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Faulkner's Mississippi: Land into Legend, Panel Discussion

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Faulkner's Mississippi: Land into Legend

Panel Discussion

- MC: Malcolm Cowley
EH: Evans Harrington
EK: Elizabeth Kerr
RO: Robert Oesterling
Q: Questioners from the Audience

EH: Let me begin by telling you something of how this film came to be made, and then I will ask for some comments from the panel members. In 1964 Mr. Oesterling asked me if I'd be interested in writing a script for a film on William Faulkner, and I certainly was. I never had really thought of doing such a thing; though I'd written some fiction, I'd never thought of writing any film scripts. But I had been a Faulkner watcher and a Faulknerland explorer without knowing it exactly. When I'd go hunting or fishing, I'd see something that would remind me of a scene in a book. And when we began to talk about it, I suddenly discovered I'd been making a great deal of preparation for this, and it wasn't much trouble to write the script at all. The writing took about a month, and the filming nine to ten more.

RO: As it happens, Mr. Cowley saw this film at its premiere in 1965. Maybe you would like to make a comment, Mr. Cowley.

MC: Well, this is about Faulkner and the country. You know, I've worked at times, and I've worked unsuccessfully, on this idea, not about Faulkner alone but about many others. There's something in the human mind that refuses to allow that mind to be completely at home in a landscape until that landscape has been vivified by the human imagination. Not necessarily by genius, sometimes just by the people of the countryside, slowly surrounding it with stories. And as you pass a house, they say, "Yes, this is where poor Abby Turner lived. And did I ever tell you . . ." Sometimes an author of genius does this work so much that it affects the history of the whole

neighborhood, a region, or even a country. For example, Scotland, as it was known in the nineteenth century, was partly a creation of Sir Walter Scott. Sir Walter Scott should have been the patron saint of every innkeeper and hotel keeper in Scotland because he brought the tourists to Scotland by the millions. In this country, so many of our authors have lacked sense of locality that not so much of the same thing has been done; but in the nineteenth century Nathaniel Hawthorne, who was steeped in Sir Walter Scott, who read each new novel as it appeared, and then read them all again aloud to his family—Hawthorne did something of the same thing for New England. And as successor to Hawthorne, Faulkner has done something like that for northeastern Mississippi, a district that was, except by Mississippians, disparaged, looked down on. It's the country of the uneducated, of the poor white, of the lowest reading capabilities in the nation, of the smallest per capita income, of the greatest prejudice. Who wants to go to Mississippi?

And now with, not with one stroke of his pen, God knows, but year after year, elaborating the legend of Yoknapatawpha County, suddenly he has surrounded this country with the human values that the mind needs to take it in. And so we are here.

EH: I feel I should say that Dr. Kerr, though she is from Wisconsin, has been here with us so often, and has gone with me into the county so many times, that I feel she is especially qualified to talk about this film and its relationship to the land. In looking at the film now, and since 1965 when you first saw it, do you have any thoughts about it, Elizabeth?

EK: Well, first of all, it seemed even better to me this time than it did in 1965. I think that the handling of mood and the sense of the poetry of the scenes and so forth were beautifully done, and the light effects—all of those enhance it. But it's the kind of thing Faulkner wrote about. Remember the bit about the jonquil thunder, for example. And I think that the coverage of the essential aspects of the country was very well done. My experience with going around the country with Mr. Harrington has been fantastic because every time we do it, we

discover something new that is right straight out of Faulkner that neither of us was, well, really looking for. But it's there all of a sudden. And I am convinced that if I came, if I lived here, and would spend all my time going around looking for Faulknerian parallels, that I'd never exhaust them. He was simply saturated with the country and all sorts of details; even the most fantastic, you'll find, are simply based on fact. Like searching for buried treasure or the gold finding machine. They did it up at Dutchman's Bend; that wasn't fiction. And that's what we always find out, and I'm convinced that there's practically nothing in Faulkner that doesn't have a germ of reality that he was conscious of but that he was interpreting and bringing to life by his imagination in a way that made it memorable where people who knew it was a fact had never paid any attention to it. And that's the sort of thing Mr. Cowley was speaking about—what happens to a region when someone illuminates it with the imagination and makes people realize what is there. And I think this film does that beautifully in giving a feeling of the unique character of this part of the country.

Q: I was wondering, according to what Dr. Kerr just said, how much of the stylistic experimenter Faulkner was. He could really recognize the land, subjects and all, but the way he put the stories down differs from book to book a lot, oftentimes from story to story. He's talking about rediscovering the land constantly, always finding something new. Now, what is the correlation there? That he felt like each time he went to put a story down he had to find a different way of putting it down?

EK: Yes, I think that that is true in that you rarely see things simply through the eyes of the author. You see them, more frequently than not, through the eyes of a character. But the amazing thing about Faulkner is that when you put together all these different views, from all these private visions, you get an overall impression. One kind of distorted vision will be corrected by another kind of distorted vision say, and what you come up with at the end is the synthesis that absorbs the different styles and the different points of view, in a fashion that is practically unparalleled in literature because nobody

but Faulkner ever did this, with as small an area, as small a population, over actually a fairly limited period of time. Remember how little of the action took place before 1900.

EH: I'd like to comment on something that is involved with what Mr. Cowley said and with this question that has just been asked. It's a fairly simple thing, and yet it seems to me extremely important. I suppose that's one reason this film was written in the way it was. There is no substitute, no matter how many different points of view, how many different ideas, and so forth—there is no substitute for a gift of phrase that can express what is widely seen, but not—well, Pope said, “what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed.” The “hot, still, pinewiney silence of the August afternoon.” When that phrase is there, many of us who have smelled, heard, felt, absorbed it, know that's what it is, and that is what makes sense. We were talking about something similar earlier today. One historian was cited, who was doing a high, rhetorical, romantic thing, and Faulkner was doing a high, rhetorical, somewhat romantic thing, but he did it so much better. In one way it's simple: he could write. But, in another way, it's all important. And when I saw these things, when I saw a house and it had been described, I remembered, and it was *that way*! He had created my vision of it, which is partly what Mr. Cowley was saying, I think. And this could even get into Wallace Stevens' idea of the artist's creating a reality for his time that can be believed, by imbuing with his imagination the reality's quotidian—and making that quotidian something else. It's an interesting subject, too; I found it in doing this film. Incidentally, some of you may have noticed that last segment—this was interesting to me, I never had noticed it before I began to reach for what I wanted. I wanted the seasons and cycle of days. And I remembered the seasons were in *The Hamlet*; and I also remembered that what I thought, before I ever read it in Cleanth Brooks, was the most beautiful passage of prose poetry in modern literature, was there in *The Hamlet*, that about the dawn being decanted down. I was very gratified ten years later to see that Mr. Brooks agreed with me. But all of that last part, about the

cycle of a day and the cycle of the seasons, comes from *The Hamlet*, and a rather small area of *The Hamlet*.

- EK: Of course, *The Hamlet* is the one where it is Faulkner speaking.
- EH: Yes, it's the Faulknerian voice.
- EK: For all the nature things, it is Faulkner. He is the observer, not a character.
- EH: Now, that lyric profusion, wouldn't you say, occurs more in that book than anywhere else? And I've tried to think why. We're getting somewhat off the film there. But partly because he was undercutting it with the context. He could let himself go in the lyricism. We'll come back to the film. Any questions about the film?
- Q: I hesitate to raise my hand at this point. But in talking about what is common about the writers of the Southern Renaissance, Cowley and Brooks and others have emphasized the sense of place as one of the distinctive characteristics of writers of the Southern Renaissance; and while Mr. Cowley was talking, I was reflecting about some of the other writers. And I'm wondering what some of you think about whether Warren and Wolfe and Welty and O'Connor, whether they really approached this kind of sense of place that you find so distinctive in Faulkner, whether their world of place emerges in the same way as it does in his.
- EH: Is the sense of place as vivid in the other authors—Wolfe, Warren, Welty, and others—as in Faulkner?
- MC: The answer is no. No, I think the sense of place has been lacking in American writers. It's pretty strong in Hemingway—Hemingway on Michigan, or Hemingway on Spain, will give you an actual feeling in that area so that you want to go there to see it for yourself and read into it what has happened there. Steinbeck on the California coast has a sense of place. He tells you stories that, although they are universally human, at the same moment, couldn't have happened anywhere else. But of American authors in general, I should say that Southern authors have a stronger sense of place than authors from other parts of the country, and that Faulkner's sense of place is the strongest of all. You see, as I say, he is trying in his books to give universal stories. He was interested

in man as man has always existed, and yet this story couldn't have come to the actuality that it comes to, or the strength, if it hadn't been set in a place for which he had a terribly intense feeling.

EH: Would there be a connection between the degree of vividness of the evocation of that one place and the effectiveness of the universalization?

MC: Perhaps, because the way we see universals in general is as embodied in particulars; and the man who misses the particular is very likely to miss the universal.

EH: I'm sure someone remembers, perhaps the person who asked the question, that Miss Welty has written at length on the importance of place in fiction. In fact, that's the title, I think, of one of her important essays. Mr. Cowley, I don't mean to put you on the spot, but how would you compare Miss Welty's sense of place in her fiction to Faulkner's or Flannery O'Connor's?

MC: They all have a strong sense of place. I said it is stronger among Southern writers than anywhere else, and I hate to draw invidious comparisons here. Eudora Welty is awfully good on Mississippi stories, and Flannery O'Connor is strong in her Georgia stories.

EK: But what Faulkner does gives a cumulative effect that the others don't get. Because each story—you read other stories with similar, with the same, setting and you get a cumulative effect, a kind of a resonance. And he's playing up to it; he's reminding you of things that happened in that same place. And that is what I think gives his sense of place the peculiar quality.

Q: On the subject of sense of place, I think it would be pertinent to mention Joyce and perhaps to focus a parallel to Faulkner in the way Joyce uses Dublin. And I think it's striking, the comparison that the greatest writers of fiction in English in the 20th century have each had this very strong sense of place.

EK: May I speak to that point, having explored Joyce's Dublin on foot for some weeks one summer and several times since? Joyce uses place in a different way. You can identify the exact house that a character lived in. He even gets the street address correct. Joyce is photographically accurate. And, of course,

he is writing about a city. But you're quite right that they are somewhat comparable. But although they both have this tremendous sense of place, they really work with it in rather different ways. Now, Faulkner—I've never been able to identify certainly any private residence with a fictional family. Joyce, you can go right down the line. You know exactly where Leopold Bloom lived until they tore it down. You know you can follow through, and, of course, Richard Ellman has done this in his biography; he's identified a tremendous number of the places. And they're right there, precisely as Joyce described them. And he would write back from Paris, when, you know, he was still living in the spirit of Dublin, and would want to know the names of the storekeepers in a certain block in a street of Dublin. He had that kind of precise, naturalistic accuracy. What happens in these identifiable places can be completely fabulous, but the places are precise and can be located. Why, a friend of mine and I even located the house in which Stephen Daedalus and James Joyce taught school in Dalkey. He gave us the details we needed to identify it, and apparently nobody else had bothered, but we got the information that we thought was pretty convincing. So they use place, they have sense of place. They are both absolutely fascinated with one locality. But remember, the important thing is, Faulkner went on living here, and Joyce would not have been putting his fictional characters in real places had he still been living in Dublin. And another person that belongs right with them is Dickens and his London. I say London rather than some of the other places, but it's true of the other places, too. You can go to Rochester, Canterbury, or places like that, and the other places are just exactly as he described. But Dickens' sense of London—and that is cumulative, see, even though his characters don't recur in different novels—when he uses the same places over again, you get the same kind of cumulative effect.

Q: Here we are, a bunch of Faulkner lovers, students, and scholars; and we talk about qualities that rather should make a man widely read—I hesitate to use the word popular, but I think that's what I mean—and I'm not sure that Faulkner is very widely read except among people who have studied him

carefully like we have. He has a nadir of his material in the middle forties, and I still don't know how widely read Faulkner is. It sounds like there's a dichotomy. I can't recall, because it sounds like he's saying things that should make him readily accepted, acceptable on a very wide base, and I don't have the feeling that he does this. Is this an incorrect impression I've gotten or can you explain the dichotomy that exists there?

EK: Well, I think it's partly that Faulkner makes greater demands on his readers. Just the very fact that he expects his readers to arrive at this cumulative effect, this synthesis. And he's appealing to them to do so. He's trying to make the readers' memories work with the memories of his characters. And if the reader is very acute, you know, he remembers something a fraction of a second before it enters the mind of his character, who remembers it. But it makes great demands on the reader. And you can't read just one book and put it aside and forget about it and get as much out of the next book. Now a novelist who writes each book all by itself—it isn't interrelated with anything else—doesn't make the same demands as Faulkner, and I think that's one reason why some people don't read Faulkner. And another is, he makes greater demands in some of his books through the difficulty in his style and his structure. And anybody who starts out on *The Sound and the Fury* or *Absalom, Absalom!* may pretty well give up before he reaches the point where he is sensible of the chart.

Q: What do you think a person should start with?

EK: Well, I think that a very sensible way of getting into Faulkner is to begin with *The Unvanquished* and *Sartoris*, where you get in chronological order the story of the Sartoris family—no difficulties of technique, but you get acquainted with the family, a great deal of the tradition, a good part of the legend, of course, because the Sartorises are the most fully developed insofar as the legend of Yoknapatawpha is concerned. They are the most recurring, best known. And then go on from there, almost any—well, maybe *Light in August* would be the thing to follow that because that again technically offers no great difficulties at all. And after that I think you could go on with anything.

- EH: I might comment on that, too. For twelve or so years, I've conducted a tutorial for our Scholars Program here, a program we have designed for outstanding students, but they're sophomores and juniors, and I use that order. Well, I actually—and I never have mentioned this to Mr. Cowley—but I start with *The Portable Faulkner*, the Introduction, read that as the first book. We read five books a semester because it's a one-hour course, and my experience has been that what Elizabeth says is quite true, only I start with *The Portable Faulkner*, which gives kind of an overview. And then with *The Unvanquished*, then *Sartoris*, and then you can go almost anywhere. My daughter, when she was a sophomore or junior in high school, declared that *Absalom, Absalom!* was the most readable, delightful book in the whole thing. And at that age she read it as a kind of a *Gone with the Wind*, a kind of complicated *Gone with the Wind*. And it does have that quality in it.
- EK: Yes. Of course, a logical thing to follow *Sartoris* with would be *Sanctuary* because you go on with the Sartorises and the Benbows. And by that time you're through with the Sartorises—you and Faulkner.
- Q: Wouldn't another dimension of the answer to that question be to explain the relative unpopularity of Faulkner? Normally, we find books are popular that have characters that we can identify with, and to most of us, at least most of us in Ohio, many of Faulkner's characters are different, peculiar, strange; their violence is completely different from ours, both in its motivation and in its accomplishment and in the countryside in which it occurs. I feel a tremendous sense of place here. I did yesterday and today at Rowan Oak, as I did in the Wordsworth country. I think you might have that fine ingredient as do all these other places in Wordsworth. I think that's part of it. The rivers that I passed and crossed over driving down from Memphis, I found frightening. I expected to see cottonmouths coming out of them. I think some of it lies in that, and I think once you get into it, though, you begin to see through the particulars, the universals that Mr. Cowley was speaking of, gone further in. We have to—those of us not from Mississippi—have to get by that barrier.

- EH: Well, you bring up what is to me a very interesting question. And since I'm a little uncomfortable that I'm moderating this and it has gotten away from the film, I'd like to bring back the film a minute, and it's quite to the point. On Wednesday afternoon *William Faulkner's Mississippi* will be shown. This is a film that's longer than the one we did. Bob—I don't want to convict him of being a Southerner, he's from Pennsylvania, but after all, all he did was make our film which you've just seen. I wrote it, and I'm a native Mississippian. And the people who did the film you'll see Wednesday were from New York, and they saw a strange Mississippi to me. The rivers—I swam in them as a boy before I ever read Faulkner, and I don't see any cottonmouths. Well, I frequently see *actual* cottonmouths. But I don't feel any particular worry about the land; I feel at home here. And you can understand how that would be. On the other hand, I was very much disappointed that the Golden Gate Bridge wasn't golden the first time—
- EK: You remind me of a shipmate of mine, going into the Mediterranean, who told about the first time she passed the Rock of Gibraltar, she was disappointed not to see the Prudential sign.
- EH: Some years ago, I took Miss Pivano—some of you may be familiar with the translations into Italian of some of Faulkner's novels by a woman named Pivano. She came here, and I took her around the county. And there was at that time a house that's, alas, gone, right here in town, the Tate House. It was fantastic; it was unpainted for years and years and years; it was really Gothic; it was a Faulkner house. And she was just fascinated with that. "Oh," she said, "such beautiful decadence!" Which I found a little strange. But this was really Faulkner country to her. I took her out to the Faulkner farm, and it was a November day, the sky was dark, and there was an old gate swinging with the hinges creaking. And she knew she finally had found Faulkner country. This has fascinated me, to see the thing translated through foreigners' eyes, not just Ohio foreigners. You understand how I mean it. It's just a universal kind of thing. I'm the same way when I go to Ohio. I just marvel at the snow.
- Q: Surely this kind of reaction isn't only found in Northerners.

Wasn't your own Southern response to Faulkner that he wasn't being true to the South as everyone knew it? It's hard to divorce the place from the people who live in that place. I think that the kind of response that this gentleman finds, or the person you talked to finds, is to see the relationship between that kind of extreme, often bizarre behavior of characters localized in a very concrete, detailed particular place that led to both Northern reaction to a strange Mississippi and also perhaps to a group in the thirties, a Southern revulsion to Faulkner's Mississippi.

EH: We haven't even mentioned the fact that most serious modern literature—poetry, prose—is difficult for the majority, which is where we started with the question a while ago. It might not be Faulkner particularly: we might try to decide why there is such a gap between the practitioners of serious literature and the general reader, but I somehow feel that's even further afield.

Q: I was wondering if maybe some emphasis ought to be put on Faulkner's short stories because I think really that his strength is as a story teller, and I think that maybe if you could get the feel of Faulkner as a story teller in shorter works it would make the longer works more powerful as stories and not so much at the level we're speaking of—all these kind of sophisticated—the spiritual connection with the land and all that stuff. That's very sophisticated, and the average reader doesn't want to have to be pondering . . .

EH: "Two Soldiers" and the short version narrated by Ratliff of "Spotted Horses" are the two that I could teach to tenth graders in high school here and get response to.

EK: "Barn Burning," too.

EH: Yes, "Barn Burning."

Q: I understand Faulkner was a Writer-in-Residence at the University of Virginia. What kind of affinity did he have with the University of Mississippi? Was he accepted for interviews, or did he lecture here?

EH: I can summarize what Mr. Blotner has laid out in the biography better than I've seen it laid out anywhere else. I was a little surprised, because I came here a few years after Mr. Faulkner was here, and there had been, I understood, an

unpleasant thing, and I didn't know who was at fault and I was afraid if the truth were ever published the University would look pretty bad. But Mr. Blotner's biography doesn't indicate that. There were some students who took notes and put an article together. There was a publicity man here who was doing his publicity job and got it published. And Mr. Faulkner had been assured by one man, the Chairman of the English Department, that his privacy would be preserved, and it wasn't wholly. But it wasn't—the man who had assured him of that, the Chairman of the English Department, had nothing to do with the publication of Faulkner's statements. But Faulkner did not like that. Only it didn't seem that he was that much irritated toward the whole University. He was a very independent man, and he did, before he ever came here, write a letter specifying that he didn't want it advertised: "We've got William Faulkner for six lectures, count them, and our water tower is higher than Starkville's." And he said he didn't want to be, he was sick of seeing a university sold like a cake of soap or something like that. But his visit was, among the officials at the University, a fairly agreeable thing. I've heard fascinating stories about his coming, getting up and saying, "Well, gentlemen, I've got to go turn the cow out" or something like that and leaving an animated discussion of English professors. And some of them weren't too happy about having him prefer a cow to them. But I don't think it was so very bad, and then of course, there was the Nobel Prize, which kind of confirmed that he could write. In '50, and between '50 and '60, or '62, more specifically, the climate in Mississippi was not such that administrators in their right minds would very much celebrate the so-called liberal, integrationist William Faulkner at a university if they were trying to get funds.

Q: This is the first time I've ever seen the film. There was a unity that I saw in it that intrigues me because it does say, I think, something of what I had read into Faulkner, which I'd like to see what your own feeling is about that.

EH: I like your phrase; that's what I had read into Faulkner, too.

Q: You began with a series of quotes about truth, and then as you're ending the film, you had those words about the spirit

of man enduring, prevailing, that inexhaustible spirit. Then, in between this, it was interesting, after a study of a historical kind which tells Faulkner's own facts, you went into an interesting—the natural time, rather than historical time, cycle of nature, summer lightly, and then fall definitely, spring rebirth; and so often Faulkner does use—and I don't think it's that sophisticated; I think he did something very natural to him—he's using nature to say something, not so much as being a poet of nature, just to comment beautifully about nature, but to say something far more important, that about man. And could it be, in your own organization of this film, that through the use of nature and through the use of observance of its life, and its death and its rebirth over and over again, that he's saying that's what truth is. I don't know, I see it as awfully subjective in his books, but there is truth there. Perhaps that truth that he defends is man prevailing above it all. What my interest is, did you see a connection between that cyclical pattern in nature and that, those ideas of Faulkner concerning human spirit?

EH: Whew! Well, that's, I was just reaching into the lumber pile. You know, that's what Mr. Faulkner would have said. And there's a lot of truth in that. I'm very interested in that idea that you expressed. But I don't believe I can honestly say I did see that connection. I saw a simple thing, I had been impressed for years with that statement in "The Bear" about truth and Keats' having to write about something. The boy said he's writing about a girl, you know, and he's been talking about a bear and Cass said Keats had to write about something. He was writing about truth and, you know, truth is these various universals. And it struck me that the particularizing—this is a part of why I asked Mr. Cowley the question I did awhile ago—that the worst way to write about almost anything is in the abstract, you see, and in writing about the verities as such you are writing about abstractions. If you're writing about love, an abstract concept, you'd better embody it, say, in Mink Snopes and his wife. That's all I saw in that, I think. Now, as to the other, I had "Faulkner's Mississippi" to present and I was trying to do it as best I could.

EK: I think that one answer to your question is that along with the

sense of place of Southerners is a closeness to the soil, because there's an absence of this sense in the big cities, for instance; and this is what critics of the Southern Literary Renaissance stress, that there is, along with the closeness to the soil, a closeness to the rhythm of the seasons. That it's just a part of built-in rhythm of life to people who live as many of the Southerners do, away from big cities and so forth, that is part of their experience of life. And that to follow out in the film, as was done with this sense of the rhythm of the seasons, is something that is especially suitable to writing about Southern places, because this is the way the people feel about the seasons. They are closer to the changes of season. On the other hand, they don't have the severity of the seasons that we have up North. And I presume that may well make them welcome the rhythm of the seasons, perhaps a little bit more heartily than we sometimes do up North.

EH: If you have another question, we could take one more.

Q: I'd like to hear Mr. Cowley tell of his discovery of Faulkner—whatever it was that led to *The Portable Faulkner*.

MC: In the first place, let me absolve myself of boasting. I didn't discover Faulkner; if anyone discovered Faulkner, Phil Stone did about the year 1916. And then, all during the 1930's people discovered Faulkner, including some distinguished people such as Arnold Bennett, such as Conrad Aiken who wrote a splendid essay on Faulkner, such as Kay Boyles, such as Evelyn Scott. I could go on with other names. What happened was that about the year 1942, with the coming of the Second World War, the fact that Faulkner was working in Hollywood where his name wasn't even used as credit for pictures, except two bad ones—no, they were pretty good pictures, *The Big Sleep* and *To Have and Have Not*—nevertheless, this name disappeared, and when the War Resources Committee asked publishers to make a sacrifice of their plates because copper was short, Random House junked the plates of two or three or four Faulkner novels. All the others were out of print, and it is just as if, I said this afternoon, somebody had taken a wet cloth and wiped out the blackboard. And, at the same time, I had been reviewing some of Faulkner's novels—three of them—in the *New Republic*; and I had an

uneasy feeling that I hadn't done justice to them. So, I went back—I had spare time at that time—and I went back and started writing a very long essay on Faulkner. Then since no magazine in the United States at that time would have published a twelve thousand word essay on Faulkner, I beefed it. I learned that phrase from an Oklahoma writer. That is, I butchered it; I cut off chunks from it. I published one chunk in the *New York Times Book Review*. I published one chunk in the *Sewanee Review*, a longer chapter. In the meantime, I had been trying to persuade Viking Press to do a *Portable Faulkner*. I had done a *Portable Hemingway*. They said, "No, Faulkner hasn't enough of an audience at this time to justify a portable." But along in the year 1944, after these segments, these cutlets and steaks cut off the long essay, had begun appearing, Marshall Best wrote me and said, "It seems to us that Faulkner has been attracting a good deal of attention, and you might go ahead with the Faulkner portable." So I did. And first writing to Faulkner about it jubilantly and then asking his advice, although it was my own idea to center the *Portable* around Faulkner's history of Yoknapatawpha County from the Indians right down to the latest day. And I had his judgment on a lot of choices I made and his approval of the whole job. I told that story in a book called *The Faulkner-Cowley File*. Yes, you can buy it, buy it at the bookstore here. You can buy it; I'll autograph the cover. Any takers?

Q: Mr. Cowley, Mr. Cowley, I already own that book; but may I testify it's a marvelous book? But one thing, sir, you did for Faulkner—you made him, you brought him into the hands of students. You made it very easy for teachers to begin teaching Faulkner. And I think Faulkner's audience is still largely students. And you've made him live, in a sense, which he hadn't before, because of *The Portable Faulkner*.

MC: Well, thank you.