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“This Time. Maybe This Time”: Asynchronous Faulknerian Narrative, Confederate Elegies, and the American Iconoclastic Tradition

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To read William Faulkner's work as a matter of habit is to immerse oneself in languorous stretches of prose that reflect a distinctively American pursuit of thresholds. The rhythms and intricacies of Faulkner's syntax — “unmistakable . . . urgent, intense, highly rhetorical” (Baym 1524) — create a perpetual disequilibrium; lyrical strands of clauses perpetually redefine their subject, but never seem to find resolution, and seem to be motivated by a conviction that nothing can finally be encompassed by definitive description. The idiosyncratic fragmentation of narrative interwoven with the complexities of diction and fluid continuities of clauses creates a vision of an American South that is at once well observed and yet as ethereal as a distant horizon.

That conclusion about Faulkner's South is well earned. I revisited the Faulknerian canon after several thousand miles of travel spent crisscrossing the Virginia landscape. My curiosity about Virginia's Civil War monuments in small towns was indulged with missionary zeal after undertaking diversions from a 500-mile weekly teaching commute between southwest Virginia and New York City. It would lead me to about 140 sites across the commonwealth, from Norfolk to the Cumberland Gap and from the Washington suburbs of northern Virginia to Danville, on the North Carolina state line. I traveled almost entirely by auto, sometimes by train or plane, but ultimately — invariably — on

foot to examine each site, photograph each monument, and transcribe the rhetoric of elegies and epitaphs. Diverse geography and weather conditions, map inconsistencies, location uncertainties, and complex logistics added to the challenge and gave ample reason why this kind of project has not been undertaken before. But my predilection for landscape reveries prevailed: where some “mortal men” find themselves “fixed in ocean reveries,” as Herman Melville phrases it, I seem to be readily transfixed by inland Middle American and American Southern terrestrial vistas (93).

Civil War monuments continue to have a prominent physical place in American Southern public space, in small county seats as well as such landmark locations as Arlington National Cemetery or Richmond’s Monument Avenue. Most of the South, of course, is utterly contemporary, and it requires a highly selective eye to focus only on explicit vestiges of the Civil War. In many ways, Atlanta is indistinguishable from Chicago, summer in New York is as sweltering as that in Richmond, and a stretch of fast food restaurants in Milwaukee seems not to have many distinguishing characteristics from a fast food strand in Charlotte. Profoundly complex regional distinctions persist, however. John Fraser Hart observes that “If the South has a symbol, it is the statue of the Confederate soldier which stands in the county seat. Hands resting on the barrel of his grounded rifle, knapsack and blanket roll on his back, he stares in stony silence to the north whence came the invading Yankee armies” (Winberry 106).

Each monument — whatever its individual prominence, size, status, state of preservation, or artistic merits — presents a confrontation with a perpetuated disequilibrium that is not unlike that found in such works as *Requiem for a Nun*, *Intruder in the Dust*, and “The Bear,” from *Go Down, Moses*. Southern postbellum elegiac rhetoric is a ceaseless, static striving to reconcile the tension between word, deed and memory. The ambition, import, irony and paradox of this rhetoric bears, I will argue, an illuminating comparison to Faulknerian syntax and import, most famously perhaps in the following passage from *Intruder in the Dust*, in which the dimensions of time are said to be perpetually compressed to one moment’s threshold and possibility. To judge from the passage below, every white Southern male adolescent of the post-war era spent his life’s blood dwelling in the possibility that the war against the Union colossus could still be won, if only in the mind:

For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it’s still not yet two o’clock on that July afternoon in 1863, the brigades are in position behind the rail fence, the guns are laid and ready in the woods and the furled flags are already loosened to break out and Pickett himself with his long oiled ringlets and his hat in one hand probably and his sword in the other looking up the hill waiting for Longstreet to give the word and it’s all in the balance,

it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet, it not only hasn't begun yet but there is still time for it not to begin against that position and those circumstances which made more men than Garnett and Kemper and Armistead and Wilcox look grave yet it's going to begin, we all know that, we have come too far with too much at stake and that moment doesn't need even a fourteen-year-old boy to think *This time. Maybe this time* with all this much to lose and all this much to gain.

(190)

The moment of uncertainty at Gettysburg that Faulkner describes is fixed, inviolate, consummate in possibility, poised between past, present and future. Sanctified to the imagination, it affords recourse to the prospect that the grit of historical detail might yet be transubstantiated into a lost cause redeemed. It is the grand pretense and discordance of such a claim that persuades me that Faulknerian syntax has a sinuous quality of discontinuity and fragmentation that should be contextualized with the discontinuum and incongruities present in the rhetoric of Lost Cause post-Civil War epitaphs and elegies.

This much has been well noted: the war had a profound relevance to Faulkner. The war ended just thirty-two years before his birth, his great-grandfather served as an officer in the Confederate army, and reconstruction was leaving its legacy during his childhood. The peak of development of postbellum southern elegiac rhetoric took place in the years of Faulkner's birth (1897), childhood and adolescence. Charles Wilson Reagan notes that by "1914 the Confederate Veteran magazine revealed that over a thousand monuments existed in the South[; and that] by that time many battlefields had been set aside as pilgrimage sites containing holy shrines" ("Religion" 178). The paradox of this rhetoric — fixed in stone to represent what came to be a dynamic, fluid interpretation of history — must have influenced a writer of Faulkner's background. Faulkner's work, I contend, reflects a landscape that is mediated by this overarching rhetoric of postbellum tragedy, genesis, reconstruction, paradox, and defiance.

An examination of a selection of the written texts attached to Virginia courthouse monuments offers an insight into the investment their authors claim in a rhetoric of earnest if ultimately discordant abstract ironies. They have nothing of the prodigious breadth and voluminous complexities of Faulknerian narrative: Cryptic, suggestive complexities prevail instead. Often, the texts are wholly dedicated to memorializing an idealized common soldier whose virtues and cause are extolled with extravagant rhetorical breadth. Thus it is that, with the upper case imperatives that are characteristic of this genre, the Bowling Green courthouse monument is "Erected by the people of Caroline County to commemorate the valor and endurance of its soldiers furnished to the Army of the Confederate States of America." The Louisa courthouse monument is erected "In memory of the courage, patriotism and devo-

tion of the Confederate soldiers of Louisa County." The Chesterfield courthouse monument is "simply" erected "In memory of the Confederate soldiers of Chesterfield and Manchester."

Abstract political principles are commonly invoked as a ritualistic articulation of what came to be called the Lost Cause.¹ The Sussex County monument, for example, declares of "Our Confederate Soliders," that "the Principles for which they fought live eternally." The dado of the shaft of the Charles City Courthouse, Virginia is dedicated "To the Confederate soldiers of Charles City County" as "defenders of constitutional liberty and the right of self government." The Montross Courthouse of Westmoreland County memorializes "The Confederate soldiers of Westmoreland," and calls particular attention to those:

Who fell in defence of Virginia,
and in the cause of
constitutional liberty.

The Berryville Courthouse monument is:

Erected to the memory of
the sons of Clarke
who gave their lives
in defense of the rights
of the states and of Constitutional Government.

The Berryville text concludes:

Fate denied them success but
they achieved imperishable fame.

Invocations of the mortal sacrifice of Confederate soldiers are common. Interpretations of the meanings of those sacrifices vary widely. The Marion, Virginia text lauds "The defenders of state sovereignty" for being "faithful unto death," but the sentimental banality of the King and Queen County text belies the extravagance of an implicit messianic claim. The text asserts that:

We have gathered the
Sacred dust,
Of warriors tried and true,
Who bore the flag of
Our nation's trust,
And fell in the cause
'Tho lost, still just
And died for me and you.

Similarly, the courthouse monument at Stannardsville promulgates a transcendent, post-mortem vitality for Greene County's Confederate

dead: "Dead — yet still they speak," it declares. The extraordinary nature of these claims raises questions. Was it a religion? A cult? The qualities ascribed to an idealized past bring to mind Wilson's observation that these monuments were so venerated that:

Preachers converted the innumerable statues dotting the Southern countryside into religious objects, almost idols, that quite blatantly taught Christian religious and moral lessons. "Our cause is with God" and "in hope of a joyful resurrection," among the most directly religious inscriptions on monuments, were not atypical.

(*Baptized* 29)

The desire to shape and perpetuate the memory is inherent in elegiac rhetoric in general, of course: many of the rhetorical gestures to the perpetuation of memory in Southern elegies are recurring. "Love makes memory eternal," the New Castle text purports, adding that their "Confederate soldiers" are "invincible in life" yet "immortal in death." The aphorism that "Love makes memory eternal" is also promulgated on the monuments at Salem, Pearisburg, Spotsylvania, Lovingsston, Charlottesville, Lawrenceville, and Franklin. The "Confederate dead" bear explicit mention at Christiansburg, Hillsville, Alexandria, Amelia, Franklin, Chatham, and Marion. They are "our Confederate dead" at Stannardsville, Norfolk and Isle of Wight. They are "our Confederate soldiers" on the Lynchburg courthouse monument.

Some facets of the war are conspicuously absent. Slavery, for example, is unmentioned. Other facets, though, are pervasive. Almost invariably, the time parameters are defined: 1861-1865, sanctifying the four years of the war from the present. In the common proclamation that God will avenge — "Deo Vindice" — is a clear intimation that unspecified injustices will be rectified, history's course righted and that victory, however that is defined, will ultimately be adjudicated by Providence. "Southerners clung to the hope of future vindication," Wilson observes. "Though they accepted the Confederacy's defeat as final, they repeatedly speculated that God might allow Confederate principles to succeed in another guise, in another time" (74-5).² In Virginia's elegiac rhetoric, those speculations are multifarious and pervasive. Every monument is different; none is identical to another; only a few counties in Virginia have no courthouse monuments at all.³

Faulkner places these rhetorical promontories in the center of his fictionalized conception of the Southern landscape. They are the dominant feature of which he writes in *Requiem for a Nun*:

But above all, the courthouse: the center, the focus, the hub; sitting looming in the center of the county's circumference like a single cloud in its ring of horizon, laying its vast shadow to the uttermost rim of horizon; musing, brooding, symbolic and ponderable, tall as cloud, solid as rock, dominating all.

(35)

Public and private enterprise and construction have had a dramatic influence on the Southern landscape, as I have noted, but one hundred years after the peak of their development and forty years after Faulkner's death, those rhetorical bulwarks continue to dominate the landscape of hundreds of crossroads and courthouse sites in Virginia and across the south. Those sites include Oxford, Mississippi, Faulkner's home and seat of Lafayette County, where the Confederate monument erected in 1907 is proclaimed to be:

In memory of
 the patriotism
 of the
 Confederate soldiers
 of Lafayette County
 Mississippi.
 They gave their lives
 in a just and holy cause.

Like many postbellum Southern elegies, the Oxford monument bears tributes from several groups, including the "surviving comrades" of "our Confederate dead," as well as the Sons of Veterans who "unite in this justification of their fathers [sic] faith," and a conclusion that proclaims the monument to be a "A loving tribute to the memory of our dead heroes by the patriotic daughters of Lafayette County, Mississippi."

John Winberry puzzles over the ultimate meaning of Confederate monuments. He is assured that the "monument is a symbol, but," he observes, "whether it was a memory of the past, a celebration of the present, or a portent of the future remains a difficult question to answer; monuments and symbols can be complicated and sometimes indecipherable." If anything, Winberry understates the case when he declares that the "South has for a long time been a dichotomous conundrum, a contradiction . . ." of the charming and trustworthy in the midst of the hostile and menacing. "The Confederate monument," he concludes, "fits this duality" (118).⁴ Confederate monuments embody this conundrum with a rhetoric of quintessentially American ideals and paradox. Extraordinary in their pretense, they offer extravagant ideals. In the monuments' rhetoric, the American Civil War's resulting loss, tragedy, and chaos are cast in an illusion of order and resolution. For all the complexity of the war's history and reconstruction's legacy, the rhetoric promulgates cohesion in the tumult of the events of 1861-1865. The medium — sculpted soldiers, bas-reliefs, terse words, stone or bronze obelisks, shafts, or plaques — necessitates ostensible simplicity and essentialized abstractions, of course, even though such simplicity can only artfully obscure the war's tragic effects and sketch its meaning. At their best, the rhetoric's simplicity and suggestiveness may well have

offered a catharsis for those who grieved war-related personal losses. At their least persuasive, the rhetoric offers dissembling platitudes or tenders hopelessly didactic rationalizations. Monuments *seem* orderly; the rhetoric *seems* persuasive. But the fullness of their appeal may rest with their message of non-reconciliation and incompleteness. Southern postbellum elegiac rhetoric attempts a grand suggestiveness and representative insufficiency with a discordant but affecting irony — they are asynchronous, incapable of wholly representing the past, intrusive in the present, yet perpetually poised over the future.⁵ It is the paradox, irony, pathos, and fragmented suggestiveness of this rhetoric that attracts my attention and brings me back to Faulkner. His body of work, I contend, represents the contradictions, pathos, and gothic tragedy of the South with a syntax of continual qualification, as if the accumulation of clauses can in some way represent, or suggest, a dimension that transcends mere representation. Faulkner amplifies these same elements with an artfulness that is distinctive in balancing a narrative and syntactical tension between order and disorder, but which finds expression in what Richard Gray calls “ultimate disconnection” — the same unrecconciled quality, I contend, that is perpetuated in postbellum Southern monuments.

I am aware that such a claim is subject to challenge. Critical perspectives vary in their assessments of the larger narrative unity or lack of unity in Faulkner’s work. J. E. Bunselmeyer, for example, sees a communal connectedness in novels as different as *The Hamlet* and *Light in August*:

The vision at the heart of Faulkner’s works is of life as a process of accretion, of overwhelming connectedness. This vision is embodied in the syntactic style that characterizes Faulkner’s narration and marks phrase rhythms as “Faulknerian.” Works as different as *The Hamlet* and *Light in August* share a syntactic style that equates events and ideas, past and present, by piling up clauses; the style transforms an individual experience by linking it to everything around it.

(313)

Faulkner himself seems to have intimations of a larger connectedness in his work. Richard Gray takes note of the author’s ruminations on this matter in Faulkner’s interview with Malcom Cowley. Gray observes that Faulkner seemed to be in “an unusually self-congratulatory mood,” when he declared “that all the people of the imaginary county [Yoknapatawpha], black and white, townsmen, farmers, and housewives, have played their part in one connected story” (*Writing* 166). Connected? Gray demurs, suggesting that Faulkner’s assertion about the continuity of his narratives is either misconceived or casually spoken. Gray argues that Faulkner consciously invested his narratives with a thematic discordance:

Continuity, however, was not quite the right word to describe it. For, as Faulkner recognised most of the time, such connections as he achieved took place within a framework of ultimate disconnection. Ends might be tied up but other ends would have to be left hanging loose; the stories that were told, the patterns that were traced, rested upon certain initial acts of selection and exclusion.

(166)

The disconnection is depicted in a range of tensions whose dimensions, as Faulkner sketches them, suggest infinite complexity, but whose resolution is held in suspension *and* continuum. In Faulkner's narratives, the possibility of redemption is not admitted, but there is no yielding recourse to hope — to some possibility of the vindication of Providence: *Deo Vindice* after all. Richard Gray's argument for ultimate disconnection may thus be consonant with Donald Kartiganer's contention that a novel such as *A Fable* has no resolution beyond an arrival at a "static equilibrium." Kartiganer writes:

If a *A Fable* contains a tragic view opposite to that of the New Testament — the recognition that potential and actual redemption will never coincide — it also contains the hope implicit to the fact that they will never relax their tension. . . . Fact and gesture, father and son, law and mutiny, symbolic and semiotic . . . Faulkner balances them against each other, confirming an essential tension of his career, in this novel unwilling to advance them beyond a static equilibrium.

(23)

The narratives of several of Faulkner's characters depict a confrontation with and defiance of history's verdict that is founded on what I argue is a distinctive American tradition of iconoclasm, a faith in the perpetuity of possibility based on seductive but untenable hopes. In Virginia postbellum rhetoric, that pursuit of thresholds is discernible in the New Castle courthouse proclamation that the Confederate soldier was "Invincible in Life; Immortal in Death," or in the juxtaposed paradox of the Confederate "Deathless dead" inscribed on the courthouse monument at Washington, Virginia. Those claims, etched in stone, have about them "the rubble-dross of fact and probability" of which Faulkner writes in *Requiem for a Nun* (184). They perpetuate reconciliation and non-reconciliation in the same way that the mourning of individuals, communities, and nations seems to be ridden with unremitting cycles of trial and grieving that alternate with intervals of reconciliation. Consistency has no place. Genuine reconciliation is an illusion. So, too, can Faulkner claim in one thread of his work that the past is perpetuated and at the same time, but in a different passage, conclude that

that old war was dead; the sons of those tottering old men in gray had already died in blue coats in Cuba, the macabre mementos and testimonials and shrines of the new war already usurping the earth before the blasts of blank shotgun shells. . . .
(*Requiem* 207)

There is in Faulkner's work a syntactic continuum, with characters who are connected *and* disconnected from the course of events around them. They are sometimes reconciled to history, as in the passage above, and yet, to judge by the narratives of some of Faulkner's characters, they reflect a South that is demonstrably, deliberately unemancipated from history. Faulkner's Ike McCaslin and Gavin Stevens, for example, are unable or unwilling to reconcile the receding past with the turbulent present and an uncertain future. Faulkner's narratives of these characters sustain a veritable solace in the asynchronous. Gavin Stevens in *Intruder in the Dust*, for example, draws succor against the turbulent present from his vision of an unchanging past that he hopes is of such overwhelming dominance as to ease the distinctions between past, present and future. These dimensions are amalgamated and rendered timeless: "It's all now you see," Stevens declares. "Yesterday wont be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago" (190).

Thus it is that Faulkner sustains long continuities of clauses, such as the following (much longer as a whole, of course, than space constraints allow), taken from *Requiem For a Nun*, in which the war's train of events are given a grim, fatalistic, inevitability about them on a landscape whose whole meaning is derived from the events of 1861-1865:

[S]o Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha County had mounted Golgotha and passed beyond Appomattox a full year in advance, with returned soldiers in the town, not only the wounded from the battle of Jefferson, but whole men: not only the furloughed from Forrest in Alabama and Johnston in Georgia and Lee in Virginia, but the stragglers, the unmaimed flotsam and refuse of that single battle now drawing its final constricting loop from the Atlantic Ocean at Old Point Comfort, to Richmond: to Chattanooga: to Atlanta: to the Atlantic Ocean again at Charleston, who were not deserters but who could not rejoin any still-intact Confederate unit for the reason that there were enemy armies between, so that in the almost faded twilight of that land, the knell of Appomattox made no sound; when in the spring and early summer of '65 the formally and officially paroled and disbanded soldiers began to trickle back into the county, there was anticlimax.

(201)

Events are recounted; tragedy and comedy are recognized, but endurance — or Sisyphean perpetuation — is all. Many examples like the one above could be cited. Let one more suffice: The railroad's intru-

sion into the backwoods of Mississippi in "The Bear" from *Go Down, Moses*. The landscape Ike McCaslin beholds in that story is both transient and fixed in the past. Ike is privy to a vision of the American "continental diaspora."⁶ Yet in Faulkner's description, twentieth-century technological and social change has the relative significance of a breeze wafting across an open field — nothing is new, and all is vanity and chasing after wind, as the prophet of Ecclesiastes declares (1:14). Faulkner writes:

the engine's exhaust was already slatting in mounting tempo against the unechoing wilderness, the crashing of draw-bars once more travelling backward along the train, the caboose picking up speed at last. Then it was gone. It had not been. He could no longer hear it. The wilderness soared, musing, inattentive, myriad, eternal, green; older than any mill-shed, longer than any spur-line.

(322)

Times change, events occur, nothing changes: the perception of timelessness prevails. It is in that vein, it seems to me, that Lewis Simpson cites Quentin of *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom* to illustrate the presence of an asynchronous continuum that characterizes Faulknerian prose. Simpson describes an American ideal of being emancipated from history that is pursued with all the vigor of Twain's Huck Finn, "light[ing] out for the territory ahead of the rest" (283). Simpson discerns no easy access to the fulfillment of that ideal. Indeed, the recognition of the parameters of history that one may desire to escape actually serves to implicate or imprison one in history:

When we expose ourselves to Quentin in his full dimension . . . we see him as emblematic of the greatest resource of Faulkner the poet-historian. He had come into a realization of the tragic and comic knowledge that Thomas Jefferson had had but refused to believe; the knowledge . . . that architects of the idealized southern slave state had had but refused to believe; the knowledge that Emerson and the other architects of the nineteenth-century ideal of the New England nation had had but refused to believe: namely, that mind, the presumed source of emancipation from history, is in its very dream of itself as the emancipator from history completely implicated — or should the term be imprisoned? — in the history it has not only made but, as Paul Valéry once said of the modern mind, inordinately desires to "live in."

(103)

Southern postbellum elegies, taken in context as a genre, offer a reminder of the "inherent disequilibrium" that is present in rhetoric.⁷ Their efficacy requires a recognition of the presence of absent or oppos-

ing truths. In this sense, Richard Gray's observation regarding what he perceives to be the "radical acts of exclusion" in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, is also applicable to the paradigmatic touchstones discernible in Southern elegiac rhetoric. Southern monuments can, at best, only offer a suggestive insufficiency in their authors' attempt to offer a mythic apologetic. The sightless eyes of the idealized Southern soldier atop hundreds of monuments in the states of the former Confederacy, whether they represent soldiers, sailors, or women (e.g., Hanover's "Confederate Soldiers" and "Her Noble Women Who Loved Them"), are strikingly appropriate representations of their rhetorical deficiencies. Faulkner, in turn, may be said to offer "Benjy's 'empty' eyes" in *The Sound and the Fury* as his testimony to the inadequacy of *any* mortal vision, as well as the insufficiency of any mortal system of understanding to do justice to the complexities of *any* realm it claims to encompass.⁸ Gray writes:

The problem is, of course, that this is the order of an idiot, dependent on certain radical acts of exclusion. It is as if Faulkner were reminding us that the ending of *The Sound and the Fury* is no ending at all: that it represents, at most, a continuation of the process of encoding — the process, that is, of trying to put things "each in its ordered place" — and an invitation to us, the readers, to continue that process too. Benjy's "empty" eyes are poignant reminders that no system is ever complete or completely adequate. Something is always missed out, it seems, some aspect of reality must invariably remain unseen; and, since this is so, no book, not even one like this that uses a multiplicity of systems, can ever truly be said to be finished. Language may be a necessary tool for understanding and dealing with the world, the only way we can hope to know Caddy; yet perversely, Faulkner suggests, it is as much a function of ignorance, idiocy, as of knowledge. It implies absence, loss, as well as fulfillment.

(215)

Gray's "absent presence" of larger truths (187) leads me to propose that Wilson may be overstating the case when he avers that through "the ritualistic and organizational activities of their civil religion, southerners tried to overcome their existential worries and to live with their tragic sense of life" ("Religion" 189). A civil religion? Certainly. Tragic sense of living? Yes. However, in Faulkner's vision of the South, any flirtations with existentialism have been overcome. The past is palpable, real, and ever present, at least to judge by Gavin Stephens' declaration in *Requiem for a Nun* that "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (80). It may be the best known of Faulknerian aphorisms. It may not be true — it has about it the grand ambiguity of great statements. But the suggestion that the distinctions between the past and present are wholly arbitrary also has the pretence of a faith in perpetuated disequilibri-

um. The Faulknerian canon shares with the American iconoclastic tradition the conviction that the past, present and future can be manipulated, held, or suspended in possibility. Faulkner's body of work sustains a consonant certainty of discordance, a vision of America that has none of the intimations of grace or redemption that a New Testament perspective would connote, but one which offers a kind of jeremiadic disquietude. Consummation is pursued with a fixed, dyspeptic certitude; "truth and dream" remain, no matter what cataclysm befalls an individual or community. Thus Faulkner declares, in a closing passage from *Requiem for a Nun*, that a vision of the past might yet be obtained, lived, *if only one vests a little more faith in the possibilities on the American horizon, if only one hastens a little faster or further into American space. The continent is illimitable. Time is nullified; "was" and "is" distinctions are blurred. There is an enduring, "vast weight of man's incredible and enduring Was" (184-5):*

not *might* have been, nor even *could* have been, but *was*: so vast, so limitless in capacity is man's imagination to disperse and burn away the rubble-dross of fact and probability, leaving only truth and dream — then gone, you are outside again, in the hot noon sun: late; you have already wasted too much time: to unfumble among the road signs and filling stations to get back onto a highway you know, back into the United States; not that it matters, since you know again now that there is not time: not space: no distance.

(225)

What resonance does Faulkner's asynchronous perspective on time offer? The evidence for my judgment on that issue also provides support for my answer to the following question: Are Confederate monuments timeless, asynchronous: can those bones live? Not if the monuments are simply lifeless figures that gaze "with empty eyes beneath his marble hand into wind and weather," as Faulkner describes it in *The Sound and the Fury* (399). But if rhetoric, by demanding the reader's vital participation, can breathe life into texts, through the act of interpretation as well as the physical act of reading, then Southern postbellum monuments do have a dynamic, multi-generational continuity.⁹ They are inextricably a part of the Southern landscape's legacy and tragedy. They are blood, stone and soil that anoint memory and imagination.

Notes

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1. Gaines M. Foster's definition of this term, taken from his *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, reads in part: "the postwar writings and activities that per-

petuated the memory of the Confederacy" (4). In his entry on this subject in the *Southern Encyclopedia*, Foster observes that the phrase was "popularized as the title of Edward A. Pollard's 1866 history of the Confederacy," noting that it "accurately reflected their ambivalence about the outcome of the war. 'Lost' acknowledge the defeat of the Confederacy; 'Cause' suggested the South had fought less for independence than for philosophical principals that might yet triumph." ("Lost Cause Myth" 1134)

2. The religious dimension of this rhetoric brings to mind Sacvan Bercovitch's assertion in his *Rites of Assent* that "Mexico may have meant the land of gold and Canada might be the Dominion of the North; but America was a venture in exegesis" (29).

3. Those counties include Stafford, Richmond, Lee, Wise, and Dickenson. Others, Spotsylvania among them, have cemetery monuments nearby.

4. Winberry's essay, published in 1982, states that the South has been "a contradiction between the friendly and the trustworthy Andy Taylor of Mayberry and the snarling dogs and police clubs of 'Bull' Connor of Birmingham" (118).

5. Though beyond the scope of this essay, a comparison of Southern and Northern postbellum elegies would reveal sharp thematic contrasts. Northern elegies may be said to manifest resolution. The "War of the Rebellion," as it is often referred to, has been won and the Union preserved—victory covers a multitude of complexities. With no need to present an apologetic and rationale for the war and its after effects, they may be said to lack something of the pathos present in Southern postbellum elegies.

6. The phrase is drawn from John Keegan's *The Mask of Command*. In his essay on Ulysses S. Grant, he observes that America "is a country dominated by the dimension not of time—as is Europe, trammled by its history—but of space" (181). Distance, it seems, provides the solace of a hope of requited dreams.

7. The phrase is taken from Israel Kirzner's *Competition and Entrepreneurship* and offers a useful argument for applying the terms and methodology of microeconomics to twentieth-century American literature. Kirzner, in contrast to Joseph A. Schumpeter's theory of a cycle of creative destruction and renewal of enterprises and institutions, sees a larger continuity in the economic and social upheaval of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Kirzner writes:

Economic development, which Schumpeter . . . makes entirely dependent on entrepreneurship, is "entirely foreign to what may be observed in . . . the tendency towards equilibrium." By contrast, my own treatment of the entrepreneur emphasizes the equilibrating aspects of his role. I see the situation upon which the entrepreneurial role impinges as one of *inherent disequilibrium* rather than of equilibrium—as one churning with opportunities

for desirable changes rather as one of placid evenness . . . I see these changes as equilibrating changes.

(73, emphasis added)

8. "Carven" eyes, as Faulkner describes the Confederate monument's sculpted soldier in *Sartoris*: "The courthouse was of brick too, with stone arches rising amid elms, and among the trees the monument of the Confederate soldier stood, his musket at order arms, shading his carven eyes with his stone hand" (166).

9. Louise Rosenblatt's asserts that "the process of understanding a work implies a re-creation of it, an attempt to grasp completely the structured sensations and concepts through which the author seeks to convey the quality of his sense of life. Each must make a new synthesis of these elements with his own nature, but it is essential that he evoke those components of experience to which the text actually refers" (*Literature* 113).

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