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## The Evolution of Yoknapatawpha

by Elizabeth Kerr

When William Faulkner discovered in *Sartoris* that, as he said to Jean Stein, his "own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about," he began the imaginative process of creating a cosmos of his own.<sup>1</sup> Both the imaginative process and the intellectual concepts reflected in the themes dramatized by the characters are illuminated by an examination of the Yoknapatawpha narratives, in the order in which they were written. Faulkner seemed to be selecting his material from a larger whole which existed only in his mind and which grew as his own experience provided ideas for narrative events and new characters. A process of organic growth in the realm seems to have occurred in the mind of its creator as well as in his fiction, which undoubtedly did not exhaust the inherent possibilities. From the beginning Faulkner was concerned with building for his readers a cumulative concept of Yoknapatawpha by means of his repetition of information about recurrent characters, his use of recurrent incidents and scenes, his maps of Yoknapatawpha, and his allusions to people and events drawn from the "common fund of shared experience and anecdote" of Yoknapatawpha such as he had known in Oxford.<sup>2</sup> These devices all serve to relate the parts to the whole which existed only in the mind of its creator and which he himself was discovering as he wrote.

In the most richly productive period in Faulkner's writing, from 1927 to 1929, he laid the foundation for most of the Yoknapatawpha chronicles. Although only the Snopes trilogy was based on a preconceived idea, stated in *Sartoris* (Appendix B) and developed over a long period, in 1931, when *Sanctuary* was published, the Sartoris-Benbow and the Compson stories had reached their conclusions in action in the twentieth century, the town of Jefferson, Oxford and the University, and the hamlet of Frenchman's Bend were on the map and much of the legend of the county had been established.

<sup>1</sup>Jean Stein, "William Faulkner," *Writers at Work*, Malcolm Cowley, ed. (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 537.

Although *Sartoris* is inferior to the works which immediately followed it, to a remarkable degree it contained potentialities which Faulkner spent the rest of his life in realizing.

Aspects of Faulkner's family history and of his own experience initiate the Yoknapatawpha cycle. The ghost of Colonel John Sartoris, a character based on some aspects of the life and character of Faulkner's great-grandfather, Colonel William Clark Falkner, presides over *Sartoris*. Encapsulated in the Sartoris story is that of Flem Snopes and his tribe of relatives—not descendants—as told in *The Hamlet* (1940) and *The Town* (1957). Before the end of 1926 Faulkner was working on manuscripts about Snopeses and Sartorises, putting aside the former, "Father Abraham," to complete *Flags in the Dust*.<sup>3</sup> This first Yoknapatawpha novel, of which *Sartoris* is a shorter version, was completed in September, 1927. The reduction in length, required by the publisher, was done by Ben Wasson, who later became Faulkner's literary agent.

In *Flags in the Dust*, Faulkner had conceived of his fictional county as basically similar to Lafayette County and Oxford. The name *Jefferson* for the county seat first appeared in an unpublished novel, "Elmer."<sup>4</sup> In *Flags in the Dust* (pp. 86, 87), the county is named for the actual river south of Oxford, *Yocona*; Faulkner later changed the name to the Indian original, *Yoknapatawpha*, meaning "water flows slowly through flat land." Jefferson remains substantially as described in *Sartoris*: the long hill up from the depot, the Square with the courthouse in the center, surrounded on four sides by banks and business establishments, and on the south side dignified by the monument of the Confederate soldier; just off the Square are the jail and the cotton gin. Jefferson is remarkably like Oxford, except that in Jefferson the cemetery overlooks the railroad, toward which the effigy of Colonel John Sartoris proudly gazes; in Ripley, the effigy of Colonel William Falkner points at *his* railroad. In *Sartoris*, the hamlet, Frenchman's Bend, is merely named as the source of the Snopeses. In *Flags in the Dust*, Byron Snopes, absconding with bank funds, fled through Frenchman's Bend, past Varner's store, a blacksmith-shop-garage, and Mrs. Littlejohn's boarding house (p. 257). Four miles north of Jefferson is the Sartoris plantation; to

<sup>3</sup> Blotner, pp. 526–527, 531.

<sup>4</sup> James B. Meriwether, *The Literary Career of William Faulkner: A Bibliographical Study* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Library, 1961), p. 13.

the northeast of Jefferson lies the MacCallum farm. Oxford and the university are forty miles away, outside the county.

The Sartoris are aristocrats; Miss Jenny and Colonel John, long dead in *Sartoris*, came to Mississippi from Carolina. In *Sartoris*, only Miss Jenny, old Bayard, Colonel John's son, and young Bayard, old Bayard's grandson, are still living. The Sartoris men are legendary for their deeds of daring and for their violent and untimely deaths. Aunt Jenny, the sharp-tongued deflater of Sartoris vainglory, will outlive them all. The exploits of Colonel John, as recalled by old man Falls and old Bayard, are part of the legend of Yoknapatawpha. (In *The Unvanquished* (1938), this same Bayard will recount these exploits, which he witnessed as a boy.) Young Bayard, an aviator of the Lost Generation to which William Faulkner also belonged, was driven by suicidal despair, over his twin brother's death in air combat, to deeds of reckless violence which resulted in his grandfather's death and finally his own death.

Narcissa Benbow, of another leading family, married young Bayard. Her brother Horace, romantic aesthete, originally had a role rivalling that of young Bayard, until Ben Wasson greatly reduced the subjective development of Horace, particularly his feeling toward Narcissa and Belle Mitchell and Belle's sister Joan, non-existent in *Sartoris*. Also curtailed is the role of the third young man, Byron Snopes, writer of obscene anonymous letters to Narcissa. In *Flags in the Dust* Byron is fully and subjectively portrayed as a study in sexual obsession; no other more-or-less-normal Snopes was capable of such passion. Byron's robbery of the bank where he was book-keeper becomes part of the Yoknapatawpha legend. His letters to Narcissa figure again in "There Was a Queen" to expose the character of Narcissa and thus literally to shock Aunt Jenny to death. Permanent denizens of Yoknapatawpha include Doc Peabody, friend of the Sartorises; the MacCallums, yeoman farmers and friends of young Bayard; and V. K. Suratt, later named Ratliff, who pulled himself up from tenant-farmer poverty to middle-class status.

In *Sartoris*, Yoknapatawpha is a Waste Land: its young men have no future and its old men have no present, only a past. The Sartoris tradition of pride and violence dooms its men and thwarts its women: Aunt Jenny cherishes the life her men destroy. The theme of the cursed or doomed family will recur among Yoknapatawphans

who choose to dwell in the past. The essential subject which Faulkner dramatized in *Sartoris*, the community as represented by a prominent family, was continued in a series of studies of old families which had lost leadership and vitality. The negative implies the positive. Young Bayard's self-destructive flight from guilt and the judgment of the MacCallums and the community, Horace's flight from his sister and his past and a community in which he played no real part, and Byron's flight from the law suggest what the Lost Generation must do to find themselves, how the Waste Land may become again the Good Earth, and how the time may be redeemed: "Give, sympathize, control." The Waste Land was not the final vision of either T. S. Eliot or William Faulkner.

Young Bayard was killed in the summer of 1920; *Sanctuary* continues the story of Horace and Narcissa in the spring of 1929. The settings of *Sartoris* recur: the Sartoris plantation, the Benbow house, the University of Mississippi at Oxford. In Jefferson, the jail and the courthouse are major settings, anticipating their symbolic significance in *Requiem for a Nun* and revealing Faulkner's growing concern with the moral issues of man's sinfulness and society's hypocritical attempt to use the law to punish any threats to the caste and class system. For the first time in a published work, the Frenchman Bend area, southeast of Jefferson, is a scene of action. The novel begins at the Old Frenchman's place, a ruined mansion which is the hangout for Lee Goodwin and Popeye. Real places in and out of the county tie the fiction into reality: Taylor and Starkville, however, are mentioned here for the first and last time. Memphis becomes a significant setting in the constellation of points connected by the activities of Horace Benbow: the old Frenchman's place, Sartoris, Jefferson, Oxford, and Memphis.

The two most appalling characters in *Sanctuary*, Temple and Popeye, apparently were based upon a story Faulkner heard in Memphis, in 1926, about a girl from Cobbtown and the gangster, "Popeye" Pumphrey.<sup>5</sup> *Sanctuary* begins with the confrontation of Horace and Popeye at the spring on the old Frenchman's place. Thus Horace links the lawless world at the old Frenchman's with the ordered world at Sartoris, his destination, and with the "disorderly house" of Miss Reba in Memphis, where his quixotic mission took

<sup>5</sup>Blotner, pp.492-493.

him. A new character, Gowan Stevens, paid court to Narcissa and dated Temple at the university. Gowan's role in *Sanctuary* ceased when he abandoned Temple at the old Frenchman's, but he reappears in later novels and serves as the inglorious forerunner of his older relative, Gavin Stevens. Created in "Smoke" in 1930, before *Sanctuary* was published, Gavin eventually succeeded Horace as Jefferson's romantic, quixotic lawyer and as the patron of Montgomery Ward Snopes, briefly dealt with in *Sartoris*. In his revision of the unpublished galleys of *Sanctuary*, Faulkner continued the diminishment of Horace's role, begun by Ben Wasson's cutting of *Flags in the Dust*, and also excised material on the Sartoris past. Faulkner seemed already to be losing interest in his romantic aristocrats.

New Snopeses in *Sanctuary* are Virgil, who roomed at Miss Reba's "boarding house," and Clarence, who preferred cheaper accommodations. As a state senator, Clarence had contacts and led Horace to Temple. Lee Goodwin and Ruby and Popeye were aliens in Jefferson. Eustace Graham, a hometown boy in *Sartoris*, as Jefferson District Attorney conspired with respectable society in the person of Narcissa and possibly of Judge Drake to protect the guilty Popeye and condemn the innocent Lee Goodwin. Miss Reba, the madam, and Minnie, her maid, among the most durable characters in the chronicles, will remain in the whorehouse on the fringe of Yoknapatawpha until the end. Although much of the violent action in *Sanctuary* is initiated by outsiders, they are present in Yoknapatawpha through the patronage of the respectable but lawbreaking natives, whose desires take them both to the old Frenchman's and to Miss Reba's: Gowan Stevens, the Virginia gentleman, and Clarence, the Snopes, are brothers under the skin.

The old Frenchman's place, the first scene, is the very image of the Waste Land, with its legend of treasure buried in its barren acres. The last scene, of Temple and her father in Paris, takes place "in the season of rain and death." Nothing grows or thrives where men like Popeye are in control: Ruby's moribund infant is pathetic evidence that even mother love is there defeated. The title is ironic: there is no safe refuge, there is no sacred place. Temple is the agent of her own violation because she did not wish to flee from evil. The integrating theme beneath the dichotomy between nature and fertility and perversion and sterility is the evasion of responsibility for one's actions and the willingness to let others pay for one's own misdeeds.

Traditional ideals, betrayed, with the collusion of judge and attorney, by those who proclaimed them, served to conceal sordid reality and gross injustice. Temple and Narcissa, self-centered and narcissistic, saved their public images at the cost of Lee Goodwin's life. The tableau of Temple leaving the courtroom, surrounded by her father and four brothers, represents Southern Womanhood defended by Southern Law and Chivalry. Gowan fled responsibility for Temple as young Bayard fled responsibility for his grandfather's death. Horace, the one character concerned for truth and justice, at the age of forty-three was initiated into evil and discovered the nature of reality, the ugly truth beneath the fair surface. The evil he discovered was partly in himself, the true nature of his feeling for Little Belle. None of the characters are innocent; at best they are ignorant or self-deceived. The "respectable" men are impotent; the virile ones, Lee Goodwin and Red, Temple's lover, are murdered.

The Waste Land vision in *Sanctuary* probably was influenced by Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, as well as by T. S. Eliot. *Sanctuary* is an ironic inversion of the mythic and romantic pattern of Innocence assailed by Evil and rescued by Chivalric Valor. The mythic dimensions which Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha Waste Land fully achieved in *Sanctuary* were heightened and sharpened by the revisions of the galleys; horrific details that originated in naturalistic fact acquire significance and multi-leveled meaning, transmuting the local and temporal to the universal. The arena of the drama in *Sanctuary* is no longer the private worlds of the Sartoris and the Compsons but the public world which the characters have chosen irresponsibly to enter without counting the cost or being willing to pay it.

The process of creation of a town and a county with a history and a shared legend which was apparent in *Sartoris* and *Sanctuary* was interrupted by Faulkner's exploration of the private worlds of the Compsons and the Sutpens, the Bundrens, and alien social outcasts. Before the publication of *Sanctuary*, Faulkner had written *The Sound and the Fury* about the Compsons and *As I Lay Dying* about the Bundrens. *Light in August*, the novel which followed *Sanctuary*, introduced Yoknapatawpha characters only in minor roles, the major figures being alien to the county and never socially assimilated into it. After abortive beginnings, as early as 1926, of what became the story of Thomas Sutpen, the story of the Sutpens in *Absalom, Absalom!* was finally absorbed into the private world of the Compsons,

especially Quentin, but not into the public world of Yoknapatawpha. To trace the imaginative creation of Yoknapatawpha it is necessary, therefore, to deal with these four novels in a kind of digression: the stories and major characters presented in them were tardily, if at all, integrated into the legend of Yoknapatawpha through the consciousness of inhabitants of the county. The reader must effect the integration of the factual information which follows with that in the other chronicles of Yoknapatawpha.

*The Sound and the Fury* was written in the spring and early summer of 1928, when *Flags in the Dust* was still unpublished. The apparent failure of this first chronicle of Yoknapatawpha impelled Faulkner to write *The Sound and the Fury* to please himself, with no concern for possible publication.<sup>6</sup> The novel originated in the image of a little girl in a pear tree, the beginning of a short story, "Twilight," which Faulkner began to write on "April 7, 1928."<sup>7</sup> Elements in this story which expanded into *The Sound and the Fury* had been present in published and unpublished fiction before Faulkner began the creation of Yoknapatawpha,<sup>8</sup> and the death of the grandmother and the ages of the three Compson brothers resemble the death of Mrs. Falkner's mother, also called Damuddy as in the novel, and the ages of the four Falkner brothers, who had no sister.<sup>9</sup> The Compson children, except Benjy, were present in a short story in 1927, which in its initial published version was called "That Evening Sun Go Down," and in "A Justice."<sup>10</sup>

In *The Sound and the Fury* Faulkner initiated the practice he followed in most of the Yoknapatawpha novels, except *Snapes*, of having the present action take place at about the time of composition. The "present" in *The Sound and the Fury* is the Easter weekend of 1928; Quentin's section, II, took place June 2, 1910. The Compson family history, before and after *The Sound and the Fury*, which Faulkner wrote as the Appendix for *The Portable Faulkner* (1946), is a further demonstration of Faulkner's creative imagination.

<sup>6</sup> Blotner, p. 570. Blotner's account of Faulkner's motives is based on an unpublished preface Faulkner wrote for an edition of *The Sound and the Fury* which did not materialize.

<sup>7</sup> Blotner, pp. 568-569.

<sup>8</sup> Blotner cites "The Kingdom of God," "The Kid Learns," and "Mayday" (pp. 414, 427, 511).

<sup>9</sup> Blotner, pp. 566-567.

<sup>10</sup> Blotner, pp. 565, 566.



Although the Compson Domain lies in the heart of Jefferson and the settings in *The Sound and the Fury* include the cemetery and the Square, living Sartorises and Compsons seem unaware of each other and of their respective residences and graves. The Negro area and church in IV do not appear again. Jason's pursuits of Miss Quentin introduce scenes in both the town and the countryside and cover his frantic trip to Mottson, a new town outside the county. Except for Quentin's memory of Colonel Sartoris as a friend of General Compson, Sartorises are non-existent in the Compson story. The main characters are the Compson family and their servants, Dilsey and the rest of the Gibsons. Minor recurrent characters include Doc Peabody, I. O. Snopes, complete with initials, and Deacon Rogers, proprietor of a restaurant. Considering the sensational events in the Compson history, which would certainly be known to the community, one is amazed that such knowledge is first introduced, in summary form in a 1943 context, in *The Mansion*, when Jason IV attempted to outsmart Flem Snopes (p. 322).

Despite the strange absence in *The Sound and the Fury* of objective links with *Sartoris* that, in light of Faulkner's later practice, one might expect, recurrent themes provide relationships with both *Sartoris* and *Sanctuary* and are intrinsic to the conceptual basis of Faulkner's imaginary domain. Sartorises and Benbows and Compsons live in a moral and emotional Waste Land in which love, especially mother love, is lacking but sibling love may be abnormally strong. Family tradition and pride breed fatalism through obsession with the past and belief in a doom or curse which denies a future. Aunt Jenny was powerless to counteract the Sartoris tradition, and the Compsons had not even an Aunt Jenny. Chastity and ignorance Mrs. Compson equated with virtue, and to the Compsons and Narcissa, respectability is a substitute for ethical values and human feelings. Stasis and death, bred of chastity and abstract ideals, imply the absence of the polar extreme of motion and life, bred of sexuality and love. The ironic Christ figure foreshadowed in the idiot in "The Kingdom of God"<sup>11</sup> becomes explicit in Benjy, thirty-three years old, and the Easter theme. The title passage from *Macbeth* applied originally to Benjy's bellowing, but the whole speech applies also to the rest of the Compsons except Caddy.

<sup>11</sup> Blotner, p. 567.

But what had been merely implied in *Sartoris*, the virtues needed to redeem the Waste Land, is dramatically portrayed in Dilsey and the Easter sermon. But Dilsey's humility, unselfishness, love, and religious faith prove inadequate to save the Compsons from the sins and weaknesses in which lie their curse and their doom.

Written after *Sanctuary* and immediately after the publication of *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying* is a *tour de force*, written in a spurt of creative energy, and an anomaly, in that Frenchman's Bend is fully realized and continues as a major setting, developing from glimpses in *Flags in the Dust* and scenes in *Sanctuary*, but the Bundrens drop completely out of sight after *As I Lay Dying* and only the minor characters reappear in the Yoknapatawpha chronicles. This anomaly is partially explained by the fact that the Bundrens had not appeared in the manuscript, "Father Abraham," from which the setting and some of the characters were derived; however, an unpublished story, "Adolescence," dealt with the Bundren family, with some parallels between the Bundens and the Bundren children.<sup>12</sup> To earlier accounts of Frenchman's Bend are added the Bundren and the Tull houses, the bridge across the Yoknapatawpha River, and Samson's bridge. Mottson of *The Sound and the Fury* is now spelled Mottstown, and the routes from Frenchman's Bend to Mottstown and from Mottstown to Jefferson are traveled by the Bundrens on their way to the cemetery in Jefferson. Christian's drugstore is established as a scene of action for later narratives. Again, the action takes place about the time of the writing. Recurrent Frenchman's Bend characters include Will and Jody Varner, Tull (changed from Turpin, in "Father Abraham" and *Flags in the Dust*), Armstid, Mr. Littlejohn (Mrs. Littlejohn appears in *The Hamlet*), Houston, Eustace Grimm, Samson, V. K. Suratt, Reverend Whitfield, and Flem Snopes and an unspecified Snopes relative.

The familiar pattern of quest romance is used for the perilous journey of the Bundrens which, with ironic inversion, celebrates death, not life. As in *Sanctuary* mythic parallels take on ironic meaning. The Bundren family resembles the Compsons in many ways: the ineffective father, the mother who loves only one child, the one sister with four, not three, brothers.<sup>13</sup> The polarity of deeds and

<sup>12</sup> Blotner, pp. 635, 333-334.

<sup>13</sup> These and other parallels are examined by Carvel Collins: "The Pairing of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*," Princeton University *Library Chronicle*, XVIII

words most explicitly stated by Addie in *As I Lay Dying* provides a less obvious thematic principle in other Yoknapatawpha chronicles.<sup>14</sup> The Waste Land is again suggested by the sacrifice of the living for the dead, by the flood which destroys rather than regenerates, reminiscent of the "season of rain and death" at the end of *Sanctuary*, and by Dewey Dell's abortion as her secret motivating goal.<sup>15</sup>

*As I Lay Dying* is unique in Yoknapatawpha fiction in the discarding of an entire brilliantly characterized family and the retention of most of the other Frenchman's Bend characters in later short stories and in *The Hamlet*. In revising "Spotted Horses" for inclusion in *The Hamlet*, Faulkner deliberately omitted a reference by Suratt to Mrs. Bundren. The single remaining reference to any of the Bundrens is that by the boy narrator of "Uncle Willy" (1935). When Uncle Willy was being taken away to be cured of drug addiction, the narrator was reminded of Darl Bundren "handcuffed to a fat sheriff" but not "too crazy to know" that the train was taking him to the asylum at Jackson. In the evolution of Yoknapatawpha, *As I Lay Dying* is a curious "sport," an excellent work, fully integrated with the chronicles in setting and minor characters, in narrative patterns and themes, and recounting a macabre pilgrimage which was a nine days' wonder but which vanished from the memory of all Yoknapatawpha thereafter except the boy in "Uncle Willy."

*Light in August*, the Yoknapatawpha novel which followed *As I Lay Dying* in composition and *Sanctuary* in publication, has two traceable origins, neither of which is related to the story of Joe Christmas, the tragic hero. The initial image of a pregnant girl on a country road, a girl named Lena Grove,<sup>16</sup> recalls Dewey Dell Bundren of *As I Lay Dying* and her opposite quest, to get rid of the child and forget its father. The first title, "Dark House," written at the top of a page on August 17, 1931, was soon changed to *Light in August*, in response to

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(Spring, 1957), 114-123. Faulkner's comment on the pairing, the Modern Library one-volume edition of the two novels, was that together they made "a proper-sized book" that could be sold for "the regulation price": *Faulkner in the University*, Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1959), p. 109.

<sup>14</sup> This principle is dealt with by Floyd Watkins in *The Flesh and the Word: Eliot, Hemingway, Faulkner* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971).

<sup>15</sup> The Waste Land parallel is obvious, the discussion of Li's abortion, "II, A Game of Chess."

<sup>16</sup> Blotner, p. 703.

a comment by Mrs. Faulkner about the season.<sup>17</sup> "Dark House" could refer to either Hightower's house or Joanna Burden's. The former seems the more likely to have been in Faulkner's mind, in view of the fact that an unpublished short story, "Rose of Lebanon," written before November, 1930, deals with Gavin Blount, who resembles Hightower in his dwelling on the past and being obsessed with Van Dorn's raid.<sup>18</sup> The time of action in *Light in August* is August, 1932, less than two months before it was published, October 6, 1932.

The journey of Lena through Frenchman's Bend and her encounter with the Armstids provide a slight tie with *As I Lay Dying*: Armstid's house is added to Varner's store. In Jefferson, Miss Burden's house is added to the familiar jail, courthouse, depot, and Mrs. Beard's; Hightower's house and the sawmill figure only in *Light in August*. Joe's wanderings are the occasion for the most detailed account of the white and the Negro residential sections. In Mottstown, the town square is added to the depot area of *The Sound and the Fury* and Moseley's drugstore, of *As I Lay Dying*.

Recurrent characters have only minor roles: Armstids, Varners, and Winterbottom of Frenchman's Bend; Joanna Burden, Maxey, Buck Conner, Mrs. Beard, and Captain McLendon of Jefferson. The Grimm family now includes Percy, and Gavin Stevens makes his first appearance in a novel. Of these characters, only Percy Grimm shares in the dominant patterns of action or of situations: flight and pursuit, quest, initiation, and confrontation involve primarily only those who appear but once in Yoknapatawpha and then are forgotten: Lena Grove and Lucas Burch, Byron Bunch and Hightower, Doc and Mrs. Hines, Mr. and Mrs. McEachern, and, of course, Joe Christmas.<sup>19</sup>

The stories of all of the major characters in the tragic plot continue the themes which had concerned Faulkner from the beginning: the Waste Land sterility or promiscuity resulting from family or social pressure becomes even more clearly a consequence of lack of favor-

<sup>17</sup> Blotner, p. 702. Faulkner explained the special quality of light to which the title referred: *Faulkner in the University*, p. 199.

<sup>18</sup> Blotner, p. 671.

<sup>19</sup> The story of Joe and Joanna Burden presents the same patterns of confrontation and of flight and pursuit, the latter an aspect of Joanna's nymphomaniac sex games (*Light in August*, pp. 244-245).

able family life and mother love, further complicated in the lives of Joanna Burden, Gail Hightower, and Joe Christmas by psychological crippling in childhood and obsession with the past. The repression of healthy sexuality is the result of Calvinistic puritanism. Irresponsibility versus responsibility is dramatized in the confrontations between Hightower and Byron Bunch. The social pressure for conformity to tradition and convention is now extended from the class to the caste structure of society: not upper-class respectability, as in *Sanctuary*, but white supremacy controls the legal system. Mythic themes acquire greater emphasis: not the innocent Benjy but the social scapegoat, Joe Christmas, is the ironic Christ-figure. Lena is both pagan and Christian, the fertility goddess, Diana of the Wood at Nemi, and the Virgin Mary. New directions or new dimensions begin to appear in Faulkner's exploration of the human significance of his mythic domain.

But, strangely enough, Faulkner did not incorporate this powerful tragicomedy of Yoknapatawpha in the foundation upon which he built later works. Only minor characters recur, and none remember the events which ended with the killing of Joe Christmas. Faulkner's prediction concerning the effect of Joe's death remains unconfirmed: upon the "black blast" of Joe's blood "the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever" (p. 440). Even Gavin Stevens never alludes to the death of Joe and his own involvement, in arranging to have Joe's body shipped to Mrs. Hines. The story of Joanna Burden is linked with the Sartoris history by the episode of Colonel John's shooting of two carpetbaggers, told in *Sartoris* and to be retold in "Skirmish at Sartoris" in *The Unvanquished*: the carpetbaggers were her grandfather and her brother. Chick Mallison refers to "Miss Joanna Burden's mailbox" in a paragraph about Captain McLendon and some terrible deed of his in which McLendon failed to act humanely in a humanitarian crisis (*The Mansion*, pp. 185, 187). Captain McLendon was deliberately created as a recurrent character, it seems, for the episode to which Chick obliquely alludes is "Dry September," published in 1931 with "Plunkett" as the leader of the lynchers; in the version in *Collected Stories* (1950), the name is changed to John McLendon; in *Light in August*, *The Town*, and *The Mansion* he is Captain McLendon, Jackson instead of John in the last two. But despite the strange oblivion which rests upon the most striking characters of *Light in August* in the

memory of the townspeople, Faulkner was becoming more concerned with continuity and cumulative effect than he had been with the Compsons and the Bundrens.

In *Light in August*, Faulkner anticipated the direction in which he would move in the further evolution of Yoknapatawpha: the common man was raised to the role of hero, tragic or comic; the caste system has become a central subject, with the Negro as a victim and scapegoat and the white people suffering deterioration due to their obsession with the past and to the religion which assured them of their own righteousness. But Faulkner had not yet turned his attention to the fundamental effects of the caste system within Yoknapatawpha and its families.

Those effects were basic to the story of Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!* as soon as Faulkner hit upon the happy expedient of combining the Sutpens with the Compsons in developing a story which had been in his mind for years. The boy-at-the-door confrontation which was the genesis of Sutpen's Grand Design Faulkner had used in the unpublished story, "The Big Shot," about Dal Martin and an earlier version of Popeye.<sup>20</sup> More nearly parallel with the Sutpen story was "Evangeline," an unpublished story which went back to antebellum times and became a tragedy of miscegenation and of the separation of lovers which the title suggests.<sup>21</sup> After writing the short story, "Wash," early in 1934, Faulkner combined that with material from "Evangeline" and began again to tell the Sutpen story, with the title *A Dark House*.<sup>22</sup> Finally, in February, 1934, using Quentin Compson as a narrator, Faulkner conceived the plan for what he was writing in August as *Absalom, Absalom!*<sup>23</sup> In a letter to Hal Smith Faulkner explained why he used Quentin Compson but not why there are no echoes of *The Sound and the Fury*: "Quentin Compson, of the Sound & Fury, tells it, or ties it together; he is the protagonist so that it is not complete apocrypha. I used him because it is just before he is to commit suicide because of his sister, and I used his bitterness which he has projected on the South in the form of hatred of it and

<sup>20</sup> Blotner, pp. 493-494.

<sup>21</sup> Blotner, p. 828. The story of the Sutpen family, with the names chiefly those used in the novel, is told by Negroes to a young writer.

<sup>22</sup> Blotner, p. 828. The twilight mood and dark houses had recurred, as indicated above, in early stages and titles of *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August*.

<sup>23</sup> Blotner, pp. 828-830.

its people to get more out of the story itself than a historical novel would be."<sup>24</sup>

When *Absalom, Absalom!* was published, in 1936, it contained Faulkner's own map of the mythical county of which he was "Sole Owner and Proprietor," with all the places identified which had figured in the Yoknapatawpha novels so far published. (Places in novels published between 1936 and 1946 were added in the map Faulkner provided for *The Portable Faulkner*.) It is clear from the map that Sutpen's Hundred and Miss Coldfield's house are the chief additions. The story of the Sutpens in Yoknapatawpha covers from 1833 to 1910; the present action, the telling of the story and Quentin's and Miss Rosa's involvement in the final stages, occurs in September, 1909, and January, 1910. The only characters who really belong to the legend of Yoknapatawpha as it is finally established, chiefly in *Requiem for a Nun*, are General Compson, Colonel Thomas Sutpen, his French architect, Uncle Buck McCaslin, Judge Benbow, Alexander Holston, Ikkemotubbe, Colonel John Sartoris, and Major de Spain. Quentin, Mr. Compson, and Shreve reappear from *The Sound and the Fury*, but the other Compson children and Mrs. Compson are not mentioned or thought of.

In *Absalom, Absalom!* Faulkner continued, as a chapter in history, the themes connected with the rise and fall of the plantation system and the slavery and miscegenation it entailed, but he dealt with those themes more directly and evocatively than in the Sartoris and Compson stories, where only the aftermath was involved. The story of Sutpen represented the cycle from wilderness to Waste Land: exploitation of the land and the slaves, devastation by war, decline of the family and loss of manpower, barrenness of the untilled land. The Grand Design which was conceived, almost achieved, and then totally destroyed in Sutpen's lifetime subordinated human beings to one man's megalomaniac purpose: successive "boys" were turned away from the door, rejected as the boy Sutpen had been, until Sutpen's rejection of Charles Bon destroyed the dynasty and his rejection of Millie and his and her infant daughter destroyed Sutpen. To prove his manhood and maintain his human dignity, Wash cut down Sutpen with a scythe. As in *The Sound and the Fury*, the lack of marital and paternal and maternal love forced the children to seek incestuous and homosexual love among themselves.

<sup>24</sup> Blotner, p. 830.

After various trials with other narrators, the multiple-narrator method which Faulkner finally used served to develop, through Quentin's point of view, new themes which the methods of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* had suggested: the search for truth, the relativity of truth, and the inadequacy of facts to explain human experience and history. The mythic parallels are derived from Greek drama, the Old Testament, and the Renaissance: the doom of the House of Atreus; the stories of David and Absalom, David and Jonathan, and Absalom, Tamar, and Amnon; the Faust legend.

*Absalom, Absalom!* ended the first period of the Yoknapatawpha chronicles and the stories of the first group of leading families but gave little intimation of the new direction which later works would reveal, other than the continuation of Faulkner's concern with caste society and its problems. Before he could pursue the subject of miscegenation within a family and present the annals of Yoknapatawpha with full consciousness of the communal tradition and shared knowledge, he needed a new family and a new kind of character. Sutpens and Compsons were exhausted before Faulkner began to tell their stories. Attempts to use them again proved that they were unsuited to new purposes. Faulkner also needed narrators or central consciousnesses with a lively sense of both past and present, unlike Quentin, to whom the past was more vivid, and with a deep concern for the community plus a degree of personal detachment. *The Unvanquished* exhibits some awareness of these needs on Faulkner's part, but the return to the Sartoris family was a move in the wrong direction for dealing with twentieth-century Yoknapatawpha. By the time he wrote *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner had got rid of Sartorises, Compsons, and Sutpens and could deal with the themes of *Absalom, Absalom!* concerning miscegenation within the family and the family patterns in society of his own time. Not until he created the narrators in *Snopes* would he have characters who could speak for the community and recount its legends.

The genesis of the *Snopes* trilogy, as *Sartoris* shows, was coeval with the creation of Yoknapatawpha. The inspiration struck him, Faulkner said, like a bolt of lightning,<sup>25</sup> but the execution took over thirty years. "Abraham's Children," an unpublished manuscript which Faulkner put aside in late 1926 or early 1927,<sup>26</sup> was the source

<sup>25</sup> *Faulkner in the University*, p. 90.

<sup>26</sup> Blotner, pp. 526-529, 531. As Blotner notes, when Faulkner put aside "Father



of early Snopes material in some of the five published stories which Faulkner revised and incorporated into *The Hamlet*. Only the salient, essential aspects of the complex process of composition of *The Hamlet* can here be noted.

Late in 1938 Faulkner wrote to Robert Haas, at Random House, about his projected Snopes trilogy and summarized the story of Flem in the three volumes (Appendix C). *The Hamlet* follows the synopsis and completes the establishment of Frenchman's Bend which had appeared briefly and partially in *Flags in the Dust*, *As I Lay Dying*, and *Light in August*. (The Frenchman was identified in "Hand upon the Waters" as Louis Grenier.) By bringing together characters from varied scenes in other works, *The Hamlet* contributes to the building up of Yoknapatawpha society. Ab Snopes, a character in the Sartoris story in *The Unvanquished*, brought Flem and the rest of his family to Frenchman's Bend in 1902; their arrival evoked Ratliff's memories of Colonel John Sartoris, Miss Rosa Millard, and Bayard Sartoris, and Uncle Buck McCaslin, chiefly in relation to events in *The Unvanquished*. The cast of characters in *The Hamlet* includes most of the inhabitants of Frenchman's Bend and the surrounding area, except the Bundrens of *As I Lay Dying*.

The synopsis named Flem Snopes as the protagonist but gave no hint of V. K. Ratliff, the antagonist throughout the trilogy. Ratliff was not only Flem's chief opponent in Flem's conquest of Frenchman's Bend but was also a narrator and commentator. As V. K. Suratt, the sewing-machine salesman, he had appeared in *Sartoris* and had been the narrator in "Spotted Horses," possibly written before that novel. He was first named V. K. Ratliff in "A Bear Hunt" (1934). In *The Hamlet*, Ratliff narrated events in previously published stories, "Fool about a Horse" (1936) and "Barn Burning" (1939). Faulkner had considered beginning *The Hamlet* with "Barn Burning" and continuing the story of Sarty Snopes throughout the trilogy (Appendix C). In "Barn Burning" Major de Spain, owner of the barn, and his family become prominent citizens in Yoknapatawpha, after brief mention of the Major in *Absalom, Absalom!*

The Waste Land vision is continued in the central themes in *The Hamlet*, but with a new focus determined by the rural setting and

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Abraham" to write the Sartoris story, "He had set up the two poles of the fictional county which he now called Yocona" (p. 534).

characters. The female world of love and natural fertility is exploited by the male world of money and competitive striving. Women and the land are exploited by the Varners, by Flem who followed their example, and by other villagers, including Snopeses imported by Flem. Flem is an anti-hero, a kind of parody of the industrious and virtuous Horatio Alger hero. The business deals of Flem and others, often with a trickster-tricked twist, provide a basic pattern of horse-trading, literal or figurative. Horses symbolize male pride in possession and masculine power and destructiveness, contrasted with female creativity and fostering of life, human or bovine. As Flem consumes the village and usurps the Varner throne, the theme of Snopesism versus the community emerges. Ratliff entered the lists with Flem in the goat-deal, from the sidelines observed the men letting themselves be victimized by Flem in the spotted horses auction, and finally challenged Flem and was defeated by Flem, when, corrupted by greed which blinded him to Flem's trickery, he searched for buried treasure on the old Frenchman's place, violating the earth by seeking in it sterile money, not fruitfulness.

Another kind of search is involved in the story of Mink Snopes who hunted down and killed Houston and was himself hunted and captured by the law. Both man-hunts and barter are games, of sorts. The game pattern becomes literal in the checker game between Mink and Lump Snopes, Mink playing for life and Lump for money.

The consequence of male greed and spiritual impotence is a Waste Land, misused by those who derive profit, without physical toil, from the labor of those who till the soil. The law exists for the rich. Again the themes of the miscarriage of justice and the violation of the spirit of the law are dramatized by court scenes: the Tulls sued for damages from the wild horses and Mink was tried for murder. Mink's sense of social injustice and personal humiliation, like Ab's grievance in "Barn Burning," drove him to retaliation, but his revenge was murder. The substitution of Mink Snopes for the bachelor, Ernest Cotton, in the revision of "The Hound" is of vital significance in the thematic pattern of *The Hamlet* and prepares for main action in *The Mansion*.

The human symbol of the Waste Land is Eula Varner, sold to the impotent Flem: though many men lusted for her, no man was worthy of her and no man truly loved her. Respectability demanded

that her child have a father and a name but not that Eula and the child should have love. Except for the solitary Mrs. Littlejohn and the domineering Mrs. Tull, all of the other women in the village were losers in the battle of the sexes. When Flem drove off with Eula and the baby, after seeing Henry Armstid insanely digging himself into his grave, he left behind him the land itself, which could still be restored if men would use it well.

*The Hamlet* represents a turning point in the evolution of Yoknapatawpha, not only in new themes but in tone and substance and techniques. It is the first Yoknapatawpha novel in which Faulkner is fully revealed as a humorist. The social scene and the characters have changed from Jefferson and plantations to a white rural community of yeoman farmers, tenants, and sharecroppers: the plain people have succeeded the aristocrats as leading characters. There is no conflict between an aristocratic, humanistic tradition and crass materialism because the humanist, Ratliff, is of poor-white origin, differing from the villagers chiefly in being less greedy and more honest, more humorous, and more compassionate. Ratliff has found an acceptable way of life, lives it with zest, and usually prevails. He is not only a plain-folks' hero but, as teller of tales and interpreter, he is the authentic voice of the common people of Yoknapatawpha.

The next novel, *Go Down, Moses*, is centered in another rural community, the McCaslin plantation. By revisions for *The Unvanquished* (1938) before the publication of *The Hamlet*, Faulkner prepared for the development of the McCaslin story. In a passage added to "Retreat" for publication in *The Unvanquished*, Faulkner gave an account of the enlightened views on slavery held by Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy McCaslin. (Uncle Buck, without his twin, had appeared in *Absalom, Absalom!*.)

The McCaslin story was created for a specific purpose: Faulkner needed the white and Negro descendants of a pioneer white ancestor who could still be living in the 1940's. Sartorises, Compsons, and Sutpens would not serve, as Faulkner discovered when he tried to hang upon these families the story that became the McCaslin saga. The story-novel, *Go Down, Moses*, covers from 1859 to 1941, in dramatic present action, in narrated past action, or in remembered past experience, but only two generations of McCaslins are represented, Uncle Buddy and Uncle Buck and Uncle Buck's son, Isaac McCaslin.

The geography of Yoknapatawpha is materially extended for the

last time: of the three major settings in *Go Down, Moses*, only Jefferson, the least important, had previously been a well-defined part of the county. The scenes of most of the action are the McCaslin plantation, northeast of Jefferson, beyond the MacCallum farm, and the wilderness northwest of Jefferson, along the Tallahatchie River, which was the far boundary of Sutpen's Hundred. In *Go Down, Moses*, the wilderness, which had not been a major setting in a novel, is both a natural environment and a physical, spiritual, and moral force. The plantation also adds an essential feature to the microcosm of Yoknapatawpha, a working plantation spanning the whole history of the county and representing its original social and economic foundations.

The only major characters in *Go Down, Moses* who are not new are Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy McCaslin, born before 1800. Ike McCaslin did not appear in *The Hamlet*, having been removed as the proprietor of the hardware store in the revision of "Fool about a Horse"; he was mentioned as a cotton farmer. In "A Bear Hunt" he was a minor character. As a consciousness he had not been created before *Go Down, Moses*. The black descendants of old Carothers McCaslin, the Beauchamps, are completely new. In a manuscript version, the white Beauchamp family, to which Ike's mother belonged, was named Prim, not Beauchamp and their house was called Primrose, not Warwick.<sup>27</sup> When Isaac McCaslin, grandson of Carothers McCaslin, was an old man, his Beauchamp kin, Carothers' descendants through slaves, were in the seventh or eighth generation. The family relationships constitute a main theme and provide motivations for action. The themes of the destruction of the wilderness and the dying out of families involved Indians as well as whites and Negroes.

Significant changes were made in short stories for inclusion in *Go Down, Moses*. In a typescript version of "Was," Bayard Sartoris, narrator of *The Unvanquished*, was the narrator, the boy who accompanied Uncle Buck; in *Go Down, Moses*, McCaslin (Cass) Edmonds, the same age as Bayard, is the boy and Ike McCaslin remembers the story as Cass told it.<sup>28</sup> In the magazine stories, "The Old People,"

<sup>27</sup> Blotner, pp. 1050-1051. Faulkner's agent had tried unsuccessfully to sell a version of this story, with the title "Almost."

<sup>28</sup> Blotner, p. 1074. The introductory section in "Was," identifying Cass and Ike, was added in the revision.

“Lion,” and “The Bear,” which were revised for “The Old People” and “The Bear” in the novel, Quentin Compson is the narrator or the central intelligence and Ike McCaslin is a grandfather. In *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner changed Quentin, born in 1890, and Mr. Compson to Isaac McCaslin, born in 1867, and Cass Edmonds, his foster-father, and set back the time accordingly. Ike is much more fully developed than was Quentin, as the young initiate into the wilderness and the cult of the hunters. In both magazine and novel versions of “Delta Autumn,” Ike is the central intelligence, but in the former, Don Boyd, not Ike’s kinsman Roth Edmonds, was the father of the girl’s child; by substituting Roth for Don Boyd, Faulkner made the story crucial in the theme of miscegenation in the McCaslin-Beauchamp family. A typescript version of the title story, “Go Down, Moses,” gives the name of the Negro murderer as Henry Coldfield Sutpen. Ellen Sutpen, a black midwife, had delivered Gavin Stevens.<sup>29</sup> In the novel, Ellen vanishes and the murderer is named Samuel Worsham Beauchamp and is the grandson of Lucas and Molly Beauchamp, the leading characters in “The Fire and the Hearth.” Thus the significance of the evolution of *Go Down, Moses* lies in Faulkner’s final concentration on a single family, new in the annals of Yoknapatawpha, which would allow him a free hand in developing the themes of miscegenation and of family relationships between whites and Negroes.

Not only were the white McCaslins and collateral Edmonds families and their Beauchamp kin assimilated into later Yoknapatawpha novels, but the only completely new major family created after *Go Down, Moses*, the Priests, were related by marriage to the Edmonds family. Whereas at the end of *Go Down, Moses* in 1941 the only descendant of Carothers McCaslin who might carry on the family is the cast-off child of Roth Edmonds by a distant Beauchamp relative, the fifth generation of Priests is flourishing in 1961.

The McCaslin-Edmonds and the Beauchamps, including by implication Rider in “Pantaloon in Black,” are the new major characters. The change from Mr. Compson and Quentin to Cass Edmonds and Ike allows the nostalgia of a long life in Ike, as the central consciousness, and the wisdom of an active life in Cass, as a father figure. Sam Fathers, who was a character in the magazine stories

<sup>29</sup> Blotner, p. 1055.

“The Old People” and “The Bear” but was strangely omitted in “Lion,” is more fully developed as the spiritual father of the young initiate in the novel, in keeping with the greater depth of character in Ike. Boon Hogganbeck, a new character, will remain until the end of the annals. The older hunters—General Compson, Major de Spain, and Cass Edmonds—represent plantation aristocracy and Jefferson business and financial interests. The only Beauchamp in the wilderness stories is Tennie’s Jim, a servant, who thereafter disappears from the ken of his white relatives. *Go Down, Moses* also provides a link with the Snopes trilogy and other novels: Gavin Stevens is described in greater detail in “Go Down, Moses” than in *Light in August* and in both functions in a single episode, arranging for the burial of a dead Negro criminal in accordance with the wishes of the man’s grandmother.

In *Go Down, Moses*, the trickster-tricked pattern recurs in the stories about Lucas Beauchamp and his still and his treasure hunt. This pattern, however, is subordinated to the central hunt-search-quest pattern: the parody-hunt in “Was”; the legal search and Lucas’s treasure-seeking in “The Fire and the Hearth”; Rider’s search for oblivion and the man-hunt in “Pantaloons in Black”; the literal hunts in the wilderness, the initiation quest, and Ike’s detective search in the ledgers in the McCaslin trilogy; Gavin’s detective search and the off-stage man-hunt in “Go Down, Moses.”

The theme of the exploitation of land and of people is illustrated in the plantation system, the treasure hunt, and the ravages of the lumber company to which De Spain sold his land: Ikkemotubbe began the destruction of the wilderness, Sutpen continued it, and De Spain completed it. The theme of stewardship of the land, represented by Cass Edmonds, is subordinated to Ike’s concept of the land held in “the communal anonymity of brotherhood” which made him repudiate his heritage and relinquish the land. The passing of the wilderness, seen in the deaths of Old Ben, Lion, and Sam Fathers, is viewed in “Delta Autumn” in the perspective of 1941 and the larger national and international context, rounding out the whole span of the white man’s occupation from the time of the Old People to the eve of World War II. A strong sense of the continuity of life is accompanied by a largely negative view of change. These themes relate primarily to the story of Ike McCaslin’s initiation as a hunter. The spiritual heir of Sam Fathers and the legal heir of Uncle

Buck McCaslin, Ike sought by repudiating his legal heritage to remain faithful to his spiritual one, but life in the wilderness was possible only on his annual hunting trips. Thus initiation did not achieve its purpose, to enable him to play his adult role in society. The mother of Roth's child accused Ike of knowing nothing about love, and he proved that she was right by rejecting her and her child as old Carothers had rejected Tomey's Turl. The sins of incest and miscegenation for which Ike had repudiated old Carothers he condoned in Carothers Edmonds.

The Beauchamp story is one of love, fidelity, and endurance, of living on and by the land, accepting in pride and humility the McCaslin heritage, and of putting family responsibility above devotion to an abstract ideal. Lucas built a fire on the hearth when he married Molly; not without danger of quenching, it burned until Molly's death. Rider patterned his life after Lucas's and built a fire quenched only by the death of Rider's wife. Rider's love and grief contrast implicitly with the lack of love in the white family. One threat to Lucas's fire was his misuse of land by digging for treasure, a sin which Molly considered grounds for a divorce. His love for Molly made him renounce his blasphemous violation of the earth and prevent the divorce action. The McCaslin plantation is not a Waste Land.

By remaining in Faulkner's memory, Isaac McCaslin won a place in the legend of Yoknapatawpha; by remaining in Faulkner's imagination, Lucas Beauchamp became a dramatic figure in *Intruder in the Dust*.

*Intruder in the Dust* evolved from Faulkner's idea, in 1941, of a detective story about a Negro who solved a murder in self-defense, to a story about Lucas Beauchamp, already created in stories for *Go Down, Moses*, as the catalyst in a boy's initiation into reality and identity.<sup>30</sup> Because *Intruder* was planned while Faulkner was writing stories for both *Go Down, Moses* and *Knight's Gambit* and was written from February to May, 1948,<sup>31</sup> when all the stories had been completed, the ideas of Gavin Stevens, introduced into action of about 1940, confusingly reflect civil rights ideas of the time of writing, 1948.

In *Intruder in the Dust*, Gavin Stevens of "Go Down, Moses," his

<sup>30</sup> Blotner, pp. 1048, 1245.

<sup>31</sup> Blotner, pp. 1036-1037, 1247, 1249.

sister Margaret Mallison and her husband, Charles, and their son, Chick, appear for the first time as a family. (Gavin and Chick had been characters in a series of detective stories which were republished in *Knight's Gambit* in 1949.) Aleck Sander, son of Mallison's cook, Paralee, and Chick form a team like Ringo and Bayard in *The Unvanquished*. Seen from Chick's point of view, Lucas and Molly Beauchamp appear in a new light. Roth Edmonds is an off-stage character. Completely new are the Gowries, an all-male family from Beat Four. Chick's thoughts and memories serve to introduce Ike McCaslin and to list families, largely familiar to the reader, in Beat Four and Frenchman's Bend. Miss Habersham is the last descendant of a founding family of Jefferson which was first named in "Hand upon the Waters" (1939). As Molly Beauchamp's foster sister, Miss Habersham is evidently the same as Miss Worsham in "Go Down, Moses." Recurrent minor characters include the sheriff, Hope Hampton, who captured Mink in *The Hamlet*, Will Legate, one of the wilderness hunters, and Skeets McGowan, in the drugstore.

Only the Square, the jail, and the Edmonds plantation are familiar scenes. New characters demand new settings: Miss Habersham's ancient house, like Miss Worsham's, is on the edge of town, but the Mallison house and Gavin's office on the Square are new. In the country are Lucas Beauchamp's cabin and Fraser's country store and the Gowrie area, where pious and violent men worship in Caledonia Church. Chick's observations present the most vivid and detailed accounts in the chronicles of the jail, Lucas's cabin, and the countryside in spring.

Faulkner's return, after *Go Down, Moses*, to the theme and pattern of initiation was conscious, if unpremeditated: he said his "simple quick . . . whodunit jumped the traces" and became "a pretty good study of a 16 year old boy who overnight became a man."<sup>32</sup> Sixteen is the right age for Chick in this initiation story but is inconsistent in date of birth with the other works in which he appears. Ironically, Gavin Stevens, Chick's uncle and boon companion, failed to play his proper role as mentor because he clung too blindly to the vices of his ancestors, the very failing which he warned Chick against (p. 49). Miss Habersham, confident that Lucas is innocent, acted in Gavin's stead and initiated both Chick and Aleck Sander under her intrepid

<sup>32</sup> Blotner, p. 1252.



leadership. Unlike Ike's memory of his long-ago initiation, Chick's initiation is presented immediately, through his consciousness under stress while he is acting in violation of social tradition and convention. His ordeals involved the hunt and search pattern, with danger of pursuit and violence. When his active role ceased, Chick accompanied Gavin on the detective search for evidence to reveal the truth. In long-winded speeches commenting on and interpreting Chick's action, Gavin threw up a smoke-screen of words to conceal his own failure to act and its cause, his unrecognized racial prejudice. Gavin's views on the South and Southern homogeneity versus the outlanders are not to be taken as Faulkner's. Gavin does not elsewhere address himself to the issue confronting Southern men of good will which was becoming vital to Faulkner before 1940.

Chick's initiation experience dramatizes a central theme: that truth and justice are lacking in a social tradition which judges a man by the color of his skin. To discover truth and achieve justice, Chick had to assume responsibility for the almost impossible task Lucas set him: to dig up the body of Vinson Gowrie in a Beat Four graveyard. Chick resisted the temptation to flee from such outrageous responsibility and the risks involved, the condemnation of his elders and the violence of the Gowries. When the mob waiting to lynch Lucas fled before the knowledge that Crawford Gowrie, a white man, was a fratricide, Chick was tempted in despair to reject his people, but he found that he could not "repudiate, relinquish" his heritage but must "stand with them unalterable and impregnable" and share their shame and expiation (p. 138). Faulkner said that Chick shows in action what his essay, "The American Dream," shows in theory: "Somebody must *do* something about injustice."<sup>33</sup>

By the end of the 1940's Faulkner had turned his primary concern from the negative aspects of his mythic society to the more positive ones, from the backward-looking, passive aristocrats to the common people living and enduring in the present and to a new kind of aristocrat re-examining the values of the past, realizing that the past lives in the present, and asserting the worth and responsibility of the individual. Ike McCaslin's relinquishment and repudiation and failure to do anything for the Negroes he professed to admire is coun-

<sup>33</sup>William Faulkner, *Faulkner at Nagano*, Robert A. Jelliffe, ed. (Tokyo: Kenkyusha Ltd., 1956), p. 97.

terbalanced by Chick Mallison's rejection of repudiation and relinquishment and his acceptance of full responsibility for and in his community.

The seventeen years between the publication of *The Hamlet* and that of *The Town* was a delay in the completion of *Snopes* but not a suspension of further evolution of Yoknapatawpha in less predictable directions: the McCaslin story in *Go Down, Moses* and the development of Gavin Stevens as a lawyer-detective in *Knight's Gambit* and *Intruder in the Dust*. Beginning in 1943 Faulkner had also been much occupied in planning and writing *A Fable*.<sup>34</sup>

The only Yoknapatawpha publications in the first half of the 1950's, *Requiem for a Nun* and two short stories which were incorporated into it, were of vital importance to the chronicles of the county. The title and initial concept for *Requiem for a Nun* went back to 1933, when Faulkner was working on *Absalom, Absalom!*. In October, he wrote Hal Smith about his story, with "a good title," and "on the esoteric side," about "a nigger woman." The manuscript, dated "17 December, 1933," began with a description of the jail.<sup>35</sup> The combination of the story of Temple Drake with that of Nancy grew out of Faulkner's speculation about what happened to Temple.<sup>36</sup> Having put aside *Requiem* after a "false start" and continued writing *Absalom, Absalom!*, Faulkner finally returned to *Requiem* early in 1950 and began writing the story of Nancy and Temple as a play. There were apparently three reasons for this departure from fictional form. Joan Williams, a college student, had sought his advice on creative writing and he conceived the idea of planning dramatic situations for her to develop in dialogue; in 1935, Ruth Ford had asked Faulkner to write a play for her to act in; a play might bring quicker financial profits than a novel. On February 13 he sent Joan notes on the opening of Act One.<sup>37</sup>

It is possible here merely to indicate how the dramatic portion of *Requiem for a Nun* is related to earlier and later Yoknapatawpha works. It is a morality play concerning Nancy Mannigoe of "That Evening Sun Go Down" (1931), condemned for murder in 1936, and Temple Drake and her husband, Gowan Stevens, of *Sanctuary*.

<sup>34</sup> Blotner, p. 1152.

<sup>35</sup> Blotner, pp. 818, 826.

<sup>36</sup> *Faulkner in the University*, p. 96.

<sup>37</sup> Blotner, pp. 1308, 1303, 1311-1312, 1309.

Gavin Stevens, uncle of Gowan, acts as lawyer-confessor to bring Temple to face and admit her responsibility and guilt for the situation which led to Nancy's crime, Temple's determination to elope with the brother of Red, her lover in *Sanctuary*, abandoning her little boy and taking with her the infant girl whom Nancy murdered to bring Temple to her senses. Temple cast new light on her actions in *Sanctuary*, admitting that she chose evil and liked her life at Miss Reba's. The most curious and significant detail in the recapitulation of the past is the disclosure of the fact that Gavin was in the court during the trial of Lee Goodwin when Temple committed perjury. Horace Benbow, Goodwin's lawyer, is not mentioned. Figuratively speaking, when Horace fled back to Kinston after the trial, in 1929, he stepped out of his shoes and Gavin stepped into them. After Ben Wasson cut Horace's role for *Sartoris*, Faulkner phased Horace out of Yoknapatawpha in *Sanctuary*. Then Faulkner developed Gavin to fill the need for a lawyer in Jefferson to serve as a detective-hero.

By the time Faulkner returned to *Snopes* and was planning *The Town*, Gavin's potentialities as an idealistic, chivalric, and articulate lawyer seem to have suggested some of the radical changes Faulkner made from the original synopsis.

The prefatory note to *The Town* recognizes the discrepancies and inconsistencies between it and *The Hamlet*. The time of action of *The Town*, 1908 or 1909 to 1929, covers that of *Sartoris*, *Sanctuary*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, and the end of the Sutpen story. None of the three narrators, Chick Mallison, V. K. Ratliff, and Gavin Stevens, is hinted at in the synopsis (Appendix C). The anecdotal method is suitable for retelling old tales as well as telling new ones. Apparently the creation of the narrators in the 1940's and of Linda determined the course of the non-*Snopes* narrative in *The Town* and *The Mansion*. Gavin, the chivalric hero, Ratliff, the shrewd commentator, and Chick, the observer-listener who speaks for Jefferson, represent roughly, according to Michael Millgate, theory, truth, and fact.<sup>38</sup> Of the 109 characters, all of the major ones are recurrent; twenty-two new characters will continue into *The Mansion*. The Stevens-Mallison family includes for a time Gowan Stevens, of *Sanctuary* and *Requiem*, now identified as the grandson of the brother of Judge Stevens (Gavin's father), not Gavin's nephew, as in *Requiem*

<sup>38</sup> Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 237.

for a Nun. The low visibility in *The Town* of Aleck Sander, Chick's co-initiate in *Intruder in the Dust*, indicates the absence in *Snopes* of concern with race relations. Melisandre Backus, a descendant of Melisandre in "My Grandmother Millard" (1943), is introduced into *The Town* because Gavin will later marry her, as readers of "Knight's Gambit" already know. The role of Eula's lover, provided for in the synopsis, is filled by Manfred de Spain, son of Major de Spain. Ratliff's version of the Snopesian past—Ab's "souring," Flem's progress, and the "farming" of Snopeses by Flem—is essential to the continuity of the trilogy, especially in light of the long interval between publication of *The Hamlet* and *The Town*. The whole tribe of Snopeses appear or are referred to. Will Varner and his wife have roles in the plot. Doc Peabody is one of the minor recurrent professional and business men and public officials. Significant new characters, foreshadowing perhaps *The Reivers*, are Mr. Buffaloe, Maurice Priest, and Lucius Hogganbeck. The name *Hogganbeck* evokes from Chick the story of the hunting group in *Go Down, Moses*. Events from *Sartoris* are recalled, as part of the town legend, and new details are added about Colonel John, Miss Jenny, and young Bayard. Buddy McCallum has a minor role. The Sartorises have consistently been part of the legend; since General Compson was introduced as one of the hunters in *Go Down, Moses*, the Compson name has tardily been figuring in the communal memory.

Since little action occurs outside of Jefferson, no major settings are added, but specific buildings are brought into focus: the two banks, the Mallison house, the power plant, the water tower, the Snopes boarding house, and the De Spain house which becomes Flem's mansion. Parchman is now named as the state penitentiary. Gavin's view from Seminary Hill suggests the creator viewing his creation and its history (*The Town*, pp. 315–316).

The pattern of Flem's progress continues in *The Town*, with Ratliff and Gavin holding the fort and toting the load for the community against the invading Snopeses. Flem outsmarted himself in his plot against Tomey's Turl and Tom-Tom and was the trickster-tricked in "Centaur in Brass" (1932). In the version in *The Town*, *Suratt* is changed to *Ratliff*, Mayor Hoxey is replaced by Manfred de Spain, and Gowan Stevens is added. After Flem became vice-president of the bank, he changed his goal from material success to respectability. Thereafter the process of adding Snopeses changed to one of sub-

tracting each Snopes who threatened Flem's community status: Montgomery Ward Snopes, whose story is not ended in *The Town*, was sent to Parchman for bootlegging, rather than for purveying pornography; I. O. Snopes of "Mule in the Yard" (1934) was banished by Flem in the novel version of the episode, in which Gavin and Ratliff also are added. As in these episodes, when Flem's motive seemed to be to maintain civic virtue, Gavin was obliged to join him. Gavin's opposition dwindled to his attempt to rescue Linda from Flem and send her away from Jefferson. Gavin as the courtly lover was engaged in a quest for the love of Eula with no hope or even desire of displacing Manfred de Spain as Eula's lover. As Linda grew up, Gavin transferred some of his devotion to her, and male competition again became a parody of knightly combat: as Gavin had fought Manfred in defense of Eula's honor, he fought Matt Levitt in defense of his own honor. The Gavin-Eula story was apparently conceived after "Knight's Gambit" was written, in which Melisandre had had no rival in Yoknapatawpha. The Gavin-Linda story bears no resemblance to the story of Flem's wife's child in the synopsis. The romantic fidelity of the middle-aged lawyer toward a high-school girl may reflect Faulkner's own deepening interest in Joan Williams, revealed in the letters he wrote her during the 1950's.<sup>39</sup> Gavin is a quixotic figure, portrayed with sympathy, humor, and irony, but by no means Faulkner's persona or mouthpiece.

The basic theme involving Snopesism is the opposition between the community, with its tradition of humanism, championed by Gavin and Ratliff, and Snopesism, with its materialistic values and exploitation of people. Respectability, however, brought Flem and the town into accord: the town connived at the infidelity of Eula, and Flem adopted community values in striving for respectability until disclosure of Eula's guilt would serve him better than concealment. Manfred's illicit physical love is paralleled by Gavin's courtly love, unrewarded because he so chose. Gavin's and Ratliff's disinterested concern for community welfare stopped short of effective responsibility: as bachelors, neither was fully involved in community life, and neither used his special competence in the struggle against Snopesism. Ratliff, however, aided Wall Snopes financially in estab-

<sup>39</sup>For example, the letter quoted by Blotner on p. 1395 dwells on Faulkner's capacity for unhappiness and his sense of the disparity in their ages, Joan being twenty-three and Faulkner fifty-four.

lishing a business which, with no sacrifice of humanistic principles, was of profit to Wall and of value to the community.

In his actions, V. K. Ratliff best illustrates a theme that is becoming apparent as basic to Faulkner's concepts: that life is motion and that the only alternative to motion and change is stagnation and death.<sup>40</sup> Ratliff changed his means of transportation and his wares to keep abreast of new developments. Although Gavin, as a chivalric hero, is in motion, Eula and Linda by their very images convey a sense of motion (*The Town*, pp. 132–135). Gavin and Ratliff imperfectly exemplify the truth that engagement with reality demands acceptance of change and responsibility, but at least they recognized the danger that lies in rigid adherence to old ways and ideas and in setting a higher value on abstractions than on individuals.

*The Town* ended in 1929, the year in which *Sartoris* was published; therefore the fictional version of reality upon which Faulkner built his initial concept of *Snopes* ends in *The Town*. In *The Mansion* Faulkner could choose not only from the past of Yoknapatawpha but also from what was provided for his creative imagination by the march of time from 1929–1946, the cut-off point of *The Mansion*. *The Hamlet* introduced Mink Snopes. *The Town* includes Mink in accounts of preceding action. But the combination in *The Mansion* of the entire story of Mink, from 1908 to 1946, along with the story of Jefferson from 1937 to 1946 was scarcely predictable. A third time-period, dealt with reminiscently, covers *The Hamlet* and *The Town*, from 1902 to 1929.

Because *The Mansion* not only ends *Snopes* but may have been intended to be Faulkner's last Yoknapatawpha novel, it is virtually a curtain call of the entire Jefferson cast. The Sartoris family and events are still the most firmly established. New light is cast on young Bayard's psychological problems. The story of old Bayard recalls the exploits of Flem and Byron Snopes when Bayard was a banker. Horace Benbow is forgotten, Gavin being in his shoes, but Aunt Jenny and Narcissa, as young Bayard's widow, belong to Bayard's story. But, curiously enough, only Mink Snopes remembered Colonel John Sartoris for his achievement as a railroad builder. The odd omission of the Compsons is finally rectified. Jason IV is an active character, and the story of the rest of the family is summarized,

<sup>40</sup>Faulkner, Foreword, *The Mansion*.

including Jason's activities since 1929: Jason took over the hardware store from Earl Triplett as Earl had taken it over from Ike McCaslin. Gavin Stevens, we learn, was at Harvard with Quentin's friend Spode, but there is no indication that Gavin knew Quentin. Gavin and Chick do not recall their own past except that in *The Town* and the part of "Knight's Gambit" pertaining to the marriage of Gavin and Melisandre. The race question as a moral issue and a social fact involves only Linda's good works and the Negro high school principal's statement of his stand. The focus on Jefferson minimizes allusions to the plantation and the wilderness, but Lucas, who figured in Jefferson events, is strangely forgotten.

Few new scenes are added, but the inclusion of material from *The Hamlet*, especially the elaboration of Mink's story, brings together most fully in a single volume Frenchman's Bend and Jefferson. The final episode showing Frenchman's Bend characters in Jefferson is Mink's trip to Jefferson to buy buckshot. Flem's development of Eula Acres, a subdivision on the old Compson property, leads to major action. From his mansion Flem went to the cemetery in Jefferson: from Flem's mansion Mink fled and went to earth in Frenchman's Bend where his cabin had been.

Parchman, not the jail in Jefferson, is a major setting at intervals during Mink's imprisonment, from 1908–1946. Another non-Yoknapatawpha setting is added, Pascagoula, where the deaf Linda worked in a shipbuilding yard during World War II. The climax of Gavin's romance with Linda thus occurs on the Gulf Coast where William and Estelle Faulkner had spent their honeymoon and where Faulkner took Jean Stein in 1955, on a tour to show her "what Mississippi was like."<sup>41</sup> Rose Hill, which became Gavin's home after his marriage to Melisandre, had previously been a major setting in "Knight's Gambit." The trips to New York by Gavin and by Gavin and Ratliff may impress readers with the wisdom of Faulkner's previous policy to keep his characters within Yoknapatawpha, Mississippi, and the Mid-South, their native habitat.

The cast of characters in *The Mansion* affected the narrative in both methods and substance. The three narrators of *The Town* continue their function in "Linda," the middle third of *The Mansion*, but only the omniscient author, articulating what Mink experienced, could

<sup>41</sup> Blotner, pp. 624, 1586.

tell Mink's story in the first book, "Mink." In "Linda," one chapter is narrated by Montgomery Ward Snopes, the only Snopes so honored. The last section, "Flem," combines the two methods by putting into the third person what concerns the three narrators, with a single focus in each chapter, dealing with Mink as before, and finally, in the last chapter, using the third person to represent the points of view of Gavin, Ratliff, and Mink. Current national and international issues are introduced in the story of Linda, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War and a card-carrying member of the Communist party. This part of Linda's story seems to be a modification of Faulkner's original plan to send Eula's daughter "overseas in the War with ambulance corps" (Appendix C). The political campaign between Clarence Snopes and Colonel Devries, who had won a Congressional Medal of Honor as the commander of Negro troops in World War II, provides an opportunity for the only account in the Yoknapatawpha chronicles of Mississippi politics. In his synopsis, Faulkner could not predict the specific issues which "crooked politics" would involve after 1938. Clarence's career is reviewed from his youth as a bully in Frenchman's Bend until Ratliff, suitably outtricking Clarence, won his final victory and made Clarence retire from politics. The magazine version, "By the People" (1955), brings the action nearer the present, after the Korean War.

After Jason Compson outsmarted himself and Flem profited by the postwar building boom to develop a subdivision on what had been Compson property, Flem retired from such competitive sports and left the field to Orestes Snopes, in his feud with old Meadowfill. Gavin's intervention prevented murder and achieved a happy ending for Essie Meadowfill and her veteran husband, a pair who, like Wall Snopes and his wife in *The Town*, may help, by their love and toil, to redeem the Waste Land.

The story of Gavin, the courtly lover who refused one lady and married another, was fused with the story of Mink, hero of a revenge tragedy, when Linda involved Gavin in her petition for the release of Mink from Parchman. Linda thus made Gavin an accessory to murder. Gavin used his detective skills in trying to intercept Mink before he reached Jefferson; Mink's success was Gavin's defeat. Four patterns of action from the whole trilogy are involved in the Gavin-Linda story: women versus men; courtly love; revenge—Linda's revenge against Flem for Eula's suicide and against Gavin for refus-



ing to marry her, and perhaps for taking her advice and marrying another; the trickster-tricked, in that Gavin was usually successful as a lawyer in outwitting criminals. The quest pattern becomes Mink's quest for revenge, involving his journey from Parchman to Memphis to Jefferson in "Flem," like that to Jefferson and back in "Mink," to secure the means of murder and execute the deed. The flight of Mink and the man-hunt at the end are comic: Linda gives Mink the gun and shows him the way out of Flem's house, and Gavin and Ratliff track him down to give him money from Linda.

Snopesism has ceased to threaten Jefferson, but only because it has proved self-destroying and because Ratliff acted effectively against Clarence's lust for power, which was more dangerous than Flem's goals and was a threat to the nation, Clarence having set his political sights on Congress. Flem is dead. The men of good will have survived and have learned that to trust in God is not enough: He must be able to trust in them. Gavin's journey toward reality has ended, but he is not victorious. A kind of Pygmalion, he refused to take his Galatea off her pedestal, and in her moral fall from it she almost crushed him. His capacity for unrequited love was self-denying and life-denying. Like all other Yoknapatawpha men, he was not brave enough or great enough for goddesses like Eula or even lesser ones like Linda.

Two positive themes are represented by Ratliff and Mink. Ratliff is adaptable, tolerant, and compassionate, but in his quest for amelioration of the human condition he never assumes the responsibility for the future which is demanded of a father and head of a family. His wisdom is gained through detachment, not involvement. Mink may seem an odd vehicle for a positive theme, but he must be judged in terms of his inherent limitations, due to extreme poverty. Mink possessed unshakable integrity according to his lights, scrupulous honesty, a passionate sense of social justice, and a willingness to die if need be to assert his human dignity. The account in *The Mansion* of Mink's single-minded determination to carry out his resolve after thirty-eight years in Parchman and of his courage in facing and coping with the strange new world he found and playing the game according to the rules as he conceived them arouses sympathy and admiration. And whereas Gavin and Ratliff finally reduced living men to the indignity of "the pore sons of bitches," Mink envisioned himself in death as equal to all the great and beautiful, "equal to any,

good as any, brave as any . . . among the shining phantoms and dreams which are the milestones of the long human recording."

Faulkner provided a kind of dual finale to the Chronicles of Yoknapatawpha. The first, the historical finale, is the prologues in *Requiem for a Nun* in which the authorial bardic voice recounts the official version of the history of Yoknapatawpha. As Michael Millgate said, Faulkner saw himself "as the historian and genealogist and interpreter of Yoknapatawpha County, because fundamental to his ambition as an artist . . . was the realisation of his world on paper, in fiction, with all the fullness and absolute solidity it had long achieved in his imagination."<sup>42</sup>

In the first prologue, "The Courthouse," Gavin Stevens, narrator in the magazine version, "A Name for the City" (1950), is replaced by the bardic voice. There is only one new major name, Thomas Jefferson Pettigrew. A Ratcliffe was the first Indian agent. The three founders are together given permanent status: Alexander Holston, Dr. Habersham, and Louis Grenier, founder of Frenchman's Bend. The more familiar aristocratic names are now in the second group: Sartoris, Compson, Stevens, and Sutpen, and finally McCaslin. New episodes are the exodus of the Indians after Mohataha signed away their land and the naming of Jefferson. The building of the courthouse, the first full-scale community activity, involved all of the leading settlers and established the physical shape of the town. The history of the courthouse is given until 1950.

In "The Golden Dome," Faulkner shows Yoknapatawpha to be "the keystone in the universe"<sup>43</sup> by tracing the cosmic process which produced Yoknapatawpha and the Golden Dome at Jackson.

The third prologue, "The Jail," shows the jail to be older than the courthouse; it witnessed much that is new in county annals, from the arrival of the first explorers to the time when animals were frightened by the shadow of mail planes. When Jefferson was transformed by modern improvements, the log walls of the jail endured beneath the surface. Old stories are retold and new ones added. The whole dizzy process of change in Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha history to 1950 is covered.

The three edifices symbolizing human justice are transcended at

<sup>42</sup>Michael Millgate, " 'The Firmament of Man's History': Faulkner's Treatment of the Past," *Mississippi Quarterly*, Supplement, XXV (Spring, 1972), 35.

<sup>43</sup>Stein, "William Faulkner," p. 141.

the end when the focus shifts to eternity and divine, not human, justice. The themes are characteristic of early and late Yoknapatawpha chronicles: self-reliance versus the welfare state, individual responsibility versus delegation of responsibility to authority. The courthouse symbolizes both the American Dream and justice defeated by law; there was, however, no reign of innocence and justice before social institutions were established. The episode of the jailor's daughter, developed also in *Intruder in the Dust*, is the nucleus of the themes of the continuity of time and the affirmation of life. The scratched signature of the girl speaks of the past to the present as do the creations of the artist. Because Faulkner left his scratch, we "Outlanders" come to Oxford to gaze at the actual pane of glass inscribed "Jane T. Cook."<sup>44</sup> The theme of the Outlander dissolves the boundaries of Yoknapatawpha and demonstrates that indeed the county is the microcosm of man's history.

But the oracular voice was not that of Faulkner's last persona. In *The Reivers*, a kind of coda to the Yoknapatawpha chronicles, Faulkner changed his tone to that of the tender intimacy of personal reminiscence addressed to loved ones. As Colonel William Falkner had stimulated Faulkner's youthful imagination and the proud and violent ghost of Colonel John presided over *Sartoris*, so Faulkner's own grandfather dominated his memories and the wise and benevolent Boss Priest is a living presence in *The Reivers*. The narrator is both the child who lived the adventure in 1905 and the grandfather telling it in 1961.

Although the origin of *The Reivers* lay in the plan Faulkner described to Robert Haas in 1940 (Appendix D), the facts that no other work was planned after *The Reivers*, that Faulkner, in reference to this last novel, said, "I been aiming to quit all this,"<sup>45</sup> and that elements in *The Reivers* which are unrelated to the original plan suggest a valediction to Yoknapatawpha, all suggest that Faulkner considered this his last work. When he said in 1956, "My last book will be the Doomsday Book, the Golden Book of Yoknapatawpha," he may have envisioned some kind of pseudo-historical register,<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup>E. O. Hawkins, "Jane Cook and Cecilia Farmer," *Mississippi Quarterly*, XVIII (Autumn, 1965), 248-251.

<sup>45</sup>"Mr. Mack Remembers Bill," William Faulkner Souvenir Edition, *The Oxford Eagle* (April 22, 1965), Part 3, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup>Stein, p. 141. James B. Meriwether insists on a strictly literal interpretation of "Golden Book" and "Doomsday Book" and denies that the terms apply to *The Reivers*:

but he certainly had, tucked away in his mind, the idea for *The Reivers* already outlined to Haas. One is not surprised to learn that the *The Tempest* was Faulkner's favorite play by Shakespeare in 1961.<sup>47</sup> *The Reivers* was Faulkner's "Tempest," published shortly before fate broke the Southern Prospero's magic wand, the pencil with which he created Yoknapatawpha.

The first part of *The Reivers* integrates it with the chief tales of the county. The first scene, Maury Priest's livery stable near the Square, and the homes of Boss Priest and his wife and of Lucius and his parents and his brothers correspond in locations and family situations to those of Faulkner's own family when he was a child. The initial episode of Boon Hogganbeck gives Lucius an occasion to identify Boon, with suitable changes for his new age and role, and to refer to the hunters of *Go Down, Moses*. In this prelude to his adventures, Lucius manages to mention most of the leading families and townspeople. Colonel Bayard Sartoris and Boss Priest were rival bankers, a rivalry that impelled Boss Priest to buy an auto, in defiance of Bayard, and thus to lead Boon and Lucius into temptation. Lucius tells of Flem's rise and his murder, and reveals that Roth Edmonds and Uncle Ike McCaslin are still living in 1961. Faulkner introduced enough links with other tales to make *The Reivers* an effective ending to his chronicles of Yoknapatawpha.

The initiation pattern, closely parallel to that in *Go Down, Moses* and *Intruder in the Dust*, is combined with the marvelous journey of quest romance.<sup>48</sup> The flight from Jefferson and the races in Parsham Junction recall the flight and hunt sequences in *Go Down, Moses*. Like Chick's initiation, that of Lucius includes women, with the new twist that the women are Miss Reba and Minnie and Everbe Corinthia, all from the familiar whorehouse in Memphis. The male mentors, two of whom are new, are equally untraditional: Boon Hogganbeck, Uncle Ned, and Uncle Parsham.

<sup>47</sup>"The Novel Faulkner Never Wrote: His *Golden Book* or *Doomsday Book*," *American Literature*, XLII (March, 1970), 93-96. Such a work as Meriwether stipulates could scarcely be called a novel. *The Reivers* was Faulkner's last book and was apparently so written.

<sup>47</sup>Blotner, p. 1787.

<sup>48</sup>In the article to which James Meriwether took exception, I dealt with *The Reivers* as a finale to the Yoknapatawpha chronicles and as a combination of initiation and quest romance: "*The Reivers*: The Golden Book of Yoknapatawpha County," *Modern Fiction Studies*, XIV (Spring, 1967), 95-113. I no longer use *saga* to refer to the Yoknapatawpha fiction.

The themes are fitting for this serio-comic finale. In Yoknapatawpha County the automobile is the most significant symbol of change and motion; the coming of the motor age was a minor theme in *The Town*, and the horse and buggy had been a symbol of premotor days in *The Hamlet*. *The Reivers* achieves a happy conjunction of the horse and the motor age. The McCaslin-Edmonds-Priest story returns to the racial theme of *Go Down, Moses*, which had been suspended in *Snopes*. Young Lucius had a simple answer to the problem of interracial relations: act like a true gentleman to everyone. As his mother had taught him to do, Lucius called Ned McCaslin "Uncle Ned," in recognition of the McCaslin blood, and he thankfully accepted Uncle Parsham as a surrogate grandfather. *The Reivers* also offers a contrast to *Go Down, Moses* in presenting a white family, the Priests, united by love that insured their survival through five generations until 1961. What Lucius had known of love and good breeding enabled him, as the champion of Everbe Corinthia, to win her over to virtue: the infant Lucius Priest Hogganbeck, the legitimate son of Everbe and Boon, is happier in his parents than was the child of Roth Edmonds and the Girl in "Delta Autumn." The success of the initiation of Lucius is evident in his role as a grandfather. He learned well from Boss Priest and from Uncle Ned the lesson of responsibility. As Boss Priest said: "A gentleman accepts the responsibility of his actions and bears the burden of their consequences, even when he did not instigate them but only acquiesced to them. . . ." (p. 302).

Lucius dried his tears and lived with his memories. The sun breaks through the clouds at the end of the long day of the author and his creation. *The Reivers* is truly a "Golden Book of Yoknapatawpha County."

## Appendix

- A. Chronology: Dates of publication of works dealt with in *The Evolution of Yoknapatawpha* and related short stories and dates of composition of unpublished works and of published works when publication did not follow immediately. After the entry, in parentheses, names of major characters on first appearance and titles of related stories. Information is based on Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*. Page

- number references to novels in the text are those of the Random House edition, of the date in the *Chronology*.
- "Elmer" (1925).  
 "Father Abraham" (1926-1927).  
*Flags in the Dust* (completed, September, 1927), 1973.  
*(The Sound and the Fury*, written, spring-summer, 1928).  
*Sartoris*, January, 1929.  
*(Sanctuary*, written, January to May, 1929).  
*The Sound and the Fury*, October, 1929.  
*As I Lay Dying* (written, October to December, 1929), October, 1930.  
*Sanctuary*, February, 1931.  
 "That Evening Sun Go Down," March, 1931 (first version written in 1927); *(The Sound and the Fury; Requiem for a Nun)*.  
 "Hair," May, 1931 (Gavin Stevens).  
 "Spotted Horses," June, 1931 (*The Hamlet*).  
 "The Hound," August, 1931 (*The Hamlet*).  
 "A Justice," September, 1931 (*The Sound and the Fury; Go Down, Moses*).  
 "Centaur in Brass," February, 1932 (*The Hamlet*).  
 "Smoke," April 1932 (*Knight's Gambit*).  
*Light in August*, October, 1932.  
 "There Was a Queen," January, 1933 (*Sartoris*).  
 "Wash," February, 1934 (*Absalom, Absalom!*).  
 "A Bear Hunt," February, 1934 (V. K. Ratliff).  
 "Mule in the Yard," August, 1934 (*The Town*).  
 "Ambuscade," September, 1934 (*The Unvanquished*).  
 "Raid," November, 1934 (*The Unvanquished*).  
 "Skirmish at Sartoris," April, 1935 (*The Unvanquished*).  
 "Lion," December, 1935 (*Go Down, Moses*).  
 "Fool about a Horse," August, 1936 (*The Hamlet*).  
*Absalom, Absalom!*, October, 1936 (CHRONOLOGY, GENEALOGY, MAP).  
 "The Unvanquished," November, 1936 ("Riposte in Tertio," *The Unvanquished*).  
 "Vendée," December, 1936 (*The Unvanquished*).  
 "Barn Burning," June, 1939 (*The Hamlet*).  
 "Hand upon the Waters," November, 1939 (*Knight's Gambit*).  
*The Hamlet, Snopes I*, April, 1940.  
 "A Point of Law," June, 1940 (*Go Down, Moses*).  
 "The Old People," September, 1940 (*Go Down, Moses*).  
 "Pantaloon in Black," October, 1940 (*Go Down, Moses*).  
 "Gold Is Not Always," November, 1940 (*Go Down, Moses*).  
 "Tomorrow," November, 1940 (*Knight's Gambit*).  
 "The Tall Men," May, 1941 (McCallums, *Sartoris*).  
 "Two Soldiers," March, 1942 (Griers, Frenchman's Bend).  
 "The Bear," May, 1942 (*Go Down, Moses*).  
*Go Down, Moses And Other Stories*, May, 1942 ("And Other Stories" was omitted in the second printing and thereafter).

- "Delta Autumn," May-June, 1942 (*Go Down, Moses*).
- "Shingles for the Lord," February, 1943 (Griers, Frenchman's Bend).
- "My Grandmother Millard and General Bedford Forrest and the Battle of Harrykin Creek," March-April, 1943 (*The Unvanquished*).
- "Shall Not Perish," July-August, 1943 (Griers, Frenchman's Bend).
- The Portable Faulkner*, April, 1946 (MAP, "*The Sound and the Fury* Appendix").
- "An Error in Chemistry," June, 1946 (*Knight's Gambit*).
- Intruder in the Dust*, September, 1948.
- Knight's Gambit*, November, 1949.
- "A Name for the City," October, 1950 (*Requiem for a Nun*).
- "The Jail," September-October, 1951 (*Requiem for a Nun*).
- Requiem for a Nun*, September, 1951.
- "Race at Morning," March, 1955 (Ike McCaslin and hunters, *Go Down, Moses*).
- "By the People," October, 1955 (*The Mansion*).
- The Town, Snopes II*, May, 1957.
- "The Waifs," May, 1957 (*The Town*).
- The Mansion, Snopes III*, November, 1959.
- The Reivers*, June, 1962.

#### B. Sartoris

This Snopes was a young man, member of a seemingly inexhaustible family which for the last ten years had been moving to town in dribbles from a small settlement known as Frenchman's Bend. Flem, the first Snopes, had appeared unheralded one day behind the counter of a small restaurant on a side street, patronized by country folk. With this foothold and like Abraham of old, he brought his blood and legal kin household by household, individual by individual, into town, and established them where they could gain money. Flem himself was presently manager of the city light and water plant, and for the following few years he was a sort of handy man to the municipal government; and three years ago, to old Bayard's profane astonishment and unconcealed annoyance, he became vice president of the Sartoris bank, where already a relation of his was a bookkeeper.

He still retained the restaurant, and the canvas tent in the rear of it, in which he and his wife and baby had passed the first few months of their residence in town; and it served as an alighting-place for incoming Snopeses, from which they spread to small third-rate businesses of various kinds—grocery stores, barber-shops (there was one, an invalid of some sort, who operated a second-hand peanut roaster)—where they multiplied and flourished.

*Sartoris* (New York: Random House, 1929), pp. 172-173.

C. Synopsis, *Snopes Trilogy*

“The title is THE PEASANTS. Has to do with Flem Snopes’ beginning in the country, as he gradually consumes a small village until there is nothing left in it for him to eat. His last coup gains him a foothold in Jefferson, to which he moves with his wife, leaving his successor kinsmen to carry on in the country.

“The second volume is KUS IN URBE. He begins to trade on his wife’s infidelity, modest blackmail of her lover, rises from half owner of back street restaurant through various grades of city employment, filling each post he vacates with another Snopes from the country, until he is secure in the presidency of a bank, where he can even stop blackmailing his wife’s lover.

“The third volume is ILIUM FALLING. This is the gradual eating up of Jefferson by Snopes [*sic*], who corrupt the local government with crooked politics, buy up all the colonial homes and tear them down and chop up the lots into subdivisions.

“This is the plot, if any. Flem gets his wife because she is got with child by a sweetheart who clears out for Texas; for a price he protects her good name. No, before this, his youngest brother tries to keep his father from setting fire to his landlord’s barn, believes he has caused his father to be shot, and runs away from home, goes west, has a son which the other Snopes know nothing about.

“Flem moves to town with his wife whose child pretty soon sees what a sorry lot Snopes are. She goes to New York (has money from her actual father) and is overseas in the War with ambulance corps, where she meets the son of the boy who ran away from home, finds him a kinsman, finds how his father has tried to eradicate the Snopes from him. After the war she brings together this Snopes and the daughter of a collateral Snopes who also looks with horror on Snopeses. She and her remote cousin marry, have a son who is the scion of the family.

“What this will tell is, that this flower and cream, this youth, whom his mother and father fondly believed would raise the family out of the muck, turns out to have all the vices of all Snopes and none of the virtues—the ruthlessness and firmness—of his banker uncle, the chief of the family. He has not enough courage and honesty to be a successful bootlegger nor enough industry to be the barber for which he is finally trained after Flem has robbed his mother of what money her father and husband left her. He is in bad shape with syphilis and all the little switch-tailed nigger whores call him by his first name in private and he likes it.

“By this time Flem has eaten up Jefferson too. There is nothing else he can gain, and worse than this, nothing else he wants. He even has no respect for the people, the town, he has victimised, let alone the parasite kin who batten on him. He reaches the stage where there is just one more joke he can play on his environment, his parasite kin and all. So he leaves all his property to the worthless boy, knowing that no other Snopes has



sense enough to hold onto it, and that at least this boy will get rid of it in the way that will make his kinfolks the maddest.”

William Faulkner, in an undated letter to Robert Haas, received December 15, 1938.

Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 1006–1007.

#### D. Synopsis, *The Reivers*

“It is a sort of Huck Finn—a normal boy of about twelve or thirteen, a big, warmhearted, courageous, honest, utterly unreliable white man with the mentality of a child, an old negro family servant, opinionated, querulous, selfish, fairly unscrupulous, and in his second childhood, and a prostitute not very young any more and with a great deal of character and generosity and common sense, and a stolen race horse which none of them actually intended to steal. The story is how they travel for a thousand miles from hand to mouth trying to get away from the police long enough to return the horse. The white man knows the police have been put on his trail by his harridan of a wife whom he has fled from. Actually, the police are trying to return the boy to his parents to get the reward. The story lasts a matter of weeks. During that time the boy grows up, becomes a man, and a good man, mostly because of the influence of the whore. He goes through in miniature all the experiences of youth which mold the man’s character. They happen to be the very experiences which in his middle class parents’ eyes stand for debauchery and degeneracy and actual criminality; through them he learned courage and honor and generosity and pride and pity. He has been absent only weeks, but as soon as his mother sees him again, she knows what has happened to him. She weeps, says, ‘He is not my baby anymore.’ ”

William Faulkner, in a letter to Robert Haas, May, 1940.  
In Blotner, pp. 1044–1045.