to his sense that the Sartoris stories were intimately involved in his own life. More to the point, it suggests his mother was right: John's death spoke to Dean's, but by the same token, Dean's death spoke to John's. When it came to the early Sartoris war stories, the line Faulkner drew between his life and his fiction was thin and porous. Indeed, Duvall recognizes the connection between the two suggesting that the life drew clear limits for the fiction: "after Dean's death, the pilot figure and flight as a metaphor for sexual ambiguity seem unavailable to Faulkner" (Duvall 65-66).

[68] cf. Duvall on penetration above

[69] For someone reading backwards from Sanctuary, the constant reference to the rustling corn shucks in Bayard's mattress can suggest his passivity before the narrative of John's death and his victimization by it.

[70] Rick Altman, as a prelude to his presentation of an alternative approach to Hollywood genre, has objected to this discussion of mythmaking, suggesting that it is runs precisely contrary to ideological discussions of genre and that together these two approaches constitute an impasse his own approach moves beyond. My sense is that this objection is less descriptive of the critical situation than it is a useful rhetorical position from which to offer a "third way." Ritual and ideological critics emphasize different aspects of filmmaking and exhibition and tend to hold different cultural politics, but they are both interested in the fictional experience of film viewing that one approach describes in (the relatively positive) terms of myth and the other in (the relatively negative) terms of mystification. Altman's semantic/syntactic approach not only draws on both approaches, but describes how the two interact and correspond. "The structures of Hollywood cinema, like those of American popular mythology as a whole, serve to mask the very distinction between ritual and ideology functions. Hollywood does not simply lend its voice to the public's desires, nor does it simply manipulate the audience" (Altman 37). Altman takes these critics as the poles he sees his model working between. On the one hand are the ritual critics, on the other the ideological critics. He positions them this way because he sees them as offering different images of where genres come from: the ritual critics see genre as arising from audience

response conceived of as an aspect of the filmmaking process, the ideological critics see genre as imposed, a kind of false consciousness. I understand Altman's point but think he overstates the difference in the two positions. The descriptions of the ritual and ideological developments of genre are structurally the same (or nearly so). They differ only in their judgment of the value of different stages in the process. When audiences participate in genre viewing, the ideological critic sees them as duped; the ritual, as active. For my purposes, there is not difference between the two. Whether the genre syntax is a means of controlling audiences or a product of audience response, the mismatch between it and the narrative structure of Faulkner's stories remains.

[71] Speaking of the dramatic conflicts repeated in the war picture, Sobchack writes that the hero:

"is always in the service of the group, of law and order, of stability, of survival, not of himself but of the organization or the institution, no matter how individual his activities, while a villain could be defined as a man who ruthlessly looks after his own needs first and who works for and will sacrifice himself for no one or nothing but himself" (Sobchack 111). This villain, a cowardly or reckless individualist who puts his comrades in harms way, will certainly die by movie's end.

[72] At the level of individual films, genre films are notable for the speed at which they advance the plot and establish characters efforts made possible thanks to the familiarity with the body of material the specific film recalls and repeats. Plot, in a deviation from the norms of art cinema, advances through dialogue. As a general rule, "whenever it takes too long to show it," a genre film will "say it instead" (Sobchack 107). By the same token characters are defined using"the shorthand of iconography. We know a person by what he wears as opposed to what he says and does. And once known, the character cannot change except in the most limited ways" (Sobchack 108). of group cohesion and social order to genre filmmaking. works in service to and as a symptom of the classical mode of narration seen in Hollywood film.

[73] Despite appearances, Schatz is not idealizing film spectatorship. These statements, drawn from the concluding sections of his book are built upon the careful study of industrial filmmaking practices and the close analysis of the form and narrative of numerous films. Instead, Schatz is arguing that Hollywood genre is an artful practice and that it both responds to and shapes spectators' anxieties about key social values in a rapidly changing society however imperfectly.

[74] This double commitment is likely symptomatic of the ends to which the war film is put: justifying war and nationalism.

[75] These characteristics may not be unique to the war picture and so, are not a complete description of the genre's syntax. It is, however, a part of that syntax and, as I'll suggest, was the part that was most important for Faulkner's adaptation.

[76] I'm not offering this as a reading of the novel. Instead, I'm looking at the novel from the perspective of the syntax of the war picture and describing those aspects of its narrative that could be translated into a generically acceptable screenplay with little or no alteration.
[77] By way of comparison, Faulkner did not face this problem during the *Turn About* project because the short story "Turnabout" conforms quite closely to the syntax of the war picture. In that story, Claude, the young, British officer who seems recklessly outside the community of soldiers, is integrated into that community by the revelation that he is actively and usefully involved in the war effort. By the same token, his death at the story's end eliminates the threat that his ambiguous representation of his gender and sexuality poses to social order.
[78] John's leap from his plane is lifted directly from Bayard's traumatic memory as recounted in *Flags in the Dust*. *War Birds*'s first climactic scene thus repeats and establishes a lineage with the narrative core of the Faulkner's on-going cycle of Sartoris stories. This screenplay participates in that cycle rather than departing from it. Yet, the context established for John's death is not literary. Bayard and John's dogfights adapt the motif of duelling brothers from Faulkner's first treatment for a war picture, "Absolution." The screenplay thus provides a cinematic context for the narrative event as the centre of the Sartoris cycle. That "Absolution" shares aspects of its narrative with—and may be indebted to—the important, wildly popular film *Wings* only highlights the cinematic origin of this context.
[79] It for this reason perhaps that, in contradistinction to *Flags*, the war story is read in the framing narrative by a man: although Caroline holds the book and speaks to their son, John's voice is heard speaking in voice-over. The war belongs to men.
[80] Another is Bayard's car, which he drives as recklessly as he did his plane on the front. Aunt Jenny's and his Grandfather's efforts to force him to drive slowly and in a manner appropriate for the dirt roads of Yoknapatawpha (with their horses, buggies and pedestrians) are an attempt to convince him to "return home" and leave the war behind him.
[81] The second time he says, "I wont do it anymore."
[82] The various stories of the Sartoris's experiences in the Civil War may seem to offer another alternative. Or perhaps even an explanation, suggesting that the Sartoris's unlike other soldiers are more prone to both the glories and the ills of war. Yet, they are the domain and preoccupation of the Grandfather, and his ineffectual relationship with Bayard suggests that these stories, like the Grandfather, have little to offer regarding Bayard's situation.
[83] In the Sartoris family, it is a family tradition to give sons one of these two names.
[84] It perhaps goes some way toward accounting for this shift to remember that in the years between the novel's and the story's compositions Faulkner had learned from experience the dissatisfactions of married life.
[85] Scene numbers were added by the studio typist to the draft reproduced in Kawin's volume.
[86] The Production Code played an important role in creating this appearance. I will discuss how at the beginning of Chapter Three.

[87] Ricoeur will trace this excess of meaning to sketch out a connection between the text and the world as part of his attempt to discover the relationship between historical and fictional narrative. What I call connotation is a small aspect of what in Ricoeur's discussion forms the basis for the ethical implications of narrative.

[88] Cf. Klinger's *Melodrama & Meaning*, especially chapter one, "The 'Progressive Auteur, Melodrama, and Canonicity."

[89] Ramsey has done excellent work in this part of his article by compiling a cross-section of contemporary reviews and comments on the suitability of Santuary as a source for a Hollywood film. The consensus view is that no acceptable film could be made from the contents of the book even with major changes, cf. Ramsey, 18. And indeed, Breen announced that even a film which departed from the book enough to escape censor would be forbidden to carry the name of the novel, a rather blatant effort to shut down one tool for connoting the novel's immoral plot, cf. Jacob's *Wages of Sin*.

[90] Studio efforts were complicated and evolved over time in response to their two conflicting goals: to be a lenient as possible and to be as strict as necessary. A presentation of the various committees and boards that came and went in these early years is beyond the bounds of this project. Richard Maltby's "The Production Code and the Hays Office," Lea Jacob's *Wages of Sin*, and Binggeli, Elizabeth. "Worse than Bad: *Sanctuary*, the Hays Office and the Genre of Abjection" offer excellent overviews of many of the issues I summarize here. Unless more specific information is required in the context, I will speak of all studio censors as a group.

[91] Cf. Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System; Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*. It's worth noting the extent to which this concern continues a practice of marketing the technical qualities of film that began in the silent era. In this period, films were viewed primarily as a means of selling technology: camera's and projectors were the market; filmed stories were a reason to buy them. As a result, films were frequently marketed for their lack of flicker and their realism. By the early sound era, films had become the market but technological notions of quality remained insofar as "quality" films used technology to seamlessly tell a story—through synch sound, invisible editing, inventive elaborate sets and accurate costumes—were deemed to be of high-quality. Censorship created problems for those attempting to meet this standard. This standard persists of course to our day in present-day obsessions with the realism of digital effects.

[92] Lea Jacobs notes that "While the Studio Relations Committee was cognizant of the complaints which issued from the public sphere, its primary function was not to prevent the production of films within the cycle, but rather to protect and perpetuate it in the face of external obstacles. ...[the process] consisted in a series of compromises which permitted this material to survive in some form. ...these defensive maneuvers were highly routinized, indeed sometimes spelled out as a matter of industrial policy." (Jacobs 34). She goes on to argue that "Aside from its diagnostic function, the Code served as a basis for discussion and

debate...The language of the Code suggests the issues to be negotiated: the explicitness of the representation (what can be directly shown as opposed to what can be suggested) and the way in which the act is motivated and commented upon within the narrative (it must not be 'justified' or made 'attractive')" (Jacobs 35). Ultimately these debates would manifest as a palpable " preference for indirect modes of representation" (Jacobs 39). It is this mode that fosters the connotations I discuss.

[93] These debates about the rape scene were in a sense debates about whether *Sanctuary* was filmable in Hollywood. In that novel, Popeye kills the man protecting Temple Drake before raping her with a corn cob. He then brings her to live in a brothel where he watches her have sex with another man. This sequence of events provides the basis for the court case and criminal investigation that organize the narrative as a whole. Without this scene, there is no story, and therefore no movie. (Oddly enough, without the corn cob, it seems to me that Temple's time in the brothel becomes even more unacceptable: without the corn cob, Popeye's voyeurism is no longer a sign of depravity and suggesting impotence. It is a sign of hyper-sexuality and perversity completely beyond the bounds laid out by the Production Code.)

[94] "how do we think we know?" (Miller 123).

[95] This claim accords well with Miller's observation that homosexuality is "the only subject matter whose representation in American mass culture appertained exclusively to the shadow kingdom of connotation." This position is ambivalent, at once enabling safe queer representations and simultaneously ensuring that no one can be sure "whether homosexuality was being meant at all" (Miller 125).

[96] The queer possibilities of *Sanctuary* have not been developed in the existing criticism but I believe they are central to the novel and highlighted by its structure. Key here is the novel's interest in voyeurism. This is a novel about men watching men have sex with women. Popeye watches Red have sex with Temple. Clarence Snopes and his friends watch his nephew have sex with prostitutes. Horace Benbow's investigation is essentially and effort to witness Popeye's rape of Temple. In each of these situations, the woman is merely a placeholder. The novel details of the man having sex. (Remember: we know the approximate size of Clarence's nephew's penis and how frequently he can have sex. We don't know the prostitutes name or what she looks like.) And so, reading the novel is also an act of voyeurism: although there are other options—watching someone being fucked, or watching someone watch—we, like the men in the novel, spend our time watching men have sex. Viewed in this light, Paramount's marketing of *The Story of Temple Drake* deftly translates the novel's disruptive queer masculinity into a titillating but heteronormative lesbian fantasy.

[97] He also sees Faulkner's frustration with his stepchildren in the portraits of Ira's children.

[98] This introduction was to be included in the forthcoming Modern Library edition.

[99] Consider Bon, for example, for whom queer codes signify refinement and sophistication. Or Claude: there the codes are shown to be deceptive insofar as they connote anything other than sexuality. The point of the story's turnabout is Bogard's discovery that this queer Brit is a real man.

[100] cf. Ramsey pp. 65-70 on Wasson in "'Turnabout' is Fair(y) Play."

[101] He also discusses it in the later introduction to the screenplay in *MGM Screenplays*.

[102] Brooks, although writing early, bemoans this situation, claiming only two critics acknowledge the value in the work.

[103] It's worth noting the extent to which critics consider *The Unvanquished* as a continuation of *Flags in the Dust*. In both Cleanth Brooks's *The Yokanapatawpha County* and Edmond Volpe's *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner*, to take only two important examples, *The Unvanquished* is discussed out of chronological order in a chapter immediately after *Flags*. In both cases, the two novels are presented as a pair that together offer a history of Faulkner's fictional county from the antebellum period to the early twentieth century. This idea does no violence to Faulkner's own conception of the two novels or his suggestion that new readers should start reading his work with *The Unvanquished*.

[104] Both letters are in part show. The first is written in part for Goldman to show to the *Post*, presumably to demonstrate that Faulkner is working hard. The pretentiousness of Faulkner's show of literary effort must be taken with a grain of salt. That said, the tension between the part and the whole he articulates is central to the effect of the stories as collected in *The Unvanquished*, an effect critics continue to debate. So the letter, show or not, demonstrates a genuine, aesthetic engagement with and understanding fundamental dynamic of the material. By the same token, the second letter's expression of outrage seems calculated to shift a discussion about what the *Post* will pay for the stories to a discussion about what it has cost Faulkner to write them. It is negotiation (through Goldman) and is thus as much show as the first. Yet, as with the first, the difference in quality between the Sartoris stories and Faulkner's anti-antebellum novel, *Absalom, Absalom!*, a novel progressing in fits and starts as he writes the Sartoris stories, speaks to the authenticity of Faulkner's frustration over what may have seemed to him as misspent time.

[105] These are pinnacle examples that emerge from the same moment that produces the Sartoris storeis. Earlier examples abound.

[106] Their bid may have been part of an effort to secure the distribution of *Gone with the Wind*.

[107] The Bayard of *The Unvanquished* appears in *Flags in the Dust*, as the grandfather of the Bayard who has fought as a pilot on the European front. For the remainder of my text, when confusion seems possible, I will refer to the Bayard of *The Unvanquished* as old Bayard, and the Bayard of *War Birds* as young Bayard.

[108] This is the great-grandfather of the John Sartoris who leaps from his plane in *War Birds*.

[109] Regarding this last, it is Hightower's relish at the uncertainty that he died in this way that highlights the recklessness: he chooses to believe the most reckless and the least consequential gesture.

[110] Kawin's reading of the scene hinges upon the visual figure of the star. He interprets it symbolically as an expression of American freedom.

[111] Interestingly, the only awkward moment in Kartiganer's excellent article is the achronological placement of *Absalom, Absalom!*, written before "An Odor of Verbena," as his final example of a revised approach to gesture. Without pursuing the problem here, I would suggest that the re-assessment of *War Birds*' representation of masculinity and war—begun prior to *Absalom* with the composition of all but the last of the Sartoris stories—was *in progress* during the the composition of *Absalom*. That novel is, of course, too large a work to be powerfully shaped by these reflections on cinema in any one-to-one way. Yet, Kartiganer's sense that it belongs in the post-*Unvanquished* revision of the sword-point manner helps to pinpoint Faulkner's prose return to *War Birds* as the key consideration in the break.

[112] He is given a monologue that tries to motivate his behaviour as despair over the passing of the old world. But his confusion of familial and political history is unconvincing.

[113] For many critics, this swift move from martial sternness to melodramatic seduction is bewildering. Millgate goes so far as to suggest Faulkner may offer the scene as a parody of the code of honor Bayard will soon revalue (169).

[114] While kissing Drusilla, embracing the pose, Bayard realizes "that those who can, do, and those who cannot and suffer enough because they cannot, write about it" (474). At first glance a confession of his own inadequacy and of his desire to be the person who does things like kissing Drusilla. But it is a line—like Drusilla's comments—whose import is known only in retrospect: to do, is to strike a pose, perform a gesture; to write, is like Bayard's refusal to kill Redmond, performative. It creates a world.

[115] This is a vision that recalls the characterization of Crawford's character in *Turn About*: there, writing against conventional notions of glamour, Faulkner imagines a woman who dresses like a man, speaks their language and is eager to send her brother and lover off to their deaths at the front. In the end, Ann's characterization echoed Faulkner's personal gender performance. That said, Drusilla seems hesitant about embracing this vision completely as her own, distancing herself from it through the use of the second person. The events of "Skirmish at Sartoris" reveal she had reason to be afraid.

[116] In this she recalls the ferocity of Ann's "kill them!" in *Turn About*.

[117] Cf. *Bodies the Matter*, especially the section entitled "Inigary/Plato" which begins on page 36.

[118] As Miller points out, "when homosexuality is entrusted to the totalizing, tantalizing play of connotation, the only way to establish the integrity of a truly other subject position is performative; by simply declaring that one occupies such a position and supporting the

declaration with a strong arm" (Miller 127).

[119] Commenting on this peculiar shortcoming, Joe Parini remarks that Faulkner "entertains us as he traces familiar patterns" (Parini 423), a reference to the novel's gentle return to terrains and personalities introduced in earlier works of the Yoknapatawpha saga now recalled as part of a work of recollection and reminiscence.

[120] For an excellent survey of the perceived failings of the late novels see the first chapter of Theresa Towner's *Faulkner on the Color Line: The Later Novels*.

[121] If it were to be established that much of the intensity of Faulkner's major phase stemmed from the homoerotics of his portraits of masculinity, it would lend additional weight to Polk's intuition that, contrary to the conclusions of current critical fashion, sexuality plays more fundamental role in Faulkner's fiction than race ("Artist as Cuckold" 144).

[122] The judgments of these critics is at once mysterious and unsurprising: mysterious because, in American culture especially, so many major works of art, literary and otherwise, are run through with melodrama; and unsurprising because, as Peter Brooks acknowledges in the early pages of his major study, *The Melodramatic Imagination*, "the connotations of the word [melodrama] are familiar to us all" and they are generally "pejorative" (11).

[123] *Sanctuary* and the "Wild Palms" segment of *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem* both deploy stock figures from melodramatic film genres, while popular films such as *Jezebel* and *Gone with the Wind* highlight the ways subject matter central to books like *Absalom, Absalom!* or *The Unvanquished* lend themselves quite naturally to a melodramatic treatment. It is also worth noting that *Sanctuary* and *Pylon* were adapted into successful film melodramas, *The Story of Temple Drake* and *Tarnished Angels* respectively.

[124] Cf. chapter one.

[125] Cf. Weinstein, Philip. *Unknowing: The Work of Modernist Fiction*. Ithaca, NY: cornell UP, 2005.

[126] Classical Hollywood refers most directly to a set of textual and industrial norms developed in the major Hollywood studios that define the style, content and distribution of mainstream American films prior to the sixties. The end-point of the classical Hollywood cinema is generally well-established: it comes with the final repeal of the production code that had proscribed various sexual, racial, political or violent contents and the adoption of the letter-based rating system in 1968. The beginning point is much less clear. While it is typically linked to the release of D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, some critics push this date back to his earlier development of narrative montage in 1907-09. Others push it forward as far as the final implementation of the Production Code in 1934.

[127] What I mean is demonstrated in an exchange from *Faulkner and the University* that, unfortunately, I cannot at the moment find in my notes. Stated from memory in broad terms, a questioner asks in 1957 or 1958 if Faulkner plans to bring Caddy's story up-to-date, to get her out of the hands of the Nazis? Faulkner replies "no." The question indicates the extent to

which Caddy's photograph with the officer figures the appendix as a text by making visible and by "sharing" its time of composition.

[128] It is significant that Faulkner received screenwriting credits for both films as this occurred only rarely. Generally, his work on a film was not extensive, was only on intermediate drafts or took place on-set in the form of dialogue revision, none of which qualified for credit.

[129] In a practice often repeated by Hollywood studios, *The Big Sleep* was rushed to production so that Bacall and Bogart could again display their on-screen chemistry in yet another violent and sexually suggestive love story.

[130] That Faulkner was generally unhappy working on these films is well-documented in most of the biographies. However, whether he enjoyed working on these melodramas seems unrelated to the question of how the work he did shaped or distorted his narrative practice in the late period. Furthermore, Steve Neale writes, "the genre [of melodramatic women's films] as a whole…[was] consistently regarded…as exemplifying Hollywood and its product at their best" (193). Should we so quickly assume that Faulkner was immune to the generally recognized aesthetic value of this set of films? Especially since his well-documented investment in his masculinity provides good reason for expecting him to express unhappiness regardless of his actual feelings? In the end, the question is neither here nor there: Faulkner's unhappiness—whether genuine or a symptom of his gender performance—at most suggests an additional biographical basis for his recoil from any perceived or possible contact between his literary writing and Hollywood melodrama.

[131] Their studies of the genre were made in the early years of academic film studies as part of a discipline-wide effort to engage intellectually with commercial film. Their approach largely excised the films from their context.

[132] For a brief summary of the importance of this work see Linda William's "Melodrama Revised" and Christine Gledhill's introduction to *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*. Singer and Neale attempt to develop an alternative genealogy for their work but in doing so work in its shadow.

[133] Stylistically, it stands as a trace of the early modernism of writers such as Hemmingway and Stein to which Faulkner's modernism responded. As an echo of an echo of modernism, it thus marks the distance between the "Appendix" and the novels of the major phase.

[134] In *Stella Dallas*, I'm thinking of the final scene in which Stella (Barbara Stanwyck), standing beside a police officer and in front of a picture window that has been coded as a movie screen watches her life as a mother apotheosized in the marriage of her daughter. In *Now, Voyager*, I'm thinking of the scene in the backseat of a car when Charlotte Vale (Bette Davis) sees and describes her future and then takes decisive action to alter it.

[135] Cavell's thought is difficult to summarize in that it develops as a network of cross-referenced essays rather than in long, systematic works. The works *Contesting Tears* and *Pursuits of Happiness* are the core works which point toward the necessary essays though

footnotes. His most important essay on his conception of film genre is, oddly enough, found in "The Fact of Television."

[136] Cavell insists upon the legitimacy of film-specific conceptions of melodrama. Rooted in his early book on the ontology of film, *The World Viewed*, and later developed in his essay on television serials, "The Fact of Television," Cavell's argument depends upon his conception of "genre-as-medium." By this he means that a genre is media-specific; and that it is constituted both internally by a set of common features and externally through its negation of the common features of adjacent genres (245). This conception is profoundly non-genealogical, emphasizing the legitimacy of a generic construction within a particular medium at a particular moment.

[137] And yet, the Nobel speech is also representative of the late fiction with all that implies. It is quoted in *A Fable,* and Irving Howe criticized *The Town* for taking the speech's sentiments to heart (283).

[138] Interestingly, many American readers were offended by the soaring rhetoric of this speech precisely because it was so disconnected from the content of the published fiction. They perceived this affirmation of the "old verities" as a kind of hypocrisy.

[139] The opening paragraphs of Warren's introduction parallel's Faulkner's development of his modernist style with Warren's "and many book-reading Southerners" discovery of that work: Soldier's Pay, a novel that is "no better than it should be" is followed—in both Faulkner's biography and in Warren's late reading—by the startling developments of *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Sanctuary*, and the collection of short stories, *These Thirteen*, books which "dramatized…some truth about the South…that had been lying speechless" (1). In Warren's discovery of Faulkner, which parallels Faulkner's discovery of speech and a subject, we see literature in full bloom creating the readers it requires (431). When Warren introduces the first of the essays to consider a novel of the late period, he cites its condemnation of the novel's affirmation of the apolitical, old-fashioned values of "a dead world" (Poderetz 250; cite in Warren 17), agreeing in turn that the novel at issue, A Fable, is "a colossal failure." He then suggests that to sort out the book's problem of tone—"we don't know how we are to take his fable" (17)—requires a criticism that can untangle "the various strands and manifestations of Faulkner's work" (21). The implication is that something less universal and less powerful is at stake in this late novel than in the earlier, major fiction.

[140] Beyond these general attempts to reorient the critical discussion, three scholars have stepped forward in recent years to offer specific accounts of the late fiction's relation to the rest of Faulkner's body of work. The first, Noel Polk's *Faulkner's Requiem for a Nun: A Critical Study*, which predates Carothurs's and Millgate's articles and gives less emphasis to the late rhetoric than they do, offers a chapter-by-chapter exegesis of a late novel. It thus suggests that the principal methodological approach to the major phase is equally productive as a model of analysis in the late period, that the late novels can sustain, in other words, careful

attention to their form and language. Polk emphasizes the continuity of the major and late phases of Faulkner's work and argues that this book which "has long been considered one of the idiot siblings in the Faulkner canon" is in fact "a powerful and complex novel" (x, xiii). The value of that complexity is found in the moral framework he unearths from the interplay between Temple's drama and the prose histories of Jefferson, Mississippi. The second major revaluation of the late phase is Towner's *Faulkner on the Color Line*, which argues that the late novels offer a resistant and perhaps transgressive response to the racial crisis in the South during the fifties. She focuses her attention on the progressive cast of racial representation in these books and suggests that they continue a project begun in such early works as *Light in August* or *Absalom, Absalom!*. Most recently, Richard Godden takes up similar themes from a very different perspective in his *William Faulkner: An Economy of Complex Words*, which offers a close reading of racial representation in the late novels in terms of class and the changing economy of the South.

[141] Faulkner's sense of Hollywood changed dramatically during his disastrous contract with Warner Bros. during the Second World War. At Warner Bros. he was miserable and trapped and wrote to Jack Warner asking to be released from his contract. He writes: "I feel that I have made a bust at moving picture writing and therefore have mis-spent and will continue to mis-spend time which at my age I cannot afford….And I dont dare mis-spend any more of it" (Blotner 1197). He continues that "I am unhappy in studio work." This letter comes after the failure of the monumental projects—*Battle Cry* and *The DuGaulle Story*.