

Performing Whiteness: Racial Representations in Selected Works of William Faulkner

松下, 紗耶

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Doctoral Dissertation

**Performing Whiteness:
Racial Representations in Selected Works of William Faulkner**

Saya Matsushita

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Graduate School of Humanities
Kyushu University

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Introduction

Performance and Whiteness

The race William Faulkner describes is performance. This performance does not necessarily mean a theatrical performance. This thesis will argue that in Faulkner's novels it is a social and cultural behavior that attempts to create people's race. However, we should not forget the fact that Faulkner was interested in theatre, as evidenced by the fact that his masterpiece, *The Sound and the Fury*, was named after Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*, and that he used a lot of theatrical metaphors. Faulkner created a mythical space, Yoknapatawpha, modeled after Oxford, Mississippi and describes performances in the lives of the people who live there.

William Cuthbert Faulkner was born in Mississippi in 1897 and spent most of his life in his hometown, Oxford. His great-grandfather, William Clark Faulkner (born in 1825), who had a huge influence on Faulkner, was called "Old Colonel." After serving in the Mexican War and returning home because of injuries, his great-grandfather married Holland Pearce, the daughter of a planter, and acquired land and slaves. He ran a plantation with his slaves, served as a lawyer, and was active in politics. He was commissioned as a colonel during the Civil War, and after the war he became a president of a railroad company, capitalizing on the boom in railroad construction in the South. His great-grandfather, who is also known as a writer, was truly an outstanding man, and Faulkner adored his great-grandfather so much that he wanted to be like his great-grandfather when he was a child. However, it was not a blind admiration, and he also became critically aware of the crimes committed by his great-grandfather. His great-grandfather used slaves and

sexually exploited enslaved black women and had children with one of them. This sexual exploitation of black women, as committed by his great-grandfather, was widespread in the South, which supported slavery, but it also created a fear of miscegenation among whites. The miscegenation caused the birth of “passing” people who look white but have black blood in their veins and are able to “pass” the racial borderline, arousing in whites the fear that they too might have black blood in their veins.

Many of the blacks in Faulkner’s works are of mixed race, which seems to reflect the history of his birth state of Mississippi, and there are also many (regarded as) black characters who look white enough to disguise their race. Considering this racial “passing,” it becomes clear that race is ultimately judged in accordance not with a biological trait, but a social norm. The best example is the “one-drop rule,” which was established after the Civil War, when slavery was dismantled and racial segregation was promoted. Under this rule, no matter how white one’s skin was, if one had at least one black ancestor, he or she was considered as a black in American society.

In the 1920s, when Faulkner began to be known as a writer, the Harlem Renaissance was in vogue and, this artistic movement aimed to raise the social status of blacks through intellectual and artistic activities such as literature, art, or music in the Harlem area of New York City. During the Harlem Renaissance, many novels on the subject of passing were published, of which Nella Larsen’s *Passing* is one of the most representative. The novel is set in New York City in the 1920s, the era of Jim Crow laws, and the two main characters, Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry, are white-looking, but regarded as black people under Jim Crow laws. Irene lives in Harlem with her husband who is seen as a black by his

appearance, and she temporarily passes her race and uses a whites-only hotel for a moment of peace and quiet. There, she reunites with an old friend, Clare, who is married to a white racist husband, disguising her race, and has a daughter. The plot of this novel that reveals the interchangeable races of Irene and Clare shows that race is fluid and arbitrary, both at the individual level and at the societal level. Irene and Clare, who are considered black by American society, are “playing a role of white,” which allows them to temporarily become white. Racial passing gives us insight that race can be played, and we can also discover some characters performing their race in Faulkner’s works.

1. What is Performance?

First, before examining Faulkner’s depiction of racial performance, we must first define what performance is. The term “performance” is first associated with physical representations such as theatre plays or dance, but it has now become an umbrella term that has been deployed in various fields such as linguistics, sociology, and cultural anthropology.

It was J.L. Austin who focused on the verb form of the word, “perform,” and proposed the concept of “performative” in the field of linguistics. The lecture he delivered at Harvard University in 1955 (*How to Do Things with Words*) gave a spotlight on “statements,” which had not been the subject of research before. He proposed the concept of “performative sentence” (6); a sentence that has the character of completing to perform some things by saying them, and gave the following examples:

(E. *a*) ‘I do (sc. take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)’—as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony.

(E. *b*) ‘I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*’—as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.

(E. *c*) ‘I give and bequeath my watch to my brother’—as occurring in a will.

(E. *d*) ‘I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.’ (5)

Austin claims that, in the appropriate circumstances, to utter the sentence is not to describe what the speaker is doing, but to do things such as accepting a woman as a wife, naming a ship, conceding belongings to someone, or predicting tomorrow’s weather. Erika Fischer-Lichte appraises Austin’s “performative sentence” theory: “Performative utterances are self-referential and constitutive in so far as they bring forth the social reality they are referring to. Austin formulated a theory that, while new to language philosophy, had been intuitively known to and practiced by speakers of all languages. Speech entails a transformative power” (24). In other words, saying something has some effect on reality and has the power to create something.

In 1959, the sociological field began to incorporate the concept of theatrical performance into behaviors on everyday life. A sociologist Irving Goffman states as follows in his book, *The Representation of Self in Everyday Life*:

I have said that when an individual appears before others his actions will influence the definition of the situation which they come to have. Sometimes the individual will act in a thoroughly calculating manner,

expressing himself in a given way solely in order to give the kind of impression to others that is likely to evoke from them a specific response he is concerned to obtain. (6)

Goffman captures theatrical theories and proposes the new perspective of “dramaturgy,” which is how we represent ourselves in social interactions. People perform, control situations, and manipulate impressions of the way they want their communication partners to see them. Although Goffman’s work can be said to be the roots of performance studies as a theory of communication and behavior, it is difficult to assume and define a priori self that “changes masks” of their identity, and Goffman’s theory was gradually replaced by new theories in post-structuralism (Takahashi 19, 68). However, Goffman’s achievement in incorporating theatrical performance into everyday life and showing the instability of people’s identity is significant.

After post-structuralism, in 1980s and 1990s, “bodies” which had been seen as unimportant began to attract critics’ attention. In 1990, Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* raised a revolution in the field of feminism and denied the previously accepted idea that gender was constructed on top of sex. She points out that gender itself has the structure of imitation (137); furthermore, she claims that the subject is constructed in performative ways through the repetition of standard actions (141-42). This theory rejects Goffman’s a priori identity changing masks and controlling self-representation. Butler’s theory is clearly a continuation of Austin’s “performative” theory, and Fischer-Lichte comments:

The specific materiality of the body emerges out of the repetition of certain

gestures and movements; these acts generate the body as individually, sexually, ethnically, and culturally marked. Performative acts thus are of crucial importance in constituting bodily as well as social identity. In so far, Butler's definition corresponds to Austin's "performative" as being "self-referential" and "constituting reality." (27)

In short, to say something or to repeat some gestures and movements significantly affect the construction of self in reality. Butler's argument is primarily about gender, but this idea that gender is not determined by biological characteristics, but is constructed by repeating actions in accordance with social norms, can also be applied to race. As already mentioned, race is also not essential and is not necessarily determined by biological characteristics because the definition of race is fluid and can be constructed, changing in accordance with social norms. In other words, race is also performed and created for the purpose of its racial identity.

The object of research in performance studies is not necessarily limited to theatrical or stage performances. It includes all actions and representations that are affected by the viewers or participants, whether or not conscious of "acting" is involved and even if unconsciously (Takahashi 10). This thesis would like to define a racial performance as an attempt to construct one's own racial identity or to give racial identity to communication partners through one's action, words or attitudes. By scrutinizing the words, actions, and attitudes of the characters in Faulkner's works, we will discover how they construct their racial identity. However, as already noted, Faulkner was born in the South, in which miscegenation is deeply rooted, and created many characters with racial anxieties, such as mixed-race characters and white people whose racial anxieties are aroused by miscegenation.

Their racial performances are not easy to understand, and we can see their struggles in the process of creating racial identities.

2. The Problem of Whiteness

Faulkner began to make race a major theme in his fiction with *Light in August*, published in 1932, in which one of the main characters, Joe Christmas, is a good example of racial performance. As we will discuss again later, Joe is called “nigger” by the dietitian at the orphanage in which he grows up, even though he has white skin. This is exactly the kind of performative utterance Austin would use: the dietitian does not describe the situation or Joe’s appearance, but gives blackness to white-skinned Joe, who begins to suffer from the ambiguity of racial identity since then, and he acts like a black man when he is with black people and acts like a white man in the white community, repeating the act for the purpose of his racial identity.

What conflicts Joe is not the blackness that he is said to have inherited. He is simultaneously internalizing the whiteness that abhors his (given) blackness and does not allow him to be black, and he is tormented by the instability of his racial identity. After all, it is white supremacy that defines the borderline of race, and it is whites who are most afraid that their color line will be broken, which brings out the problem of whiteness.

Toni Morrison, an African-American woman writer, challenges the way people accept American literature: “There seems to be a more or less tacit agreement among literary scholars that, because American literature has been

clearly the preserve of white male views, genius, and power, those views, genius, and power are without relationship to and removed from the overwhelming presence of black people in the United States” (5). She claims that blacks have been marginalized in the literary imagination, but “Africanism” reveals the true nature of whiteness. Moreover, she points out that the major themes and presumptions of American literature are “autonomy, authority, newness and difference, absolute power” which are shaped by “Africanism” that means white people’s “autonomy, authority, newness and difference, absolute power” can be acquired by differentiating themselves from the racial “others” in “raw half-savage world” (44-45). Finally, she concludes as follows:

If we follow through on the self-reflexive nature of these encounters with Africanism, it falls clear: images of blackness can be evil *and* protective, rebellious *and* forgiving, fearful *and* desirable—all of the self-contradictory features of the self. Whiteness, alone, is mute, meaningless, unfathomable, pointless, frozen, veiled, curtained, dreaded, senseless, implacable. Or so our writers seem to say. (59)

Morrison shows that whiteness in American literature is silent and keeps itself from being scrutinized while blackness is characterized by its own self-contradictions. This questioning of whiteness by Morrison has had a profound impact on whiteness studies.

In addition, whiteness studies, which have rapidly developed as a cross-disciplinary field of study in the humanities and social sciences since the late 20th century, has one of its aims to put whiteness, which has not been analyzed and

racialized because it is the standard, into the discussion of race. Ross Chambers argues that whiteness cannot be “marked” or “analyzed,” so to speak, a “blank” category.

There are plenty of unmarked categories . . . but whiteness is perhaps the primary unmarked and so unexamined—let’s say “blank”—category. Like other unmarked categories, it has a touchstone quality of the normal, against which the members of marked categories are measured and, of course, found deviant, that is, wanting. It is thus (unlike linguistic unmarkedness) situated outside the paradigm that it defines. (189)

Whiteness, according to Chambers, is the touchstone of “being the normal” while other categories are marked by how much they deviate or how far they are from that standard. At the same time, however, the blankness of whiteness cannot be recognized by itself, so it can only be known through looking at the imperfect, the abnormal (Fujikawa 22). However, it must be noted that “[w]hiteness is not about racial inheritance at all.” Whiteness is established through racial domination that creates “norms” and maintains the social relations, and in this sense, whiteness is “making choices” to be white and can be constructed (Ware and Back 287). And, following Austin and Butler’s argument, whiteness is constructed by performance of utterances or actions.

3. Performing Whiteness in the South

To show the ambiguity of racial boundaries and the construction of whiteness through performance in the American South, the short story “*Désirée’s Baby*” (1893) by a southern woman writer, Kate Chopin (1850-1904),¹ would be a good example. The story is set in pre-Civil War Louisiana, in which *Désirée* is abandoned by her parents at so early an age that she does not know who they are, and is found and raised as a daughter by Mr. and Mrs. Valmonde with great care. *Désirée* marries Armand, a white plantation owner, and they have a son. Their marriage life, sailing smoothly at first, gradually falls apart when their son begins to exhibit black characteristics. When *Désirée* questions the reason for her son’s skin color, Armand says, “the child is not white; it means that you are not white” (192). *Désirée*’s blackness is assigned to her by Armand because her origin is obscure, and she despairs and commits suicide by entering the bayou with her child. However, it is later discovered that Armand’s mother, who died when Armand was eight years old, is in fact black. In other words, Armand has black heritage, and according to the social norms of the time, he would be considered as black. However, by hiding it, acting as a white plantation owner, and giving *Désirée* blackness, Armand becomes white.

Armand’s telling *Désirée* that she is black is not the description of the fact that she is black, but a socially powerful man giving the reality of being black to the socially powerless woman (who has unknown origin). At the same time, Armand gives himself whiteness by othering her as black. After *Désirée*’s death, there is “a curious scene enacted” (194 emphasis mine) at Armand’s house. He burns *Désirée*’s and their child’s belongings, and this scene could be interpreted as

a performance as a white husband who is betrayed by his wife.

A quick reading of the story would indicate that the time Armand learns of his black blood hidden beneath his white skin is when he reads his mother's letter while burning her belongings after Désirée leaves the plantation. The time of the loss of his racial innocence is about the same time that the reader learns the fact of his blackness, and it has been considered that his past with his mother, with whom he had lived until the age of eight in Paris, is unconsciously repressed (Foy 223). Werner Sollors says, however, that "[h]e (Armand) is so bad, in fact, that some readers even surmised [. . .] that Armand must have known about his own racial background earlier and kept this knowledge from Désirée" (68). In other words, it is possible that Armand knows of his own black blood prior to the scene in which he reads the letter at the end. Therefore, we would like to examine the scene in which Armand reads the letter from his mother.

The last thing to go was a tiny bundle of letters; innocent little scribblings that Désirée had sent to him during the days of their espousal. There was remnant of one back in the drawer from which he took them. But it was not Désirée's; it was part of an old letter from his mother to his father. (194)

The fact that the letter from his mother is in the drawer with letters Désirée sent him connects with the possibility that Armand has long known of its existence. It seems strange that he never noticed the other letter in the drawer in which he stores his wife's letters.² Even if it is possible that his mother is a fair-skinned black woman like Armand, it would be unnatural to assume that he "unconsciously" repressed the memory of his mother, with whom he lived until the age of eight, and

if he does repress it, it would be more natural to assume that it is conscious repression.³

If Armand knows of his secret black blood before he marries Désirée, he knows that there is a possibility of his child bearing black features. Thus, his marriage to her might be his performance so as to represent his identity as “a white plantation master.” Hints for his performance lurk at the moment in which Armand falls in love with Désirée.

It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stone pillar in whose shadow she had lain asleep, eighteen years before, that Armand Aubigny riding by and seeing her there, had fallen in love with her. That was the way all the Aubignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot. The wonder was that he had not loved her before; for he had known her since his father brought him home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there. The passion that awoke in him that day, when he saw her at the gate, swept along like an avalanche, or a prairie fire, or like anything that drives headlong over all obstacles. (189)

He falls in love with Désirée “as if struck by a pistol shot.” In addition, when he shuts Désirée out from his plantation, she feels that she is “stabbed,” and “stunned by a blow” (193), indicating his violence. Armand deliberately produces the situation so that he manipulates a traditionally “masculine” image. Furthermore, his intentional deterioration becomes apparent when, having never fallen in love with Désirée before despite having known her for a long time, he suddenly falls headlong in love with her; he uses her for his own purpose. He is reminded many

times by Monsieur Valmondé that Désirée is of “obscure origin” and “nameless” (190), but Armand goes against this opposition and marries her. In fact, the “blankness” of Désirée’s last name is convenient for him because he can fill in her blankness as he pleases. Ellen Peel points out “her blankness should be read as a warning about the fragility of representation” (225), and claims that “Armand sees Désirée’s blankness as blackness, not *blanche*-ness” (228). However, Armand does not “see” blackness, but “blacks out” Désirée’s blankness. Additionally, “Armand Aubigny’s imperious and exacting nature” (191) and his strict attitude toward his slaves are part of his performance of being “a white plantation master”—a requirement of southern social norms. What is more, his tanning “dark” (191) skin may also be his performance to hide his anxiety when black features suddenly appear.

The perspective of Armand’s racial performance makes it possible to reconsider several previous interpretations. After he forces Désirée out of his house, his feelings are described as follows:

He thought Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him; and felt, somehow, that he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife’s soul. Moreover he no longer loved her, because of the unconscious injury she had brought upon his home and his name. (193)

Superficially regarded, Armand feels hurt because his wife disguises her race and betrays him, but it could be considered that what injures his home and his name rather than the fact that Désirée has black blood, is that she does not give birth to a white baby. Moreover, in Armand’s mother’s letter, she says:

I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, belongs to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery. (194)

She does not only thank her husband, who allows her to live apart in France far from Louisiana, in which she has to be a slave, but thanks God because Armand does not have black features.

Désirée loves him, but “[w]hen he frowned she trembled” (191); thus, because of her powerlessness, she is controlled by Armand’s performance.⁴ And her past as well as her present is under the control by him

The analysis of whiteness and performance in this short story questions represented whiteness and will cast our eyes on the process of constructing whiteness. In doing so, we will also find elements that have been masked by the represented whiteness.

4. Whiteness and Performance in Faulkner

Let us return to whiteness in Faulkner’s work. Thadious M. Davis appreciates Faulkner’s approach to whiteness in his works:

With more insight, clarity, and artistry than any other white writer of his generation, specifically Hemingway and Fitzgerald, Faulkner represented issues of race, racialization, racial construction, and racial division. Most

impressive about his achievement is not that he created black characters and positioned them within his fictional Yoknapatawpha, but rather that he envisioned what Melville represented as “the whiteness of whiteness.” Faulkner constructed characters who are consciously white, racialized as white, and depicted the construction of whiteness within southern and American society. As a result, he allowed outsiders to know in ways not otherwise available to them one ongoing narrative of white people in psychological nudity. His treatment of white people, within the normalizing, universalizing elision of racial identity, but with the complexity of the burden of racial subjectivity is an extraordinary achievement, unequaled in the first half of the century and unparalleled in the second. (*Games of Property* 254)

Davis applauds that Faulkner positions whiteness which is, as Chambers says, the touchstone of being the normal and has not been analyzed “within the normalizing, universalizing elision of racial identity, but with the complexity of the burden of racial subjectivity,” and that he racializes white. Then, what was the perspective of race in an era in which Faulkner lives? Jay Watson explains that Faulkner wrote his works “during a period characterized by paradigm shifts in the theorization of race generally and the conceptualization of the white race in particular;” in other words, race “began to ‘soften’ conceptually, from a natural absolute to a more culturally contingent phenomenon, a matter of affiliation and practice” (x). Besides, according to Matthew Frye Jacobson, “the late nineteenth century’s probation white groups” such as Celts, Slavs, Hebrews, Iberics, and Saracens “were reconsolidated as the unitary Caucasian race” in the 1920s because

of the restrictive legislation in 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act) (8). Watson claims that, in Faulkner's South, "the fundamental biracialism of this new phase of U.S. whiteness (in which to be "Caucasian" was necessarily not to be black and vice versa) was powerfully reinforced by the cultural of segregation" (xi) considering the social background in the U.S.

In other words, in Faulkner's time, people were beginning to realize that race is not essentialist, based on biological matters, but constructionist, based on social and cultural matters. As already mentioned, it is white people who determine the social and cultural standard, and whites position blacks as the racial other; then, they themselves acquire whiteness by representing themselves as a white through performance of words and actions in accordance with social and cultural standard. However, there may be cases when there is a conflict between their consciousness and white social and cultural standard. For example, economic deprivation may prevent them from gaining the privileges of whiteness, or they may have a desire for blacks, which has the potential for new miscegenation. And such anxieties can threaten their whiteness.

Watson suggests that we "turn from the formation to the performance (or more precisely the *misperformance*) of social subjects and groups that don't seem to get their whiteness right" to uncover the "pretense to coherence and neutrality" of whiteness, and offers a possibility that such performances, "whether inadvertent or deliberately subversive, have the potential to expose and disrupt the operation of normative whiteness" (xiv-xv). In the imperfection of the performance of white characters in Faulkner's works to be a white, we can see their obsession with "being white" that is deeply embedded in the white consciousness, or their confusion and conflict of being and performing whiteness. Discovering their

obsession with white or racial conflict may lead to the possibility of causing a stir in a society dominated by white supremacy.

This thesis will focus on Faulkner's works, whose primary theme is race, to show how whiteness is constructed through performance by examining white characters' words and actions that create their racial identity. Studying racial performances leads to the possibility of questioning and casting doubt on the normality of white. And by studying from this perspective, we hope to uncover elements that have not been the subject of critique in the past, to discover what is created or hidden by the performance, and to offer the possibility of new interpretations in these elements.

Chapter 1 discusses "Dry September" (1931), a short story in which Faulkner uses race as a major theme before *Light in August*. This short story depicts the overreaction of the white community toward a black man who is rumored that he raped a spinster white woman. Whether this rape actually occurred or not is not known. However, the white men who gather at the barbershop ignore the restraint of Henry Hawkshaw, the barber, and go on to lynch the black man, Will Mayes. The lynching is led by John McLendon, a former military man who has led troops in World War I. This chapter will emphasize his Irish family name and his racial anxiety. In America, composed of immigrants and always accepting immigrants from other countries, the concept of race is constantly changing. The fluidity of the concept of race in the U.S. causes McLendon's leading of the lynching, which is a guarantee of his own whiteness. In addition, Minnie Cooper, the white woman rumored to have been raped, has been interpreted by both the characters in the

work and by critics as having fabricated the rape. However, Minnie's race and sexuality are constructed through her constant exposure to the eyes of the townspeople. Examining the connection between race and sexuality as assigned to white American women, this chapter scrutinizes the gaze cast on Minnie. When we conspire with that gaze, we "create" her subjectivity that she fabricates the rape.

Chapter 2 focuses on *Light in August* (1932). This is the first novel in which Faulkner brings racial issues rooted in the South to the forefront, and the story centers on Joe Christmas, who is abandoned by his parents soon after his birth and grows up amid rumors that he has "black blood" despite his white appearance. Joe's mother is shown to be white, but his father is unknown until the end of the novel, and neither Joe nor the reader learns Joe's "true" race. Hence, he performs his race like a white person in the white community and like a black person in the black community. Also, with regard to gender and sexuality, he feels a gender inversion in his sexual relationship with Joanna Burden, who is his fated woman. As this plot indicates, we can read Joe as being marginal even at the boundary between men and women. In this chapter, after reviewing the racial instability that Joe faces, we will focus on the instability of Joanna's whiteness which critics have not noticed. Her racial anxiety is made clear by scrutinizing the stories of her family she tells Joe. It also reveals how her own whiteness is established while she gives Joe blackness. The gender reversal that occurs between them is also revealed to be an attempt by Joanna to become the southern "father."

Chapter 3 examines the construction, reconstruction, and deconstruction of whiteness in *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), known as Faulkner's masterpiece. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, the story of what happened to the Sutpen family in the South before, during, and after the Civil War is told. The narrators are Rosa Coldfield,

Quentin Compson, the protagonist of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Mr. Compson, Quentin's father, and Shreve, Quentin's friend, who reconstruct the Sutpen story. Among the difficult narratives that mix various plots, the plot about the "design" held by Thomas Sutpen, a former poor white man in West Virginia, is an important plot point. It is about acquiring a huge amount of land, a house, slaves, and a white family, and it is precisely Sutpen's racial performance of trying to become a southern white man, having been deprived of whiteness because he is a poor white man. In this chapter, we will examine the process of Sutpen's racial performance and discover his struggle within it. Then, Quentin reconstructs the Sutpen story, and he discovers the presence of black people in it. As the reason of his discovery of the blackness, intertextuality with *The Sound and the Fury* has often been discussed, but this chapter examines intertextuality with "That Evening Sun," a short story about Quentin's childhood memories of the relation with his black nanny, Nancy, and demonstrates that the reconstruction of the Sutpen story reflects Quentin's own experiences with blacks in the South. It also shows that it is Rosa who has the potential to shatter the Sutpen's and Quentin's narrative dominated by southern white supremacy and patriarchy. Her physical performance is one that defies the southern white norm, and it strikes a significant blow to that norm.

Chapter 4 will examine *Go Down, Moses*, which consists of seven short stories. Roth Edmonds has been interpreted as a typical white southern plantation owner because of his repetition of Old Carothers McCaslin's miscegenation and incest. However, critics have neglected Roth's anxiety about his whiteness, although some of them note his sense of inferiority in his relationship with a black man, Lucas Beauchamp. This chapter will point out that he fails to perform as Southern father,

and it aims to offer a new interpretation of Roth Edmonds by focusing on his anxiety about his whiteness. Roth's outwardly ruthless attitude to Lucas includes his minstrelsy characteristics, which represent an obvious discrimination against black people. At the same time, recent studies have identified that minstrelsy blackface represents the panic, anxiety, terror, and pleasure of white people; this proves that Roth's jealousy and anxiety reveal his secret acceptance that Lucas is a better man than himself. Examining Roth's anxiety about his whiteness reveals not only his hidden desire for black people, but also his love for them. Some of Roth's relationships with women, like with Molly and with his black mistress, clarify this affection. Roth's conflict between his affection and southern tradition offers the possibility to turn the spotlight on repressed blacks in the traditional South. While Ike McCaslin believes in the purity of the mythic South, Roth contrives to adopt a new worldview, which is not obsessed with the old South, and the new era helps the repressed people with fleeing from McCaslin's control. Thus, comprehending Roth's conflict leads us to a new interpretation of his character in *Go Down, Moses*.

In *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), Gavins' abhorrence of the federal government's intervention in the South and his conservative insistence that the South should gradually change have been interpreted as an expression of Faulkner's personal attitude toward racial problems in the South. Chapter 5 will analyze the performance of the whites to reveal the satirical aspect of this work and Faulkner's critical stance toward southern Whites. First, we will examine Charles Mallison's (Chick Mallison's) experience that changes his traditional perspective of race. Through the relationship with Lucas, who is characterized as an autonomic black man, Chick acquires a new perspective on race, that is not

derived from racial characteristics; he realizes that race is historically and socially constructed. And, we will focus on Faulkner's usage of the metaphor of the theatre to depict the place in which southern whites expect Lucas' lynching. They create a rhetoric that assures their own whiteness by identifying Lucas as black, which makes him a murderer, and by seeing him as a racial other. Hence, Chick's digging up of the grave and proving Lucas' innocence confounds the racial discourse by southern whites. Faulkner also emphasizes Chick's bodily act. The excavation of the grave by Chick is a bodily act that deviates from the southern norm, which, in turn, restructures the position of the racial superiority of whites. However, Chick is unable to move his body while listening to Gavin's rhetoric. Ultimately, internalizing Gavin's ideas, Chick embraces his identity as a southern white man. It is in this version of Chick that we discover the coerciveness of southern culture and history exerting on the deviant body, which is Faulkner's ironical representation of southern whiteness.

Notes

1. Chopin's parents' house in St. Louis had several slaves, and her husband, Oscar's family owned a plantation with nearly 100 slaves. There is also the fact that Oscar was a member of a white supremacist organization. Given these facts, it may be unnatural to assume that Chopin was completely free from racist perspectives (Furomoto 18-19). Certainly, her main interest in her novels is women's liberation, but it is worth noting that "Désirée's Baby" depicts the ambiguity of racial boundaries.

2. For detailed arguments regarding this point, see Margaret D. Bauer, p.161-63.
3. Robert D. Arner comments “his mother, whom he has never seen that he remembers” (140), but there is no evidence that Armand has never seen his mother. Armand was brought “home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there” (189), which means he had spent eight years with his mother. Roslyn Reso Foy analyzes Armand’s memory about his mother as “a repressed, unconscious remembrance of his own past” (223). Armand’s mother believes that he has never known her race, because she had light skin. If this is so, and if Armand is never aware of her race, it is unnatural that he would repress his memory of his mother subconsciously because he need not do so. Armand keeps knowledge about his mother a secret from everyone, and he consciously represses memories because he may actually know all about his mother.
4. Cynthia Griffin Wolf suggests that “innocence is her most marked characteristic, a kind of childlike, helpless ignorance” (40). Moreover, “her very life depends on the whims, social class, and race of her husband” (127) Anna Shannon Elfenbein notes. She also points out the name, Désirée, means “desired;” in the other words, she is always a desired object (27). She is the ideal daughter to Monsieur and Madame Valmondé when she is a child, and she becomes an ideal wife to Armand after their marriage. Thus, throughout her life, Désirée is desired by other people. Désirée is always the object, and Armand makes her black with his words, “the child is not white; it means that you are not white.” After Désirée leaves the plantation, she is described as follows: “Désirée had not changed the thin white garment nor the slippers which she wore. Her hair was uncovered and the sun’s rays brought a golden gleam from its brown meshes [. . .]. She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised

her tender feet, so delicately shod, and tore her thin gown to shreds (194).” She used to put on “her soft white muslins and laces” (190) on Armand’s plantation and play the role of an elegant white woman. However, after her expulsion, she is covered with “golden” and “brown” rays; her clothes become rags like those of the slaves. This is a kind of her racial performance in the process of becoming a black.

Chapter 1

Violence and Whiteness in “Dry September”

William Cuthbert Faulkner was born in 1897 in New Albany, Union County, Mississippi, in the Deep South, and moved to Oxford, Lafayette County in 1902. As already mentioned, he considered Oxford as his home and used it as the prototype for Yoknapatawpha County, which he created as the main setting for his works. Also, as already mentioned in Introduction, Faulkner respected his great-grandfather, who was an outstanding man, but was critical of his grand-grandfather's slaveholding and sexual exploitation of black women. He had black servants in his home, among them, his nanny, Caroline Barr, also known as Mammy Callie, and his deep affection for her is well known.

However, he was born at a time when the backlash against the Reconstruction after the defeat of the Civil War was strongly expressed. By the 1890s, the so-called Jim Crow laws that ordained racial segregation in schools, dining halls, theaters, public transportation, and hotels became institutionalized in the southern states. In fact, the elementary school to which Faulkner went consisted of all white students. The case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 was a challenge to the Jim Crow laws, but the court decision, “separate but equal,” would not be overturned until 1955, and the civil rights movement of the 1960s would finally lead to the abolition of racial segregation.

Lynchings became more and more common from this time onward, as the offender (or alleged offender) was subjected to collective, private sanctions rather than judicially imposed punishment, often resulting in the victim's death. In the South, blacks were often the victims (many of the lynched blacks were innocent).

Behind the scenes, the Ku Klux Klan was founded in the South after the Civil War with the purpose of threatening blacks who had been freed by the abolition of slavery, carpetbaggers (those who migrated from the North), and scalawags (southerners who collaborated with blacks and northerners).

The Ku Klux Klan repeatedly lynched blacks on the basis of white supremacy, which ranks the races and holds the belief that the white race is in the superior position. White supremacy stems from Christian fundamentalism, which seeks to interpret biblical doctrines literally, justifying the superiority of the white race and the inferiority of colored people. For example, fundamentalists believe the black race as cursed by God by interpreting the mark given by God to Cain, the brother-killer, as a sign of blackness. White supremacists also justified slavery by interpreting Ham as the ancestor of blacks, based on biblical episodes of Canaan, the son of Ham, being cursed by Noah to serve as the servant of his father's brothers. This fundamentalism was also particularly prevalent in the South, and it produced a racist ideology that created a dichotomy between whites and blacks and determined their superiority and the inferiority of other races.¹ In addition, science became more important in post-Civil War America. Scientific justification for the inferiority of blacks became a greater influence than religious one, which contributed to the increase in lynchings at the end of the 19th century (Noll 96).

Faulkner's short story "Dry September," finally published in 1931, describes a rumor that a middle-aged white woman, Minnie Cooper, is raped by a black man, Will Mayes, and describes how the lynching takes place under the leadership of John McLendon, a former soldier who has the experience of commanding a troop on the French front during World War I. Hisao Tanaka points out the "multi-layered nature of structured violence as a cultural form" in this work which depicts

the intertwined themes of violence, race, and sex, such as lynching and rape, and appreciates that the work “reflects the traumatic delusion and pathology of white society,” and “brilliantly and symbolically seeks to show the violent dominance of racial illusions that have become the collective unconscious of southern society” (51-52).

As already mentioned in Introduction, it should be noted that by Faulkner’s time, race had already become cultural, not biological. Southern whites, through this cultural policy of racial segregation, dichotomized the races. In the post-Civil War South, there were many lynchings of blacks, and it is said that the “excuse” for these lynchings was sexual contacts such as rape for white women, who were supposed to be pure and innocent. Many researchers have already pointed out that it was the fear of the instability of whiteness due to miscegenation that created such a violent collective consciousness among southern whites. In light of this, it can be said that the act of lynching provided a means of constructing and guaranteeing the privileged whiteness of the whites who carried out such lynchings.

Furthermore, the construction of privileged whiteness in the United States is interrelated with gender and sexuality. Ruth Frankenberg demonstrates the stereotypical images that appeared in racist discourses in the age of early settlement in America.

White Woman is frail, vulnerable, delicate, sexually pure but at times easily led “astray.” White Man is strong, dominant, arbiter of truth, and self-designated protector of white womankind, defender of nation/territory (and here defense of the nation and its honor often also entails defending

White Woman's racial chastity). Man of Color (most frequently this has meant African/Black Man . . .) is sexually rapacious, sometimes seductive, usually predatory, especially toward White Woman: it is he, in fact from whom White Woman must be protected by White Man. (11-12)

In this clearly white/male-centric image, the positioning of black/female categories as predators and (sexual) victims of them makes white men white women's "protectors." This complementary image of "white women to be saved," "black men as predators," and "white men as protectors of women" is seen in the relationship between Minnie, Will, and McLendon in "Dry September."

Considering the above discussion, it is McLendon who is most conscious of his whiteness in "Dry September," and who constructs his whiteness by acting, with his violent nature, as a "protector" of white women from black men through leading the lynching of Will. However, when we take into account McLendon's Irish family name and his background of having served during World War I, it seems that the instability of McLendon's whiteness also reveals a national background as well as his background in the South.

In "Dry September," the common reading is that Will's rape of Minnie does not take place and is faked by Minnie, and Minnie, approaching middle-age, is sometimes interpreted as trying to relive her past glory (Crane 414-15), as suggested by the title ("Dry" means the approaching the end of life). However, neither the rape nor the fabrication of the rape by Minnie is actually depicted, and nobody knows what really happens. This narrative blank, as Thomas Claviez points out, "can function as a trap that might not only hide the political and ideological preconceptions, projections and prejudices of the author or his or her

times, but also can serve to mirror and reflect those of the reader” (31). That means, previous interpretations of Minnie reflect the sexism of the reader, but there has been no re-reading of Minnie.

Therefore, this chapter aims to offer a new interpretation of McLendon and Minnie, using “violence” and “whiteness” as keywords. By focusing on the Irish family name, McLendon, and his World War I service experience, we examine the construction of multilayered whiteness in McLendon. In addition, this chapter will compare Minnie to Emily Grierson in “A Rose for Emily,” which is thought as thematically similar to “Dry September,” and clarify the violent sexuality that lies not in Minnie but rather in the community as a whole by scrutinizing Minnie’s position as a white woman.

1. McLendon’s Whiteness

The rumor that Minnie has been raped by Will quickly spreads throughout the town. “Dry September” opens with a description of the men talking about the rumor. The place is a barbershop, a masculine space, as follows:

Attacked, insulted, frightened: none of them, gathered in the barber shop on that Saturday evening where the ceiling fan stirred, without freshening it, the vitiated air, sending back upon them, in recurrent surges of stale pomade and lotion, their own stale breath and odors, knew exactly what had happened. (158)

This depiction of the air in the room not being replaced, even though it is still hot in September, and the smell of lotion and pomade mixing with their own smells, indicates that the space is an enclosed homosocial space. The expression, “their own breath and smells,” also suggests a more or less sexual element that highlights their masculinity by the fact that what they are talking about is their retaliation for the rape of a white woman by a black man.

One of them is the youth whose name is Butch. He does not hesitate to express his manly and violent thoughts that Will should be lynched as soon as possible, just as his name, which means “muscular and macho” suggests. However, as explained that “[h]e looked about with a strained, baffled gaze, as if he was trying to remember what it was he wanted to say or to do” (160), he looks as if he is acting his masculinity and trying to remember how to perform it, and perhaps because of his youth, this description shows the bafflement he feels when he does not behave well.

McLendon’s masculinity is particularly strongly portrayed among the men in the barbershop. We see a deliberate display of his masculinity from his physical descriptions (“[a] man stood in the floor, his feet apart and his heavy-set body poised easily. His white shirt was open at the throat; he wore a felt hat” [160]). Moreover, his “hot, bold glance” (160) controls the space. Henry Hawkshaw and several others who oppose the lynching defend Will, saying that they do not know if the rape really happened, but McLendon leads the men in the barbershop to lynch Will, saying that regardless of whether it actually happened, if the blacks are left alone, a rape could really happen someday. At this time, Butch, who has not been able to perform well the act as a white man, starts to follow McLendon’s example and performs his whiteness, saying, “That’s what I been telling them!”

(160). Before leaving the barbershop, McLendon roves “his gaze, dragging his sleeve across his face” (161), and he acts as if he makes those who oppose the lynching obey him with his violence. People who are made to feel uncomfortable by his gaze follow him with great reluctance.

Behaviors such as a white man retaliating against a black man who raped a white woman can be read as an anachronistic allegiance to southern chivalry, which is reinforced by the racist discourse of “a white man as protector of a white woman.” However, in “Dry September,” it does not matter whether one is born in the South or not because the customer in the barbershop is “a drummer and a stranger.” His appearance is “like a desert rat in the moving pictures” (159), which is a far cry from the southern aristocracy, in which southern chivalry is an important value. Rather, because of this appearance, he must behave like a “proper white man” in the South, and he considers those who deviate from that norm as the “other.”

The client sat up. He looked at the speaker. ‘Do you claim that anything excuses a nigger attacking a white woman? Do you mean to tell me you are a white man and you’ll stand for it? You better go back North where you came from. The South dont want your kind here.’

‘North what?’ the second (barber) said. ‘I was born and raised in this town.’ (160)

We do not know where this customer is actually from, but he clearly behaves as a “southerner” and considers those who defend blacks to be from the “North” even though they are born in the South. Just as southerners dichotomize race as black

and white, they dichotomize the South and the North, and create the “other,” which makes themselves a southern white. Southern whiteness is a product of performance.

The lynching of blacks in “Dry September,” which reveals the fear that a real rape may someday occur if blacks are left alone, is not southern chivalry to protect white women, but it is just acting like it. Rather, this violence is what Takashi Sakai calls “majority aggression,” in which “the superior side in power which uses their violent power attributes the superiority of power and the perpetration of violence to the inferior side in power” (113). The fear of miscegenation justifies violence, and by viewing the violence of white people as a “prophylactic” defense, it is not perceived as violence (116-17).

In the United States, however, a nation composed of immigrants, whiteness is not monolithic. The whiteness of McLendon, who has an Irish surname and has participated in World War I, the first national war, reveals the whites’ anxiety latent in the history of immigration and the national racial politics of the war time that reinforce southern racial discourse.

“Dry September” was sent to a publisher in 1930 under the title “Drouth” but was rejected for publication. After several revisions, it was published in *Scribners* magazine in 1931 and later included in *These 13* (1931), which consists of thirteen short stories. One of the major changes in the revision was that the name of the man leading the lynching, Plunkett in the “Drouth” and *Scribners* editions, was changed to McLendon (Millgate 262-63). Both are family names of Irish, and this name change further emphasizes the fact that Faulkner created this character with the assumption that he would be of Irish descent. Furthermore, McLendon’s house has “green-and-white paint” (170), which is quite suggestive of his racial

roots.² It is also possible that McLendon is portrayed as a hot-blooded individual, as is often the stereotype of Irish immigrants in the U.S. McLendon's background is never described; then, it can only be speculative, but his family name is a kind of "mark." By scrutinizing the racial discourse of Irish descent in the U.S., we can see the unstable whiteness that lurks in the U.S.

Between 1845 and 1849, Europe suffered from a great famine triggered by the outbreak of the infections of potatoes across Europe. Many people in Ireland, in which potatoes were the staple food, died of starvation, and many were forced to emigrate to other countries. The U.S. was one of the destinations, and immigration to the U.S. increased dramatically from the 1840s onward, but the Celtic and Catholic Irish were marginalized whites in the U.S., in which the WASP held tremendous power, and their race was unstable and defined by political discourse in the U.S. According to Matthew Frye Jacobson, who researches the racial discourse of white in the U.S., the category of white was relatively stabilized after the naturalization laws, which sanctioned citizenship of immigrants, in 1790, but with the increase of immigrants after the 1840s, "the massive influx borne of the 'liberal' immigration policy, in its turn, generated a new perception of some Europeans' *unfitness* for self-government, now rendered racially in a series of subcategorical groupings—Celt, Slav, Hebrew, Iberic, Mediterranean, and so on—white Others of a supreme Anglo-Saxondom" (42). Before the Civil War, Irish were described with following adjectives: "*[l]ow-browed and savage, grovelling and bestial, lazy and wild, simian and sensual*" (Roediger 133), and blacks and Irish were sometimes associated with each other. In the South, black slaves were considered as valuable property, while Irish laborers were considered as slavish laborers, and the Irish were sometimes regarded as a substitutive labor for black

slaves in dangerous jobs. It has also been noted that the discourse against the Irish was tied to their physical characteristics (Jacobson 48).

With this immigrant background and the changing racial discourse, the U.S.'s focus in entering World War I was on how to bring together American residents who had various origins as "American citizens" (Nakano 97).³ On the other hand, however, blacks were divided and monitored, and by separating blacks as the racial other, white people sought to ensure the homogeneity of the "American people" (Nakano 152).⁴ As for white people, according to Jacobson, "Anglo-Saxonist exclusivity dominated the years from 1840 to the 1920s, whereas a pattern of Caucasian unity gradually took its place in the 1920s and after," and "between the mid-1920s and the end of World War II, 'Caucasian' as a 'natural' division of humanity became part of a popular national catechism" (91-92). What this overview of the changing white racial discourse in the U.S. underscores is that whiteness can be constructed by creating racial "others" in a place of white domination.

On the other hand, it also entails the danger of becoming the other. Perhaps McLendon, born in the late 1800s and exposes the changing racial discourse of whites in the U.S. at the time as well as the national policies of segregation and immigrant assimilation during World War I, has not only a fear of miscegenation but also a fear that he deviates from white standards. What follows is McLendon's obsessive response to people including Hawkshaw, who say that this rape should be scrutinized.

'Well,' he said, 'are you going to sit there and let a black son rape a white woman on the streets of Jefferson?' (160)

‘Happen? What the hell difference does it make? Are you going to let the black sons get away with it until one really does it?’ (160)

‘You mean to tell me,’ McLendon said, ‘that you’d take a nigger’s word before a white woman’s? Why, you damn niggerloving—’ (161)

These responses are reflected not only the traumatic delusion and pathology of a white society that wants blacks to strictly adhere to racial etiquette, but also the McLendon’s fear to deviate from the southern white society that shapes racial etiquette. In fact, Hawkshaw, who deviates from Southern white standards as a defender of blacks, is marked by the non-southernity of “niggerlover” (159), and southern white supremacy, although he has Anglo-Saxon family name, does not allow Hawkshaw to be white. Just as the discourse about Irish descent was tied to their physical characteristics, his “sand-colored” (158) skin color could be read as representing the ambiguity of his whiteness, and when he is face to face with McLendon attempting to stop him, they are described that “[t]hey looked like men of different races” (161). Moreover, while McLendon has “a heavy automatic pistol,” Hawkshaw holds “the drummer’s face down, the razor poised” (161). The image of holding a razor blade and pointing it at a white man’s neck is often given as an image of blacks in Faulkner’s later novels (e.g., Joe Christmas, who is seen as killing Joanna Burden by decapitating her with a razor in *Light in August*; Rider, who decapitates a white sheriff in *Go Down, Moses*). For McLendon, this incident, like whiteness, creates the racial “other” by remaining unanalyzed, to ensure his own whiteness. However, the fact that Hawkshaw’s razor blade is held to the throat of a white man seems to indicate the danger of whiteness.

When the fear of unstable whiteness increased by racial politics in the U.S.

responds to southern values, it manifests itself in the form of excessive violence against black people. As Joan D. Winslow states, by inciting those around him through words such as “nigger,” “white woman,” and “niggerlover,” he gives himself an identity as a hero and avenger, and defeating his racial other, Will, with his violent power is a way of reaffirming his own whiteness.

McLendon’s construction of whiteness through the display of violence can be seen in the scene in which he leaves the barbershop and heads toward Will’s lynching. The air after he leaves the barbershop is “flat and dead,” and it is described as having “a metallic taste at the base of the tongue” (162). The metallic taste is reminiscent of bleeding in the mouth, and it also evokes violence, such as blows and fights. This blood/metal (iron) imagery also appears in the lynching scene against Will.

Below the east the wan hemorrhage of the moon increased. It heaved above the ridge, silvering the air, the dust, so that they seemed to breathe, live, in a bowl of molten lead. There was no sound of nightbird nor insect, no sound save their breathing and a faint ticking of contracting metal about the cars. Where their bodies touched one another they seemed to sweat dryly, for no more moisture came. ‘Christ!’ a voice said; ‘let’s get out here.’ (165-66 emphasis mine)

This scene, in which the light of the moon is compared to “hemorrhage,” gives a violent image just before a lynching. The moonlight emits silver light, making them feel as if they were in “molten lead.” Given that Faulkner writes about the social changes brought by the infiltration of mechanical civilization in the South in his

novels, using the changes in vehicles and other details (Jiten 606), the metallic sound of the car that appears in the next scene can also be interpreted as the mechanical civilization in the South. While the behavior of the whites is precisely the performance of the “protectors of white women,” which white men have depended on since the time of settlement in the U.S., or the performance of the southern chivalric pre-Civil War, the sound of car metal makes it clear that the South has become more civilized and that times are certainly changing. They are stuck in the old southern values, as described as they are stuck in the molten lead, from which they are unable to move.

The lynching of Will is never depicted, but it is shown that it is probably carried out and soon becomes the rumor spread throughout the town. McLendon returns to his home after Will’s lynching, and he has a conversation with his wife, who has been waiting for his return without sleep, but he violently shoves his wife away and walks to the porch.

‘John,’ she said. She laid the magazine down. Poised on the balls of his feet, he glared at her with his hot eyes, his sweating face.

‘Don’t I tell you?’ He went toward her. She looked up then. He caught her shoulder. She stood passive, looking at him.

‘Didn’t, John. I couldn’t sleep . . . The heat; something. Please, John. You’re hurting me.’

‘Didn’t I tell you?’ He released her and half struck, half flung her across the chair, and she lay there and watched him quietly as he left the room.

He went on through the house, ripping off the shirt, and on the dark, screened porch at the rear he stood and mopped his head and shoulders

with the shirt and flung it away. He took the pistol from his hip and laid it on the table beside the bed, and sat on the bed and removed his shoes, and rose and slipped his trousers off. He was sweating again already, and he stooped and hunted furiously for the shirt. At last he found it and wiped his body again, and, with his body pressed against the dusty screen, he stood panting. There was no movement, no sound, not even an insect. The dark world seemed to lie stricken beneath the cold moon and the lidless stars. (171 emphasis mine)

McLendon's eyes are "hot" and he has a "sweating face" when he comes home because of the excitement caused by the lynching. His wife cannot sleep because of "the heat" perhaps because she has already heard rumors of the lynching, and she tries to blame him for it. But McLendon releases and flings to the chair violently his wife: a white woman whom southern white men are supposed to protect, which shows McLendon's mis-performance as a white man. In the end of this story, he goes out of the porch. There are "no movement, no sound, not even an insect" and "the cold moon and the lidless stars." This description is very similar to the one in the scene before Will's lynching ("no sound of nightbird nor insect," and "the wan hemorrhage of the moon"). We have already seen that he is trapped in the old southern values, but the lynching is seen by the "eye" of the "moon," which neither admires nor condemns him, but continues to watch him long after he has completed his act. Through this eye of the moon, we see McLendon, of course, with the view of an anti-racist, and we can see how the veil of southern chivalry that he has been wearing is torn away when he commits violence against his wife, and this seems to be reflected in his act of taking off his clothes. By taking off the veil which

justifies violence against blacks by making himself a protector of white women, he also becomes aware of the violent nature of his actions, and we discover a pathetic McLendon in his nakedness and panting. At the same time, the descriptions of “his hot eyes,” “his sweating face” and “the heat,” as well as his undressing and panting, evoke sexual imagery. But he flings his wife, a white woman, to the chair; this is a violence that is precisely corresponding to rape. McLendon’s mis-performance is evident.

2. “A Rose for Emily”

Minnie, the other major character in “Dry September,” has long been interpreted that she fabricates the rape by Will and has been found to be the subject of her own sexual desire. A very similar theme in terms of female subjectivity is dealt with in “A Rose for Emily,” one of Faulkner’s most popular short stories. This short story was first published in the magazine, *Forum*, in 1930 and was included in *These 13* in 1931, at about the same time as “Dry September.”

Faulkner describes Emily Grierson, the protagonist of “A Rose for Emily” as follows: “it’s simply the poor woman had had no life at all. Her father had kept her more or less locked up and then she had a lover who was about to quit her, she had to murder him” (*FU* 87-88). As Faulkner states, Emily’s father keeps her from marrying and keeps her locked up in the patriarchy, and even when she dies, her father’s portrait is displayed above her coffin. However, after her father’s death, Emily starts the romantic relationship with Homer Barron, who is a daily worker from the North, and they are rumored to be getting married. She is criticized by

the townspeople for being immoral in her relationship with a man from the North and of a different social status.

And as soon as the old people said, 'Poor Emily,' the whispering began. 'Do you suppose it's really so?' they said to one another. 'Of course it is. What else could . . .' (115 emphasis mine)

This scene, in which Emily's relationship is rumored by the townspeople, is very similar to the scene in "Dry September," in which Minnie is rumored to have been raped.

'[P]oor girl!' Then to one another: 'Do you suppose anything really happened?' their eyes darkly aglitter, secret and passionate. 'Shhhhhhhhhh! Poor girl! Poor Minnie!' (170 emphasis mine)

This obvious similarity also means Emily and Minnie's characteristic similarities: both in middle-age (Emily: about forty, Minnie: thirty-eight or thirty-nine). Their sexuality has become a sensation in the town, and they are constantly "seen" and labeled as "poor women" by the townspeople.

Then, Barron disappears, and the townspeople assume that Emily has been abandoned. While Emily's suicide is suspected after she buys arsenic at a pharmacy, a strange smell begins to emanate from her house, and she rejects any interaction with the townspeople. Then Emily dies, and people head upstairs to her house, which no one has ever entered. And they see the skeleton of Barron lying on her newlywed bed, and Emily's silver hair next to the skeleton.

Judith Fetterley points out this shocking ending as follows:

The ending shocks us not simply by its hint of necrophilia; more shocking is the fact that it is a woman who provides the hint. It is one thing for Poe to spend his nights in the tomb of Annabel Lee and another thing for Miss Emily Grierson to deposit a strand of iron-gray hair on the pillow beside the rotted corpse of Homer Barron. Further, we do not expect to discover that a woman has murdered a man. . . . To reverse this “natural” pattern inevitably produces the grotesque. (34)

Fetterley explains the cause of this grotesque in the ending by pointing out that the discovery that the subject of killing a lover and sleeping with its corpse is a woman, which subverts the pattern of gender that people generally assume. Furthermore, Fetterley says that “it is a story of a woman victimized and betrayed by the system of sexual politics, who nevertheless has discovered, within the structures that victimize her, sources of power for herself” (35), and recognizes the power of Emily, who is locked up by the patriarchy, but resists it.

Emily is “a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town” (109) in Jefferson because Colonel Sartoris, the mayor, remits her taxes when her father dies. Then, townspeople try to revoke her tax exemption, but she refuses to pay. And then, they observe her after she rejects the interaction with them.

Daily, monthly, yearly we watched the Negro grow grayer and more stooped, going in and out with the market basket. Each December we sent

her a tax notice, which would be returned by the post office a week later, unclaimed. Now and then we would see her in one of the downstairs windows—she had evidently shut up the top floor of the house—like the carven torso of an idol in a niche, looking or not looking at us, we could never tell which. Thus she passed from generation to generation—dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse. (118 emphasis mine)

The plural first person “we” represents the entire town; they keep an eye on Emily, who stays at home, but she is rarely seen. She, then, becomes “a tradition, a duty, and a care” and is passed down from generation to generation as if she is the property of the town. Therefore, when she dies, the men think her death as “a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument,” and the townspeople, especially women, who have not seen the inside of her house although they keep watching her, have a “curiosity to see the inside of her house” (109).

Colonel Sartoris remits her taxes because he believes that she, without a father or husband to depend on, has no ability to pay, and the townspeople tell her to remember her “*noblesse oblige*” (114) when she is dating Barron. It means that by doing so, they make her “a lady,” and as Fetterley says, “A Rose for Emily’ expose[s] the violence done to a woman by making her lady,” but, “it also explores the particular form of power the victim gains from this position and can use on those who enact this violence” (39). The lady status she has acquired allows her to refuse to pay taxes to those who tell her to pay, and to reject those who try to enter her house to investigate the cause of the bad smell. Because she is a lady, the men of authority in the town like Judge Stevens say, “will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?” (112), and are unable to pursue the cause of the bad smell.

Because nobody cannot see the inside of the house which confines her, the house becomes more and more mysterious, which rouses the townspeople's desire to see the inside of the house.

That is why, when Emily dies, they exercise "[t]he violence of breaking down the door" (119) on the second floor of the house that no one has ever stepped into. However, what they find is Barron's dead body, and they discover Emily's compelling force against a man and her subject of sexual desire, even while she is shut up inside the house that embodies that patriarchy.

3. Violent Gazes on Minnie

While subjectivity is required in the construction of male whiteness, as already seen in McLendon, white femininity may be given by being seen as an object. The following is a conversation among men in a barbershop about the rumors of Minnie's rape.

'What do you know about her?' a second barber said.

'Who is she?' the client said. 'A young girl?'

'No,' the barber said. 'She's about forty, I reckon. She aint married.

That's why I don't believe—' (158)

As this reaction to Minnie suggests, "youth of age" and "marriage" are important to white women. Minnie used to be the center of the society, but she misses her wedding and is left behind by her friends. Besides, her affair and breakup with the

older banker is rumored. In the southern community, Minnie is marginalized as a spinster who has committed adultery before the rape.

Minnie lives with her mother and aunt, and unlike Emily, she has no father to confine her, but she is “of comfortable people” but “not the best in Jefferson” (162). Hence, she does not have the power as a lady like Emily. People in Jefferson believe the subject of her sexuality that she fabricates rape as people discover Emily’s subject of sexual desire, but it is never written. It is the community that creates her subject and she is controlled by it. She is exposed to the gaze of the community as she goes out in the town.

Each afternoon she dressed in one of the new dresses and went downtown alone, where her young ‘cousins’ were already strolling in the late afternoons with their delicate, silken heads and thin awkward arms and conscious hips, clinging to one another or shrieking and giggling with paired boys in the soda fountain when she passed and went on along the serried store fronts, in the doors of which the sitting and lounging men did not even follow her with their eyes any more. (164)

The sexual attractiveness of the young women is contrasted with Minnie, and the dominant gaze of the community looks at Minnie and regards that she is no longer seen as sexually attractive. Also, because of Minnie’s age, it is believed that the rape by the black man does not actually take place but is fabricated by her, but Minnie has no power to resist this.

Minnie often goes shopping in her new dress. She goes downtown with her friends, even after rumors of the rape have spread.

As she dressed for supper on that Saturday evening, her own flesh felt like a fever. Her hands trembled among the hooks and eyes, and her eyes had a feverish look, and her hair swirled crisp and crackling under the comb. While she was still dressing the friends called for her and sat while she donned her sheerest underthings and stockings and new voile dress. ‘Do you feel strong enough to go out?’ they said, their eyes bright too, with a dark glitter. ‘When you have had time to get over the shock, you must tell us what happened. What he said and did; everything.’

In the leafed darkness, as they walked toward the square, she began to breathe deeply, something like a swimmer preparing to dive, until she ceased trembling, the four of them walking slowly because of the terrible heat and out of solicitude for her. But as they neared the square she began to tremble again, walking with her head up, her hands clenched at her sides, their voices about her murmurous, also with that feverish, glittering quality of their eyes. (168-69 emphasis mine)

We can read her remorse of conscience for Will in the way she trembles, if we take the view that she fabricates the rape. However, as already mentioned, we are never told whether Minnie fabricates the rape story in the first place, and we readers have no way of knowing. Still, the reader may find her covert eroticism from “her sheerest underthings and stockings” (Roberts 170), and assumes her sexual frustration because the sitting and lounging men in the town does not “even follow her with their eyes any more,” and we may conclude that the rape is fabricated by Minnie to regain the sexual attention of those around her.⁵

Minnie and her friends head to the movie theater and see “the silver glare” (169-70) on the movie screen. The silver color is reminiscent of the silver glow of the moon just before McLendon and mobs lynch Will. While Minnie sees a movie, she suddenly begins to laugh. This description makes us imagine that she cannot stand the guilty feeling anymore. Moreover, just before she bursts into laughter, she witnesses: “the young men and girls enter[ing], scented and sibilant in the half dark, their paired backs in silhouette delicate and sleek, their slim, quick bodies awkward, divinely young, while beyond them the silver dream accumulated, inevitably on and on” (170). We might also be led to the interpretation that Minnie, once at the center of the social scene but unmarried, considered to have committed adultery, compared to the sexual attractiveness of young women, and who no longer attracts men sexually, goes mad because she is reminded by the young men and women around her and by the movie that her sexual desire’s satisfaction by the gossip of rape is only temporary.

However, as Winslow points out, Minnie never speaks a word in this work (384). Then, is it possible to find her “true” subjectivity? Why do we find her sexual subjectivity? The answer is her friends’ and the townspeople’s gazes on her. The narrator of this story and the townspeople who speak of Minnie often give her negative labels. For example, when Minnie’s affair with an older banker is discovered by the townspeople, she is “relegated into adultery by public opinion” (163). Minnie’s outing in town is constantly exposed to the gaze of her friends, whose eyes are described as “bright too, with a dark glitter” (168). The gazes seem to remind us of the description of the friends “watching with bright, secret eyes” (163) as they enjoy gossiping about Minnie’s affair with the banker and its breakup. Therefore, when we conspire with those glances, we find in Minnie a sensation of

middle-aged woman's sexual interest and the subjectivity of fabricating the rape.

Given that Minnie is always the object of observation, we realize that what we know about Minnie is through someone else's perspective. Then, it is the gaze of the townspeople looking at Minnie that should be analyzed. The gaze on Minnie as "the woman raped by a black man," which again positions Minnie, who has been marginalized as a spinster committing an adultery, as a white woman because there is a racist stereotype of "white women to be saved" and "black men as predators" in the time of early settlement in America. However, the gazes on Minnie are also violent with an obvious erotic curiosity. The friends who accompany Minnie on her outings say to her: 'When you have had time to get over the shock, you must tell us what happened. What he said and did; everything.' This question clearly contains their excitement to satisfy their curiosity.

The friends take Minnie home and nurse her after she suddenly bursts into hysterical laughter at the movie theater.

They removed the pink voile and the sheer underthings and the stockings, and put her to bed, and cracked ice for her temples, and sent for the doctor. He was hard to locate, so they ministered to her with hushed ejaculations, renewing the ice and fanning her. While the ice was fresh and cold she stopped laughing and lay still for a time, moaning only a little. But soon the laughing welled again and her voice rose screaming.

'Shhhhhhhhhhh! Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!' they said, freshening the icepack, smoothing her hair, examining it for gray; 'poor girl!' Then to one another: 'Do you suppose anything really happened?' their eyes darkly aglitter, secret and passionate. 'Shhhhhhhhhhh! Poor girl! Poor Minnie!'

(170 emphasis mine)

The “hushed ejaculations” refers to Minnie’s sudden laughter. However, we would like to scrutinize the polysemy of this expression, which has no possessive and is written in the plural. This expression with its clearly sexual connotations could also be read as hushed ejaculations/stealthy seminal emission. This stealthy way is associated with the friends’ curious and secretive talk: “Do you suppose anything really happened?” And their “darkly aglitter, secret and passionate” eyes are nothing less than a sexual consumption of Minnie; moreover, the description that “[t]hey removed the pink voile and the sheer underthings and the stockings, and her to bed” gives us the image that they rape Minnie (and before going to the movie theater, they watch her donning “her sheerest underthings and stockings”). Furthermore, given that the noun form of “hushed” is “hush,” which means the “sh” sound (sibilant consonant) of trying to silence someone, “hushed ejaculations” is a reference to Minnie’s friends’ attempts to calm her laughter, with the exclamation mark indicating their impulse: “Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Shhhhhhhhhhhhh!,” and the friends’ voices could be considered as sudden shout/seminal emission: “ejaculations.”⁶

Kirk W. Fuoss reveals that talking about lynchings resulting from rape became an excuse for public discussion of sexual topics, and the experiences of raped women were quickly described, adapted, and became a kind of pornography (24-25). When the men in the square see Minnie, they have the following conversation.

‘That’s the one: see? The one in pink in the middle.’ ‘Is that her? What did

they do with the nigger? Did they—' 'Sure. He's all right.' 'All right, is he?'
 'Sure. He went on a little trip.' (169)

They speak of Will's lynching, but they imagine the rape of Minnie accompanied by the lynching. Considering this included sexual connotation, the smoldering sexual desire seems to have appeared in the voices of the town speaking of Minnie's rape. The gazes of Minnie's hips and legs by young men hanging out in the town ("the drug store, where even the young men lounging in the doorway tipped their hats and followed with their eyes the motion of her hips and legs when she passed" [169]) is contrasted with the previous description of Minnie as no longer attracting male attention, and the gazes suggest that they are looking at her sexually, and in a sense can be interpreted as expressing a desire to rape a white woman.

At the beginning of the story, the spread of the rumor of Minnie's rape is described as follows: "Through the bloody September twilight, aftermath of sixty-two rainless days, it had gone like a fire in dry grass—the rumor, the story, whatever it was" (158), which is juxtaposed with the harsh environment of the South in September. The woman's experience of rape becomes the sexual interest of the community, and the gossip of Minnie's rape ignites a fire of sexual desire in that community of repressed sexuality.⁷

The figure of Minnie as the one deprived of language and the object to be seen, would be the evidence of the containment of her subjectivity. Therefore, what should be discussed is why the reader would "discover" Minnie's subjectivity of fabricating the rape and become complicit in its sexism. Opposed to McLendon's

fear of being analyzed and his escaping into his whiteness and masculinity with violence, Minnie's white femininity is rather established by being analyzed. In the nursing scene, her friends stroke her hair "examining" her "gray" hair, which represents her old age, with erotic gazes fired by the rumor of her rape, doubting that it actually happened. Their erotic gazes are precisely backed up by the racist discourse of "a white woman raped by a predatory black man," which maintains the hegemony of white dominance, and discover a sexual element in Minnie, who has been excluded from sexual attention because of her age. In other words, the forceful discovery of white femininity in Minnie, despite her gray hair that represents her age, brings Minnie, once relegated to the periphery as a spinster, back to the center of sexuality. When the reader is complicit with the violent gazes lurking in the community, the reader, recognizing the anachronistic nature of the racist discourses, has "created" a smoldering sexual desire in Minnie and given Minnie the "subjectivity" of fabricating the rape.

Notes

1. For detailed arguments regarding the discourse of racial hierarchy in the U.S., see Tanaka, pp.45-47.
2. In "Dry September," there are few references to color. Hawkshaw's "sand-colored" skin and Minnie's "gray" hair are mentioned as references to color, but as we will discuss later, both are associated with elements that give them characteristics (Hawkshaw: race, Minnie: age).
3. Megumi Kitahara, who studied propaganda posters during the World War I

period, points out that the posters depicted the Statue of Liberty as a “unique national symbol” (120) to integrate various people from different origins. She also points out that the propaganda posters used gender politics as well as race. For example, a poster depicting a man in a house, looking out the window at a walking military column evoked male anxiety as if he escaped into an inner soft female domain that suggested cowardice, and it made use of the fear of deviating from the gender norms of “masculinity” and “femininity” that made men feel a sense of shame.

4. According to Nakano, some units preferred to hire southern whites who “knew how to treat blacks well,” and the hiring of southern whites caused abuses of black soldiers (138).
5. Minnie’s facial expressions are often written using oxymoron. Her face wears “that bright haggard look” and looks “like a mask or a flag” (the thing to hide something or to represent something) (163). It is difficult to read Minnie’s true feelings, but that is why it can be interpreted in any way we like.
6. In this paper, in interpreting the sentence “they ministered to her with hushed ejaculations,” “hushed ejaculations” may also be attributed to the subject “they,” the friends.
7. Given that Minnie’s rape gossip ignites communal sexual desire, which is juxtaposed with the southern heat of September, the description of heat often depicted in McLendon’s part may also be interpreted as containing an erotic element. In the barbershop, white men who are enthusiastic about the lynching are often described as sweating. Also, before Will’s lynching, white men are described as follows: “Where their bodies touched one another they seem to sweat dryly, for no more moisture came” (166). We may find a homoerotic element in

these white men touching each other and sweating. That homoerotic element is the thing deviating from the southern white norm, and their hidden sexual/racial anxiety can be seen. In the last chapter, McLendon's "hot eyes, his sweating face" and his wife's inability to sleep because of "the heat" also give the image that they are just about to have a sexual intercourse, but McLendon rejects his wife, from which McLendon's sexual anxiety may be read.

Chapter 2

Racial Anxieties and Performing White: Southern Men and Joanna Burden in

Light in August

Faulkner states as follows: “the most tragic condition a man could find himself in—not to know what he is and to know that he will never know” (*FU* 72). In *Light in August* (1932), Faulkner’s masterpiece that uses collage to depict multiple protagonists, he created such a tragic character, Joe Christmas. Joe’s tragedy is that, despite his white skin, he is raised on the “rumor” that he has “black blood” and has to live his life without being able to see if the rumor is true or not. Joe searches for his racial identity as either “black” or “white” through his racial performance, but finally Jefferson’s southern patriarchy makes him a “Negro.”

As for Joe, Thadious M. Davis comments as follows:

In revealing Joe’s history and destiny, Faulkner presents “Negro” as a behavioral pattern (especially from the point of view of other characters, such as the dietitian, the sheriff, Halliday, and Percy Grimm); as a social construct (according to the views of Gavin Stevens, Joanna Burden, and Gail Hightower); and as a subjective projection (particularly in the case of Doc Hines and Joe himself). (*Faulkner’s Negro* 130)

In other words, Joe embodies or projects what “Negro” is for southern whites, and Joe’s race is a social construction by Southern whites. That is why Joe’s skin color is described as “parchment” (35), as he looks white but also “foreigner” (34), and

people in Jefferson write Joe's blackness on his skin/paper.

In light of the construction of Joe's race, not only his racial performance, but also southern whiteness is an important factor. It is important to note, however, that the racial identity of southern whites is not stable either. As cited in Introduction, Jay Watson suggests that the one way of whiteness studies is "to turn from the formation to the performance (or more precisely the *misperformance*) of social subjects and groups that don't seem to get their whiteness right." Faulkner depicts a southern society that remains trapped in the patriarchal traditions of the Old South. The consciousness of the whites is torn between the traditions of the Old South and the New South, and their whiteness is marked by anxiety. Given that "[s]uch performances, whether inadvertent or deliberately subversive, have the potential to expose and disrupt the operation of normative whiteness" (*Faulkner and Whiteness* xiv-xv), how conscious Faulkner was of the southern white race and how critically he viewed their whiteness through creating Joe, its victim, will be clear.

In *Light in August*, it is mostly men who struggle with the consciousness of being torn apart. Hence, race and gender performances that attempt to be "white male" have often been studied, but the focus in this chapter is not only on white men but also on Joanna Burden. Although she is described as a northern woman marginalized by southern society, it is she who determines Joe's blackness. Also, in his relationship with Joanna, Joe perceives her dual personality.

A dual personality: the one the woman at first sight of whom in the lifted candle (or perhaps the very sound of the slippered approaching feet) there had opened before him, instantaneous as a landscape in a lightningflash, a

horizon of physical security and adultery if not pleasure; the other the mantrained muscles and the mantrained habit of thinking born of heritage and environment with which he had to fight up to the final instant. There was no feminine vacillation, no coyness of obvious desire and intention to succumb at last. (234-35)

Then, Joe experiences a gender reversal between him and Joanna, feeling that “it was like I was the woman and she was the man” (235). In other words, Joanna has the masculine power of her southern father in her relationship with Joe, ultimately making Joe “black.” Furthermore, as we discussed in Introduction, the blankness of whiteness cannot be recognized by itself, so it can only be known through looking at the imperfect, the abnormal. It means that behind making Joe’s blackness lies Joanna’s whiteness construction; furthermore, beneath it, we can discover her racial instability.

Joe thinks that “[i]t was as if she had invented the whole thing deliberately, for the purpose of playing it out like a play” (259) in the relationship with Joanna. Some critics are aware of Joanna’s performance of blackening Joe,¹ but they have not discussed in detail the racial anxieties in her performance. After clarifying the racial anxiety and performance or mis-performance of white males in *Light in August*, this chapter will focus on the history and southern characteristics of the Burden family, and examine how Joanna’s racial anxiety and performance are intertwined in the relationship between Joe and Joanna, which is the most important intersection of race and gender in *Light in August*.

1. Racial (Gender) Anxieties in Southern Men

In the South, a person like Joe, who has white skin but is regarded as a black, stirs white fears that he or she, too, might have Negro blood. Krister Friday precisely portrays white racial anxiety in *Light in August*: “most of the outrage and indignation Joe elicits occur because *he has already passed*” (54). Joe heads to Mottstown after he kills Joanna, and people in Mottstown observe how he walks, and say that “[h]e never acted like either a nigger or a white man” (350). Friday explains the people’s reaction to Joe that “[i]f Christmas acted like everyone else, but at the same time acted like neither black nor white, then everyone else acts neither black nor white,” and points out that “[t]he voice of Mottstown remembers a time when Christmas passed, but in doing so, it traumatically discovers how no one was, is, or can be consistently black or white” (55). White people can be white by contrasting themselves with “blacks,” but because Joe acts like everyone in the town but he never represents black nor white, his presence shakes the whiteness of southern whites.

The white anxiety stirred by Joe is most evident in Percy Grimm, a twenty-five-year-old patriotic white male, who has complex feelings about not being able to fight in World War I because of his age, but his father does not understand his frustration and considers Grimm as “just lazy and in a fair way to become perfectly worthless” (450). What saves him is the new civilian-military act, his white supremacist belief superimposed on his yearning to serve in World War I is represented in his military uniform and described as follows:

. . . a sublime and implicit faith in physical courage and blind obedience,

and a belief that the white race is superior to any and all other races and that the American is superior to all other white races and that the American uniform is superior to all men, and that all that would ever be required of him in payment for this belief, this privilege, would be his own life. (451 emphasis mine)

His white supremacy is represented by the military uniform he always wears, but it means that he can feel the white supremacy only by wearing the military uniform, and it is an attempt to counteract his father's castration not to be "lazy" and "worthless."² To Grimm, the white supremacist, Joe is, of course, unforgivable because he is a threat to the purity of their white lineage in the South, and as if to show off his masculinity, he fires an automatic pistol and then cuts off Joe's penis while cursing: "Now you'll let white women alone, even in hell" (464). The "black blood" splashed from Joe's penis is a representation of his black blood and menstrual blood, and he is given the role of a woman at the time of his death (Duvall, "Faulkner's Crying Game" 64). In short, Grimm's castration of Joe shows that Grimm tries to gain his own white male status by positioning Joe as a black woman. The narrator describes Grimm as "blind obedience to whatever Player moved him on the Board" (462), and he seems to be controlled by some powerful thing, the "Player." The power is the patriarchy itself, which controls gender, and Grimm expresses a view of gender constructed by the patriarchy (Watson, "Overdoing" 172). In other words, it is the southern patriarchy that constructs and drives the characters of *Light in August*.³

The other white supremacist character besides Grimm is Doc Hines, Joe's grandfather. He is a fanatical white supremacist who goes to a black church and

preaches white superiority, telling black people to be obedient to whites. His racist aspect also appears when he considers his daughter Milly's lover who is a sojourning circus member as a black and shoots him dead. Later, when Milly dies in childbirth, he takes her child (Joe) to an orphanage and becomes the caretaker of the orphanage, watching over how Joe grows up and lives his "cursed" life. It is Hines who tells children in the orphanage and Miss Atkins, a dietitian, that Joe has black blood in his veins.

As we examined that Christianity became the pretext for white supremacy and justified the slavery in the last chapter, Hines' fanatic white supremacist belief is explained by his regional belief ("that furious and preclusive expression about the eyes which the people took for insanity: that quality of outworn violence like a scent, an odor; that fanaticism like a fading and almost extinct ember, of some kind of twofisted evangelism which had been one quarter violent conviction and three quarters physical hardihood" [343]). However, we could discover the simpler reason why he emphasizes white supremacy. He cannot work diligently and cannot stay in one position for long; therefore, almost all of his life depends on black people's "bounty and charity" (343). To justify the inability to make his living, he "preach[s] to them (black people) humility before all skins lighter than theirs [. . .] the superiority of the white race, himself his own exhibit A, in fanatic and unconscious paradox" (343-45). Moreover, his violent characteristics might stem from his physical smallness. Even when Milly gives birth to her child, he is jailed because of a fight. The reason is that people around him pick fights with him because "he is littler than most men," and Hines considers the fighting as "his vanity and his pride" (372). He performs excessively to prevent himself from feeling his own inability which physical complex makes him feel. However, his performance (as a

white supremacist and masculine man) is too much even in the South, people in the town think that Mr. and Mrs. Hines are strange “as if they belonged to a different race, species,” and say, “They are crazy; crazy on the subject of negroes. Maybe they are Yankees” (341). In other words, Hines’ excessive performance results in failure; after Joanna is killed, he hears that Joe is the murderer and comes to Jefferson to try to incite a lynching of Joe, but no one listens to him (447).

As Grimm’s and Hines’ examples show, white supremacy is also accompanied by male insecurity.³ Grimm engages in white supremacy in an attempt to counter the castration of his father’s perception of his incompetence due to his failure to fight in World War I, and Hines holds his own masculine complex due to his small body size, and he is obsessed with showing his violent aspect. Often discussed in terms of male anxiety is a furniture repairer and dealer who tells his wife about Lena and Byron as a “interesting” story in the final chapter. Because the furniture dealer and his wife are not very old (494) and he is still sexually capable, he finds it “interesting” that Byron proposes marriage to Lena, but she rejects him, and that they have not had any sexual contact yet. The furniture dealer judges Byron as an earnest man, but not a manly man, saying that he is “a good fellow, the kind that would hold a job steady and work at the same job a long time, without bothering anybody about a raise neither, long as they let him keep on working.” After that, he says, “I just couldn’t imagine anybody, any woman, knowing that they had ever slept with him, let alone having anything to show folks to prove it” (496), and the conversation with his wife starts:

Aint you shamed? his wife says. *Talking that way before a lady*

They are talking in the dark.

Anyway, I cant see you blushing any he says.(496)

The fact that they are talking in the dark in which he cannot see his wife's face suggests that they have this conversation after sexual intercourse, probably on the bed in their bedroom, which is evidenced by the fact that he has not returned home for a long time due to his work. This would be in contrast that Byron has not had sexual contact with Lena, and in the bed, the furniture dealer goes on to tell an "interesting" story that Byron and Lena have not been married. The furniture dealer's telling about Byron and Lena is his gender performance to keep his masculinity in regards to the sexual purity relationship between them as an "interesting" one, as Deborah Clarke points out, "he wants to tell about a man who fails to be a 'real' man, at least by the terms of the male community, for the salesman, by his wit and sexual performance, sets himself up as the arbiter of masculine culture. [. . .] Comfortable with his own sexual position, the salesman lays claim to his masculinity by rendering both Byron and Lena into comic objects" ("Humorously Masculine" 32). He also talks about how he is frustrated that Byron cannot easily have sexual contact with Lena:

Then I got a little worried. I wasn't worried about him doing her any harm she didn't want done to her. In fact, I was pulling for the little cuss. That was it. I couldn't decide what I had better do when she would begin to holler. I knew that she would holler, and if I jumped up and run to the trunk, it would scare him off, and if he didn't come running, he would know that I was awake and watching him all the time, and he'd be scared off faster than ever. (502-03)

The furniture dealer makes it clear that he expects Byron to rape Lena, but his wife gains an insight into the fact that it is not going to happen, saying, "*I reckon the reason you knew you never had to worry was that you had already found out just what she would do in a case like that*" (503). The talking about the rape as if it is going to happen is the furniture dealer's excessive performance, and he has expressed his "masculinity" in the form of rape with complete disregard for the woman's sexual consent. Also, in contrast that the moment when the people of the town know Joanna's death and discover that Joe, the murderer, has black blood in his vein, they assumes that the black man has raped the white woman, and make him the target of a lynching (and in "Dry September," discussed in the previous chapter, we can remember Will Mayes becomes a target of a lynching by the rumor that he rapes a white woman, Minnie Cooper), for a white male, forcing a woman to submit to him sexually is a representation of "masculinity." The gender performance of the furniture dealer simultaneously reveals a racial performance made from a privileged position as a white man.

2. Joe's Mis-Performance

Next, we need to examine Joe's racial anxiety again. He does not know who his parents are because he is left in front of an orphanage on Christmas Day. When he is five years old, in the orphanage, he witnesses Miss Atkins, the dietitian of the orphanage, has an affair while he is sucking on her toothpaste, and she finds him watching her sexual intercourse. She has heard the other children call him

“nigger,” and she gets mad when she notices that Joe peeps in on her affair, and she turns to him and says; “You little nigger bastard!” (122). The caretaker who tells the children in the orphanage that Joe is a “nigger” is Joe’s grandfather, Doc Hines, and readers will later learn that Joe’s race is created by Hines, a white supremacist. This accident is the beginning of Joe’s racial identity becoming unstable, but he does not have any ways to make sure of his “true” race because he does not know his parents. This experience, which could be called Joe’s primary experience, reaffirms that race is not biologically determined, but is a fluid social construct determined by discourse and behavior.

It should also be mentioned that Joe develops an aversion to “women” and “sex” and becomes tormented by female sexuality.⁴ The toothpaste of Miss Atkins that Joe is sucking on is clearly a symbol of female breasts, which gives us an image of breast-feeding. While he is sucking on it, he witnesses her sexual intercourse, and the toothpaste and her sexual intercourse make him feel sick, and finally he vomits. He also sees Miss Atkins’ sexual intercourse while he squats and hides “among delicate shoes and suspended soft womangarments” (120). Besides, Miss Atkins’ occupation is a dietician, and she is associated with a woman/mother who provides him with food. In other words, the emphasis on the feminine elements in this scene makes this experience more traumatic for Joe.

After that, Joe is adopted by Mr. McEachern, a strict Calvinist, who raises him as a white man, dresses him in white child’s clothes, and tries to get him to memorize a Presbyterian catechism. When Joe cannot recite it, Mr. McEachern takes down Joe’s pants and whips him. This is exactly a castration by a southern father. But the relationship between Joe and Mr. McEachern is very clear: a southern father and his son, and as long as Joe is under Mr. McEachern’s care, he

can act like a white son.

On the other hand, it is women who try to impede his establishment of a white male identity. When Joe is given a physical punishment by Mr. McEachen because he cannot recite the Presbyterian catechism, Mrs. McEachen tries to protect Joe as follows: “she would try to get herself between him and the punishment which, deserved or not, just or unjust was impersonal, both the man and the boy accepting it as a natural and inescapable,” and her protection gives “an odor, an attenuation, an aftertaste” (167) to Joe. Furthermore, Joe considers her as “the woman who, with a woman’s affinity and instinct for secrecy, for casting a faint taint of evil about the most trivial and innocent actions” (168). Mrs. McEachern’s attempt to protect Joe will damage his relationship with Mr. McEachern, which makes him white. Therefore, Joe’s racial anxiety is enhanced by her actions, and he feels guilty about keeping his race a secret and is tempted to confess to her that he is black.

Also, what enhances Joe’s racial/gender anxiety is his relationship with Bobbie, a worker at a diner into which Mr. McEachern takes him into, and Joe develops a sexual relationship with her. However, he exposes his male insecurity when he confronts Bobbie’s menstruation. Having once heard boys at his age talking about menstruation, he considers it as “the temporary and abject helplessness of that which tantalised and frustrated desire; the smooth and superior shape in which volition dwelled doomed to be at stated and inescapable intervals victims of periodical filth” (185). Joe has never actually seen menstruation before meeting Bobbie, but when he sees Bobbie’s genital and menstrual blood, he feels that it is not “perfect” but “something liquid, deathcolored, and foul” (189) and he vomits; it is his mis-performance as a man.

Therefore, he confesses to Bobbie that he thinks he is a black. Bobbie, a southern prostitute, does not take this confession seriously, so Joe can act as a white man struggling with his racial identity. However, Mr. McEachern gets into at a dance party they attend, and Bobbie, in anger at his abuse, shouts at Joe: “Getting me into a jam, that always treated you like you were a white. A white man!” (217). Joe seems to have killed his “father” and overcome his castration from his father by beating Mr. McEachern with a chair. However, Bobbie’s shout, like Miss Atkins’ “nigger” to Joe, has the power to make him black, and Joe starts to struggle with his racial anxiety more and more.

Joe’s racial instability is evident in the way Joe is dressed when he arrives at Jefferson’s mill. Takaki Hiraishi states that Faulkner rarely describes the characters’ bodies and clothes because he wants to see their ‘insides,’ and “instead, he is extremely sensitive to the surfaces, expressions, and gestures that conceal/present the ‘insides’” (64). Joe’s appearance is described as follows:

He looked like a tramp, yet not like a tramp either. His shoes were dusty and his trousers were soiled too. But they were of decent serge, sharply creased, and his shirt was soiled but it was a white shirt. And he wore tie and a stiffbrim straw hat that was quite new, cocked at an angle arrogant and baleful above his still face. He did not look like a professional hobo in his professional rags, but there was something definitely rootless about him as though no town nor city was his, no street, no walls, no square of earth his home. (31)

His clothes are “decent serge,” “a white shirt,” and “a new stiffbrim straw hat,”

which emphasize the orthodox or the whiteness. His slanted hat and the cigarette, as he recollects later, also a mimic manner of the whites he sees in the city diner to which he is brought when he is Mr. McEachern's adopted son.⁵ His clothes, however, are stained black in places, which makes him look "like a tramp, yet not like a tramp either," and he is "definitely rootless about him as though no town nor city was his, no street, no walls, no square of earth his home." His clothes are a clear indication of the instability of Joe's racial identity and his sadness of not being able to belong to any community, and he always puts them on.

Joe's ambiguity of his racial identity leads him to roam the South and North, fleeing to places that blur his identity such as "the street ran through cities, through an identical and wellnigh interchangeable section of cities without remembered names, where beneath the dark and equivocal and symbolical archways of midnight" (224), in which he has sexual intercourse with white women. After the sexual intercourse, he confesses to the women that he is black. While he is in the South, the women kick him out of the house as soon as they find out that he is black. While this treatment can be interpreted as an attempt to convince himself that he is black, as long as there is still a possibility that he is white, it can also be interpreted as an attempt to enjoy the reaction by looking over his shoulder at the women who overreact in this way, which postpones his racial determination. In the North, however, he finds himself bewildered by the fact that there are women who are not afraid to have a sexual intercourse with a black. He confesses that he is a black as always in the South, but the women accept his confession and have no trouble. It means their acceptance of his being black; because he himself cannot stand that he is a black, he becomes so violent that the women think that they are nearly killed by him.

Then, Joe begins to live in the black community in the North, shunning white people. And he starts to live with a dark-skinned black woman who resembles “an ebony carving” (225) as if they are a married couple.

He now lived as man and wife with a woman who resembled an ebony carving. At night he would lie in bed beside her, sleepless, beginning to breathe deep and hard. He would do it deliberately, feeling, even watching, his white chest arch deeper and deeper within his ribcage, trying to breathe into himself the dark odor, the dark and inscrutable thinking and being of negroes, with each suspiration trying to expel from himself the white blood and the white thinking and being. And all the while his nostrils at the odor which he was trying to make his own would whiten and tauten, his whole being writhe and strain with physical outrage and spiritual denial. (225-26)

Joe lives with black people in a black community and spends time with a black woman as if they are a married couple, and he smells the “dark odor” in an attempt to become a black. However, his chest, which rises and falls as he breathes in the air, is “white,” and his physical whiteness would be the one reason he cannot admit that he is black. Therefore, he denies all the blackness he is trying to inhale. He then becomes completely inconsistent in his behavior. For example, while he picks fights with his white counterparts by having them call him black, he also picks fights with blacks who call him white. He becomes the racial other in both the white and black communities, and he cannot represent either race well, white or black. As Koichi Suwabe suggests that because he has “deeply internalized

southern white ideology, Joe thinks of himself as black,” but “for the very same reason, he cannot accept himself as black” (230). Suwabe continues to refer to Joe’s racial identity as follows:

Put another way, his insecurities about his own racial and gender identity utterly reveal his internalization of southern white male ideology. In a society in which blacks and women are discriminated against, it is, after all, precisely because he is “white” that he is anxious about his racial identity, and precisely because he is “male” that he is anxious about his gender identity.

In this way, we realize that Joe’s anxieties about race and gender, though somewhat perverse, function as a confirmation of his sense of superiority over blacks and women. This is why, during his years of wandering, he is able to escape his “self” by “performing” on race and gender. As long as he is struggling with his race/gender, he does not need to be black/female. As long as he can “perform” his “suffering self” and “act” as a “black man” sometimes, he does not have to face his true identity. But the woman, Joanna, brings his performance to a critical point. (245-46)

After all, he is a southern male raised in Southern ideology; therefore, he cannot admit that he is black. Joe’s race is never determined as long as he acts as if he is seeking racial identity but struggling with its obscurity. Living with blacks in the North is, after all, a racial performance to prove his superiority. However, Joe becomes “black” when he confronts with Joanna’s “whiteness.” As noted before, Joe feels that Joanna’s gender is “male” in her relationship with Joe because Joanna

has the power of the “father” to determine and control Joe’s race.

3. Hightower: Recognizing His Mis-Performance

Of the main characters in *Light in August*, Lena and Joe never meet. The link between their stories is Hightower, who assists in Lena’s giving birth and witnesses Joe’s death. With his transcendental ego, he watches over the future of Lena and Joe. Then, he is set up as a heterogeneous person in *Light in August* because Hightower is also a white male born in the South, but he does not seek to assimilate into the southern community, but seems to have established his identity by being marginalized.

His father is an abolitionist, but takes part in the Civil War in the side of the Confederates. Hightower, who is born after the Civil War, discovers his father’s frock coat which his father always wore during the war in the attic of his home. The frock coat is covered with the blue patchwork of the Union uniforms, and Hightower fears it as evidence that his father killed a Union soldier to obtain the uniform. Instead, he becomes captured by the heroic but comic stories of his grandfather in the Civil War that he hears from a black servant. Fascinated by the phantom of his grandfather, a member of the cavalry, Hightower enrolls in seminary and becomes a minister at a church in Jefferson, in which his grandfather fought. However, he talks about a galloping cavalry and Southern glory and defeat in his sermons that confounds his congregation.

He encounters his wife in seminary and marries her, but he sees the marriage only as a means to get sent to Jefferson’s church. With no regard for his wife, she

is gradually seen going in and out of a sleazy hotel in Memphis with another man, and one day she dies mysteriously. Hightower, who “should” be grieving, is taken a photograph of his smiling shortly after her death, which leads to his dismissal from the pastorate of his church, and he becomes even more marginalized in Jefferson. The townspeople try to have him leave the town, but he will not leave. Then, he hires a black woman, but is accused of having an affair with her, and when he hires a black man, he is accused of homosexuality and the black man is attacked by the KKK. He is extremely alienated by the town.

This “alienation” appears to be his mis-performance. However, he can make use of such alienation to confirm his superiority as a transcendent subject, to play the role of a martyr dismissed from the church (Suwabe 208), and to immerse himself in his grandfather’s visions in the Civil War.

However, helping Lena give birth would give Hightower, who seems to have a Thanatos syndrome, some hopes for his life, and witnessing Joe’s brutal murder by Grimm, who embodies pre-Civil War values, must be a great shock. Looking back at his own past after Joe’s death, Hightower considers as follows:

He seems to watch himself among faces, always among enclosed and surrounded by, faces, as though he watched himself in his own pulpit, from the rear of the church, or as though he were a fish in a bowl. And more than that: the faces seem to be mirrors in which he watches himself. He knows them all; he can read his doings in them. He seems to see reflected in them a figure antic as a showman, a little wild: a charlatan preaching worse than heresy, in utter disregard of that whose very stage he preempted, offering instead of the crucified shape of pity and love, a swaggering and unchastened

bravo killed with a shotgun in a peaceful henhouse, in a temporary hiatus of his own avocation of killing. (488)

He remembers all of his life, and consider those who influence him. The faces he is surrounded by are those of his wife, the people of the city, the church commissioners who rejects him, Byron, Lena, Joe, and God. And then, he reads the reflection of his own actions on these faces and realizes that he is just “a showman,” and “a charlatan,” speaking of his grandfather’s glory at the pulpit. However, his recent experiences would be an opportunity of his changing his perspective. Byron’s sincere love for Lena must make Hightower aware of his regret for his wife. The faces around him blame him for using his wife as a tool to get him an assignment at Jefferson, and he realizes that he is guilty of sinning against her. Furthermore, it is Grimm’s face that comes to mind after he thinks of Joe’s face (“I have seen it, recently Why, it’s that boy. With that black pistol, automatic they call them. The one who into the kitchen where killed, who fired the—” [492]). Hightower has been trapped by his grandfather’s visions in the Civil War and preached about the glories of the Civil War fanatically, but he encounters a shocking scene in which Grimm, holding the old southern values, kills the black man. On Joe’s castration, the black blood that splashed from his penis is not only symbolic of his blackness and femininity, but also it becomes “a rising rocket” which “seem[s] to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever” (465), and it will remain in the memories of all who are there. Hightower has persisted in preaching the Civil War sermons at Jefferson’s church at the expense of his wife, but he realizes that this is his “moral” mis-performance. He concludes with the following thoughts:

They rush past, are gone; the dust swirls skyward sucking, fades away into the night which has fully come. Yet, leaning forward in the window, his bandaged head huge and without depth above the twin blobs of his hands upon the ledge, it seems to him that he still hears them: the wild bulges and the clashing sabres and the dying thunder of hooves. (493)

Hugh Ruppersberg comments that “they” means “the ghostly cavalry,” and explains that the visions of the Confederate cavalry which Hightower thinks are “an image of bravery and heroism, yet wholly disconnected from reality” (298). This pessimistic ending indicates that he is never free from this moral sin. Hence, Hightower’s story becomes a tragedy, but Faulkner may give great significance to his awareness of his mis-performance.

4. The Burdens: Discovery of “Another Damn Black Burden”

Like Hightower, another marginalized person in Jefferson is Joanna Burden. She is so much emphasized as a “northerner” marginalized by southern society that Byron says, “I reckon there are folks born here that never even saw her” (87). However, is she really a northerner, and does she believe or doubt her own whiteness? And, like Hightower, does that “alienation” from southern community have a meaning? To find out the answers, we must first take a closer look at the history of the Burden family.

Joanna’s grandfather, Calvin Burden, marries Evangeline, a Huguenot, and

they have a son, Nathaniel Burden, Joanna's father. Nathaniel is "the small, dark, vivid child who had inherited his mother's build and coloring" while his father is "the tall, gaunt, Nordic man;" therefore the father and son are "like people of two different races" (242). Nathaniel's first marriage to Juana, who is described as looking enough "like his dead wife (Evangeline) to have been her sister" (246). Nathaniel gets married to his second wife, Joanna's mother, who is from New Hampshire, after Juana's death, but Joanna is named after Juana, not her biological mother. It is later revealed that Juana is a Mexican. When Calvin first sees Juana, he says that she is "[a]nother damn black Burden." He also expresses the statements that allow for miscegenation while internalizing racist discourse by saying, "black because of the sin of human bondage staining their blood and flesh" but "we done freed them now, both black and white alike. They'll bleach out now" (247). Moreover, Nathaniel and Juana have a child, Joanna's half-brother, Calvin, who, along with his grandfather Calvin, works on the issue of black voting rights and is murdered for it.

Given this history of the Burden family, we see the possibility of "damn black Burden" in the Burden family, as Calvin says. The "Mexican" lineage in the Burden family, combined with the possibility that Joe's father is Mexican, which will be revealed later in the book, makes clear a parallel of Joanna and Joe.

Joanna's father put the curse on her that blacks are a "curse" to be a burden on whites, and she has devoted her life since then to supporting blacks. Hence, she has been a marginalized northerner and considered as a "nigger lover" in the South. However, as R.G. Collins notes, northerners do not carry the curse, so we should not regard her father as a pure northern Puritan. Therefore, Joanna is deeply etched into herself with the curse of the Negro, and after all, she is also a

southerner because “the curse of the Negro is significant to the Burdens to the degree that they themselves accept and represent the communal identity of the South, not the North” (Collins 123).

By looking at Joanna’s racial instability and the quality of the South, we discover the possibility of “damn black Burden” lurking in Joanna’s family, but it is not Joanna’s blackness that we wish to assert because, like Joe, no one can be sure of that. However, it should be noted that, like Joe, Joanna could also be considered as “black” in the southern discourse. Collins also points out the parallel between Joanna and Joe, stating as follows:

Whether or not this was unconscious correlation on Faulkner’s part, it evokes a parallel to Joe Christmas. The parallel is still more precise when we hear that Nathaniel Burden marries a Mexican woman, who exactly resembles his Huguenot mother, and that this dead Mexican woman is a sort of spiritual mother to Joanna. Later, of course, we discover that Joe’s father was allegedly Mexican (a good logical choice, since the racist in the South and Southwest today still refers to Mexicans as “niggers”). (124)

Their parallel relationship is made clearer by the racial element of “Mexican” that they supposedly have in common, and Collins shows that “Mexicans” is still referred to as “niggers” in racists discourse even today. In *Light in August*, once Hines discovers that Milly’s boyfriend is a Mexican, he shoots and kills her boyfriend because he thinks the Mexican is half-black. Moreover, Joanna’s father, Nathaniel, who is described as “the small, dark, vivid child who had inherited his mother’s build and coloring” and gets married to a Mexican wife, Juana, has an

experience of shooting a Mexican because the Mexican claims that Nathaniel steals the Mexican's horse. When the trouble is mentioned, "Mexican" is dealt as a non-white by being contrasted with "white men" (244). As we have already seen that Joe's racial instability because of being called "a nigger," race-related discourses have the power to derange people's racial identities. This is why Joanna tries to hide the darker blood in her own family tree and why she is so intent on building her own whiteness.

Joanna tells Joe that the graves of her brother and grandfather, who are murdered due to the issue of black voting rights, and those of her father and his wives are hidden, and she explains the reason:

"So they would not find them. Dig them up. Maybe butcher them." She went on, her voice a little impatient, explanatory: "They hated us here. We were Yankees. Foreigners. Worse than foreigners: enemies. Carpet baggers. And it—the War—still too close for even the ones that got whipped to be very sensible. Stirring up the negroes to murder and rape, they called it. Threatening white supremacy. . . ." (249 emphasis mine)

She tells the reason of the hidden graves with "a little impatient, explanatory" voice as if she pretends to be unconcerned. Joanna does not say, but perhaps she hides her father's (and possibly even her mothers') grave by herself, and there seems to be an underlying intent to "hide the family lineage" in her actions. She explains that she is concerned that her community members will dig up the grave, but it is hard to imagine the townspeople uncovering the graves of people who died a long time ago, no matter how much they may have held a grudge. Hence, it is

possible that Joanna fears that people in the community remember her grandfather's comments allowing for miscegenation, her father's appearance that "looked like a different race" compared with her grandfather's Nordic appearance, and the fact that her father's first wife is a Mexican and exactly like her grandmother as if they were sisters by seeing the graves. In this scene, Joanna also refers to the stereotype of northerners seducing blacks into murder and rape. When Joanna's dead body is found, the people of the town believed that "she had been ravished too: at least once before her throat was cut and at least once afterward" (288). The stereotype to which Joanna refers coincides with townspeople's giving blackness to Joe, who is considered as a murderer and rapist.

Having concealed her family lineage by hiding her family's grave, Joanna continues to speak in a "New England" (240) tone. And even after stating, "We were Yankees. Foreigners," Joanna asserts her own New England lineage by stating that her mother was from New Hampshire three times within a few pages (Hall 36).⁶

Joanna's racial performance continues. She consistently claims, "we were foreigners, strangers, that thought differently from the people whose country we had come into without being asked or wanted" (255). Also, her clothing will be the costume in that performance. Byron sees and tells about Joanna "in a dress and sunbonnet that some nigger women I know wouldn't have wore for its shape and how it made her look" (88). From her appearance, we might think that she is not only presenting a marginalized white woman in the South, but also concealing her own family lineage—racial instability—by the performance of being marginalized.

Toni Morrison points out that in whiteness studies, we readers know that the person is white because no one says he or she is white (72), but Joanna makes a

strong claim for her own whiteness when she talks about the curse burdened on whites:

I had seen and known negroes since I could remember. . . . But after that I seemed to see them for the first time not as people, but as a thing, a shadow in which I lived, we lived, all white people, all other people. I thought of all the children coming forever and ever into the world, white, with the black shadow already falling upon them before they drew breath. And I seemed to see the black shadow in the shape of a cross. And it seemed like the white babies were struggling, even before they drew breath, to escape from the shadow that was not only upon them but beneath them too, flung out like their arms were flung out, as if they were nailed to the cross. (253 emphasis mine)

She talks using single first person “I,” and plural first person “we,” and finally she uses “all white people” as if she spreads or expands her whiteness. Then, she refers to “white” many times, making white/black contrasts. It should also be noted that Joanna is always spoken of in contrast to the “negroes.” She is “a lover of negroes” (46) and a “nigger lover.” Even the black child to whom Joe asks directions says, “Colored folks around here looks after her” (227). For Joanna, the contrast with blacks is important. In her relationship with Joe, she gives herself a northern-white identity as a “nigger lover” by positioning him as a black man.

What, then, is the critical difference between Joe and Joanna’s performance? While Joe runs away, he thinks as follows:

He had grown to manhood in the country, where like the unswimming sailor his physical shape and his thought had been molded by its compulsions without his learning anything about its actual shape and feel. For a week now he has lurked and crept among its secret places, yet he remained a foreigner to the very immutable laws which earth must obey.
(338)

Joe's failure may be in his attempt to assimilate to "the very immutable laws which earth must obey."⁷ Joanna, with her deep understanding of Southern law, is performing as a "stranger" with the understanding that assimilation would only enhance her own and the southern community's white racial anxiety. In this respect, we can see the difference between their racial performances.

5. Joanna: Performing Whiteness

Until Joanna meets Joe, she is a northern "spinster." Duvall divides southern women into four types and categorizes them in the following matrix.

	sexually active	sexually inactive
positive	wife	virgin
negative	prostitute	spinster

(*Faulkner's Marginal Couple* 121)

If we are to apply Joanna to this matrix, the only category for Joanna is a spinster. This is because virgins inevitably become spinsters as they get old, and to become a prostitute or wife involves sexual intercourse with someone, but to do so, they must mingle with the white community in the South. Before she meets Joe, she maintains her whiteness by “positioning” herself as a spinster in the Southern community. However, there is no doubt that her encounter with Joe changes Joanna’s performance.

The relationship between Joanna and Joe is described in three phases. In the second of these, Joanna becomes sexually awakened.

At first it shocked him: the abject fury of the New England glacier exposed suddenly to the fire of the New England biblical hell. Perhaps he was aware of the abnegation in it: the imperious and fierce urgency that concealed an actual despair at frustrate and irrevocable years, which she appeared to attempt to compensate each night as if she believed that it would be the last night on earth by damning herself forever to the hell of her forefathers, by living not alone in sin but in filth. She had an avidity for the forbidden wordsymbols; an insatiable appetite for the sound of them on his tongue and on her own. She revealed the terrible and impersonal curiosity of a child about forbidden subjects and objects; that rapt and tireless and detached interest of a surgeon in the physical body and its possibilities. And by day he would see the calm, coldfaced, almost manlike, almost middleaged woman who had lived for twenty years alone, without any feminine fears at all, in a lonely house in a neighborhood populated, when at all, by negroes, who spent a certain portion of each day sitting

tranquilly at a desk and writing tranquilly for the eyes of both youth and age the practical advice of a combined priest and banker and trained nurse.
(258 emphasis mine)

“The New England glacier” expressed as “the abject fury of the New England glacier exposed suddenly to the fire of the New England biblical hell” suggests that Joanna has been alienated from the southern community because of her northern religious views and had no sexual contact with anyone, but her sexual desire, liberated from its repression by her encounter with Joe, appears in the form of “the abject fury.” The liberation of Joanna’s repressed sexuality drops her into “filth,” according to the narrator, which reminds us of Joe’s reference to menstruating women as destined to become “victims of periodical filth” (185). However, in Southern society, in which women are oppressed, being a man makes men feel gender anxiety. After all, the matrix shown previously is also men’s arbitrary construction. Then, Joanna hopes to continue the relationship with Joe, saying, “I’m not ready to pray yet,” and she holds the desire to be pregnant.

Joe also thinks that Joanna is “almost manlike” in her everyday life. It also suggests that she is a middle-aged woman who is estranged from her sexuality, but in fact she is becoming sexually awakened. Also, the way she continues to write something in the study evokes the image of a “father.” It is also evident in Joe and Joanna’s sexual relationship, in which Joe feels “as if she had invented the whole thing deliberately, for the purpose of playing it out like a play” (259). In Joanna’s creating a relationship with Joe as if it is a play, we discover her subjectivity. Duvall points out that the sexuality of a woman out of wedlock who bears a child without a father’s name is a threat to the patriarchal tradition, and a woman’s

becoming the operator is a threat to male power (*Faulkner's Marginal Couple* 123). Joanna, becoming a “father” herself by being a woman and a manipulator, will not experience the same sexual anxiety as the southern male shown in the first section. Joanna hardly resists during the first rape, and is even described as “almost as though she were helping him, with small changes of position of the limbs when the ultimate need for help arose” (236). Rather, it is the “blackness” associated with the sexuality of the “woman” that is problematic for her.⁸ She, therefore, devotes herself to the performance of whiteness.

In her relationship with Joe, Joanna’s willingness to position Joe as black is clear: Joanna does not lock the door for whites after the first rape by Joe, but she locks it after the second rape (Ruppersburg 141), which makes Joe not a visitor but a black intruder. Furthermore, she makes Joe find her hiding, breathing heavily, in a cupboard or empty room, and shouts “Negro! Negro! Negro!” (260) at him during sexual intercourse; that indicates that she performs a “white woman being raped by a black man.”⁹ On the other hand, Joe reflects on his own submergence into blackness.

In the less than halflight he appeared to be watching his body, seeming to watch it turning slow and lascivious in a whispering of gutter filth like a drowned corpse in a thick still black pool of more than water. (107 emphasis mine)

According to Ruppersburg, “a thick still black pool of more than water” represents black blood (65). Also, it reminds us of Joe walking around Freedman Town, a town for black, calling the town “a black pit” and “abyss” (116).

Then he found himself. Without his being aware the street had begun to slope and before he knew it he was in Freedman Town, surrounded by the summer smell and the summer voices of invisible negroes. They seemed to enclose him like bodiless voices murmuring talking laughing in a language not his. As from the bottom of a thick black pit he saw himself enclosed by cabinshapes, vague, kerosenelit, so that the street lamps themselves seemed to be further spaced, as if the black life, the black breathing had compounded the substance of breath so that not only voices but moving bodies and light itself must become fluid and accrete slowly from particle to particle, of and with the now ponderable night inseparable and one.

He was standing still now, breathing quite hard, glaring this way and that. About him the cabins were shaped blackly out of blackness by the faint, sultry glow of kerosene lamps. On all sides, even within him the bodiless fecundmellow voices of negro woman murmured. It was as though he and all other manshaped life about him had been returned to the lightless hot wet primogenitive Female. (114-15 emphasis mine)

While walking through the town, Joe feels “the black life, the black breathing” is inseparably merged with the “night,” in which he listens to “the bodiless fecundmellow voices of negro women,” and thinks that “as though he and all other manshaped life about him had been returned to the lightless hot wet primogenitive Female.” Cathy Peppers points out that blackness is mixed with femininity in this scene, and that the most fundamental threat to the masculine subject is femininity

(129). Peppers further points out that Joe's remembering the sexual relationship with Joanna threatens his male identity, and the "gutter filth" marked on his body is "feminized" by being submerged in "a thick still black pool of more than water" (130-31). The "gutter filth" that Joe recalls is, of course, reminiscent of the "filth" of the menstruating woman he refers to. In other words, sinking into the "black pool" involves not only blackening but also feminization.¹⁰

Joanna's performance of the "white woman being raped by a black man" results in the making Joe a black, positioning him as a "woman," and Joanna, paradoxically, can be a "man." Joe goes to the bedroom of "almost manlike" Joanna thinking that "as though he entered by stealth to despoil her virginity each time anew," and he considers her virginity as "the necessity to despoil again that which he had already despoiled—or never had and never would" (234); finally, he thinks that "it was like I was the woman and she was the man" (235) and recognizes that the role of woman is imposed on him. Even when Joanna tells Joe that she may be pregnant, she gives Joe the "Negro blood" by saying: "Even to a bastard negro child. I would like to see father's and Calvin's faces" (266).

After it turns out that the "pregnancy" is actually a sign of menopause, their relationship enters a third phase, and Joanna's "man (father)" figure in blackening Joe begins to become more prominent. The note Joanna leaves for Joe becomes "a lock and chain" (272), and Joe comes to realize that he is being bound, and Joanna wants to expose Joe's blackness to society by trying to get him to go to a black school. She also orders Joe to "[k]neel" (280) and pray to God, which is a superimposition of Mr. McEachern's attempt to get Joe to memorize the catechism and say: "Kneel down" (152).

When Joanna and Joe finally confront each other, Joanna is holding "one of

them old Civil War, cap-and-ball pistols” (298), which is another clear symbol that she becomes the phallic “father.” The bullet is not fired from “the round black ring of the pistol muzzle” (282), and Joanna is decapitated by Joe. At this “father-killing” moment, he is holding a razor, which is used by black men (Banta 173). It can be said that Joe’s blackness and Joanna’s whiteness are exactly back-to-back.

When the townspeople hear the news that Joe has killed Joanna, they see it as “an anonymous negro crime committed not by a negro but by Negro” (288). Because Joe’s race is socially determined and he is ostracized from the white community, he is forced to flee to the black community. “The black shoes smelling of negro” which Joe trades to escape from the pursuit symbolizes “the black abyss which had been waiting, trying, for thirty years to drown him” (331), and he cannot anymore avoid the blackness, thinking as follows: “at last he had actually entered, bearing now upon his ankles the definite and ineradicable gauge of its upward moving” (331). Then, he flees to the Hightower house, but ends up being shot and castrated by Grimm, which, ironically, completes Joanna’s racial performance because Joe’s lynching to death by a white man for the crime of rape allows Joanna to position herself as a victim, a white woman, who is raped and murdered, in the mutually complementary relationship of white man, white woman, and black man that we see in the previous chapter. Behind Joe’s blackness lurks Joanna’s racial anxiety, and killing Joanna is the crucial thing for Joe’s blackness; on the other hand, she may have achieved her eternal whiteness.

6. Lena and Southern White (Middle-Aged) Women

Perhaps the most liberated character in *Light in August* is Lena, who is often interpreted as a symbol of nature and fertility, and whose chapters have a pastoral atmosphere, since her narrative is written in the present tense while Joe and Hightower often use the past tense, which shows her chapters are full of hopes for her future. However, her upbringing has not been a blessed one. After her parents' death, she is taken in by her brother, who is 20 years older than her, and begins to live with him as "his labor- and childridden wife." Lena's sister-in-law has been "lying in or recovering" (5) from her labor and childbirth, and Lena herself is forced to help raise her brother's children, and finally becomes pregnant although she is still unmarried, and she is abandoned by her lover. In other words, she lives in the South, in which women's sexuality is dominated by men. Yet she escapes from her home in a very romantic way, through a window.

Her journey takes her from Alabama to Mississippi, and to Tennessee, and she never leaves the South. However, the journey that she begins with Byron in the final chapter is one that we foresee will continue, and she allows the reader to imagine that she will one day leave the South and begin a life of her own. Also, in the gender performance of the furniture dealer as shown before, Lena is expected to be raped by Byron, but that never actually happens. It is suggested that she is emerging from the place in which female sexuality is dominated by men, as she has been in the past. On the other hand, Joe is still "inside the circle," thinking, "I have never got outside that circle. I have never broken out the ring of what I have already done and cannot ever undo" (339). Lena's freedom is contrasted that Joe has not been able to escape from the circle due to the instability of his racial

identity, and the story of Lena foregrounds the tragedy of Joe.

However, Joe is not the only contrast to Lena in *Light in August*, as Joanna Burden is set up as a contrasting figure in terms of age and fertility. Contrasted Lena, the symbol of fertility, with Joanna, the symbol of barrenness, Joanna's "tragedy" is also foregrounded. It would be ironic, therefore, that after Joanna is killed, Lena gives birth to a child on the very grounds of her home.

Considering the discussion about "Dry September" and "A Rose for Emily" in Chapter 1, it is clear that Faulkner frequently features unmarried middle-aged women in his works. Joanna in *Light in August* is of course one of them. Minnie Cooper in "Dry September," Emily Grierson in "A Rose for Emily," and Joanna Burden in *Light in August* are all middle-aged women locked up or keeping themselves in their houses. This is also contrasted with Lena, and their anguish and struggles are highlighted. Then, we would like to compare these three middle-aged women.

As discussed in the previous chapter, rumors spread throughout the town that Minnie is raped by a black man, and because of her age, the townspeople and readers assume that the rape is fabricated by her and discover her subjectivity. However, there is no evidence anywhere that she fabricates the rape, and the subjectivity of "fabricating the rape" is created by the way people around her looks at her erotically, through which we find our sexism. Minnie is never given to any opportunities to speak something or express her feelings, and unable to resist the making of her subjectivity. She has always been a victim of the South.

On the other hand, many similarities can be seen between Emily and Joanna. One of the most interesting things is that Emily begins to gain weight after killing Homer Barron with arsenic (117). The same is also true of Joanna. When her

relationship with Joe begins to turn into the second phase, she is awakening sexually, and gets fat (her getting fat may be the onset of her menopause, or it may have been a desire to become pregnant). Judith Fetterley, who reads in Emily a rebellion against patriarchy, explains the reason for Emily's gaining weight as follows:

Having been consumed by her father, Emily in turn feeds off Homer Barron, becoming, after his death, suspiciously fat. Or, to put it another way it is as if, after her father's death, she has reversed his act of incorporating her by incorporating and becoming him, metamorphosed from the slender figure in white to the obese figure in black whose hair a "vigorous iron-gray, like the hair of an active man." She has taken into herself the violence in him which thwarted her and has reenacted it upon Homer Barron. (42-43)

Emily's continued confinement by her father makes her a victim of patriarchy, but Fetterley interprets her physical change from the slender figure in white to the obese figure as a symbol of her acquiring of "fatherhood" by incorporating that "father." Minnie's gray hair is an expression of her old age, but Emily's silver hair is "vivid iron-gray, like the hair of an active man," and it is this silver hair that is placed next to Barron's dead body at the end of "A Rose for Emily." And we, the readers, and the people of the town find her subjectivity of her sexual desire in the gray hair.

The same is true of Joanna, who, as analyzed in this chapter, demonstrates her "subjectivity" and becomes a "father," exercising the power of the father in her sexual relations with Joe and controlling him as she likes. However, she is also a

victim of the Southern patriarchy, as Emily is, because she is confined in the house and bound with the curse of black people which her father gives her. Joanna also incorporates and embodies that patriarchy and demonstrates it in her relationship with the black man. But that partner is a man who is trapped in what Faulkner calls “the most tragic condition a man could find himself in—not to know what he is and to know that he will never know.” Joe has been also a victim of white supremacy and patriarchy in the South. Joanna’s exercise of agency is one way of avenging patriarchy which she is trapped, but she reproduces that very patriarchy. The tragedy of *Light in August* can be read in the fact that it also creates new victims.

By discovering Joanna’s racial anxiety, this chapter examines her racial performance in reaction to Joe’s racial performance. Her performance would “complete” when she is killed as a white woman attacked by a black man, but in the end, what is driving her is the same southern rules as Grimm. Although Joanna is a woman, she is able to gain agency through racial performance, and as a result, the figure of Joanna converges with that of the “southern father.” Joanna’s performance leads to Joe’s death, and we rediscover the conventional South, in which someone is oppressed by the power of “father.”

Notes

1. Davis, for example, states that Joanna demonstrates her own fantasy of the white woman and the Negro by involving not only Joe but also the southern community (*Faulkner's "Negro"* 48).
2. John N. Duvall comments as follows: "Wearing the uniform, however, gives Grimm only 'the selfconscious pride of a boy.' This portrait of Grimm crucially reveals a young man who is insecure about his masculinity and who believes that there is some choice he can make that would create a stable identity" ("Faulkner's *Crying Game*" 61).
3. Many southern men with male anxiety appear in Faulkner's work. Duvall points out that "[a] woman is called a whore whenever her sexuality exceeds or threatens to exceed male control" (*Faulkner's Marginal Couple* 119), and in *Light in August*, we see the sexual insecurities of southern white men in Hines' shouts to Miss Atkins and Mr. McEachern's shout of "Jezebel!" to Bobbie (132, 204).
4. When Joe attempts to have sexual intercourse with a black girl in order to lose his virginity, he smells "womanshenegro" (156) and beats the black girl in repulsion against it. Joe feels disgust for the woman, but at the same time he strongly associates the woman with blackness. Furthermore, as for his aversion to women's menstruation, we have already discussed in the chapter.
5. Joe looks at the proprietor of a dining hall in which Bobbie works and learns how to smoke. "He noticed, saw the proprietor for the first time. Like the other men, the proprietor wore a hat and was smoking. He was not a big man, not much bigger than Joe himself, with a cigarette burning in one corner of his

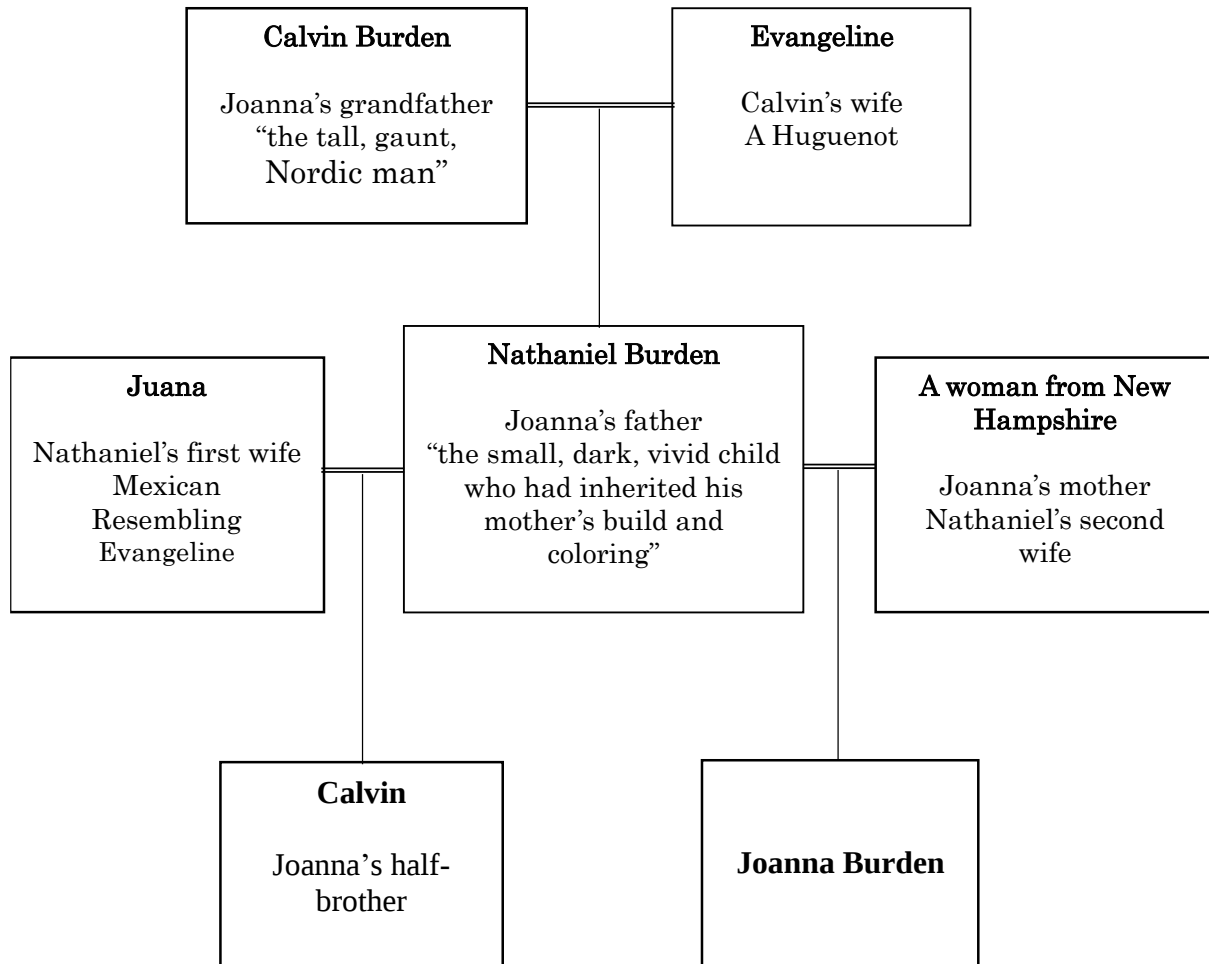
mouth as though to be out of the way of talking. From that face squinted and still behind the curling smoke from the cigarette which was not touched once with hand until it burned down and was spat out and ground beneath a heel, Joe was to acquire one of his own mannerism" (178 emphasis mine). It is in this town and in the diner that Joe sees many white men. Joe learns the "manly" gestures of the diner proprietor who has Bobbie as an employee.

6. Joanna refers to New Hampshire three times as follows: "father sent for her up to New Hampshire where some of our kin people still live" (249), "And the next year he wrote to our cousin in New Hampshire." (250), "And then what they probably knew all the time was going to happen did happen, and father was alone until my mother came from New Hampshire" (252)
7. As already noted, Joe attempts to be black by living with blacks in accordance with the southern ideology, but precisely the ideology prevents him from accepting his blackness. Moreover, Watson states that Joe's failure is in "overdoing" masculinity in the South, and that in the Southern community Joe embodies "uncanny, contradictory, consummatory" masculinity ("Overdoing" 153).
8. Beth Widmaire comments that "[t]he sanctity of the cult of true white womanhood is maintained through the mechanism of displacement, upholding the myth of the black woman as sexual animal" (29), and points out that "Joanna's regression into the primal darkness of unbound sexuality places her outside the cult of true white womanhood" (35).
9. Bobbie is a "southern woman" who, like Joanna, has premarital sexual intercourse with Joe, but in the relationship, she does not blacken Joe, but rather treats like a white man. The contrast between Bobbie, who makes Joe a

white man, and Joanna, who refers to Joe as “Negro” and blackens him through her racial performance, is also noteworthy.

10. As Joe wanders the black streets, and feels the night’s blackness and its integration with racial blackness, thinking “as though he and all the other manshaped life about him had been returned to the lightless hot wet primogenitive Female.” This description evokes that he is returning to the womb of a black woman, which could be interpreted as his rebirth as a black child, and again, he is given blackness in this scene.

Appendix: Burden Genealogy



Chapter 3

Constructing, Reconstructing, and Deconstructing Whiteness: Sutpen, Quentin and Rosa in *Absalom, Absalom!*

Absalom, Absalom! (1936), which William Faulkner himself considered his masterpiece, is the story of the rise and fall of Thomas Sutpen and what happens to the Sutpen family. The narrators are Rosa Coldfield, sister of Sutpen's wife, Ellen; Quentin Compson, protagonist of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929); Jason Compson III, Quentin's father, (Mr. Compson); and Shreve, a Canadian friend of Quentin in Harvard, through whom Sutpen's story is reconstructed. It is this polyphonic narrative that not only complicates the novel, but also makes it difficult to give the readers the real image of Sutpen.

At first, let us organize the structure of the narrative and what each narrator tells. *Absalom, Absalom!* starts with Rosa's telling the story to Quentin in her house about how she is involved in the Sutpen family. Then, Mr. Compson and Quentin retells the story of Sutpen's arrival in Jefferson, the background of his marriage to Ellen, the story of his son, Henry and his school friend, Charles Bon, the engagement of Bon and Sutpen's daughter, Judith, Henry's and Bon's running away from the Sutpen's house, and Henry's shooting and killing Bon. As for the reason why Sutpen forbids the engagement of Bon and Judith, Mr. Compson guesses that the cause is Bon's octoroon mistress. After Quentin enters Harvard, he and Shreve correct Mr. Compson's theory and find that the reason for the marriage ban is incest by discovering the possibility that Bon is Sutpen's son. However, they continue trying to find the truth of Sutpen's denial of Bon and reach the conclusion that Bon has black blood in his veins.

A clue to the narrators' reconstruction of Sutpen is his "design" as told to General Compson, his only friend and Quentin's grandfather. Sutpen recounts how he moves to Tidewater in his childhood from a mountain village in West Virginia, in which he was born and lives in poverty, and how he goes to Haiti to achieve his "design" of acquiring his own mansion, plantation, and slaves. The "design" stems from an insult that he receives from a black slave at the entrance of the home of Pettibone, a white plantation owner in Tidewater when he visits there as his father's errand.

In the process of reconstructing Sutpen's story, Quentin and Shreve discover Bon's black blood in this narrative about Sutpen's "design" inherited from Quentin's grandfather through his father, and create a tragedy specific to the South, in which people detest miscegenation, and gives Sutpen a southern whiteness that represses the blacks.

In *Absalom, Absalom!*, this discovery of blackness makes the work an American southern novel, and it also brings up the issue of whiteness supported by its blackness. It has been a main subject of critical interest whether Sutpen, who is born in West Virginia, not the deep-South, and aspires for the "design" of single-handedly acquiring southern lands, can be seen as a southern white man. Cleanth Brooks appreciates Sutpen's power to accomplish by himself, and argues that Sutpen is a "rationalistic and scientific, not traditional, not religious, not even superstitious" and that "Sutpen turns out to be a Yankee, not a Southerner at all" (306). Koichi Suwabe, however, disagrees with Brooks, saying that Sutpen should be considered as "the embodiment of the 'Southern Dream'" (383).¹

The polyphonic narrative makes readers curious as to who Sutpen is. General Compson's description of Sutpen as "[g]iven the occasion and the need, this man

can and will do anything” (35) gives us the impression that Sutpen is a northern self-made man with indomitable strength. On the other hand, given that Sutpen’s “design” is based on large amounts of land, a mansion, a white wife and children, and black slaves, it is conceivable that Sutpen represents a Southern white male. However, to place Sutpen in either frame, the North or the South, would seem to miss the complexity of his whiteness. There is no doubt that Sutpen’s “design” relies on southern values, but this thesis will focus on Sutpen’s acquired southern white masculine performance; by looking at Sutpen’s process of becoming a southern white male, we will discover Sutpen’s struggles, which the narrators do not tell.

It has been pointed out that Quentin’s discovery of Bon’s black blood is an escape from the incestuous narrative of the relationship between Henry, Judith, and Bon, based on the intertextuality with *The Sound and the Fury*, in which his own incestuous feelings toward his sister Caddy are written. This is a valid point, but the universal taboo of incest, which is not only a South’s taboo, is not enough to understand Quentin’s painful cry, “*I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!*,” answering Shreve’s question, “Why do you hate the South?” (303). Besides, it should be noticed that there is no evidence that Bon is black; this is a creation of Quentin and Shreve. This discovery reflecting the southern values would also give the southern whiteness to Sutpen, but at the same time it lights up the southern whiteness of the narrators.

While the intertextuality with *The Sound and the Fury* is often mentioned, other works featuring the Compson family are less discussed in the intertextuality with *Absalom, Absalom!*. This chapter examines the intertextuality with “That Evening Sun,” a short story in which the Compson family appears, and examines

Quentin's portrayal of blacks in his "reenactment" of the Sutpen family's southern history, which allows us to discover Quentin's traumatic encounter with the black people and exposes his anguish as a white southern male.

Minrose Gwin discusses and refers to Quentin's retelling about the Sutpen's family, and points out that "[i]n the latter part of the book, this 'man talk' empowers Thomas Sutpen to speak by shutting Rosa Coldfield up" (177). In chapter 5, in the middle of *Absalom, Absalom!*, Rosa tells why she refuses Sutpen's marriage proposal and how she becomes a spinster keeping her virginity for forty-three years, which includes what the southern white male supremacy does not want to know. That is why her narrative is silenced by the male narrators. However, we will show that she has a power of defiance against white male dominance in the South; it is what deconstructs the Southern whiteness that Sutpen constructs and Quentin reconstructs.

1. Sutpen: Constructing Whiteness

While many characters recount Sutpen's story, he rarely gets an opportunity to tell it by himself. The only exception is when he tells General Compson about his half-life before he comes to Jefferson and his "design." This narrative is given to readers by Quentin and Shreve, but it can be considered Sutpen's own telling because this narrative is what Sutpen tells General Compson personally, and Quentin's grandfather passes it on to his son and grandson.

Sutpen, born in West Virginia, thinks that his trouble in his childhood is "innocence" (178). White plantation owners and black slaves in Tidewater make

him realize that he is innocent. He considers the treatment he receives at the entrance of the white plantation owner's house from a black slave to be insulting, but his consciousness can be said to be directed to the white face beyond the one of the black slaves.

Not the monkey nigger. It was not the nigger anymore than it had been the nigger that his father had helped to whip that night. The nigger was just another balloon face slick and distended with that mellow loud and terrible laughing so that he did not dare to burst it, looking down at him from within the half closed door during that instant in which, before he knew it, something in him had escaped and—he unable to close the eyes of it—was looking out from within the balloon face just as the man who did not even have to wear the shoes he owned, whom the laughter which the balloon held barricaded and protected from such as he, looked out from whatever invisible place he (the man) happened to be at the moment, at the boy outside the barred door in his patched garments and splayed bare feet, looking through and beyond the boy, he himself seeing his own father and sisters and brothers as the owner, the rich man (not the nigger) must have been seeing them all the time . . . (189-90 emphasis mine)

Sutpen feels the contemptuous look of the plantation owner “who did not even have to wear the shoes he owned” beyond “the monkey nigger’s” face. Simultaneously, Sutpen turns his gaze on his own family, his parents and siblings in the same way as the white plantation owner looks at him. At this moment, he learns “the difference not only between white men and black ones,” but also “a difference white

men and white men not to be measured by lifting anvils or gouging eyes or how much whiskey you could drink then get up and walk out of the room” (183). Then, he realizes that the difference among whites is the result from economic disparity, not the strength of physical power.

John N. Duvall points out that Sutpen is a poor white and “not-white” in his childhood.

When he emerges from this cave, Sutpen is reborn into a strange, newly raced world. Still visibly “white” (after all, his skin color has not changed), he is simultaneously not-white because he no longer enjoys the primary marker of whiteness, which is an experience of the self as unmarked by race. . . . Both the poor white and the African American are denied humanity by southern Whiteness; indeed, both groups are identified as animals. (*Race and White Identity* 10)

Readers of Faulkner, who have already known Faulkner’s characters who are considered as black people although they have white skin such as Joe in *Light in August*, and Bon, are well aware that the whiteness of his characters’ skin is not proof that they are white. Sutpen is unable to obtain the privileges to which the white race is entitled, and in that sense, he is not white, but is identified with an animal, just as he refers to black people as “monkey.” He describes the moment when he realizes that he is innocent:

Because he was still innocent. He knew it without being aware that he did; he told Grandfather how, before the monkey nigger who came to the door

had finished saying what he did, he seemed to kind of dissolve and a part of him turn and rush back through the two years they had lived there like when you pass through a room fast and look at all the objects in it and you turn and go back through the room again and look at all the objects from the other side and you find out you had never seen them before, rushing back through those two years and seeing a dozen things that had happened and he hadn't even seen them before: . . . (186 emphasis mime)

At the moment Sutpen is rejected by the black slave at the door, his consciousness turns toward the two years he has spent at Tidewater in which he has never cared about how he looks to others even when he wears his ragged clothes, just as he has never cared about his skin color. It is not until he is rejected that he sees that poor whites and the blacks who sometimes are better dressed, are almost in the same class. And this is the time when he understands the reason for the hostility between poor whites and the blacks which he explains that "his older sisters and the other white women of their kind had of looking at niggers, not with fear or dread but with a kind of speculative antagonism" (186). Sutpen insists on his innocence, but he has lost it when he realizes that he "was" innocent. At this moment, he feels the collapse and fall of his whiteness as his body dissolves. He must "properly" construct his whiteness, and he then heads to Haiti, and then to Jefferson after his plans are crushed in Haiti.

Mr. Compson and Quentin tell the process through which Sutpen comes to Jefferson, gets the land, and makes his own house. Their narrative surely includes Rosa's bias against Sutpen as she considers him as a "demon" because Quentin has already heard Rosa's narrative. However, Quentin has known the Sutpen's story

long before Rosa tells him because “[i]t was a part of his twenty years’ heritage of breathing the same air and hearing his father talk about the man; a part of the town’s—Jefferson’s—eighty years’ heritage of the same air which the man himself had breathed between this September afternoon in 1909 and that Sunday morning in June in 1833 when he first rode into town out of no discernible past”(7). The largest part of Sutpen’s image told by Mr. Compson and Quentin reflects the impression that southern whites have of Sutpen, which has been passed down to their descendants.

In Jefferson, the name of Sutpen, who is a stranger, goes “back and forth among the places of business and of idleness and among residences in steady strophe and antistrophe: *Sutpen. Sutpen. Sutpen. Sutpen*” (24). This metaphor for a theatre gives us the image that Jefferson itself is the theatre in which Sutpen gives his performance. And he performs as a southern white man in order to construct his own whiteness. General Compson describes the masculine performance of Sutpen with his slight antagonism against Sutpen:

Then he turned, and he looked at the other men sitting with their feet on the railing and watching him too, men who used to come out to his place and sleep on the floor and hunt with him, and he saluted them with that florid, swaggering gesture to the hat (yes, he was underbred. It showed like this always, your grandfather said, in all his formal contacts with people. He was like John L. Sullivan having taught himself painfully and tediously to do the schottische, having drilled himself and drilled himself in secret until he now believed it no longer necessary to count the music’s beat, say. (34-35)

General Compson's impression of Sutpen shows that he tries to learn how to behave as a southern white man by repeating his performance over and over again. However, his arrogant, exaggerated and "overdone" behaviors result in revealing his poor upbringing.

Since Sutpen, who comes to Jefferson from Haiti with blacks in tow, refuses to tell the townspeople anything about his personal story, they just watch the way that he acquires land and builds a mansion with black slaves. The relationship between Sutpen and the townspeople is like "a raree show" (12), and they always watch Sutpen in the process of performing to become a southern white man. It means that the Sutpen's story of "the town's—Jefferson's—eighty years' heritage" is seen through the townspeople's eyes and their projected image of Sutpen as his name is repeated and echoed throughout the town. Sutpen's whiteness depends not only on his own behavior, which constructs him as the southern white man, but also on how he is seen by the southern community.

First, the object of townspeople's interest (it can be translated into their "fear") is the black slaves that Sutpen has brought with him. They regard them as ferocious beasts and even more dangerous than the black slaves with whom they normally interact, by considering French spoken by the Haitian blacks as "dark, fatal tongue" (20). Two striking parts of the description of Sutpen and the black slaves working together in the Sutpen legend are as follows.

. . . General Compson told his son, Quentin's father, while the negroes were working Sutpen never raised his voice at them, that instead he led them, caught them at the psychological instant by example, by some

ascendancy of forbearance rather than by brute fear. (27)

So he (Sutpen) and the twenty negroes worked together, plastered over with mud against the mosquitoes and as Miss Coldfield told Quentin, distinguishable one from another by his beard and eyes alone and only the architect resembling a human creature because of the French clothes . . . —working in the sun and heat of summer and the mud and ice of winter, with quiet and unflagging fury. (28)

From a perspective liberated from southern values, this behavior of Sutpen could be interpreted as working with the black slaves on the same footing rather than treating them as slaves. However, we must not forget that Sutpen needs just “slaves,” and this is essential to the achievement of a “design” that reflects his southern values, and is a process of southern whiteness construction by Sutpen, who has been a not-white. Rather, it should be noticed that these descriptions bring out the gaze cast on Sutpen by the southern white men who observe him. For them, taking the gentle initiative and performing active physical labor on a par with slaves is not the right thing to do as southern white men, and darkening their skin to make them indistinguishable from blacks would have put whites in the same position as black slaves. Their casting gaze on Sutpen brings up the whiteness of southern whites, which is guaranteed by regarding Sutpen as similar to blacks and making him the “other.”

Moreover, the French architect described as “a small, alertly resigned man with a grim, harried Latin face, in a frock coat and a flowered waistcoat and a hat which would have created no furore on a Paris boulevard” (26) is a function of

making Sutpen the “other.” Even though he speaks French, the same language as Sutpen and his black slaves, the emphasis on his clothing symbolic of the European civilization of “Paris” makes him the only person considered as a human, even when he works and plasters mud all over his body to repel mosquitoes like Sutpen and his black slaves.

Sutpen then needs a white wife, so he approaches the Coldfield family and becomes engaged to Ellen, but townspeople do not “think of love in connection with Sutpen,” and they think “of ruthlessness rather than justice and of fear rather than respect, but not of pity or love” (32). They create the image of Sutpen lacking of love or affection and dehumanize him. And their abhorrence “which at some moment during the five preceding years had swallowed him even though he never had quite ever lain quiet on its stomach, had performed one of mankind’s natural and violent and inexplicable volte faces and regurgitated him” (39-40) culminates at the time of his wedding with Ellen.

For southern whites watching their land be invaded by Sutpen, whom they had regarded as inferior to them (equal to blacks) because he is a stranger without any property, the acceptance of Sutpen, who acquires the name Coldfield, a name trusted by southern whites, means that they have to accept him as their equal. Throwing mud at him at the wedding which makes him “swallowed” into the town’s throat means their rejection of Sutpen and an attempt to keep him as the “other,” and the othering is what keeps their whiteness. It should be added, however, that Sutpen, who later marries Ellen, lives in a mansion he completed himself, runs a plantation using black slaves, has two white children, Henry and Judith, and serves in the military with distinction, repeating his performance as a model southern white male, and the community is eventually forced to accept Sutpen as

a southern white man.

The rejection by the people in Jefferson can be said to be an experience similar to the scorn and rejection Sutpen received from white plantation owners in Tidewater. In such an adverse criticism, it is not surprising to find his self-made-man-like fortitude, given that Sutpen goes through the process of building a house and marrying to achieve his “design.” In this rejection of Sutpen, it is important to note, however, that Southern whiteness is preserved through the creation of the “other,” and is dependent on the “other.” Sutpen’s “design” crucially has southern-like characteristics because it depends on the existence of the “other,” the black slaves (and even more so, the woman who gives birth to white children). His whiteness is also assured by the presence of blacks or people economically equal to blacks, such as poor whites.

It was not only people from high-status families like General Compson who observe Sutpen during the construction of his mansion. The description that “[t]here were many more than Akers, though the others were responsible citizens and landowners and so did not have to lurk about the camp at night” (27) would be the evidence that poor whites also watch Sutpen building his house. While, as already discussed, the high-status men, the so-called southern “fathers” make Sutpen the “other,” it could be said that he also attempts to put black slaves and poor whites in the “other” position. Suwabe points out that Sutpen’s “exploitation (of the gaze) of poor whites is a narcissistic attempt to be a ‘father,’” and further that the fistfight by Sutpen and the blacks is Sutpen’s “pathetic attempt to repress a traumatic past” (405).

On the other hand, Sutpen describes the impetus for the creation of his “design” as follows:

. . . telling Grandfather that the boy-symbol at the door wasn't it because the boy-symbol was just the figment of the amazed and desperate child; that now he would take that boy in where he would never again need to stand on the outside of a white door and knock at it: and not at all for mere shelter but so that that boy, that whatever nameless stranger, could shut that door himself forever behind him on all that he had ever known, and look ahead along the still undivulged light rays in which his descendants who might not even ever hear his (the boy's) name, waited to be born without even having to know that they had once been riven forever free from brutehood just as his own (Sutpen's) children were— . . . (210)

Dirk Kuyk, Jr. points out that Sutpen's "design" requires "a powerful act of imagination" (208) and is neither based on Christian philanthropy as represented by "love thy neighbor as thyself" nor Appalachian egalitarianism, and evaluates it as follows:

Sutpen intends to free the stranger's descendants from brutehood forever and, by doing so, to strike at the heart of the patriarchal structure on which not only the southern plantation but also Western culture itself had been based. (209)

Surely, Sutpen is born in West Virginia, "where the only colored people were Indians and you only looked down at them over your rifle sights, where he had never even heard of, never imagined, a place, a land divided neatly up and actually

owned by men who did nothing but ride over it on fine horses or sit in fine clothes on the galleries of big houses while other people worked for them” (179). The place, to some extent, is free from patriarchy and imperialism, and he did not know the southern values until the loss of his innocence in Tidewater. Given this background, it may be possible to say that his “design” is created as a counter to patriarchy and Western culture. The problem, however, is that Sutpen’s role model is the very white plantation owner who rejects him. His “design,” therefore, relies on the southern values that he is supposed to overcome. In other words, we understand the contradiction that the goal of Sutpen’s “design” is not southern at all, but the means to achieve it are modeled after southern values. And while becoming a southern “father” is synonymous with constructing whiteness as a southern white, it requires the “other,” black slaves and poor whites, to do so.

Absalom, Absalom! tells of the downfall of the Sutpen family, the loss of land and home, black slaves and white family members, as a tragedy for him. However, given the contradictions Sutpen faces, his true tragedy is that he seeks to achieve his “design” in order to create a space in which no one is rejected because of his own bitter experiences, but in the process, he has to reject Bon.

What is still unclear, however, is whether Sutpen rejects Bon because he is black, as Quentin and Shreve imagines. Sutpen tries to get a plantation and slaves by working on a sugar plantation in Haiti and marrying the plantation owner’s daughter, but Sutpen tells General Compson that he abandoned his wife and son and came to Jefferson because of “a fact which I (Sutpen) did not learn until after my son was born” (212). When hearing this story, General Compson reacts as follows:

Conscience? Conscience? Good God, man, what else did you expect? Didn't the very affinity and instinct for misfortune of a man who had spent that much time in a monastery even, let alone one who had lived that many years as you lived them, tell you better than that? didn't the dread and fear of females which you must have drawn in with the primary mammalian milk teach you better? . . . (213)

It is often pointed out that "a fact which I did not learn until after my son was born" can be guessed as black blood considering the mentality of the South. However, Joseph R. Urgo and Noel Polk comment that "[i]f the reason for ending the marriage was the discovery that she (Sutpen's first wife) was part Negro, as Quentin and Shreve will posture, Quentin's grandfather would hardly disagree or express such shock in his reaction to Sutpen's decision" (142). In the end, it can be said that Faulkner obscures the existence of Bon's black blood.

Furthermore, in keeping with Sutpen's original "design" goals, he aims for a world that would reject no one. And even if he has developed a southern white mentality in the process of achieving that goal, what barrier would it be to his "design" to recognize his son, Bon, as a black man? Admitting that he is black would be a formal admission that Sutpen does not give Bon the right to inherit the house, which preserves his family's white purity. Rather, as Quentin first imagines, incest would be a formal reason to repudiate his engagement to Judith. After all, no clear evidence is given that Bon is of black blood. Given "white narrators' general lack of direct sighting allows them to treat racial passing solely in language and ignore the white-looking body and its subversive implication to their subjectivity" (Sugimori, "Racial Mixture" 9) in *Absalom, Absalom!*, the

“reenactment” of the South by Quentin (and Shreve), who identifies Bon and his mother, Eulalia, with the blacks, reflects Quentin’s own values, knowledge, history, and personal experiences in the South.

2. Quentin: Reconstructing Whiteness

At first, we should examine how Quentin finds incest as the reason of Sutpen’s marriage ban. Mr. Compson tells the incestuous relationship between Henry and Judith as follows:

Henry, the provincial, the clown almost, given to instinctive and violent action rather than to thinking, ratiocination, who may have been conscious that his fierce provincial’s pride in his sister’s virginity was a false quantity which must incorporate in itself an inability to endure in order to be precious, to exist, and so must depend upon its loss, absence, to have existed at all. In fact, perhaps this is the pure and perfect incest: the brother realising that sister’s virginity must be destroyed in order to have existed at all, taking that virginity in the person of the brother-in-law, the man whom he would be if he could become, metamorphose into, the lover, the husband; by whom he would be despoiled, choose for despoiler, if he could become, metamorphose into sister, the mistress, the bride. (76-77)

Mr. Compson tells that Henry imagines taking his sister Judith’s virginity to prove it and wishes to have Bon, whom he wants to transform, take Judith’s virginity.

Perhaps Mr. Compson has discovered that Bon could be Sutpen's son, but his Sutpen's rejection of Bon and Judith's marriage is only because of Bon's bigamy with an octoroon.

In addition, Quentin hears Rosa recount what happened to Henry, Judith, and Bon in Chapter 5, but Quentin does not hear it because there is "also something which he too could not pass" (139). The image in Quentin's mind is one of incest: Henry and Judith in her underwear standing between the bed and the wedding dress on top of it. John T. Irwin points out that Quentin, who directs his incestuous feelings to his sister, Caddy, projects his personal history of not being able to kill a seducer of his sister into the narrative of *Absalom, Absalom!*, and suggests that "the relationship between Henry and Bon is a form of doubling" (12). Quentin's incestuous feeling toward Caddy is described in *The Sound and the Fury*, in which his desire for Caddy is a cause of his sexual impotence. Escaping this personal history, Quentin's narrative shifts to miscegenation, considered a more serious offense in the South.

The incest between Henry, Judith, and Bon that Mr. Compson describes is also mixed with Henry's homosexual desire for Bon because Henry shows his desire to "metamorphose into sister, the mistress, the bride." And the description of Quentin and Shreve that "not at all as two young men might look at each other but almost as a youth and a very young girl might out of virginity itself—a sort of hushed and naked searching" (240) implicates their homosexual relationship. That is, the personal history that Quentin layers on Henry includes not only incest but also homosexual desires. Betina Entzminger points out that "[r]acially, identification with cultural definitions of whiteness—which [. . .] are coded as masculine and heterosexual—would be the antidote to a socially disgraceful desire

that lies beneath the surface” (88). Quentin’s narrative shift to the discovery of black blood is an attempt to construct whiteness that can be characterized as “masculine and heterosexual” and that functions as a device to conceal not only incest but also homosexual desires.

But as already mentioned, the universal taboo of incest or homosexual desire, which is not confined to the American South, is not enough to understand Quentin’s painful cry for the South at the end of this novel. It is, after all, from Quentin’s narrative of his discovery of black blood that we will discover his personal history with blacks.

Barbara Ladd explains that the difference between Mr. Compson’s and Quentin’s narratives can be attributed to the era in which they are born.

Jason and Quentin Compson are nevertheless quite different as speakers, and their stories of Bon—of the South’s (and of America’s) represses history—diverge, especially insofar as race figure into the stories, chiefly because for Faulkner they represent two distinct generations whose understanding of the United States and of their own relationship to the United States and to the history of slavery and race in the Deep South is very different. Although both imagine Bon as a creole possessed of the expected creole decadence and capable of corrupting the innocence of Sutpens, it is only in Quentin’s narrative that Bon is constructed as black. . . . For Jason, preoccupied with the scene of a colonizing and corrupting European empire and its impact on the American Deep South, the white creole Bon is representative of a retributive power perceived as culminating in his inheritance of the French architect’s ability to “curb the

dream of grim and castlelike magnificence” toward which Sutpen aims. . . .

It is, however, Quentin’s appropriation and deployment of this horror of confused and violent origins in his reconstruction of Charles Bon himself as a “white nigger” that is of greater significance. (236-39)

Ladd’s account clearly points out the difference in racial views of blacks (especially Creoles) between Mr. Compson, a man of the Reconstruction era, and Quentin, a man of the Redemption era born of a backlash against the Reconstruction, and successfully explains the difference in their narratives.

In this chapter, however, we wish to point out not only Quentin’s chronological background, but also his personal experience with blacks. It is no wonder to think that Quentin has some traumatic experiences with blacks, considering that the Redemption era is born from the backlash against the tolerance for blacks. As a starting point for this, allow us to quote again General Compson’s response to Sutpen, who tells that he abandoned his wife and son in Haiti because they did not fit his “design.”

Conscience? Conscience? Good God, man, what else did you expect? Didn’t the very affinity and instinct for misfortune of a man who had spent that much time in a monastery even, let alone one who had lived that many years as you lived them, tell you better than that? didn’t the dread and fear of females which you must have drawn in with the primary mammalian milk teach you better? . . . (213 emphasis mine)

This narrative is passed on to Quentin’s father by his grandfather, and then to

Quentin, and what is passed on is “the dread and fear of females which you must have drawn in with the primary mammalian milk teach.” General Compson asks Sutpen about the experience of the dread and fear of women taught through the primary mammalian milk, but Sutpen loses his mother soon after birth, and General Compson must hear about this. Thus, it could be interpreted rather as an introspective narrative of the “fear of the mother,” inherited by southern white males.

Although Quentin carries on this lineage, in *The Sound and the Fury*, Quentin’s mother, Mrs. Compson, claims that she is not a member of the Compsons but one of the Bascombs, and she believes that her only child, Quentin’s younger brother, Jason, is of Bascomb descent. Hence, Quentin has experienced the absence of his mother; for Quentin, the surrogate mother is his nanny, Dilsey, who provides him with food and directed his motherly affection. In light of this, it is possible for Quentin to discover “blackness” in the fear of women given to him through his mother’s milk.

And Dilsey is not the only nanny for Quentin. We must not forget his other nanny, Nancy, in “That Evening Sun,” which was first published in *American Mercury* in 1931 and later included in *These 13*, and *Collected Stories*. In the short story, Quentin recalls his childhood at the age of nine and depicts the horror of Nancy, a black woman who is pregnant with a white child, and the fear that her husband, Jesus, will attempt to take her life. Nancy, pregnant with a white child, causes a commotion one day and is thrown in jail. She then tries to commit suicide by hanging herself, and the jailer find her “hanging from the window, stark naked, her belly already swelling out a little, like a little balloon” (CS 273-74). This must be a grotesque primary experience in black female sexuality for Quentin.² When

Quentin finds “her apron swelling out” (274), she says to her husband that “[i]t never come off your vine” (274), and the father of her child is implicated to be Mr. Stovall, who is “the cashier in the bank and a deacon in the Baptist church” (273). The inference can be made that perhaps she is prostituted by Mr. Stovall for money and becomes pregnant as a result of their sexual intercourse because Nancy says to Mr. Stovall, “When you going to pay me, white man? When you going to pay me, white man? It’s been three times now since you paid me a cent—” (273) and asks for the payment. Nancy in “That Evening Sun” reminds us of Mr. Compson’s classifying women into three categories.

. . . a young man grown up and living in a milieu where the other sex is separated into three sharp divisions, separated (two of them) by a chasm which could be crossed but one time and in but one direction—ladies, women, females—the virgins whom gentlemen someday married, the courtesans to whom they went while on sabbaticals to the cities, the slave girls and women upon whom that first caste rested and to whom in certain cases it doubtless owned the very fact of its virginity; . . . (A4 87)

Nancy, who is prostituted with money, is truly “the courtesans” to protect the virginity of the southern ladies, and is also one of “the slave girls.” The cause of the pregnancy of these girl’s is “the entire male principle” (46-47) which is “a principle of power which allows them such sexual activity” and “grants men exclusive rights not only to select their own sexual partners but also to select the sexual partners of all women whose lives, and therefore sexualities, they control” (Urgo and Polk 28).³

It is Bon's mother, Eulalia, whom Quentin and Shreve create as the victim of this "male principle" in *Absalom, Absalom!*.

. . . his mother had emerged from a sojourn in limbo, from that state of blessed amnesia in which the weak senses can take refuge from the godless dark forces and powers which weak human flesh cannot stand, to wake pregnant, shrieking and screaming and thrashing, not against the ruthless agony of labor but in protest against the outrage of her swelling loins: that he (Bon) had been fathered on her not through that natural process but had been blotted onto and out of her body by the old infernal immortal male principle of all unbridled terror and darkness . . . (251 emphasis mine)

Although it is primarily Shreve who is the narrator of this section, Quentin, born in Mississippi, and Shreve, a Canadian, are "connected after a fashion in a sort of geographical transubstantiation by that Continental Trough, that River which runs not only through the physical land of which it is the geologic umbilical, not only runs through the spiritual lives of the beings within its scope, but is very Environment itself which laughs at degrees of latitude and temperature" (208),⁴ and they proceed with their narrative as one person. It must be noted, however, that we can see that Shreve just enjoys this Southern reenactment judging from his amused words, "Jesus, the South is fine, isn't it. It's better than the theatre, isn't it. It's better than Ben Hur, isn't it" (176). Shreve is a man who does not share Quentin's background and does not need to conform to southern norms. In the end, as Thadious Davis detects, while "Shreve's knowledge is a result of his melodramatic vision of the South," the South which Quentin holds in his mind

includes “Quentin’s of his long personal and historical experience of the South” (“The Signifying Abstraction” 95). After Quentin and Shreve finish telling the story of the Sutpen family’s past, the following conversation takes place:

“ . . . What is it? something you live and breathe in like air? a kind of vacuum filled with wraithlike and indomitable anger and pride and glory at and in happenings that occurred and ceased fifty years ago? a kind of entailed birthright father and son and father and son of never forgiving General Sherman, so that forever more as long as your children’s children produce children you wont be anything but a descendant of a long line of colonels killed in Pickett’s charge at Manassas?”

“Gettysburg,” Quentin said. “You cant understand it. You would have to be born there.” (289)

Shreve, after all, does not share the cultural and historical background of the South and cannot understand the South. On the other hand, Quentin inherited post-Civil War southern values of “never forgiving General Sherman” from his father. In light of this, it is natural to assume that the Eulalia created by Shreve as narrator reflects Shreve’s archetypal image of the South (which he himself does not understand) and the southern values that Quentin inherited from his father through his storytelling.

Let us begin discussing the fear of women that southern white men have. This fear is inherited from Quentin’s grandfather in the Compsons: the most misogynistic figure in *Absalom, Absalom!* would be Mr. Compson, who calls southern unmarried women “vampire[s].”

. . . it is as though she were living on the actual blood itself like a vampire, not with insatiability, certainly not with voracity, but with that serene and idle splendor of flowers arrogating to herself, because it fills her veins also, nourishment from the old blood that crosses uncharted seas and continents and battled wilderness hardships and lurking circumstances and fatalities, with tranquil disregard of whatever onerous carks to leisure and even peace which the preservation of it incurs upon what might be called the contemporary transmutable fountainhead who contrives to keep the crass foodbearing corpuscles sufficiently numerous and healthy in the stream.

(68 emphasis mine)

Given the analysis by Deborah Clarke that family blood is patriarchal blood, representing founders who “crossed uncharted seas and continents” and passed on a “transmutable fountainhead” to the next male descendant (*Robbing the Mother* 129), the problem facing southern men who devalue women by calling unmarried women “vampire[s]” is probably the obsession with having to produce their male offspring.

Quentin, who inherited this obsession, tells the story of how Eulalia became pregnant as if it were a violent rape, emphasizing masculinity. On the other hand, his description of the process of her pregnancy is thus “his mother had emerged from a sojourn in limbo, from that state of blessed amnesia in which the weak senses can take refuge from the godless dark forces and powers which weak human flesh cannot stand, to wake pregnant” (251). In short, Quentin cannot imagine the sexual intercourse. As already mentioned, Quentin directs his incestuous desire

toward his sister and realizes his sexual impotence through his inability to fire his gun in a duel with his sister's lover in *The Sound and the Fury*. And this creating of Eulalia also becomes a process of reaffirming his sexual impotence by not being able to imagine the sexual act. This pregnancy without sexual intercourse may be reminiscent of the Virgin Mary's virgin conception, but the religious and sacred image seems to be lost in the emphasis on the violent force that makes a woman pregnant. Rather, it resembles the folklore of the "the bosom serpent," which has been handed down throughout Europe since the Middle Ages, in which a woman swallows the egg of a snake, which grows inside her stomach and expands her belly. Tatsuru Uchida points out that this is a metaphor for pregnancy and childbirth, and an allegory for a woman's anxiety and aversion toward becoming a mother. Since pregnancy, childbirth, and child rearing should never be spoken of negatively, such sensitivities as regarding the man who impregnated her as a "snake" (a penis symbol) and hating the child in her womb as a "snake child" are suppressed by the woman herself (62-63). It can be said that Quentin represses this aversion of men because he thinks "all boy flesh that walked and breathed stemming from that one ambiguous eluded dark fatherhead" (240) when he creates Eulalia and Bon.

This could be paraphrased as Quentin's inability to imagine a female body. This "body-lessness" of the pregnant woman is associated with Nancy's belly "like a little balloon," Quentin's grotesque primary experience with black female sexuality.⁵ As already discussed, Quentin's fear of women is accompanied by black blood, and the swelling belly of black women (Nancy and Eulalia) are instilled by the "male principle" of white men.

Mr. Compson describes Bon's octoroon mistress as "the apotheosis of two doomed races presided over by its own victim—a woman with a face like a tragic

magnolia” (91 emphasis mine). He uses the magnolia to signify a mix-raced person who has white skin, and tells why and how such a woman is born:

Yes; a sparrow which God Himself neglected to mark. Because though men, white men, created her, God did not stop it. He planted the seed which brought her to flower—the white blood to give the shape and pigment of what the white man calls female beauty, to a female principle which existed, queenly and complete, in the hot equatorial groin of the world long before that white one of ours came down from trees and lost its hair and bleached out (92)

Mr. Compson’s narrative seems to be an apotheosis of mixed-race (white-skinned) women, but it also reveals the exploitation of black women’s bodies by white men as “the courtesans” or “the slave girls.” In the end, it is the “male principle” of white men that creates mixed-race women.

Mr. Compson’s image of “magnolia” for Bon’s octoroon is repeated by Quentin and Shreve (249), and then they describe Mississippi as “the magnolias in bloom” (262). The image of the magnolias in bloom throughout Mississippi represents a sign of miscegenation that is prevalent throughout Mississippi, and Mississippi itself is characterized by magnolias/miscegenation. The fact that the last surviving member of the Sutpen family is Jim Bond, who is of mixed blood, would also reinforce this. Finally, Shreve asks Quentin:

“Then I’ll tell you. I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere. Of course it wont quite be in our time and

of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again like the rabbits and the birds do, so they wont show up so sharp against the snow. But it will still be Jim Bond; and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings. Now I want you to tell me just one thing more. Why do you hate the South?" (302-03)

Shreve gives Quentin the possibility that the miscegenation is prevalent throughout the world as well as Mississippi. Moreover, this question puts Quentin in Henry's position, asking what he would do if Shreve, who is apparently white, were actually mixed-race like Bon (Suwabe 374-75). To this, Quentin responds with what could be described as a hysterical response to his trauma: "*I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!*" (303). Quentin's narrative of discovering black blood is also the process of knowing that his birthplace is characterized by miscegenation, and at the same time he realizes that the cause of miscegenation is the "male principle" of his inherited southern values, but when he notices the power of it, he recognizes his own sexual impotence. In other words, in the process of recounting the history of the South as represented by Sutpen, Quentin discovers an instability in his own masculinity/whiteness.

There is no doubt that it is the Civil War that destabilized southern whiteness in southern history, and Quentin is already aware of this at the beginning of *Absalom, Absalom!*.

He was a barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts still recovering, even forty-three years afterward, from the fever which had cured the

disease, waking from the fever without even knowing that it had been the fever itself which they had fought against and not the sickness, looking with stubborn recalcitrance backward beyond the fever and into the disease with actual regret, weak from the fever yet free of the disease and not even aware that the freedom was that of impotence. (7 emphasis mine)

There is a critics' consensus that "the fever" is "the Civil War," "the disease" is "the slave-based antebellum South," and "the freedom was that of impotence" means "the post-war South was rendered economically and socially powerless when the war forced it to give up slavery, upon which its economy was based" (Urgo and Polk 10). Growing up in the post-Civil War "impotent" South, which has lost its paternalistic control, Quentin's reconstruction of the Sutpen family leads him to recognize his own sexual impotence and fear of miscegenation.

3. Rosa: Deconstructing Whiteness

In the first chapter, readers hear Rosa's narrative which contains her subjectivity as a victim of Sutpen's patriarchy; Rosa recounts Sutpen as the very demon in hell; however, it is not a retelling of his story, but of her own until she rejects his marriage proposal and locks herself in the house. But after her narrative, the male narrators (Mr Compson, Quentin, and Shreve) always replace it with the story of Sutpen.

However, the male narrators are fully aware of their "creating [. . .] people who perhaps had never existed at all anywhere, who, shadows, were shadows not

of flesh and blood which had lived and died but shadows in turn of what were [. . .] quiet as the visible murmur of their vaporising breath” (243). In other words, they merely write a story that reflects their own southern ideology on something that has no substance like shadows.

On the other hand, Bon, whom they consider a “shadow,” certainly exists, and they have a letter to Judith as evidence of his existence. In that letter, Bon writes the following:

So that means that it is dawn again and that I must stop. Stop what? You will say. Why, thinking, remembering—remark that I do not say, hoping—; to become once more for a period without boundaries or location in time, mindless and irrational companion and inmate of a body which, even after four years, with a sort of dismal and incorruptible fidelity which is incredibly admirable to me, is still immersed and obliviously bemused in recollections of old peace and contentment the very names of whose scents and sounds I do not know that I remember (104)

Bon writes that his body is important, and that his body remembers the “old peace” that his own memory would have already forgotten. This reminds us of Rosa’s insistence: “the substance of remembering—sense, sight, smell” is “the muscles with which we see and hear and feel” (115). Those whose pasts are rewritten by white male narrators actually emphasize the importance of their own physical experiences with their own volition.

Rosa’s body is confined to the “house” until her father dies and for 43 years after her rejection of Sutpen’s marriage proposal. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, the “house”

is a “masculine” structure, whereas its interiors are characterized by “any feminized softness of window pane or door or mattress” (30). In other words, the house is patriarchy itself, and Rosa’s being confined to the house manifests the oppression of patriarchy, while at the same time, being in the “house,” whose inside is characterized by maternal softness, represents being in a pseudo-womb, and Rosa symbolizes a child waiting for being born.

After her father’s death, Rosa goes to Sutpen’s house because she keeps Ellen’s dying wish to protect Judith, but she is stopped at the door by Clytie, the child of Sutpen and his black slave woman, and experiences a hugely significant physical contact.

‘Dont you go up there, Rosa.’ . . . Because there is something in the touch of flesh with flesh which abrogates, cuts sharp and straight across the devious intricate channels of decorous ordering, which enemies as well as lovers know because it makes them both:—touch and touch of that which is the citadel of the central I-Am’s private own: not spirit, soul; . . . But let flesh touch with flesh, and watch the fall of all the eggshell shibboleth of caste and color too. Yes, I stopped dead—no woman’s hand, no negro’s hand, but bitted bridle-curb to check and guide the furious and unbending will—I crying not to her, to it; speaking to it through the negro, the woman, only because of the shock which was not yet outrage because it would be terror soon, expecting and receiving no answer because we both knew it was not to her I spoke: ‘Take you hand off me, nigger!’ (111-12 emphasis mine)

When Rosa’s body comes into contact with Clytie’s, the racial barriers that had

existed until then disappear, and Rosa exclaims, “*And you too? And you too, sister, sister?*” (112-13). At that time, Rosa and Clytie are united as sisters transcending race and blood. As for this scene, Gwin highlights that Rosa calls Clytie “nigger,” and makes an accusation because “she (Rosa) could not read the possibility of cross-racial female relationships which would dismantle white patriarchal constructs of racial interaction in the slaveholding South” (158). However, Ikuko Fujihira takes the opposite position to Gwin, and insists that Rosa confirms her own racial consciousness when Clytie calls her “Rosa” as an equal, while Rosa calls the mixed-race Clytie “nigger.” Rosa’s physical contact with Clytie is an opportunity for her to struggle with such self-consciousness, and as she thinks about this experience over and over again, Rosa is forced into a position of distress, questioning white supremacy (*Gensou* 372-73).

In this thesis, we take the position in favor of Fujihira. Given the condition of marriage Sutpen gives to Rosa (“if it was a boy they would marry” [144]),⁶ it is clear that she cannot accept patriarchal exploitation of women by southern men; therefore she will not be a part of Sutpen’s “design.” Furthermore, she must realize that Sutpen exploits blacks as well as women. While Rosa refers to Clytie with racist words (“*wild: half untamed black, half Sutpen blood*”), she recognized Sutpen’s dominant character toward blacks (“*if ‘untamed’ be synonymous with ‘wild’ then ‘Sutpen’ is the silent unsleeping viciousness of the tamer’s lash*” [126]). If she does not experience an encounter with the black, Clytie, and does not question the white supremacy in the South, then she will never truly realize the sinfulness of Sutpen’s “design.”

Rosa refuses to be taken in by the southern patriarchy by rejecting Sutpen’s proposal, but it is the southern patriarchy that sees her as a spinster, and she is

once again trapped in a house in which she continues to be in the conflict for forty-three years.

Unlike southern ladies, Rosa says her sexual desire and her pregnancy desire clearly, “[b]ut root and urge I do insist and claim, for had I not heired too from all the unsistered Eves since the Snake? Yes, urge I do: warped chrysalis of what blind perfect seed: for who shall say what gnarled forgotten root might not bloom yet with some globed concentrate more globed and concentrate and heady-perfect” (115-16), but her image of pregnancy is one in which she herself becomes a pregnant woman and at the same time she herself becomes the fetus.

I was fourteen then, fourteen in years if they could have been called years while in that unpaced corridor which I called childhood, which was not living but rather some projection of the lightless womb itself; I gestate and complete, not aged, just overdue because of some caesarean lack, some cold head-nuzzling forceps of the savage time which should have torn me free, I waited not for light but for that doom which we call female victory which is: endure and then endure, without rhyme or reason or hope of reward—and then endure; . . . (116 emphasis mine)

Her description, “I gestate and complete, not aged” can be associated with the power of keeping her virginity despite her sexual desire and ability to be pregnant. What keeps her a virgin is the “male principle” inherited from the southern patriarchy that kept her aunt a virgin until she was thirty-five years old (46-47), and she is locked in a symbolic “house.” Simultaneously, the “house” is “the lightless womb,” in which she is a child, waiting to be pulled out, and enduring.

Rosa discovers that someone is hiding in the Sutpen mansion and goes there with Quentin to see who it is. The door of the house is locked, but Rosa gives Quentin a hatchet and orders him to break it open. At the door he opens, Clytie stops her again, but Rosa beats Clytie “with a full-armed blow like a man would have” (295). This is a metaphor for Rosa transcending her sexuality and becoming a “man” herself, breaking her own virginity membrane symbolized by the door of the house, and rescuing herself from the “house,” which symbolizes the southern patriarchy.

At first glance, beating up Clytie is seen as defeating the black, which gives the racist impression. However, Clytie is the one who makes Rosa aware of her racial consciousness and makes her question white supremacy. Moreover, Rosa describes Clytie as having a “*Sutpen coffee-colored face*” (109), and she depicts Clytie’s stopping her at the door as “*it was as though it had not been she who spoke but the house itself that said the words—the house which he had built, which some suppuration of himself had created about him as the sweat of his body might have created, produced some (even if invisible) cocoon-like and complementary shell*” (111). In other words, Rosa always recognizes in Clytie the image of Sutpen, and Clytie, like “the house which he had built,” symbolizes the southern patriarchy that has always kept Rosa in the house. It is ironic that Clytie, a mixed-race woman, is herself a victim of Sutpen’s “male principle” by beating up Clytie, Sutpen’s surrogate, Rosa deconstructs Sutpen’s whiteness. It is a counterpunch to the southern patriarchy that oppresses race and sex.

This chapter clarifies Sutpen in the process of constructing Southern

whiteness; and Quentin in the process of reconstructing the Sutpen story in which he confronts his own instability of his masculinity/whiteness; and Rosa deconstructing the patriarchy and white supremacy Sutpen constructed. These polyphonic narratives of the construction, reconstruction, and deconstruction of whiteness create dynamics in *Absalom, Absalom!*, which makes this work Faulkner's masterpiece.

Absalom, Absalom! spanning more than 100 years (1807-1909), places the Civil War right in the middle, and it is fair to say that it is the story of southern whiteness, which was to be greatly shaken by that defeat. Faulkner gives Rosa, a white woman, the role of shattering that southern whiteness in this novel, but it seems that he creates few female characters who stand against authority after this novel. Rather, Faulkner's interest in the dilemma of the southern white men seems to be enhanced.

Notes

1. Suwabe disagrees with Brooks' argument that Sutpen is a Yankee because "to think of Sutpen as a 'Yankee' seems to diminish the thematic importance of the 'curse' of the Old South, and furthermore, it seems to significantly reduce the persuasiveness of that 'curse' haunting even Quentin in the North and causing pain to him" (383).
2. In "That Evening Sun," Quentin's recollections often include descriptions of his brother Jason's fear of the dark. The word "dark" is, of course, associated with blacks, and it is possible that this recurring description of fear of darkness is the

reflection of Quentin's latent fear of blacks.

3. Sutpen sees "one of the older girls (Sutpen's sisters) who had left the cabin unmarried was still unmarried when they finally stopped, though she had become a mother before they lost the last blue mountain range" (181) when he moves to Tidewater. He has an older sister who is a victim of that male principle in his childhood.
4. Urgo and Polk explain that "[a]s an environmental fact, the Mississippi River affects consciousness, as do climate, landscape, and other factors. This shared environment is what makes it possible for Quentin and Shreve to connect through geographical transubstantiation" (134).
5. It can be noted that Mr. Compson also describes Eulalia's son Bon as "substanceless" (74) and says that Charles Etienne, Bon's son, is made "without agency of man or agony of woman" (159).
6. It should be noted that the terms of this marriage are Shreve's creation (Urgo and Polk 79-80), but given that Sutpen's "design" includes a white family, this aspect of Shreve's imagination is likely.

Chapter 4

Autonomy of Blacks and Failure of Performing Whiteness in *Go Down, Moses*

With *Light in August* in 1932 and *Absalom, Absalom!* in 1936, Faulkner exposed the racial structure of the South in which he was born, but his next work on the primary theme of race had to wait until *Go Down, Moses* in 1942, which is regarded as the ideological high point of Faulkner's creative period. *Go Down, Moses* consists of seven stories ("Was," "The Fire and the Hearth," "Pantaloon in Black," "The Old People," "The Bear," "Delta Autumn," and "Go Down, Moses"), and the novel's origin story is "Lion," a predecessor to "The Bear," published in *Harper's* magazine in 1935. Around 1939, writing began in earnest, and the book was published in 1942 under the title *Go Down, Moses and Other Stories*. Faulkner took objection to the title of the first edition and insisted on its consistency as a novel; famously, he requested that the reprint in 1949 remove "*and Other Stories*." The novel is also well known to be dedicated to Caroline Barr, a black woman who served the Faulkner family for many years, who died in 1940.

Go Down, Moses has long been read as the story of the redemption of Isaac McCaslin (Ike), who reads from the ledger of the McCaslin plantation that his grandfather Carothers McCaslin (Old Carothers), is guilty of miscegenation and incest, and renounces the land he is to inherit.

Meanwhile, Carothers Edmonds (Roth), the heir to the land that Ike abandoned, is discovered in "Delta Autumn" to have a child with a fair-skinned black woman. When Ike learns of the child's existence, he laments the repetition of Old Carothers' sins of miscegenation. That is why Roth has been interpreted as a southern white male of the type of Old Carothers and Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom*,

Absalom!. However, an interesting dialogue takes place regarding his behavior:

The third speaker was still leaning forward a little over the table, looking at Edmonds. "Meaning that it's only because folks happen to be watching him that a man behaves at all," he said. "Is that it?"

"Yes," Edmonds said. (329)

Given that race is always constructed through performance in Faulkner's works, as we have discussed in this thesis, Roth's behavior as a white plantation owner who believes that people behave properly because of being watched by those around them is a performance in accordance with the southern norm. Roth's attitude with a feeling of resignation makes it possible to read the oppression within the southern norm.

The autonomy of Lucas Beauchamp, the black man who is a unique character in *Go Down, Moses*, has also been a point of discussion. His autonomy is based on the background that Lucas is a male descendant of Old Carothers. On the other hand, Roth is a descendant of Old Carothers' daughter, and is forced to acknowledge that Lucas is a respectable human being. Therefore, he holds a feeling of inferiority by the racial inversion between him and Lucas. In light of these facts, Roth's behavior is a performance to construct his whiteness, in which we can read his racial anxiety. It is Ike who interprets Roth as a white plantation owner who repeats the sins of miscegenation of Old Carothers, and the image of such a plantation owner is merely given to him by Ike; that is, we have seen the image of Roth through Ike's viewpoint. If this is the case, a new interpretation can be seen by examining Roth's instability as a white person. Karl F. Zender points out the

similarities between Roth and Faulkner as follows:

Like Faulkner at the time he was writing the novel, Roth Edmonds is a man in his early forties. He lives on a plantation that bears approximately the same geographical relation to the fictional Jefferson as does Greenfield Farm—purchased by Faulkner in 1938—to the town of Oxford. By all accounts, his relations with Lucas Beauchamp and his wife Molly resemble, in tone if not in detail, those that Faulkner had with Ned Barnett, a long-time family servant, and Caroline Barr, the “Mammy” of the novel’s dedication. (65)

Zender points out similarities between Faulkner and Roth in their age, the geography of their plantations, and their relationship with their black nanny (Faulkner with Caroline Barr, and Roth with Molly Beauchamp, Lucas’ wife). It would seem, therefore, that Roth reflects Faulkner’s racial ideology to some degree. Nonetheless, Roth has never been treated as a center of criticism.

And when we connect the elements of racial anxiety and performance, we may recall one of the most racist entertainments in American history, that played a major role in the construction of whiteness in America: the minstrel show. This image can be read from “Pantaloon in Black,” the only story that has no character connections to the other works in *Go Down, Moses*. This novel is often the subject of debate for its narrative unity, and “Pantaloon in Black,” which has no characters from the other six stories, may be considered as heterogenous. However, in this chapter, rather than looking at the unity of this narrative, we would like to see this story as providing an interesting perspective on the white/black theme of the work

as a whole. In the title “Pantaloön in Black,” the word of “Pantaloön” alludes to its comedic elements and “in Black” to the wearing of blackface in the minstrel show, and there are many elements of the minstrel show in this story. Despite the comedic elements of “Pantaloön,” the first chapter of the story is a tale of grief for Rider, a black man who loses his wife, Mannie. However, in the second part of the story, a white sheriff’s deputy recounts the story of Rider, who kills a white man and is lynched because of his grief over the loss of his beloved wife, in accordance with black stereotypes; this is very similar to the composition of the minstrel show. And it can be said that this minstrel-like white consciousness is an important theme in *Go Down, Moses*.

In this chapter, we first examine Ike’s renunciation of his inheritance rights to land and his whiteness. Then, it shows Lucas as an autonomous black man, and then reads Roth Edmonds’ failure to perform as a southern father. Furthermore, after reviewing the function of the minstrel show, we look closely at his performance as a southern white plantation owner, and discover his minstrel-like white consciousness and his racial instability in the complex feelings toward blacks that lurk in his conscious. In *Go Down, Moses*, which is regarded as an ideological high point in Faulkner’s works, this chapter presents a new interpretation and position of Roth, which has not been examined enough.

1. Ike and Blacks Who Makes Him Confused

First, we need to consider Ike’s whiteness. He is a son of Theophilus McCaslin (Uncle Buck) and is descended from the male line of Old Carothers. He participates

in hunting from an early age, and kills a buck by himself for the first time at the age of twelve. His mentor, Sam Fathers, puts his hands inside the buck's guts and smears its blood on Ike's face, and Ike experiences this as one initiation ritual. Also, at the age of sixteen, Ike goes into the woods to hunt Old Ben, the legendary big bear, and witnesses the deaths of Old Ben and Sam Fathers.

Sam Fathers is the son of Chickasaw Indian chief, Ikkemotubbe, and a one-fourth mixed-race black slave woman, and as the son of an Indian chief, he appears as the embodiment of the natural spirit. In Faulkner's works, Indians are positioned as a noble being connected to the land, the original owners of the land. Furthermore, in writing about Southern society, Faulkner presents the land as the antithesis of Northern domination, an idealization of old things in antebellum South (*Jiten* 306).¹ The death of Sam Fathers, the embodiment of nature, is superimposed on the encroachment on the land by civilization represented by railroads, but the death further leads Ike back to the primitive forest. It is as if he is returning to the southern myth before the Civil War, and by hunting, he unconsciously internalizes his own privileged whiteness.

Furthermore, as far as his masculinity is concerned, he is taught by Sam Fathers to "be a man" by killing a "buck." "Buck" is also his father's nickname, and it is possible to think that he avoids the castration from his father by killing his pseudo father. Ike, who has taken masculinity for granted since his childhood, shows his disappointment at Roth who, even in his old age, only takes "doe."

In the same year that Old Ben is hunted, Ike discovers a ledger book in a commissary run by the McCaslin plantation, in which he discovers the suicide of a slave woman, Eunice, and sins of incest and miscegenation of his respected grandfather, Old Carothers. The first thing he sees is the handwriting of his father,

Theophilus McCaslin (Uncle Buck). In that ledger, he writes the records of slaveholding as follows:

Eunice Bought by Father in New Orleans 1807 \$650. dollars. Married to Thucydus 1809 Drownd in Crick Cristmas Day 1832 (253)

Then, Ike finds the handwriting of his uncle, his father's twin brother, Amodeus McCaslin (Uncle Buddy).

June 21th 1833 Drownd herself

Next, his father's handwriting:

23 Jun 1833 Who in hell ever heard of a nigger drowning himself

Below the sentence, Ike finds his uncle's handwriting again:

Aug 13th 1833 Drownd herself (254)

Looking at the ledger, Ike thinks as follows: "he leaned above the yellow page and thought not Why drowned herself, but thinking what he believed his father had thought when he found his brother's first comment: Why did Uncle Buddy think she had drowned herself?" (255). *Go Down, Moses'* tragedy has its roots in Eunice's suicide, but Eunice herself is not allowed to speak about it. It is the words of Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy left in the ledger that speak the tragedy. Although they are

often equated because they are twins, these twins are clearly differentiated: while Uncle Buck gains a son and joins an organization directed by a former slave trader, Uncle Buddy is responsible for all household chores before Uncle Buck's marriage, and after his brother's marriage, continues to live in the small house in which he and Uncle Buck had lived, and whose handwriting is attributed to the person "who should have been a woman to begin with" (259): he is clearly out of the norms of the patriarchal South. When Uncle Buddy notes that "drownd herself," Uncle Buck replies that he has never heard of a black man committing suicide; this reply suggests the southern patriarchy in which blacks are property and have no "self" (Clerico 14), but Uncle Buddy recognizes Eunice's humanity and subject. Ike wonders why Uncle Buddy would say such a thing, and does not understand Uncle Buddy's intentions. Ike internalizes the idea that a slave black woman does not have her "subject," and Ike's failure to understand Eunice's subject to choose to die on her own confuses him. Furthermore, the note left in the ledger by Uncle Buddy, who does not follow the southern patriarchy and is thought to have supposed to have been born a woman, acknowledges Eunice's "subject," further confuses Ike.

Ike continues reading the following two records.

Tomasina called Tomy Daughter of Thucydus @ Eunice

Born 1810 dide in Child bed June 1833 and Burd. Yr stars fell

Turl Son of Thucydus @ Eunice Tomy born Jun 1833 yr stars fell Fathers will (255)

Tomasina, who is described as the daughter of Eunice and her husband, Thucydus,

dies as soon as she gives birth to her son, Tomey's Turl, in 1833. Knowing that Eunice commits suicide by entering the river on Christmas Day in 1832, and discovering "Fathers will," that is, Old Carothers' legacy in Tomasina's son's record, Ike understands that the reason of Eunice's suicide is that he sexually exploits and impregnates Tomasina, although she is in fact Old Carothers' biological daughter, and that Tomasina's son is the child of Old Carothers. Ike then considers the following:

*So I reckon that was cheaper than saying My son to a nigger he thought.
Even if My son wasn't but just two words. But there must have been love
he thought. Some sort of love. Even what he would have called love: not
just an afternoon's or a night's spittoon (256)*

Ike discovers his grandfather's sins of incest and miscegenation. While he views critically the sins and denies his inheritance rights to the McCaslin plantation, he believes that "there must have been love" between the Old Carothers and Tomasina. However, the relationship between Tomasina and Old Carothers, a black slave woman and a white plantation owner who is the "father" of the South, reflects "power relations manifested in coercion, not love" (Davis, *Game of Property* 98). Ike, who is perplexed by Eunice's subjectivity and sees love in the relationship between Old Carothers and Tomasina, which reflects power relations, seems to embody white male romanticism.

Ike laments this repeated transgression between Roth and his black mistress. She is the granddaughter of Lucas Beauchamp's brother, James, and they share the same Old Carothers ancestry. However, it is questionable whether the

relationship between Roth and her mistress can be called incestuous compared to Faulkner's previous incestuous relationships between a brother and a sister, such as in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!*, or between a father and a daughter: Old Carothers and Tomasina. After all, the "sin" that Ike considered important is miscegenation, in which we can see Ike's southern whiteness.

Ike's confusion is further illustrated when Lucas' sister, Fonsiba's husband visits McCaslin Edmonds (Roth's grandfather), who is Ike's seventeen-year-old cousin and foster father, to ask his permission to marry her. Ike observes the black man as follows:

. . . the stranger, taller than McCaslin and wearing better clothes than McCaslin and most of the other white men the boy knew habitually wore, who entered the room like a white man and stood in it like a white man, as though he had let McCaslin precede him into it not because McCaslin's skin was white but simply because McCaslin lived there and knew the way, and who talked like a white man too, looking at him past McCaslin's shoulder rapidly and keenly once and then no more, without further interest, as a mature and contained white man not impatient but just pressed for time might have looked. (260-61)

Fonsiba's husband consistently looks "white," and he has also learned to behave more like a white person than most white people. The fact that a black man looks white is a threat to the color line in the South. The white-like appearance of a black would also remind one of the goods sold at the commissary in which Ike finds the ledger.

. . . the square, galleried, wooden building squatting like a portent above the fields whose laborers it still held in thrall '65 or no and placarded over with advertisements for snuff and cures for chills and salves and potions manufactured and sold by white men to bleach the pigment and straighten the hair of negroes that they might resemble the very race which for two hundred years had held them in bondage and from which for another hundred years not even bloody civil war would have set them completely free (242)

The narrator is critical of the blacks' attempts to resemble the whites who have oppressed them, but from the description of "potions manufactured and sold by white men to bleach the pigment and straighten the hair of negroes," we can imagine that after the end of the Civil War, the plantations alone can no longer support their livelihoods, and that they start to sell these goods. The products are the result of the development of scientific civilization which southern whites believe has eroded nature, and embody a new economic system. These goods will make blacks look more like whites, which would further stir racial anxiety among whites.

Fonsiba later marries her husband and starts to live in his farm in Arkansas. Her father, Tomey's Turl, who is to inherit the Old Carothers' legacy, refuses to accept it; hence, it is distributed to his children, of whom Fonsiba is one of the successive beneficiaries. Ike goes to their farm to hand over the inheritance, and he finds Fonsiba's husband, still as calm and composed as before; Ike feels "permeant, clinging to the man's very clothing exuding from his skin itself, that

rank stink of baseless and imbecile delusion, that boundless rapacity and folly, of the carpet-bagger followers of victorious armies” (264-65 emphasis mine). Fonsiba’s husband, born and raised in the North, is certainly a migrant from the North to the South, but it is strange for Ike to get “the carpet-bagger” atmosphere from a black man whose father was once a slave (261). Ike can’t help but feel the black man is like a white man because of his white man-like attitude. But Ike cries out as if he resists his contradiction.

This whole land, the whole South, is cursed, and all of us who derive from it, whom it ever suckled, white and black both, lie under the curse? Granted that my people brought the curse onto the land: maybe for that reason their descendants alone can—not resist it, not combat it—maybe just endure and outlast it until the curse is lifted. Then your people’s turn will come because we have forfeited ours. But not now. Not yet. Dont you see? (265 emphasis mine)

Ike, who says that the South is a cursed land, speaks critically about “my people” bringing that curse into the South, but also insists that he is white and that his race carries the curse (this reminds us of Joanna’s insistence on carrying the curse of blackness and her whiteness). On the other hand, he emphasizes Fonsiba’s husband as “your people,” that is, the racial otherness of blackness. Ike is able to become a southern white man by carrying that curse. His saying that the curse should not yet be lifted reveals his internalized southern whiteness and his confusion in the face of Fonsiba’s husband, an entity that shakes the boundaries of race. Moreover, the confusion is further enhanced by the black man’s reply: “The

curse you whites brought into this land has been lifted. It has been voided and discharged. We are seeing a new era, an era dedicated, as our founders intended it, to freedom, liberty and equality for all, to which this country will be the new Canaan—" (265).

Ike also sees that the farm in Arkansas is desolate due to the harsh winter conditions, and he thinks that Fonsiba and her family will not be able to make a living; hence, he thinks the money (Old Carothers' legacy) will help them, and tries to give it to Fonsiba, but she says, "I'm free" (267) and refuses to accept it. Fonsiba's freedom from the dominant environment of the white South, and Ike again sees the subjectivity of black women.²

Ike has a father and uncle who freed black slaves before the Civil War and exhibits progressive white behavior, such as renouncing inheritance of land due to his grandfather's sins of incest and miscegenation. However, he cannot allow miscegenation and has inherited the traditional white male attitude. As a result, he is bewildered by black subjectivity and the crossing of the color line by blacks. Meanwhile, he seems to see this as less of a threat to his whiteness than do the Edmonds, the matrilineal family of the McCaslin, and other white workers. He is born in a privileged environment as a member of the old southern family, and he has a male lineage. Moreover, he embodies the romanticism of pre-Civil War southern myth by returning to the primitive woods by hunting. While he understands the sins of his "father," Old Carothers, in that southern myth, he should know better the greatness of him. Ike insists that to be good men depends on their circumstance or luck: "There are good men everywhere, at all times. Most men are. Some are just unlucky, because most men are a little better than their circumstances give them a chance to be. And I've known some that even the

circumstances couldn't stop" (329). Ike acquires his privileged whiteness through the circumstances and luck of his family lineage, and it is rather because of this awareness that he is a member of the good men, he suffers from the "sins" that lurks in his privileged white lineage.

Carl J. Dimitri, using Isaiah Berlin's concept of "negative liberty," which refers to freedom from outside interference, explains the reason for Ike's renunciation of his inheritance as follows:

In this way, Isaac works to escape a society fraught with racism, greed, and lust by retreating into himself, renouncing his claim to the McCaslin inheritance, adopting ascetic life principles, refusing the money and land, and allowing his marriage to dissolve. (16)

Dimitri critically analyzes Ike's renunciation of his inheritance as a passive attempt to escape from various problems in society. Just after Ike looks at the ledger and learns of his ancestor's sins, he tries to atone for them by passing that Old Carothers' estate into the hands of Tomey's Turl's children. In the process, however, he encounters the subjectivity of blacks, such as Fonsiba's husband, and he is unable to understand it within the norms of their own internalized southern whiteness. Hence, Ike chooses to escape from society. Insofar as he renounces his inheritance, he can turn his eyes away from society and still perform as if he is opposing the racial problems.

In "Delta Autumn," Ike is an old man of nearly eighty, and his confusion is again evident when he is confronted by Roth's mistress. A white-skinned black woman appears before Ike wearing "a man's hat and a man's slicker and rubber

boots” (339). When Ike discovers that she is James’ granddaughter, he rejects her as a disruptor of race and gender: “That’s right. Go back North. Marry: a man in your own race. That’s the only salvation for you—for a while yet, maybe a long while yet. We will have to wait. Marry a black man. You are young, handsome, almost white” (345). The conversation between Ike and her reveals the whiteness of Ike, who does not tolerate miscegenation and can only place the value of female beauty on “white,” even for women who he identifies as black, and the rejection of blacks supported by pre-Civil War southern white male values. Even though it has been nearly sixty years since his encounter with Fonsiba’s husband, he continues to retain his previous values by fleeing society.

2. Lucas’ Autonomy and Roth’s Anxiety of Whiteness

Thadious M. Davis points to Roth’s whiteness as the moment of “shame” he felt while sleeping with Henry, Lucas’ son, when he is eight years old as the scene in which Roth becomes aware of the racial segregation (*Games of Property* 203). Roth also inherits “the old curse of his fathers” (107) in that moment, realizing that he must perform like his “father” in the dark days of Mississippi: “somehow and somewhere back in that dark time in Mississippi when a man had to be hard and ruthless to get a patrimony to leave behind himself and strong and hard to keep it until he could bequeath it” (103). As mentioned in Introduction, it is the act of performatively constructing the subject through what Judith Butler calls the repetition of normative acts, and in doing so, southern white masculinity is created. Roth, however, experiences instability of his whiteness in the process.

In “The Fire and the Hearth,” the narrator describes Lucas and Roth as follows:

But they were the old days, the old time, and better men than these; Lucas himself made one, himself and old Cass coevals in more than spirit even, the analogy only the closer for its paradox:—old Cass a McCaslin only on his mother’s side and so bearing his father’s name though he possessed the land and its benefits and responsibilities; Lucas a McCaslin on his father’s side though bearing his mother’s name and possessing the use and benefit of the land with none of the responsibilities. Better men:—old Cass, a McCaslin only by the distaff yet having enough of old Carothers McCaslin in his veins to take the land from the true heir simply because he wanted it and knew he could use it better and was strong enough, ruthless enough, old Carothers McCaslin enough; even Zack, who was not the man his father had been but whom Lucas, the man McCaslin, had accepted as his peer to the extent of intending to kill him, right up to the point when, his affairs all set in order like those of a man preparing for death, he stood over the sleeping white man that morning forty-three years ago with the naked razor in his hand. (43-44 emphasis mine)

It is emphasized that Lucas is a male lineage of Old Carothers, while Edmonds is a female lineage. Furthermore, it is shown that the closer generation a man is to Old Carothers, the better he is: Lucas is only three generations from Old Carothers, while Roth is not only female lineage, but five generations from Old Carothers. The narrator says that Roth’s grandfather, Cass, is held in high regard,

and that Cass's son, Zack Edmonds, even is acknowledged as Lucas' peer, albeit inferior to his father. The narrator speaks from the perspective that as the blood of Old Carothers fades, its greatness is lost, and this is a view shared by Lucas as well. We can see the limits of Faulkner's imagination in Lucas that he could not envision an autonomous black image or mode of behavior outside the southern white norm because Lucas looks to his grandfather Old Carothers, a southern white aristocrat, for autonomy and masculinity, but as Dimitri suggests, it can be said that "it is also the case that Faulkner made an attempt to endow a black character with a muscular drive for autonomy and a substantial amount of self-respect" (18). Despite the perspective of the southern patriarchy, this narrator sees Lucas, a black man, as the better man. In the scene in which he tells the story of his duel with Zack, the narrator lets Lucas take the initiative in telling the story because it is Lucas who recognizes Zack as his peer. It should be noticed that Lucas is holding a "razor" in his hand at the duel. Faulkner has used a razor as a symbol of blackness, but with the appearance of Lucas, he allows blackness and a man to exist simultaneously in one person. In the duel with Zack, Lucas says: "I'm a nigger . . . But I'm a man too. I'm more than just a man. The same thing made my pappy that made your grandmaw. I'm going to take her back" (46).

The Edmonds, who inherit the land despite being of female lineage, are called "usurpers" (110) by Zack. For this reason, Zack accepts that Lucas calls him without using "mister," and Roth also inherits the complex white consciousness by recognizing "that instant when the child realises with both grief and outrage that parent antedates it, has experienced things, shames and triumphs both, in which it can have no part" (111).

Eventually Roth learns about the duel between his father and Lucas, and

believes that Lucas has defeated his father, and the recognition enhances his unstable white consciousness. Roth is aware that he is of female lineage and that he is of a generation far from the Old Carothers.

Now the white man (Roth) leaned in the window, looking at the impenetrable face with its definite strain of white blood, the same blood which ran in his own veins, which had not only come to the negro through male descent while it had come to him from a woman, but had reached the negro a generation sooner—a face composed, inscrutable, even a little haughty, shaped even in expression in the pattern of his great-grandfather McCaslin's face. (68 emphasis mine)

Roth sees the face of Old Carothers in the face of Lucas. In other words, because Roth also internalizes southern patriarchy and white supremacy, he attaches importance to the Old Carothers' lineage. However, precisely because of this, he must feel inferior to Lucas, who is supposed to be his racial other. As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this thesis when dealing with *Light in August*, the reader assumes that the characters in novels are white, because the whites are not specified as to their race. In this scene, however, Roth is described as "the white man," and his contrast with Lucas makes him a racialized being. This is what gives his whiteness instability.

Lucas is not afraid to assert that Roth is inferior to Edmonds' fathers: "And he would say, if it really came to that—and it probably would, since he, Lucas, would affirm to his death that Zack Edmonds had been as much better a man than his son as old Cass Edmonds had been than both of them together" (42). A dispute

also arises between Lucas and Roth, which stems from Lucas taking mortgages on Roth's female donkey without Roth's permission in order to purchase a metal detector to search for gold coins. But, it does not seem to make Roth any more of a peer to Lucas than the duel between Lucas and Zack, and it is the female donkey they are fighting over. And not only is there no gun between them, but Roth does not even get to face Lucas. Roth inherits from his father the racial inversion with Lucas, and while he behaves like a white plantation owner, Lucas would not allow it. His white behavior is always accompanied by a sense of inferiority.

The rivalry between Roth and Lucas reveals a more complex set of Roth's feelings. Since his mother, who dies soon after giving birth to Roth, seems as if she never existed (45), Molly is the only mother he remembers, whose husband, Lucas, he sees more often than his own father. And Roth is said to have preferred the fireplace in the Beauchamp home to his own. Lucas and Molly have never extinguished a fire in the fireplace since they married, and the custom is carried on by Rider and Mannie in "Pantaloone in Black," in which the fireplace is depicted as a symbol of family. Roth's familial attachment to the Beauchamps is evident, but he cannot call Lucas his father, despite the fact that he is the husband of his virtual mother (Molly) and the man who defeated his own father.

Lucas is an autonomous black man, and it is also clear from Roth's inward acknowledgment that Lucas is a respectable person. Philip M. Weinstein points to his autonomy, and claims "the subject is not self-generative but rather produced, and (according to recent claims of French critical theory) it is produced in and by *language*" (66). In the short story "A Point of Law," the predecessor to "The Fire and the Hearth," Lucas' words when his bootlegging equipment is about to be discovered by the whites are "Git the ax!" Luke said. 'Bust it! We ain't got time to

git it away” (*US* 216 emphasis mine), showing a black accent. But when we move on to *Go Down, Moses*, his black accent disappears: “Get the axe!” he said. ‘But it! We ain’t got time to get it away” (61 emphasis mine).

However, this chapter focuses on the white men’s “repetition” of Lucas’ words in *Go Down, Moses*. The white deputy and Roth later recount the time when his bootlegging equipment is about to be discovered, and the deputy says, “Git the axe and bust it! Git the axe and bust it!” (63 emphasis mine), using a black accent that should have disappeared from Lucas’ words, and repeating the same phrase twice to recreate the scene in a comical manner. We may find an aspect of the minstrel show in the act of telling a black story by a white person using a blackened language. Before going into an analysis of this scene, we should identify the minstrel element in this novel.

3. The Minstrel Show and Desires for Black

As mentioned before, the title “Pantaloon in Black” evokes the image of the minstrel show. The minstrel show consisted of songs and skits was a popular show from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. It was popular because white comedians painted their faces black and imitated the movements, speech, and accents of black people. However, the comedic performance of black stereotypes was based on racism, and after the civil rights movement in the 1960s, it is recognized as promoting racial discrimination.

In *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, Huston A. Baker, Jr. suggests the concept of mask that “a group of people [. . .] holds to be a valued repository

of spirit,” and claims that “minstrel mask” is a “space of habitation not only for repressed spirits of sexuality, lucid play, id satisfaction, castration anxiety, and a mirror stage of development, but also for that deep-seated denial of the indisputable humanity of inhabitants of and descendants from the continent of Africa”(17), and he continues:

By misappropriating elements from everyday black use, from the vernacular—the commonplace and commonly sensible in Afro-American life—and fashioning them into a comic array, a mask of *selective* memory, white America fashioned a *device* that only “counts” in relationship to the Afro-American systems of sense from which it is appropriated. (21)

The white actors in the minstrel show differentiates blacks from whites by stereotypically acting out black language and daily life. In other words, putting on the minstrel mask means drawing a line between white and black and wearing black stereotypes in order to secure their identity as white people.

Furthermore, in *The Wages of Whiteness*, which points to whiteness in the consciousness of the minstrel show among working class whites, David R. Roediger argues the following two things:

At the same time, blackface minstrels were the first self-consciously *white* entertainers in the world. The simple physical disguise—and elaborate cultural disguise—of blacking up served to emphasize that those on stage were really white and that whiteness really mattered.

(117)

Moreover, the racial logic of minstrelsy was replicated in framing discussions of the second most commonly addressed issue, women's rights. Minstrels claimed the right to turn Black for as long as they desired and to reappear as white. They forcefully denied Blacks that right, parodying fancy dress, 'l'arned' speech, temperance and religion among Blacks as ridiculous attempts to 'act white'. . . . Similarly, minstrels claimed the right to be female for as long as they liked and then to reappear as male. But they necessarily denied women the same right to cross gender boundaries. (125)

As already noted in the first chapter of this thesis, the rapid increase in immigration to the United States after the 1840s created a class of whites with Anglo-Saxons at the top, and Celts and others were considered as the racial other. Roediger adds that "[b]lackface whiteness was not without its ethnic tensions, stereotypes and contradictions." The stereotypes of drinking habits and stupidity of Irish descent, and the thick-accented speech of German descent, were the subject of ridicule in the minstrel show. However, whites of any ethnic origin could participate in the joke on blacks that was at the core of the minstrel show (118). In other words, minstrel show could mask its ethnic signifiers, and those who were positioned in a discriminatory status in relation to whites would gain relative status as "whites" by entering into the white/black dichotomy (Owada 23). In addition, blacks and women are often equated because just as blacks are subordinated to whites, women are subordinated to men; hence, racial anxiety is followed by gender anxiety. Therefore, Roediger points out that minstrel show was

also a site for the construction of privileged whiteness and, moreover, of masculinity. This discusses the establishment of whiteness for whites who have been positioned at the bottom in the racial classes of the mid-19th century, but for Americans who are white but have an ideological complex, not limited working class or ethnicity, it can be said that blackface which hides this complex is effective in establishing their identities, and the whiteness gained by stereotyping black people encompasses a minstrel mentality.³

At this point, we should go to “Pantaloons in Black” and review the minstrel aspects this story encompasses. As has been said, the work is commonly interpreted as a misreading of emotions, especially grief (McDowell 101), and the white sheriff’s deputy speaks as if he does not understand the grief of Rider, a young black man who has lost his wife. There are frequent references to Rider’s “eyes” in this short story, and Rider’s “eyes” are mentioned in a scene in which he buys whiskey, “blinking his bloodshot eyes rapidly in his high, slightly back-tilted head” (140). This could be interpreted as expressing the “tears” that are about to spill over in grief over the loss of his wife Mannie. However, the white deputy relates the scene as follows:

. . . a nigger would come flying out and go sailing through the air across the room, spraddled out like a flying squirrel and with his eyes sticking out like car headlights, until at last they had him down and Ketcham went in and begun peeling away niggers until he could see him laying there under the pile of them, laughing, with tears big as glass marbles running across his face and down past his ears and making a kind of popping sound on the floor like somebody dropping bird eggs, laughing and laughing and saying,

‘Hit look lack Ah just cant quit thinking. Look lack Ah just cant quit.’ (152 emphasis mine)

He does not understand Rider’s grief, and explains Rider’s appearance with analogies of an animal or car. This comical and stereotypical representation of blacks by whites is a typical composition of the minstrel show. It is further noteworthy that the white deputy compares Rider to an animal. In white discourses, the comparison of blacks to animals is often found. It is a way to represent the bestiality of blacks, and it is certainly a racist discourse.

In *Go Down Moses*, the white man’s discourse of blacks as animals appears in the duel between Lucas and Zack. The reason of the duel is that Molly moves to Zack’s house to take care of Roth, replacing his mother, who dies at the time of Roth’s birth, and she does not come back to her house. Lucas believes that not only is she taking care of Roth, but that Zack is sexually exploiting her, and he cannot bear the situation, and then, he breaks into Zack’s bedroom and challenges him to a duel for Molly. At this scene, Zach compares Lucas’ appearance to the resistance of a cornered animal: “he saw the whites of the negro’s eyes rush suddenly with red like the eyes of a bayed animal—a bear, a fox: ‘I tell you! Dont ask too much of me!’ *I was wrong*, the white man thought. *I have gone too far*. But it was too late” (54 emphasis mine).

Eric J. Sundquist notes that in “The Old People,” the buck which Ike kills is “immortality” (169), and points out that “the immortality of the buck in its moment of death depends completely on that death” and “the entire purpose of the hunt is to preserve the moment it necessarily destroys” (140). He also points to the parallel with Caddy Compson’s virginity in *The Sound and the Fury*, noting the sexual

overtones in Ike's buck and bear hunts, and he suggests the "paradoxical violence in which the act of love may be expressed" (141) in the hunt. Sundquist, who further reads miscegenation into that image of the hunt because, in *Go Down Moses*, there are frequent scenes of white men chasing black men, as in a hunt, and analyzes the comparison of blacks to beasts as follows:

Because the hallucinating fear of the Negro as "beast" that characterized many theoretical justifications of American slavery and became particularly fierce in postbellum racial hysteria undeniably grew in part out of repressed guilt over the visible actualities of slaveholding miscegenation, the language in which such fears were expressed, both before and after war, reveals a psychological instability that makes the analogy between repressed white lust and projected black threat acute by frantically denying it, closer for the paradox. (142)

In other words, the psychological instability of miscegenation—"repressed white lust and projected black threat"—is expressed in the discourse that calls black people beasts. Lucas, who is called "a bear, a fox," and Zack, who compares Lucas to an animal, are fighting over a black woman, Molly. Zack simultaneously says, "I have gone too far. But it was too late," and in his regret, the desire and fear of miscegenation may be expressed. Besides, Roth realizes that they fight over Molly, saying "*[i]t was a woman . . . My father and a nigger, over a woman. My father and a nigger man over a nigger woman*" (111), and he would notice his father's desire for miscegenation. Also, since it is Lucas in front of him that Zack is hunting in this confrontation, it could be possible that his desire is mixed with

the violence that he directs at Lucas. Just before Zack compares Lucas to an animal, he recalls a memory from his childhood of spending time and sleeping with Lucas: “They had fished and hunted together, they had learned to swim in the same water, they had eaten at the same table in the white boy’s kitchen and in the cabin of the negro’s mother; they had slept under the same blanket before a fire in the woods” (54). It is Zack’s lamentation of this current adversarial relationship compared to his previous closeness with Lucas. It is noteworthy, however, that they once sleep “under the same blanket;” while white and black children are often depicted sleeping in the same room in Faulkner’s works, in keeping with the norms of racial segregation, the white and black bunks are separate. However, Zack recalls being under the same blanket as Lucas, and it could be pointed out that his lust may be latent.

Sundquist’s point resonates with the recent reevaluation of the minstrel show. Eric Lott, a leading authority on its revaluation, states as follows:

It was cross-racial desire that coupled a nearly insupportable fascination and a self-protective derision with respect to black people and their cultural practices, and that made blackface minstrelsy less a sign of absolute white power and control than of panic, anxiety, terror and pleasure. (6-7)

Lott points out that white consciousness behind the minstrel show includes white people’s fascination with and respect for black culture and their mockery of self-preservation, and blackface represents “panic, anxiety, terror and pleasure.” Both the whites’ discourse comparing blacks to beasts and blackface are based on racism, and an attempt to attain their own whiteness by stereotyping blacks. Underneath

lies an anxiety that whiteness is threatened and a fascination with blackness.

Let us return to the interpretation of “Pantaloon in Black.” As already mentioned, the white sheriff’s deputy, unable to understand the grief of Rider who lost his wife, compares Rider to an animal. Noel Polk, however, argues as follows:

His (Faulkner’s) white characters are also too often read as stereotypes. “Pantaloon in Black” is, for many reasons, generally considered one of Faulkner’s greatest stories. Most critics have, in my judgment, misunderstood “Pantaloon” not because of Faulkner’s treatment of Rider, but because of their inability to see the deputy of the second part of that story as anything but a stereotypical Southern law man. (149)

Then, as for the sheriff’s deputy, Polk suggests that “he isn’t talking to her at all, but rather to himself” and “he (Faulkner) is also asking us to look behind the stereotype of the Southern lawman” (149). The white sheriff’s deputy certainly does not understand Rider’s grief and speaks of it comically. However, the narrative is detailed and even recreates Rider’s black accent. While denying his humanity, this narrative is a performance that gives Rider a voice. Furthermore, the way he asks his wife at last, “what do you think of that?” (152) shows that, under Jim Crow laws, Rider would surely be forgotten as a cliché, but he cannot be forgotten under the deputy’s narrative (Stunden 65). Also, the white sheriff’s wife does not even listen to Rider’s story, saying, “I think if you eat any supper in this house you’ll do it in the next five minutes, [. . .] I’m going to clear this table then and I’m going to the picture show” (152), and she assumes that Rider’s story

is worth less than the movie. In this scene, Rider's grief is drowned out by his wife rather than the deputy.

"Pantaloone in Black" repeatedly emphasizes and depicts Rider's strength. For example, Rider's physical characteristics are described: "he was better than six feet and weighed better than two hundred pounds" (129) and he can carry by himself logs which requires two people to carry (131-32). When he sees Rider's strength, the deputy's gaze will be mixed with envy and he will feel the anxiety of his masculinity. Moreover, Rider has a wife he loves dearly and the courage to stand up to powerful white men. On the other hand, the deputy has "a stout woman, handsome once, graying now and with a neck definitely too short, who looked not harried at all but composed in fact, only choleric" (147) as his wife, and she does not concern herself with his story. The deputy's relationship with his wife might lead him to feel jealousy toward the relationship between Rider and Mannie based on their solid affection.

Also, Rider's very "masculine" physical characteristics evoke his sexual allure, and the deputy's gaze may have included his homosexual desire. The physical description of Rider's large body and red eyes reminds us that Old Ben is "tremendous, red-eyed" (183). We can also read hunting imagery in Rider's escape and the white men who pursue him, and Sundquist's claim of "the paradoxical violence in which the act of love may be expressed" can be found in the discourse of the white sheriff who compares him to an animal. The deputy's minstrel mask may not be a simple rejection of the black race, but may also have worked to mask the shame for southern men of their desire for blacks and his anxiety for his masculinity.

Then, let us return to the scene in which a white deputy and Roth repeat

Lucas' words, saying, "Git the axe and bust it! Git the axe and bust it!" It is the white deputy that says these words. He tries to blacken Lucas, who does not follow the southern norm, by giving him a black stereotype, and he tries to construct his own whiteness because he is a white working-class man, not a "good" man. Roth is also present and he sees in Lucas' face a reflection of Old McCaslin, thinking, "*I am not only looking at a face older than mine and which has seen and winnowed more, but at a man most of whose blood was pure ten thousand years when my own anonymous beginnings became mixed enough to produce me*" (69). Roth has internalized the value of southern patriarchal and white supremacy value that "pure" is the best and "mixed" is inferior, but he has a twisted feeling that it is Lucas who is "pure" and himself who is "mixed." This twisted feeling is exactly the "panic, anxiety, fear, and pleasure" as Lott points out. Behind the racist comedy, Roth has his "furious outrage" (63) in his gaze toward Lucas. How should we interpret this facial expression, which seems to be accompanied by not only "anger" but also "humiliation" and "envy" toward Lucas, who easily jumps over the white master's domination?

4. Homosexuality in *Go Down, Moses*

In *Go Down, Moses*, the white men's sexual desire for the blacks often appears. Ike's encounter with a black woman, the mistress of his maternal uncle Hubert Beauchamp, leaves him with a "breathless and exciting and evocative" impression. Through physical contact with the woman, Ike comes into contact with the primal experience of Uncle Hubert's desire for a black woman: "as though, like

two limpid and pellucid streams meeting, the child which he still was had made serene and absolute and perfect rapport and contact through that glimpsed nameless illicit hybrid female flesh with the boy which had existed at that stage of inviolable and immortal adolescence in his uncle for almost sixty years” (288). And it could be Ike’s primal experience.

In addition, there are recurring scenes that further evoke the homosexuality of whites and blacks. It should be mentioned that Uncle Hubert lives and sleeps in one room with an old black man (Tennie’s ancient and quarrelsome great grandfather) in later years, suggesting a homosexual relationship.

It is not only the sins of miscegenation and incest by Old Carothers that are written in the ledger. Ike reads not only the sins, but also the homoerotic relationship between his father (Uncle Buck), his uncle (Uncle Buddy), and Percival Brownlee, the only slave the twins have purchased. Ike reads the records written by Uncle Buck in the ledger before Eunice’s records.

Percavil Brownly 26yr Old. cleark @ Bookepper. bought from N.B.Forest at Cold Water 3 Mar 1856 \$265. dolars

5 mar 1856 No bookepper any way Cant read. Can write his Name but I already put that down My self Says he can Plough but dont look like it to Me. sent to Feild to day Mar 5 1856

6 Mar 1856 Cant plough either Says he aims to be a Precher so may be he can lead live stock to Crick to Drink (250)

Percival Brownlee is bought as a slave but cannot read or plow the fields. Although he is worthless as a slave, Uncle Buddy and Uncle Buck will not sell him. In 1862, after emancipation, he reappears at the McCaslin plantation during Uncle Buck's absence and is described as "preaching and leading the singing also in his high sweet true soprano voice." Moreover, in 1866, Uncle Buck happens to see him passing through the town of Jefferson as "the entourage of a travelling Army paymaster," and Percival Brownlee gives Uncle Buck "one defiant female glance" (278). J. Edward Schamberger points out, in the allusions of "his high sweet soprano voice" and "one defiant female glance," that "Faulkner implies that homosexuality is the source of Percival's anomalism" (92). Furthermore, Schamberger notes that Percival Brownlee changes his name to "Spintrius," and suggests that "Spintrius" is "a variation of *Spintriae*, a derivative from the Latin *phintria*, the anal contractile muscle" (93).

Furthermore, Richard Godden and Noel Polk considers the ledger page about Percival Brownlee as "an extended admission of an incestuous liaison between Isaac's father and his uncle, a liaison drawn onto the page by Buck's homosexual miscegeny with a slave" (302), and suggests that Ike finds his father's sins of incest and miscegenation before finding his grandfather's sins. Then, Godden and Polk use the concept of "homosexual panic" by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Ike's panic when finding the page of Percival Brownlee is "not simply a father's penetration of a male slave, [. . .] but it is also a fascinated refusal of the prohibited," and they analyze that "Isaac confronts Brownlee as a crisis in his own sexual definition" (341-42).

Sedgwick explains homosexual panic as follows:

I argue that the historically shifting, and precisely the arbitrary and self-contradictory, nature of the way *homosexuality* (along with its predecessor terms) has been defined in relation to the rest of the male homosocial spectrum has been an exceedingly potent and embattled locus of power over the entire range of male bonds, and perhaps especially over those that define themselves, not *as* homosexual, but *as against* the homosexual. Because the paths of male entitlement, especially in the nineteenth century, required certain intense male bonds that were not readily distinguishable from the most reprobated bonds, an endemic and ineradicable state of what I am calling male homosexual panic became the normal condition of male heterosexual entitlement. (185)

Because in order to qualify as men, they need a passionate bond of homosociality with other men that is difficult to distinguish from homosexuality, they define themselves as an objector to homosexuality in order to qualify as heterosexual: it is a homosexual panic. In the words of John N. Duvall, who has studied the homosexual panic in Faulkner's work, the cultural function of the homosexual panic is "to police the border between hetero- and homosexuality" ("Faulkner's Crying Game" 50).

A moment of homosexual panic is also depicted in Roth's episode with Henry when Roth runs away from the Beauchamp house. Roth and Henry have been together since they are born as if they were brothers, and they hope "only to love, [. . .] and to be let alone" (107). From the description that they have never been afraid to sleep in the same bed before, Neil Watson reads homoeroticism and sees a homosexual relationship between Henry and Roth (120). This scene is when Roth

becomes aware of his whiteness, but this awakening of whiteness also means entering the world that enforces heterosexuality. It does not allow Roth to sleep with Henry.

Then one day the old curse of his fathers, the old haught ancestral pride based not on any value but on an accident of geography, stemmed not from courage and honor but from wrong and shame, descended to him. He did not recognise it then. He and his foster-brother, Henry, were seven years old. They had finished supper at Henry's house and Molly was just sending them to bed in the room across the hall where they slept when there, when suddenly he said, "I'm going home." . . .

"All right," Henry said, following him. . . . Then he went to the bed and lay down on it, rigid, staring up at the dark ceiling even after he heard Henry raise onto one elbow, looking toward the bed with slow and equable astonishment. "Are you going to sleep up there?" Henry said. "Well, all right. This here pallet sleeps all right to me, but I reckon I just as lief to if you wants to," and rose and approached the bed and stood over the white boy, waiting for him to move over and make room until the boy said, harsh and violent though not loud:

"No!"

Henry didn't move. "You mean you dont want me to sleep in the bed?" . . . "I reckon on a hot night like tonight we will sleep cooler if we —"

"Shut up!" the boy said. (107-108 emphasis mine)

At this point, Roth becomes aware of “the old curse of his fathers.” This is the moment when Roth realizes the curse of the Negro, stemmed from white supremacy and slavery, that has been passed down from generation to generation by white southern men. However, if we take into account that, like Roth’s relationship with Henry, his father Zack grows up with Lucas as if they are brothers, and, as we have already examined, there is a possibility of a desire by Zack for Lucas in the duel between Zack and Lucas, we can find Roth’s recognition of his hidden desire. Also, the curse of the Negro is ultimately accompanied by miscegenation.

Roth refuses Henry’s question about whether Roth does not want to sleep with Henry, and interrupts Henry’s subsequent words: “I reckon on a hot night like tonight we will sleep cooler if we—.” It could be seen as a scene from Roth’s homosexual panic that reads sexual connotation into Henry’s words such as “hot” or “sleep.” However, an excessive rejection of homosexuality may also lead to the realization of his own hidden homosexual desires. Roth’s awareness of whiteness and his awareness of his desire for blackness are simultaneous, and he wears the mask of white supremacy to hide his desire. However, Lucas jumps over that racial boundary, and it makes Roth’s whiteness unstable.

5. Reconsidering Roth Edmonds

Roth is experiencing an identity crisis as a southern white man. However, could the sense of inferiority that clings to Roth’s sense of whiteness, the minstrel mask that fosters that sense of inferiority, and the desires hidden behind that mask

be a crack in the patriarchal South? Couldn't this desire contain "love," the theme of the novel as a whole? Couldn't Roth's vacillation between being trapped by and deviating from the southern norm shed light on the voices of those oppressed by that very norm?

The love that is most clearly expressed in the work is probably for Molly. Diane Roberts explains that the archetypal erotic connection of whites to other races is an experience that begins with taking Mommy's breasts in their mouth as an infant, and, for Roth, Molly is a mother and object of desire (55-56). As Davis states that "[t]he key words are fidelity, devotion, and love, which reverberate throughout the book, specifically in Roth Edmonds' recognition of Molly Beauchamp as a surrogate mother" (Faulkner's *Negro* 242), especially, from Roth's devoted work with Molly, who insists on divorcing Lucas, Roth's acceptance of affection from Molly and his solid affection for her are well expressed.

In *Go Down, Moses*, it is probably Ike who first talks about love, but as already noted before, the love that Ike talks about is only from the perspective of masculine power and shows his romanticism as a southern white man. And the person who refutes the love which Ike speaks is Roth's mistress: "have you lived so long and forgotten so much that you dont remember anything you ever knew or felt or even heard about love?" (346). She speaks in her own words about her nonmarital relationship with Roth.

No. He didn't have to. I didn't ask him to. I knew what I was doing. I knew that to begin with, long before honor I imagine he called it told him the time had come to tell me in so many words what his code I suppose he would call it would forbid him forever to do. And we agreed. (341)

She enters into a relationship with Roth and bears his child, knowing that he cannot marry because of the “honor” and “code” of the whites. Ikuko Fujihira points out that her will is at work in this relationship when compared to the relationships between Old Carothers, Eunice, and Thomasina (“Hitan” 103). In the relationship between Old Carothers and his female slaves, the biggest problem is expressed in the black women’s inability to resist the power of the white man, but Roth’s black mistress says, “I was listening to myself” (341), and she believes in her own love and shows her resistance to the power relationship between the white man and the black woman.

Because readers share Ike’s perspective, they will see Roth’s actions as a repetition of the sins of his ancestors. Then, we would have to compare Ike to Roth, who shows his mis-performance as a normative southern white male. Ike, who leaves his watch and compass behind and enters the forest because he believes in the myth of forest, laments the loss of the forest as time moves on and industry replaces it. The forest is a hunting ground, and for him it is the place in which he acquires his masculinity through his hunting rituals with Sam Fathers. However, Christina Thyssen notes that “hunt” in Ike’s narrative is “a ritualized, repeated, and predictable model of prescribed and perpetuated distinctions between hunter and hunted, master and slave,” whereas in Lucas’ performance of using a metal detector to search for gold coins, it changes to “a technological relationship” (101). In other words, Ike continues to hold the forest values of the Old South, even though the times have indeed moved on to industrialization. Furthermore, from Ike and Roth discussing the rise of Hitler and Democratic politics in America, Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr. offers a critical look at Ike’s heroic

ideology, noting that “the South moves progressively toward not the immortal world of Ike’s dreams but the chaos of radical democracy” (86). All of these previous studies criticize Ike’s ideal for the immutable and show that the mythical Southern order is beginning to break down. Ike gives Roth’s mistress and her child “the horn, the one which General Compson had left him in his will, covered with the unbroken skin from a buck’s shank and bound with silver” (345), which means nothing to them as they return to the North and lead their independent lives. Ike’s final lament is about the disappearance of the forest.

This Delta. *This land which man has deswamped and denuded and derivered in two generations so that white men can own plantations and commute every night to Memphis and black men own plantations and ride in jim crow cars to Chicago to live in millionaire’ mansions on Lakeshore Drive, where white men rent farms and live like niggers and niggers crop on shares and live like animals, where cotton is planted and grows man-tall in the very cracks of the sidewalks, and usury and mortgage and bankruptcy and measureless wealth, Chinese and African and Aryan and Jew, all breed and spawn together until no man has time to say which one is which nor cares.* (346)

Ike laments that the civilization of the forest is allowing the introduction of northern style capitalism in the South, and that the railroad is destroying the forest and even allowing the easy movement of people. Ike, who experiences initiation in the mythical forests of the South and then abandons his inheritance, retreating to escape the various problems of society, has been left behind by the

changing times. Furthermore, he expresses anxiety about the loss of racial purity due to the easy movement of people.

On the other hand, Roth criticizes Ike's indifference to the world with the question: "where have you been all the time you were dead?" (329). He also opposes Ike's heroism, expresses concern about Democratic politics after the Great Depression, and tries to adapt to it. Roth's adaptation to new era is described in his confrontation with Lucas in "The Fire and the Hearth."

In age he could have been Lucas' son, but actually was the lesser man for more reason than that, since it was not Lucas who paid taxes insurance and interest or owned anything which had to be kept ditched drained fenced and fertilised or gambled anything save his sweat, and that only as he saw fit, against God for his yearly sustenance. (58)

The narrator, who speaks of Roth as an inferior human being against God's will, is complicit in the underestimation of Roth by those around him (and even by the reader). This reveals Roth's failure to behave as an ideal white plantation owner in terms of Ike's idealized notion of the antebellum South. However, the changing times encourage previously oppressed women.

Ike summarizes Roth's mistress's story as having been deceived and discarded against the will of hers, and when her racial identity is revealed, he sees in their relationship the sins of miscegenation and incest. Later, Eunice's image is superimposed on the figure of her heading to the river, but Ike hears the "the pop and snarl" (346) technological sound of her boat's engine as it carries her across the river. Moreover, she is an independent woman who is not dependent on the

white plantation owner and has taken a job as a schoolteacher. She has the will and the words to speak, and cannot be silenced, and this is the moment when Eunice's unvoiced voice is saved.

John T. Matthews claims that "Ike's confusion is just a step away from resolving into the understanding that Roth's marriage to the last black McCaslin would reverse old Carothers in the very act of imitating his crimes" (267), but it seems that it is too tied to the old values that emphasizes hetero connections and forces marriage. Rather, it would be redemption for the grief of Eunice and Thomasina and others to break out of the category of values dominated by men of the McCaslins.⁴

Yet, Roth still remains trapped in the South. Deborah E. McDowell is correct in pointing out that, while Roth reinforces the prewar code of women being sexually consumed, Roth's mistress sees a relationship that this code could neither capture nor control (106). However, Roth is aware of the oppression of having to subject himself to the external coercive forces of "honor" and "code." The voices which force him to follow the "honor" and "code" are a mockery of the white men who participate in the hunt. To Ike, who believes in the purity of southern mythology, Roth says, as discussed before, that people behave that way because they happen to be watched, and further that people are watched by the order: "A man in a blue coat, with a badge on it watching him. Maybe just the badge" (329).

Roth is gloomy and moody all the time, with a thoughtful expression on his face when the people around him ridicule him for "hunting a doe" and "coon-hunting" (321). It is not only a mockery of the doe hunting as a deviation from the order of the hunting community, but also of the relationship between Roth and his mistress because "doe" and "coon" are clearly analogies of a black woman. In short,

Roth's relationship with his mistress becomes the victim of this homosocial white community. Roth, trying to follow order under the watchful eye of the "badge," asks Ike to give his mistress palimony. He finally tries to kill a buck, but what he ends up killing is a doe, and he is unable to perform well as one of a homosocial group of southern white males. The relationship between Roth and his mistress comes to an end, but the expression, "it (the honor) told him the time had come to tell (the breakup)," which is explained in her narrative, reveals Roth's "hesitation" that it is somewhat too selfish to be called love. Roth's confusion and conflict can be seen in his performance as a white man.

Go Down, Moses begins with the sentence: "Isaac McCaslin, 'Uncle Ike,' past seventy and nearly eighty than he ever corroborated anyone, a widower now and uncle to half a county and father to no one" (5). He believes that not having children would be redemptive, and speaks as if to justify his indifference to the world: "I think that every man and woman, at the instant when it dont even matter whether they marry or not, I think that whether they marry then or afterward or dont never, at that instant the two of them together were God" (331-32). In contrast, Roth laughs sarcastically at himself, who is unmarried and will never marry: "Then there are some Gods in this world I wouldn't want to touch, and with a damn long stick, [. . .]. And that includes myself, if that's what you want to know. I'm going to bed" (332). Roth's failure to iterate on his southern normative father is what makes his white consciousness unstable; thus, Roth cannot be a "father." He cannot identify himself as a southern father, and yet Roth, who cannot abandon his honor and code, cannot recognize his black child with his black mistress.

At the root of this instability in whiteness may lie the torn consciousness of that generation of southern white men, as Faulkner's contemporary writer, Lillian Smith attest:

And now curious things happen. Strong bonds begin to grow as the most profound relationships of his life are formed, holding him to two women whose paths will take them far from each other. It is as if he were fastened to two umbilical cords which wrap themselves together in a terrifying tangle, and then suddenly, inexplicably, but with awful sureness, begin steadily to move, each in a different direction. Because white mother has always set up right and wrong, has with authority established the "do" and the "don't" of behavior, his conscience, as it grows in him, ties its allegiance to her and to the white culture and authority which she and his father represent. But to colored mother, persuasive in her relaxed attitude toward "sin," easy and warm in her physical ministrations, generous with her petting, he ties his pleasure feelings. (132)

Roth's biological white mother passes away soon after giving birth to him, but it is the eyes of those around him that teach him "right and wrong" things and "the do's and the don't behavior" in the Southern norm. On the other hand, however, he touches Molly's deep affection. We may read the confusion and conflict of Faulkner into the character of Roth, who is granted similarities with the author in terms of age, position, and relationship with his nanny.

Notes

1. The land is also the embodiment of the crime of genocide of the whites, and Faulkner's contradiction is expressed.
2. In *Go Down, Moses*, white women rarely appear. Instead, many active black women are portrayed, including Molly, who demonstrates her own initiative in trying to divorce Lucas. And, in "Go Down, Moses," Molly is determined to appeal to Gavin, a white lawyer, for the return of her grandson's body.
3. Masks that contrast in action with the minstrel masks can be seen in Boon Hogganbeck, who is a member of the hunt led by Major de Spain. Boon is a poor white man with a quarter of Chickasaw blood from his grandmother, but the blood is not that of a chief like Sam Fathers, and his low class is evident because he is said to be a "mastiff" loyal to Cass and Major de Spain. His appearance, described as "hunting clothes, the muddy boots and stained khaki and Boon's blue unshaven jowls" (218), is no problem in sawmill and commissary, but problematic when he is in a city: "It was as if the high building and the hard pavements, the fine carriages and the horse cars and the men in starched collars and neckties made their boots and khaki look a little rougher and a little muddier and made Boon's beard look worse and more unshaven and his face look more and more like he should never have brought it out of the woods at all or at least out of reach of Major de Spain or McCaslin or someone who knew it and could have said, 'Dont be afraid. He wont hurt you'" (219). Although white, he does not look like the upper class of southern whites at all, but rather represents his coarseness, and he is unable to behave as a white man. Boon, who reveals his racial anxiety to the extent that he is not afraid to make the false claim that

his father is a pure-blood Chickasaw, can be seen in his “Native American performance” as he is constantly reddened by whiskey.

4. Mary Paniccia Carden also appreciates that Roth’s and his mistress’s child blurs the distinction between McCaslin, Beauchamp, and Edmonds, and that their leaving the South means that the family blood would continue beyond McCaslin’s control (70-71). In “Go Down, Moses,” Molly struggles to return the body of her grandson, Samuel Worsham Beauchamp, who is executed in Chicago for the murder of a police officer. Samuel is banished by Roth for breaking into Roth’s store, but it can be also an opportunity to get out of McCaslin’s control. However, he ends up being executed in the North. As is frequently said, *Go Down, Moses* does not depict a complete resolution of the race issue.

Chapter 5

The Theatre of the South: Southern Whites' Performance in *Intruder in the Dust*

When *Intruder in the Dust* was published in 1948, the U.S. was beginning to move toward civil rights legislation, as two years earlier, in 1946, President Harry S. Truman established the commission for civil rights with an eye toward abolishment of racial discrimination. In the 1948 presidential campaign, Truman, a Democrat, was targeting legislation that would have abolished all forms of discrimination, putting racial discrimination at the top of the list. Sensing the danger of this policy, Democratic conservatives in the South revolted and formed the Dixiecrats, a Southern Democratic Party that advocated for independent state's right. In this political background, Faulkner was in the midst of his rise to prominence as a southern American writer with the publication of Malcolm Cowley's *The Portable Faulkner* in 1946, which led to his winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1949. *Intruder in the Dust* was published the year before he got the prize.

In *Intruder in the Dust*, Charles Mallison, Chick, a sixteen-year-old white man, tries to prove the innocence of Lucas Beauchamp, a black man arrested on the murder of a white man, Vinson Gowrie. To save Lucas from lynching, Chick digs up the grave to prove that the murder weapon used to kill Vinson is not Lucas' gun, but he finds a dead body that is not Vinson, and his subsequent investigative activities prove Lucas' innocence. Thus, *Intruder in the Dust*, which takes the form of a detective story but deals with racial issues in the South with a national and social context, has been accepted as a political novel that is distinct from Faulkner's previous works and as a statement of Faulkner's personal attitude

toward racial issues in the South.

Faulkner explains that Chick's uncle, Gavin Stevens, represents the feelings that typical liberal whites in the South have about "Negroes" (Cowley 110-11). Gavin's distaste for federal intervention in the South and his conservative insistence that the South should change gradually have been superimposed and interpreted in conjunction with Faulkner's statement. However, as Noel Polk warns that "[w]e should be very careful, however, not to read backwards from the public statements into the fiction" (140), to equate Gavin's manifesto with Faulkner's ideas would seem to miss Faulkner's critical stance toward southern whites, including his self-criticism, contained in the novel.

We have shown in the previous chapter that Lucas who appears in *Go Down, Moses* in 1942, is a third-generation male lineage descendant of Old Carothers McCaslin, and is an autonomous black man. In *Go Down Moses*, the previous chapter scrutinizes Lucas' language to show his autonomy and the minstrel consciousness of whites who attempt to make Lucas a black by using the stereotype of black language. Then, in *Intruder in the Dust*, Lucas' autonomy comes to be more explicit.

He (Chick) had seen him (Lucas) three times more, on the Square in town [. . .] like the white men who were not farmers but planters, who wore neckties and vests like the merchants and doctors and lawyers themselves, as if he refused, declined to accept even that little of the pattern not only of Negro but of country Negro behavior, and always in the worn brushed obviously once-expensive black broadcloth suit of the portrait-photograph on the gold easel and the raked fine hat and the boiled white shirt of his

own grandfather's time and the tieless collar and the heavy watch-chain and the good toothpick like the one his own grandfather had carried in his upper vest pocket(23-24 emphasis mine)

Lucas is described as behaving as if he were an influential white man, showing no behaviors of being black, and he is putting on things like what his grandfather, Old Carothers, put on. The whiteness of the townspeople, mostly working-class people, is threaten by Lucas, who rejects the stereotypes of blacks as comically performed in the minstrel show, and behaves as if he were a southern aristocrat, even though he is black. The racial anxiety of the whites is expressed in their curse to Lucas, “goddemn biggity stiffnecked stinking burrheaded Edmonds sonofabitch,” but Lucas responds to the curse: “I aint a Edmonds. I dont belong to these new folks. I belongs to the old lot. I’m a McCaslin” (19), and he emphasizes his southern aristocratic and male lineage. As noted in the previous chapter, we can see the limitations of Faulkner’s imagination in his inability to envision an autonomous black person and behaviors outside of the southern white norm in Lucas, who looks to his grandfather McCaslin, a southern white aristocrat, for autonomy and masculinity, but this is also an attempt to give Lucas self-respect (Dimitri 18). Moreover, because Lucas’ behavior across the color line in a place in which southern white norms dominate disturbs the boundary, southern white people around Lucas think, “*We got to make him be a nigger first. He’s got to admit he’s a nigger. Then maybe we will accept him as he seems to intend to be accepted*” (18). In other words, the matter is the whiteness of southern whites that can only be obtained by defining Lucas, who behaves beyond the color line, as “black.”

Given this anxiety of whiteness, it must be said that Faulkner was aware of

the vulnerability of whiteness. It is noteworthy that in *Intruder in the Dust*, Faulkner uses theatrical metaphors such as theater and actors in a place in which southern whites' racial anxieties appear, and he depicts their "performance" of lynching, which gives themselves whiteness by considering the victim as black. This chapter examines Chick's experience of awareness of whiteness and an inversion of racial positions between white and black, and clarifies performances by southern whites to assure their whiteness. Then, by analyzing Chick's physical performance which deviates from the southern norm, we aim to decipher the satirical nature of the novel and Faulkner's self-critical stance, which has not been often pointed out.

1. Chick's Acquiring the New Perspective of Race

Intruder in the Dust begins with Chick' hearing rumors of Lucas' arrest and recalling a rabbit hunt he goes on four years ago at the invitation of his uncle's friend, Roth Edmonds. Accompanied by a black boy, Aleck Sander, Chick goes hunting, slips off a log bridge, and falls into an icy creek, but he is taken care of by Lucas, and offered the meal that Lucas is supposed to eat in his house. Chick gives Molly seventy cents he has at the time in exchange for the care and food, but Lucas throws the coins on the floor. For Chick, the payment of money is proof of white superiority, and we can read his unconscious acceptance of southern whiteness in Chick's view of its rejection as "shame."

This rabbit hunting scene is quite important in considering Chick's whiteness. Stephanie Li notes that Roth has Chick accompanied by his servants (Edmonds'

boys), and points out an unspoken understanding among the adults that he needs a black servant. Also, Li focuses on Roth's order to Aleck Sander, a black boy who has grown up with him like a brother, to accompany him on that hunt, and suggests that "the white community ultimately forces Chick to define his manhood through a system of racialized opposition" and "Aleck Sander in effect becomes the badge of Chick's whiteness" (106). Chick's whiteness is assured by his racial otherness of a black man, but he is not yet aware of it.

Chick goes hunting and falls into an icy creek, but as is described the moment "when all of a sudden the known familiar sunny winter earth was upside down" (5), his view of the world changes completely. Aleck Sander offers a long pole to save Chick, but Lucas stops him.

'Get the pole out of his way so he can get out'—just a voice, not because it couldn't be anybody else but either Aleck Sander or Edmonds' boy but because it didn't matter whose: climbing out now with both hands among the willows, the skim ice crinkling and tinkling against his chest, his clothes like soft cold lead which he didn't move in but seemed rather to mount into like a poncho or tarpaulin: up the bank until he saw two feet in gum boots which were neither Edmonds' boy's nor Alec Sander's and then the legs, the overalls rising out of them and he climbed on and stood up and saw a Negro man with an axe on his shoulder, in a heavy sheeplined coat and a broad pale felt hat such as his grandfather had used to wear, looking at him and that was when he saw Lucas Beauchamp for the first time that he remembered or rather for the first time because you didn't forget Lucas Beauchamp; gasping, shaking and only now feeling the shock of the cold

water, he looked up at the face which was just watching him without pity commiseration or anything else, not even surprise: just watching him

(6 emphasis mine)

With the advice, “Get the pole out of his way so he can get out,” Aleck Sander pulls down the pole. The loss of the saving pole from a black boy symbolizes the detachment of Aleck Sander’s blackness which is a “badge of Chick’s whiteness” from him (Nagao 123). In other words, by losing this badge, Chick becomes aware for the first time that his whiteness is guaranteed by the presence of the childhood black friend.

As Chick walks up to the river bank, he sees the boots of the voice’s owner. Then, he sees the legs, then the overalls, and finally he “looks up” at Lucas. This description shows their physical positioning, Lucas on top and Chick on the bottom. Furthermore, Lucas, who does not act like a black man and defies racial dichotomies, wears “a heavy sheeplined coat and a broad pale felt hat such as his grandfather had used to wear” as usual. This physical positioning is symbolic for Chick, who literally experienced an inversion, “a sudden the known familiar sunny winter earth was upside down.”

Furthermore, Thea J. Autry points out that “the body that is viewed is regarded as black and the body that views is regarded as white.” Then, Autry notes that it is Lucas who watches Chick in their encounter scene, points out “Chick Mallison’s powerlessness under the dominant gaze of Lucas Beauchamp, illustratively, is a vivid inversion of the orthodox subject/object relationship,” and suggests that Lucas’ gaze is “a usurpation of that which the boy considers his by right: authority” (22-23). In other words, Chick experiences an inversion of the

racial positions between him and Lucas which gives him the awareness of his unstable whiteness.

In “The Bear” from *Go Down, Moses*, Ike McCaslin, who is a direct descendant of Old Carothers, experiences an initiation into whiteness and masculinity through hunting, as already discussed in the previous chapter. However, Chick has to stop hunting rabbits because he falls into a creek, and the Southern myth that whiteness and masculinity can be achieved by entering the wilderness begins to collapse with the defeat of the South in the Civil War, and in the 1940s, about seventy years after the South’s defeat, entering the wilderness is becoming meaningless. For Chick, the inversion of racial positions with Lucas, which becomes symbolized by the modern capitalistic “coins” rather than the romantic Old South, leads Chick to consider the need for “re-equalization, reaffirmation of his masculinity and his white blood” (26).

At the same time, however, the experience at Lucas’ house offers Chick a new perspective of race. Undressing his wet clothes, being enveloped in the “quilt like a cocoon”—something that both comforts and foreshadows Chick’s growth—in front of the fireplace, and remembering “the smell of the Negro,” Chick thinks as follows:

. . . that unmistakable odor of Negroes—that smell which if it were not for something that was going to happen to him within a space of time measurable now in minutes he would have gone to his grave never once pondering speculating if perhaps that smell were really not the odor of a race nor even actually of poverty but perhaps of a condition: an idea: a belief: an acceptance, a passive acceptance by them themselves of the idea that being Negroes they were not supposed to have facilities to wash

properly or often or even to wash bathe often even without the facilities to do it with; that in fact it was a little to be preferred that they did not. (11)

As Dimitri points out that the smell of the Negro which Chick smells is “bound up [. . .] with the processes of historical and social conditioning” (17), and it does not derive from the racial characteristics of blacks. Hence, Chick becomes aware of how whites have historically and socially accepted blacks and believed in them, in other words, how race is socially constructed.

2. Southern Whites' Rhetorical Performance

After hearing rumors that Lucas shot Vinson Gowrie in the back, Chick goes to “the Square, empty too—the amphitheatric lightless stores” (48) facing the prison, in which he sees many white people expecting the Gowrie family to lynch Lucas. Faulkner uses a theatrical metaphor to depict this Square filled with white speculation that the lynching of Lucas by the Gowrie family would be on Monday morning, since the incident occurs on Saturday night and the following day is Sunday, the Sabbath.

. . . the men and women and not one child, the weathered country faces and sunburned necks and backs of hands, the clean faded tieless earthcolored shirts and pants and print cotton dresses thronging the Square and the street as though the stores themselves were closed and locked, not even staring yet at the blank front of the jail and the single barred window which

had been empty and silent too for going on forty-eight hours now but just gathering, condensing, not expectant nor in anticipation nor even attentive yet but merely in that preliminary settling down like the before-curtain in a theatre: and he thought that was it: holiday . . . (133-34)

Kirk W. Fuoss noted the performative nature of lynchings, such as the fact that they took place on a separated place such as theater stage, that the bodies of lynched blacks were on display, and that white people told the story of the crime, the pursuit of the black, and the details of the lynching, and he points out that lynching was a site for the creation of racial discourse in the United States. Fuoss also points out the linkage of these lynching performances to future lynching performances as “performance chaining,” and characterizes many lynchings as the sites in which this chain emerges. Fuoss then discusses a discourse by a man named James R. McGovern about a lynching that occurred due to the murder of a white woman by a black man, explaining that “[t]he oral recitation of narratives recounting details of the alleged precipitating crime” was creating a future lynching performance.

While the above quote details McGovern’s imagined version of a street corner interaction rather than a transcript of an actual oral narrative, it nevertheless successfully suggests two related narrative maneuvers that seem almost certainly to have occurred with considerable frequency: first, the shift from “the black man who committed this crime is dangerous” to “black men are dangerous” and, second, the shift from “here’s what has been done” to “here’s what we must do.” (25)

In telling the story of a single lynching of a black person, Fuoss reveals that whites reproduced stereotypes of blacks by emphasizing that blacks as a whole is dangerous and that this narrative provoked lynchings because it made them think that they had to retaliate for what had been done to them.¹ On the day Chick hears the rumor of Lucas' arrest, he walks around town and hears rumors from everywhere that Lucas shot Vinson Gowrie in the back. The town is described using a performance metaphor as being like the ancient Greek play "strophe and antistrophe" (41),² and Chick hears the rumors flying from right to left, and then see the townspeople expecting the lynching of Lucas start to gather in the Square. Lynching also works on the homogeneity of the white community through its violent exclusion of racial others, and in *Intruder in the Dust*, the whites gathered in the Square are all described as being similarly dressed and having similar appearances. Furthermore, Chick recognizes "the faces myriad yet curiously identical in their lack of individual identity, their complete relinquishment of individual identity into one We not even impatient, not even hurryable, almost gala in its complete obliviousness of its own menace" (135) in the Square.

Chick's voice, which addresses the possibility of Lucas' false accusation, can be regarded as Lucas' voice, but it is always drowned out by Gavin's words, the same rhetoric that would make Lucas a criminal as told by the white people of the city. At the same time, as Keith Clark has pointed out, the "voice" of a black man who do not have literacy due to slavery and can tell his own history/story is interrupted by Gavin; thereby, the interrupt separates Lucas from his telling (78). Furthermore, Chick recalls his uncle once referring to the smallness of vocabulary that humans need, and then he begins to recognize a standardized vocabulary in

the words that the white people in town and his uncle say about Lucas.

. . . he remembered his uncle saying once how little of vocabulary man really needed to get comfortably and even efficiently through his life, how not only in the individual but within his whole type and race and kind a few simple clichés served his few simple passions and needs and lusts (46)

. . . he thought how it was not really a paucity a meagreness of vocabulary, it was in the first place because the deliberate violent blotting out obliteration of a human life was itself so simple and so final that the verbiage which surrounded it enclosed it insulated it intact into the chronicle of man had of necessity to be simple and uncomplex too, repetitive, almost monotonous even . . . (87)

Gavin's categorization into types, races, and kinds, and his use of clichés acquired through everyday life to stereotype them, can be thought of as an adaptation of the logic of whiteness, in which whites can stereotype blacks in order to gain their own whiteness relative to them. As indicated previously, Chick realizes this unconsciously internalized relative whiteness of his own by falling into the river and meeting Lucas. Chick also recognizes that the vocabulary for excluding blacks has simplified because it is so repetitive, and he recognizes that the reproduced black stereotypes are precisely those constructed by the repeated, performative discourse of southern whites. The best example is Mr. Lilley, a neighbor who is described by Gavin as desiring the lynching of Lucas, but not as having any animosity toward blacks.

All he requires is that they act like niggers. Which is exactly what Lucas is doing: blew his top and murdered a white man—which Mr Lilley is probably convinced all Negroes want to do—and now the white people will take him out and burn him, all regular and in order and themselves acting exactly as he is convinced Lucas would wish them to act: like white folks; both of them observing implicitly the rules: the nigger acting like a nigger and the white folks acting like whitefolks and no real hard feelings on either side (since Mr Lilley is not a Gowrie) once the fury is over . . . (47)

Mr. Lilley wants the racial discipline and order in which whites act like whites and blacks act like blacks, but what determines how to “act like niggers” is the stereotyping of blacks by whites, and the white belief that “all Negroes want to murder a white man” is transformed into a rhetoric that makes Lucas, a black man, a “murderer.”³ It also means, paradoxically, that southern whites, who can only guarantee their racial identity by comparison with racial others, can define themselves as white only if they give blackness to Lucas, who disturbs the racial norms of the South. Therefore, the action of digging up the dead body of Vinson by Chick and others not only proves Lucas’ innocence, it also disrupts the racial discourse of southern whites and makes self-evident the fallacy of the equation “black equals to murderer,” which has become the cornerstone of the racial identity of the whites in the town.

Chick sees the southern whites who have gathered in the Square start to leave after Lucas is proven innocent. Then, Gavin again interrupts Chick, who is appalled that they would not even give Lucas a cigarette to atone for falsely

arresting him, to say the following:

He will receive installments on it for the rest of his life in this county whether he wants them or not and not just Lucas but *Lucas: Sambo* since what sets man writhing sleepless in bed at night is not having injured his fellow so much as having been wrong; the mere injury . . . he can efface by destroying the victim and the witnesses but the mistake is his and that is one of his cats which he always prefers to choke to death with butter. So Lucas will get his tobacco. (194)

The false accusation for Lucas reveals the southern whites' recognition that they have been "wrong" because they nearly kill the innocent black man, and the failure to destroy "the victim and the witnesses" of Lucas, as Gavin says, will cause southern whites to be "writhing sleepless in bed at night." When considering this statement by Gavin, one would be reminded that in Faulkner's past works, Gavin has been the narrator of stories about black "victims and witnesses." In *Light in August*, Joe Christmas is pursued for the murder of Joanna Burden, and ultimately dies in Grimm's lynching. Gavin recounts Joe's escape and the moment of his death as follows:

Because the black blood drove him first to the negro cabin. And then the white blood drove him out of there, as it was the black blood which snatched up the pistol and the white blood which would not let him fire it. And it was the white blood which sent him to the minister . . . It was the black blood which swept him by his own desire beyond the aid of any man, swept him

up into that ecstasy out of a black jungle where life has already ceased before the heart stops and death is desire and fulfillment. (*LA* 449)

While Gavin feels sympathetic to Joe, his lynching performance associates white blood with the moralistic and religious traits while associating black blood with violent images such as pistols or images of death. Gavin uses the blood dichotomy to assert the goodness of white blood; at the same time, he attempts to stereotype black people. Also, in *Go Down, Moses*, Samuel Warsham Beauchamp, grandson of Lucas and Molly, is executed for the murder of a policeman in Chicago. Gavin makes an effort to bring Samuel's dead body home to meet Molly's request, but he is not able to understand Molly's song of grief sung for Samuel. Molly's other request for documenting the issue of Samuel in a newspaper article means that she is trying to transcend her grief in the "song" into "writing" which is regarded as a white culture (Fujihira, "Hitan" 104), but Gavin rejects the request, and seeks to deprive blacks of the opportunity to speak and to maintain white privilege by saying: "Why, you couldn't read it, Aunty" (*GDM* 365). Gavin's narration of black deaths and the expropriation of black narratives leads to "black silence," and in light of this, Gavin's narrative about southern whites who flee from their own shame because they cannot destroy the victim and witness seems to sound self-referential. Gavin's narrative represents how he contributes to the reproduction of a rhetoric that adheres to the southern tradition.

Thus, what is noteworthy in Gavin's narrative would be the discursive strategy of shifting to the new rhetoric of "Sambo" after Lucas' exoneration in place of the words of "nigger" and "negro," which contain the meaning of dangerous black murderer. Gavin describes "Sambo" in the following rhetoric: "Not all white people

can endure slavery and apparently no man can stand freedom [. . .] [b]ut the people named Sambo survived the one and who knows? they may even endure the other” (146), “Sambo is a human being living in a free country and hence must be free” (151), and “he (Sambo) had patience even when he didn’t have hope, the long view even when there was nothing to see at the end of it, not even just the will but the desire to endure” (152). In this rhetoric of “Sambo,” the violent stereotype that has been given to “nigger” and “negro” disappears, and a positive image has been reassigned, but it creates new image that “Sambo” is able to endure, a kind of expanded interpretation of slavery. Furthermore, Gavin claims “homogeneity” of the South and say, “We—he and us—should confederate” (153). Ultimately, he assigns himself a defender of Sambo from “the North and East and West—the outlanders who will fling him decades back not merely into injustice but into grief and agony and violence too by forcing on us laws based on the idea that man’s injustice to man can be abolished overnight by police,” and emphasizes the different order between the South and the North through claiming his theory: “the injustice is ours, the South’s. We must expiate and abolish it ourselves alone and without help nor even (with thanks) advice” (199). Eric Dussere points out that because the South had an aristocratic “debt of honor,” a social tie to show superiority to the North, the southern whites consider that the job of providing equality to blacks belonged to themselves, and refused to the enforced equality by the federal government (37, 43). Gavin’s “Sambo” rhetoric is a rejection of radical racial views, and it is a rhetorical performance that attempts to rationalize the moderate attitude for racial problems and the gradual change, emphasizing that the black (he) is still the racial other to the white (us), while trying to protect the Southern homogeneity.

White racial discourse does not only affect blacks, but also whites. Beat Four, in which the Gowrie family lives, is an area inhabited by whites, but both whites and blacks living in other areas never step into the area normally. The reason is described as follows:

. . . a synonym for independence and violence: an idea with physical boundaries like a quarantine for plague so that solitary unique and alone out of all the county it was known to the rest of the county by the number of its survey co-ordinate—Beat Four—as in the middle twenties people knew where Cicero Illinois was and who lived there and what they did who neither knew nor cared what state Chicago was in . . . (35)

Beat Four is “synonymous” with independence and violence, and is spoken of as if it were a mafia neighborhood. Discursively, it is a dangerous place, inhabited by violent people, and so the Beat Four, though white, becomes the “other” in this town. That is why the people who gather in the Square in anticipation of the lynching of Lucas are not coming only to see the lynching of Lucas, but “to see that Beat Four should not fail its white man’s high estate” (134). As soon as it is revealed that Lucas is innocent and that the true murderer is white, Gavin tries to protect the homogeneity of the South while emphasizing to whites that blacks are still the racial other. In this rhetoric of Gavin’s, the Beat Four stand in the position of whites, but their “otherness” is ignored.

3. Faulkner's Women and Mothers

In *Intruder in the Dust*, women are not placed in a major position. The novel has political characteristics regarding racial issues, and it may be a misogynistic aspect of Faulkner that there is no room for women in the political resolution of racial issues. However, as Faulkner matures as a writer, he gives women more liberal values in his works dealing with racial issues. By examining Faulkner's portrayal of women, we can see the influence that women have on Chick in *Intruder in the Dust*.

As we have already examined, women in the works in the 1930s are trapped in the southern patriarchy. Minnie in "Dry September" has no words to say about herself, and although she is deprived of her subject, her subject is created by her surroundings. Emily in "Rose for Emily" and Joanna in *Light in August* are also women who are trapped in patriarchy, but they try to compete with men by becoming fathers themselves. However, this is also a sign that they have internalized patriarchal values. The most powerful women who offer an opposing force to patriarchy are Lena in *Light in August*, who escapes from its domination, and, above all, Rosa in *Absalom, Absalom!*. Rosa breaks down the door of Sutpen's house, which is the symbol of her confinement, by transcending racial boundaries and becoming androgynous being.

In *Go Down Moses*, dealt with in the previous chapter, white women rarely appear. Rather, black women such as Molly, Fonsiba, and Roth's mistress are independent characters and choose their own way by themselves. Also, in *Go Down Moses*, solidarity between white and black women is depicted, which is not accomplished in *Absalom, Absalom!*. In "Go Down, Moses," Miss Warsham, who

has been like a sister to Molly (*GDM* 357), supports Molly's request to Gavin to return the dead body of Molly's grandchild. It is because she asks Gavin to accept Molly's request, Gavin accepts it, collecting money to bring the body home from people in the town and saying that it is for Miss Warsham, not for Molly ("It's to bring a dead nigger home. It's for Miss Worsham" [360]). Later, when Gavin visits Miss Warsham's house, he hears her, Molly, and Molly's brother singing a song of grief for Samuel. Gavin feels suffocated at the time, is unable to comprehend the grief and says, "I ask you to forgive me. I should have known." Miss Warsham's reply, "It's all right, [. . .] It's our grief" (363), expresses the recapture of grief through the solidarity of its "sisters" (Fujihira, "Hitan" 104).⁴

Miss Warsham in *Go Down Moses* reappears in *Intruder in the Dust* as Miss Habersham, an elderly woman who goes with Chick to dig up Vinson's grave.⁵ She, as Molly's sister, throws herself into the dangerous act of uncovering the grave to clear Lucas' false accusation, and afterwards serves as a surveillant in front of the jail to prevent the mob from lynching Lucas. The person who joins the surveillance with her in front of the jail and acting as a deterrent to the lynching of the whites is Chick's mother, Mrs. Mallison.

Masami Sugimori notes that Mrs. Mallison takes actions to oppose to Chick's self-help and prevents him from participating in some sports which can be considered as the ritual of initiation such as football, hunting, and riding horses, and Sugimori suggests as follows: "Mrs. Mallison's overtly inconsistent actions such as her resilient enthusiasm for what she had fiercely resented—including Chick's ballgame, riding, and involvement in Lucas' case—place her outside the Southern ideological framework predicated upon the 'battlefield'-like binary between the 'defeater' and the 'defeated'" ("Signifying" 69). She tries to keep Chick

escape the Southern ideology as she herself is outside of it. Sugimori further argues that Mrs. Mallison's putting "milk" in Chick's coffee when he drinks it although he is not old enough is "indicative of the permeating female influences upon the youth" and that it is the coffee that helps Chick stay awake to save Lucas ("Signifying" 70). This chapter would like to further scrutinize the function of coffee. Chick thinks that the coffee taste like "quinine" (126). Considering the fact that "quinine" has antipyretic properties, a special remedy for malaria, and Faulkner's famous use of "fever" and "disease" in *Absalom, Absalom!*, as metaphors for the Civil War and the slavery-based Old South, ("[h]e was a barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts still recovering, even forty-three years afterward, from the fever which had cured the disease, waking from the fever without even knowing that it had been the fever itself which they had fought against and not the sickness . . . [AA 7 emphasis mine]), the quinine-taste "coffee" is working on Chick to stay awake and to save Lucas, which could be one hope for a solution of racism inherited from slavery in the South. Then, Chick sees "illusions" of his father by this coffee.

. . . seeing watching his father's noise and uproar flick and vanish away like blown smoke or mist, not merely revealing but exposing the man who had begot him looking back at him from beyond the bridgeless abyss of that begetting not with just pride but with envy too; . . . and his father was gnawing the true bitter irremediable bone of all which was mismatchment with time, being born too soon or late to have been himself sixteen and gallop a horse ten miles in the dark to save an old nigger's insolent and friendless neck. (130-31)

Chick's father compares the courageous actions of Chick, Miss Habersham, and Alec Sander in uncovering the grave to "a kind of kindergarten witch-hunt" (131) and diminishes the value of their actions. However, in Chick's illusion, his father's face is looking back at him with envy. And the frustration of his father, probably of the same generation as Faulkner, that he is born too early and too late to help blacks, can be read as frustration of being left between the values of the Old South and the shifting times.⁶

In this thesis, the torn consciousness of southern white men has also been discussed in terms of "mothers." For example, Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!* finds out about a grotesque black female sexuality victimized by southern white men in the image of the "mother" in the southern narratives passed down from the fathers, and, as we see in the previous chapter, Lillian Smith's southern white male consciousness is torn between a white mother who inculcates southern norms and a black mother who provides warmth and affection. In *Intruder in the Dust*, however, the change in attitude toward "mother" is clearly expressed. Chick looks down on the town in which he is born and raised and thinks of the North beyond the town as follows:

. . . the North: not north but North, outland and circumscribing and not even a geographical place but an emotional idea, a condition of which he had fed from his mother's milk to be ever and constant on the alert not at all to fear and not actually anymore to hate but just—a little wearily sometimes and sometimes even with tongue in cheek—to defy . . . (149)

In the Faulkner's South, we often find that women are given images of nature, as

Faulkner gave to Lena. Therefore, this “mother’s milk” represents the land of the South and the resistance to the North that has been handed down in that southern land for a long time, and it is the white mothers who teach it to them. However, Chick’s mother keeps him out of the southern ideology, and Chick realizes that the South’s resistance to the North is just a “condition” and not really something he needs to fear or hate. This recognition reminds us of Chick’s realization that when he smells blackness in Lucas’ house, he knows that it is not essentialist, but “a condition: an idea: a belief: an acceptance, a passive acceptance,” in other words, the smell reflects the idea of how white people have socially accepted black people. Chick realizes that the hatred of the North by southern whites and even the obligation of southerners to protect blacks from the North, as represented by Gavin, are ultimately created by southern society.

4. Chick’s Physical Performance

In contrast to the performative discourse of white southerners, Faulkner seems to place more emphasis on Chick’s physical performances. Chick also initially thinks of Lucas as “*a nigger a murderer who shoots white people in the back and aint even sorry*” (64), as told all over town, and after Lucas is arrested, Chick imagines himself riding away on a horse to avoid seeing Lucas lynched. However, as Olga Vickery points out, the physical absence to escape from the mob violence and involvement in Lucas’ death cannot bring moral freedom to Chick (141). Moreover, according to Jean E. Graham, who scrutinized the verbs given to Gavin and Chick, the words used for Gavin are legal and linguistic actions; on the

other hand, the verbs attributed to Chick are often used to describe his physical actions (85).

The thought that saving Lucas could be a way to repay the debt for the meal sends Chick to Lucas because he needs “re-equalization, reaffirmation of his masculinity and his white blood.” However, Chick thinks, “*He’s not only beat me, he never for one second had any doubt of it*” (71), and remembers the four-year-ago experience of inversion of racial positions between Chick and Lucas. That is why Chick becomes the only person who listens to the assertion that Lucas is not the true murderer of Vinson, and he flings himself “bodily” (80) into the physical performance of the grave disinterment. It is emphasized that the act is represented by the words: “Dig up Vinson Gowrie” (83), only four words that includes a verb meaning physical action.

Judith Butler applies the concept of “performative” to philosophy, focusing specifically on bodily acts rather than on human linguistic acts. Revealing that identity is not a given, but rather that bodily acts produce identity as meaning, Butler states that the body is “fundamentally dramatic” to embody various possibilities, and that people perform their bodies.⁷ Butler uses the concepts of Beauvoir and Merleau-Ponty, and suggests that “the body is understood to be an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities,” and “[a]s an intentionally organized materiality, the body is always an embodying *of* possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention” and “the body *is* a historical situation, as Beauvoir has claimed, and is a manner of doing, dramatizing, and *reproducing* a historical situation” (272). In other words, the repetition of performative physical acts is the embodiment of a particular culture and history, and in doing so, identity is produced. In response to Butler’s argument,

performance researcher, Erika Fischer-Lichte explains as follows:

Nonetheless, individuals alone do not control the conditions for the processes of embodiment; they are not free to choose what possibilities to embody, or which identity to adopt. Neither are they wholly determined by society. While society might attempt to enforce the embodiment of certain possibilities by punishing deviation, it cannot generally prevent individuals from pursuing them. . . . On the one hand, society violates the individual bodied by imposing performative acts that constitute gender and identity. On the other hand, performative acts offer the possibility for individuals to embody themselves, even if this means deviating from dominant norms and provoking social sanctions. (27-28)

In light of Butler's argument that the body dramatizes and reproduces historical situation, it seems that the southern whiteness by the performance of lynching, which occurs simultaneously with the stereotyping of blacks, is indeed the embodiment of the culture and history of the South. The fact that southern whites are depicted in the same manner in terms of their clothing and appearance, and that this group of whites can be seen as a single "face" for Chick, is evidence that they are embodiment of their historical situation. At the same time, as Fischer-Lichte explains, the identity one creates is determined by society, but it is not completely determined by society, nor can it completely prevent one from deviating from the norms of society, and it is possible to produce oneself by deviating from the dominant image of that community, which can be seen in Chick.

Before digging up the grave, Chick thinks, "*Maybe we can, maybe we will*

after all’ (92). Although the verb is not explicitly stated, it would probably follow words that describes a physical action, such as “do,” or “dig up.” Even before Chick thinks about it, however, he fears and tries to dismiss the idea that he would be able to dig up Vinson’s body and prove Lucas’ innocence “because thinking it into words even only to himself was like the struck match which doesn’t dispel the dark but only exposed its terror—one weak flash and glare revealing for a second the empty road’s the dark and empty land’s irrevocable immitigable negation” (93). Chick is terrified, but goes out to dig Vinson’s grave. Saying, “maybe we can, maybe we will after all,” is nothing more than Chick’s statement of intent to help Lucas, who is given the label of a black murderer. Chick’s words are simple, but quite different from cliché which Gavin explains. Rather, such a cliché has become the southern norm, which prevents Chick from deviating from itself. Therefore, the moment Chick says that he may be able to help Lucas, he is aware of the fear around him; it means that he recognizes the southern norm that limits him. However, in the end, he shakes it off and performs digging up the grave, a deviation from the southern rule.

On the way to digging up the body, Chick often smells the pine trees and thinks that this works like the wine he drinks in church: “the deathless blood of our Lord not to be tasted, moving not downward toward the stomach but upward and outward into the Allknowledge between good and evil and the choice and the repudiation and the acceptance forever” (98), but in this very scene, Chick is once again faced with a moral choice of how he should perform. Then, Chick makes the choice to continue digging up the grave against the control of the southern community. What he finds in the grave is not the body of Vinson Gowrie, but that of Jake Montgomery, a white lumber merchant whom Lucas, in prison, could not

have killed. The subsequent investigation reveals that the real murderer is Vinson's brother, Crawford Gowrie. At this point, Chick becomes aware of the fictional nature of the discourse that frames Lucas as a murderer and the dominant character of the southern discourse that governs the people's physical performance in lynching an innocent black man.

Therefore, the physical performance of Chick's digging up of the grave should be positively evaluated. Doreen Fowler sees burial and disinterment symbolically, stating that while burial symbolizes exclusion and denial, disinterment is the restoration of a position that burial has prevented (789). After digging up the grave, Chick contemplates the "face" of the white mob as one, and feels that "he was responsible for having brought into the light and glare of day something shocking and shameful out of the whole white foundation of the county which he himself must partake of too since he too was bred of it" (135), and Chick's performance of disinterment is surely a restoration of the position of the black, Lucas, who has been equated with murderers. Also, it is the unstable position of white racial superiority that Chick has revealed through digging up the grave. That is why Gavin uses a new rhetoric of Sambo and constructs a southern homogeneity that conceals racism.

As Chick listens to Gavin's rhetoric about "Sambo" and Southern homogeneity, it is described that Chick's body is unable to move (198). Ultimately, Chick finally accepts his identity as a Southern white man in response to that conservative ideology of his uncle:

. . . when suddenly he realised that that was a part of it too—that fierce desire that they should be perfect because they were his and he was theirs,

that furious intolerance of any one single jot or tittle less than absolute perfection—that furious almost instinctive leap and spring to defend them from anyone anywhere so that he might excoriate them himself without mercy since they were his own and he wanted no more save to stand with them unalterable and impregnable: one shame if shame must be, one expiation since expiation must surely be but above all one unalterable durable impregnable one: one people one heart one land . . . (204-205)

We could take a critical view of Faulkner's own struggles and limitations in deviating from the homogeneity of the South at a time when he was gaining recognition as a southern writer. On the other hand, it could also be seen as an indictment of the homogeneity of the South.⁸ At the very least, Faulkner, who often used theatrical metaphors to describe the South, would have been aware that the social structure based on white supremacy in the South was an arbitrary one for whites. Faulkner may have been ironically expressing the fact that Chick's body, deviating from the dominance of the community by the physical performance of grave disinterment, is rendered immobile by the social constraints created by the "language" privileged to white people.

At the end of *Intruder in the Dust*, in the Square on the way to the prison in which Lucas is waiting, Chick imagines himself as an "actor" before he goes to the stage.

. . . himself not potent but at least the vessel of a potency like the actor

looking from wings or perhaps empty balcony down upon the waiting stage vacant yet garnished and empty yet, nevertheless where in a moment now he will walk and posture in the last act's absolute cynosure, himself in himself nothing and maybe no world-beater of a play either but at least his to finish it, round it and put it away intact and unassailable, complete

(206 emphasis mine)

This is precisely the Square in which the crowd has gathered in anticipation of Lucas' lynching, and in which the rhetoric that stereotypes blacks as murderers continues to be reproduced. What Chick has accomplished, as he imagines the curtain closing on this play with his own hand, is to break the "performance chaining" of lynching in this Square and to reveal the fictional nature of its rhetoric. Chick, who has digging up grave and proved Lucas' innocence, does not view his actions as heroic, believing that his actions would be meaningless if they were not done in an inherently anonymous manner. Ultimately, Chick's deviant physical performances are constrained by southern ideology. Chick's performance does not go so far as to change the present status of blacks, but merely prevents the lynching of Lucas. Chick thinks, despite his "own one anonymous chance too to perform something passionate and brave and austere," that "austerity itself debased by what it had gained, courage and passion befouled by what they had had to cope with." When he remembers "a Face, the composite Face of his native kind his native land, his people his blood" (189). Chick becomes aware that his performance is limited by the southern norms which he is born and raised with, and he comes to recognize that the "South," symbolized by the "Face" is what has nurtured him and of which he is a part.

Ultimately, Chick accepts his identity as a Southern white man. This has often been interpreted and criticized as Chick's acceptance of a moderate stance on racial issues. However, Chick sees southern whiteness as something that he has to fight against, and his acceptance of southern whiteness simultaneously internalizes his denial of the whiteness. In other words, it is dialectical whiteness, and it would show Faulkner's expectation for Chick, who is given the role of "the vessel of a potency like the actor" to close the curtain on the "stage" of the racial struggle in the South with his own hands in the future to come.

Notes

1. Chick hears rumors of Lucas' murder and lynching everywhere, most notably in "barbershop" (32). As we discussed in Chapter 1, how the barbershop generates lynchings in Faulkner's work is detailed in "Dry September," in which the rumor of Will's rape of Minnie is told, and in which Will's lynching is instigated by words of McLendon.
2. Strophe is the first of the three parts that make up an ode in ancient Greek drama, in which the chorus moves from right to left on stage. The antistrophe, on the other hand, is the second of the three parts of the ode, in which the chorus moves from left to right, opposite to the strophe.
3. It should be noted that it is Gavin, the typical southern liberal white, who is speaking about this rhetoric through the filter of Mr. Lilly.
4. While Gavin does not understand Molly's grief, Chick realizes Lucas' grief over the loss of Molly and understands that racial differences are irrelevant in

grieving: “*He was grieving. You dont have to be a nigger in order to grieve*” (ID 25). Chick also later discovers Mr. Gowrie’s expression of grief at the loss of his son, Vinson: “*he’s grieving*” (158).

5. In *Intruder in the Dust*, the relationship between Miss Habersham and Molly as follows: “old Molly, Lucas’ wife, who had been the daughter of one of old Doctor Habersham’s, Miss Habersham’s grandfather’s, slaves, she and Miss Habersham the same age, born in the same week and both suckled at Molly’s mother’s breast and grown up together almost inextricably like sister’s, like twins, sleeping in the same room, the white girl in the bed, the Negro girl on a cot at the foot of it almost until Molly and Lucas married, and Miss Habersham had stood up in the Negro church as godmother to Molly’s first child” (85). Thus, we can consider her as the identical person with Miss Warsham, who are described as sisters in *Go Down, Moses*. Also, Molly and Miss Habersham grow up like sisters in their childhood and sleep in the same room. In the previous chapter, we analyzed the relationship between Lucas and Zack’s childhood and that between Henry and Roth’s childhood to show that moments of what could be called homosexual panic occurs among white men. It is also worth noting that, despite similar childhoods, the women’s relationships remain sisterly.
6. In *Intruder in the Dust*, Chick is born in 1924 (*Jiten* 374), and his father is assumed to be born in the 1890s.
7. Butler’s discussion is primarily about gender, but we have already shown that race, like gender, is not determined by biological characteristics but is constructed by its historical and cultural norms.
8. Atsushi Marutani interprets that “Chick voluntarily chooses to accept his

Southern white identity not in order to insist on his cultural difference within the whole nation, but in order to claim persistent moral responsibility for the past sins of his community" (72). And, Sugimori points out that "[t]hrough the dilemma Chick encounters as an "in-between" white male adolescent, Faulkner demonstrates the difficulty of developing discursive freedom into substantial resistance and of avoiding the constant and penetrative working of ideological recruitment" ("Signifying" 68).

Conclusion

Racialized and Self-Reflective Whiteness

As has often been argued, Faulkner's attitude toward race has not been consistent. In the social climate of the 1920s and 1930s, when racial segregation was taken for granted, he depicted the tragedy of racism in "Dry September" and *Light in August*. That is why he had been regarded by southerners as an author who depicts the shameful aspects of the South, and as a pariah in southern society. On the other hand, his letter, written within days of the publication of "Dry September," expressed "its virtual defense of lynching as an instrument of justice" (McMillan and Polk 3), although his financial situation at the time and the loss of his daughter, Alabama, were taken into account.

Also, in the 1940s, the civil rights movement began to emerge in the United States. When Faulkner became widely known through the publication of *The Portable Faulkner* by Malcolm Cowley, and by the Nobel Prize in 1949, he began to feel the rise of his reputation and the responsibility as a southern writer. In addition, the successful film adaptation of *Intruder in the Dust*, which was filmed in Faulkner's hometown, finally brought Faulkner a favorable reception by the people of the South.

In the 1950s, as the civil rights movement began to be active, Faulkner was called for to make a statement of his political stance. His assertion ("Go slow now. Stop now for a time, a moment" [*ESPL* 87]) that he could be considered a moderate toward the NAACP and organizations working toward the enactment of civil rights was criticized by southern conservatives as well as by radicals and blacks. It was also interpreted in conjunction with Gavin Stevens' statements in *Intruder in the*

Dust.

How should we view Faulkner in terms of race? Noel Polk comments as follows:

Was Faulkner a racist? If by “racism” one means a hatred or fear of Negroes, one can say, I think, clearly No: Faulkner seems never to have been any more intolerant of blacks than of whites, or any more fearful of their capacity for mischief; he seems, in fact, to have been equally intolerant of just about everybody. If, however, by “racism” one means a belief in the inferiority of Negroes, one could probably answer that question with a Yes, but only by citing his numerous invocations of historical, rather than biological and genetic, circumstances as being responsible for the Negro’s social and economic and cultural disadvantages. (145)

That Faulkner did not hate black people is evident in his works. Through the tragedies of Will Mayes, the black man in “Dry September,” and Joe Christmas in *Light in August*, he criticized white society for bringing about such tragedies. As Polk notes, Faulkner had continued to emphasize the inferiority of blacks due to their disadvantage in historical circumstances, not biological or genetic. Likewise, it reveals the social and historical aspects in whiteness that had created that historical situation.

This thesis focused on whiteness in Faulkner’s works, in which race is a major theme, and examined how Faulkner viewed whiteness by considering the process of representing whiteness as a performance, based on the assumption that race is a social construct. Faulkner’s achievement also lies in his portrayal of various

women in a society under male dominance. As examined in the previous chapter, in terms of race, Faulkner portrayed women moving outside of the southern norm as time went on. However, it seems that what allows these women to step outside of the southern norm is that they are women. The women are “under” the control of the southern norm, so they can “get out” of it, and because the southern norm is created by white men, it would not be possible without white men and would bind them to the end.

This thesis first examined racial politics in the United States from before the Civil War to the 1930s, when racial segregation was taken for granted, through John McLendon, who leads the lynching of a black man in “Dry September,” and shows how unstable whiteness is. The increase of immigration created classes among whites, and those who were placed in the lower classes were able to see themselves as white by seeing blacks as racial others. In addition, during World War I, blacks were seen as the racial other in order to give the immigrant soldiers a sense of American nationhood and to bring them together.

Faulkner has described socially constructed whiteness through the racial performances of McLendon, Joanna Burden, a woman becoming a southern father in *Light in August*, and Thomas Sutpen, an immigrant poor white in *Absalom, Absalom!*. Faulkner was quick to recognize the instability of whiteness which is considered as a standard of normality and a blankness, and he racialized the whiteness.

Through the telling of Sutpen’s racial performance in *Absalom, Absalom!*, we focused on Quentin Compson’s anxiety of his whiteness, who, like Faulkner, is born into an aristocratic southern family. Faulkner depicts how, from *Absalom, Absalom!* onward, men from aristocratic southern families recognize their own

whiteness through their personal experiences with blacks. This thesis then examined their realization of the divergence between southern norms and their own whiteness. Quentin encounters black female sexuality through Nancy and realizes the fear of miscegenation that he has unconsciously internalized, and Roth's interactions with the Beauchamp family (Lucas, Molly, and Henry) make him aware of his own racial anxiety and affection and desire for black people. And Chick realizes that his whiteness is guaranteed by Lucas and Alec Sander, and that race is constructed by society. Therefore, Chick's physical performance that deviates from the southern norm should be appreciated, and from his acceptance of southern whiteness in the end, we can discover Faulkner's conflict.

As already noted, Faulkner's attitude toward blacks was inconsistent. Also, in the 1950s, his moderate attitude was expressed in his statements and writings. However, this study reveals that Faulkner has consistently had a self-reflective view of his whiteness; in short, Faulkner is a writer who always confronted the instability of whiteness.

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