

“NOT A LITERARY MAN”

EXPLORING FAULKNER: THE SPACE BETWEEN AUTHOR AND PHILOSOPHER

by

THANKFUL CONNELL SULLIVANT

(Under the Direction of Dr. Hubert H. McAlexander)

### ABSTRACT

The following study offers two perspectives on William Faulkner, exploring the way in which the self-proclaimed “writer [and] not a literary man” reflected and, more importantly, developed in his works the ideas of two important philosophers, arguably creating his own philosophy. The first examination offers a close reading of one scene of Faulkner’s *Sanctuary* in light of Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* that exhibits how the need for tragedy evolves under Faulkner’s treatment. The second essay is considerably larger in scope, but necessarily so: it attempts a speculative biography and explanation of Faulkner’s design as exhibited in *Absalom, Absalom!* and explained in line with Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The following therefore offers two very different examinations of two very different philosophers, and Faulkner’s philosophical prowess alone enables a discussion of both in the same study.

INDEX WORDS: William Faulkner, Philosophy, Friedrich Nietzsche, G.W.F. Hegel, *Absalom, Absalom!*, *Sanctuary*, selfhood, tragedy, history, consciousness, design, Southern Literature.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

When interviewed by the New York Times in 1948, William Faulkner explained to Ralph Thompson,

Look, I'm just writer. Not a literary man...I write about people. Maybe all sorts of symbols and images get in – I don't know. When a good carpenter builds something, he puts the nails where they belong. Maybe they make a fancy pattern when he's through, but that's not why he put them in that way.  
(LG 61)

Faulkner would repeat a similar explanation throughout his interviews and lectures, stressing the fact that a writer is different from a literary man. Faulkner's writing, however, directly contradicts his claim, as evidenced by the countless volumes of work dedicated to explicating Faulkner's design, his literary "craft," and determining its source, his intellectual history. Information on the latter, however, is vague at best, and Faulkner's own word is tricky to trust. For example, one of the more frequently quoted passages from Faulkner's letters includes the following moment of recollection, as written to his protégé (and lover) Joan Williams,

I now realize for the first time what an amazing gift I had: uneducated in every formal sense, without even very literate, let alone literary, companions, yet to have made the things I made. I don't know where it came from... Believe you me, this is not humility, false modesty: it is simply amazement.  
(SL 348)

Less than a year earlier, however, he wrote a less whimsical note of advice, telling Williams that,

You must learn more. Where I beat you was, I set out to learn all I could sooner in my life than you did. I mean, the reading.  
(SL 338)

\* \* \*

The following study offers two perspectives on William Faulkner, exploring the way in which he reflected and developed in his works the ideas of two important philosophers.



The first essay, “Tragedy and the Trial: Exploring Faulkner’s *Sanctuary* and Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*,” presents a Nietzschean reading of Faulkner’s *Sanctuary* and illustrates the way in which Faulkner reflects the philosopher’s “need for tragedy.” While I briefly speculate and document the possibility that Faulkner did in fact possess an awareness of Nietzsche’s philosophy, the focus of this study lies rather in the point at which Faulkner and Nietzsche illuminate each other. In this way, *The Birth of Tragedy* offers new life to a passage that had seemingly been exhausted, Temple Drake’s perjury. More importantly, however, this examination exhibits how the need for tragedy evolves under Faulkner’s treatment and explores the point at which Faulkner’s text stops reflecting Nietzsche’s ideas and instead embodies and even develops this philosophy.

I focus my essay on a single scene of the novel, the trial, in order to focus in detail on the significance of this scene in terms of both content and form and to touch briefly on the significance of genre itself. Interestingly, this scene was one of the few that remained unchanged in the course of Faulkner’s extensive revision: the trial existed in the first edition in its entirety. In addition, an in depth examination proves that the trial scene provides the key to much of the novel’s importance. For this reason, I limit my focus to a close reading, and as a result, this initial study reveals the way in which Faulkner’s art takes up Greek tragedy (that “supreme art,” as Nietzsche describes it) in a work that was supposedly “basely conceived” by someone who is “not a literary man” (*FU* 90, *LG* 61).

The second essay, “Faulkner, Hegel, and the Telling in *Absalom, Absalom!*,” is considerably larger in scope, but necessarily so. In discussing the possible connection between Hegel and Faulkner, I provide a speculative biography of Faulkner’s literary history and a possible explanation for his “cosmos” as exhibited in *Absalom, Absalom!* and explained in line

with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There is, of course, a thin line between evidence and overeager analysis. The problem with attempting an "Hegelian reading" of Faulkner is the misguided "belief that the *Phenomenology* is an unsystematic text," which, according to Jon Stewart, naturally results in "many essays and shorter works on the *Phenomenology* [that] take certain themes or analyses out of their systematic context and use them as the focal point for discussion" (Stewart 10).<sup>1</sup> Hegel never intended his philosophy to be dissected into parts to be analyzed and applied elsewhere, but rather meant for the particulars of his philosophy to be explored only within their context, as a function of the whole. This should come as no surprise, especially considering the line most often extracted from the *Phenomenology* is, ironically enough, "The True is the whole" (*PhS* 11). As Walter Davis correctly explains, using Henry James's *The Ambassadors* as an example, "We read [it] as a coherent work of art and that experience suggests that the many things that go to make it up function as integral parts of that totality" (Davis 2). Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* is perhaps not unlike the *Phenomenology* in that it remains impossible, or at least irresponsible, to extract a single "meaning" from the whole.

As stated in the introduction to John T. Irwin's *Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge*, "In juxtaposing Faulkner and Freud or Faulkner and Nietzsche," or Faulkner and Hegel, my aim like Irwin's is "not to explain or reduce or simplify Faulkner's novels but to make them more problematic, richer and more complex" (5). Furthermore, I do not claim a connection between Nietzsche and Hegel; these essays are meant to be separate entities, and for that reason, the difference in their style directly reflects the substance within each. The following therefore offers two very different examinations of two very different philosophers. The mere fact, however, that these philosophers can be discussed in the same study is attributed solely to Faulkner's own philosophical prowess. Thus, my greater concern here is the way in which

Faulkner, the self-proclaimed “writer [and] not a literary man,” developed in his works the ideas of Nietzsche and Hegel and arguably created his own philosophy in the process.

Faulkner, however, is rarely (if ever) considered a philosopher because of the public role for which he is primarily known today. His Nobel Prize acceptance speech, for example, is often quoted in critical studies of the author, yet the speech itself contains platitudes that are arguably nonexistent in Faulkner’s art – certainly not in the novels of his “greater period.” According to Faulkner, only the writer should care about the writer, and “everyone else should be too busy with the work to care about the individual” (*LG* 238). Faulkner, however, is not unlike one of the characters he writes, in that “every time any character gets into a book, no matter how minor, he’s actually telling his biography” (*FU* 275). Thus, “When we wish to know Faulkner,” Joseph Urgo notes that “[the] historian, becomes a literary critic. He has no choice” (Urgo H-USA).

When asked how he “went about writing [and] how stories came to [him],” Faulkner replied in his country-boy persona that, for him, “it never comes from an idea because [he doesn’t] know too much about ideas and ain’t really interested in ideas” (*FU* 19). Despite his affectation, Faulkner was not entirely dishonest. Emily Stone interprets Faulkner’s relationship with ideas, claiming that Faulkner “was not interested in ideas as such; he was interested in them in action, which is the reason he was a novelist and not, for example, a philosopher” (Stone 143). As this study hopes to reveal, however, Faulkner’s novels provide the very existence of his philosophy. Faulkner became a philosopher by becoming an author, and to gain a better understanding of Faulkner, we must therefore turn to the text itself. Indeed, the idea exists only in the text, the very space between author and philosopher.

TRAGEDY AND THE TRIAL:  
EXPLORING FAULKNER'S *SANCTUARY* AND NIETZSCHE'S *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

“Tragedy is the highest form of life affirmation.”  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*

During his lecture series at the University of Virginia, William Faulkner was asked a leading question that directly referred to his (infamously) harmful introduction to the Modern Library edition of *Sanctuary*.<sup>2</sup> Faulkner replied,

I would say, if [a young writer] is creating characters which are flesh-and-blood people, are believable and are honest and true, then he can use sensationalism if he thinks that's an effective way of telling his story. But if he's writing just for sensationalism then he has betrayed his vocation, and he deserves to suffer from it. That is, sensationalism is in a way an incidental tool.

(FU 49)

Faulkner's response echoes a position he continued to stress throughout the course of these lectures: the use of different kinds of “tools” in the writing process. Faulkner included tragedy among these tools.

A writer who is still trying to write about people, to write about man, about the human heart in some moving way,...uses whatever tool that he thinks will do most to finish the picture which at the moment he is trying to paint, of man. That he will use humor, *tragedy*, just as he uses violence. They are *tools*, [and each is] an ineradicable part of life.

(FU 39, *my emphasis*)

Thus, the difference between sensationalism and tragedy is a (major) difference in tools; Faulkner considers the first to be “incidental,” while tragedy is “ineradicable” from the human condition.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Friedrich Nietzsche defines tragedy as the encounter and sexualized combination of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses. Tragedy is engendered from this

pairing “in much the same way as reproduction depends on there being two sexes which co-exist in a state of perpetual conflict interrupted only occasionally by periods of reconciliation” (14). The Apollonian (or Apolline) impulse is characterized by critical reason, restraint, and semblance. On the other hand, the Dionysian (or Dionysiac) impulse is marked by the uninhibited, unrestrained, and irrational. “These two very different drives exist side by side, mostly in open conflict...an opposition only apparently bridged by the common term ‘art,’” and specifically, as Nietzsche determines, “a work of art which is Dionysiac and Apolline in equal measure [is] Attic tragedy” (14).<sup>3</sup>

While there is no documentary proof that Faulkner read Nietzsche, some critics argue for a Nietzschean influence. Frederick Karl provides the most indirect connection in his theory that, “Although Faulkner showed no direct awareness of Nietzsche... Nietzsche was, in one sense, the synthesizer of several nineteenth-century ideas” (Karl 611), and Faulkner directly addresses these ideas in the works of his “mature period” (“even *Sanctuary*”), providing “something of the [experience] sense[d] in Greek drama, *or* in Nietzsche’s sense of amor fati” (Karl 326, *my emphasis*). While Karl makes an interesting connection, he focuses so narrowly on this one aspect of Nietzschean theory (amor fati), that he misses an opportunity to connect Greek drama, Nietzsche, *and* Faulkner. Tom McHaney does seize this opportunity but only in relation to Faulkner’s “The Wild Palms.” In one of the most prescient arguments connecting Nietzsche and Faulkner, Donald Kartiganer points out the Faulkner works that remain “Nietzschean in their fundamental commitments...affirm the condition of the modern imagination” (Kartiganer 174). *Sanctuary* as a whole, however, is glaringly absent from Kartiganer’s study. Alone in suggesting a connection between Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* and Faulkner’s *Sanctuary*, Douglas Canfield offers little more than a mere suggestion. Few other critics have addressed Nietzsche in

relation to Faulkner. Finally, none of these critics notes the necessity of drama in tragedy's existence, nor mentions the trial scene at all, despite the fact that it is arguably "the central metaphor" (Kinney 117).

For tragedy to exist, there must be drama. As Nietzsche defines it, drama is "the Apolline embodiment of Dionysiac insights and effects" (44). A trial is inherently dramatic by nature: it is performative and sometimes even scripted. The witness stand, the "dais," serves as a spotlight, focusing the audience's attention on the performance. Finally, the theatrical elements are all emphasized by the "roles" Faulkner maps onto these characters. In the courtroom, characters become the roles they play: most notably their names are replaced by their titles, so that "Eustace Graham" is present only as an expression of The District Attorney. Temple and Horace are the only two who are named in the trial scene.<sup>4</sup> Jay Watson reminds us that "As every reader of the novel knows, the whole timbre of the trial changes with the entrance of Temple Drake [and] at this textual turning point...the narrative itself acquire[s] a dimension of theatricality" (Watson 59).

"The fundamental conflict in [*Sanctuary*] can be characterized as that between Dionysiac and Apollonian forces," and the Dionysian force in the novel is that which "drives relentlessly through...Temple" (Canfield 12). Douglas Canfield thus begins his argument connecting *Sanctuary* and *The Birth of Tragedy*, and these foundations are the same upholding my argument. However, Canfield's reading arguably falls short when he claims that the Dionysian impulse "is imaged throughout the novel as the deafening cicadas or writhing honeysuckle or the stifling wisteria or especially 'the wild and waxlike bleeding' of the grape blossoms" (Canfield 11-12). Nietzsche states that the art of Dionysus is "the imageless art of music," and the "essence of the Dionysiac...is best conveyed by the analogy of intoxication" (*BT* 14, 17). Using these precise

guidelines, the reader discovers that the “Dionysiac, with the primal pleasure it perceives even in pain, is the common womb from which both music and tragic myth are born” (114).

This “intimate relationship between music and myth” provides an understanding of the psychological chaos existing within Temple: specifically, at the Grotto nightclub, Temple is the [Nietzschean] womb. “Music and tragic myth both express, in the same way, the Dionysiac capacity of a people, and they cannot be separated from one another” (115). Entering the Grotto, Temple notices “the music beat, sultry and evocative [and] filled with movement of feet, [and] the voluptuous hysteria of muscles warming the scent of flesh, of the blood” (*S* 233). The rhythm and sexuality of the music make Temple aware of some inevitable horror: “‘Oh God; oh God,’ she said, her lips scarce moving” (233). She tries to leave, but cannot, and in a dream-like sequence of events “then they were dancing” (234). Temple moves from being Popeye’s victim to his dance partner in one fluid motion: “he was turning her toward the door, her head reverted...his hand closed upon the back of neck [and] she could hear the vertebrae grating faintly together and...then they were dancing” (234). Music and tragic myth “both transfigure a region where dissonance and the terrible image of the world fade away in chords of delight [and] both justify by their play the existence of even the ‘worst of all worlds’” (*BT* 115). At the Grotto, Temple’s abusive treatment melts into dance steps, and it becomes difficult even for Temple to distinguish the two: suddenly dancing, “she could still feel his hand at her neck” (*S* 234). Ultimately, as Nietzsche explains, by “singing and dancing, [the Dionysiac] expresses his sense of belonging to a higher community,” and as a part of this “higher community,” Temple feels “the dancers, the music swirling slowly about her in a bright myriad wave” (*BT* 18, *S* 238). Thus, as Andre Bleikasten explains, “whether it succumbs to drunkenness, nausea or sheer terror, the body drifts away from the self” (19).

“Temple is utterly drunk at the Grotto nightclub” (Bleikasten 24). According to Nietzsche, “these Dionysiac stirrings...awaken either under the influence of narcotic drunk...or at the approach of spring when the whole of nature is pervaded by lust for life” (*BT* 17). Faulkner subtly reveals the season is spring: in the beginning of the novel, Temple is going to see a baseball game. For the purpose of explicating Temple’s Dionysian role, however, what remains more important here is the (ab)use of alcohol: “She watched hands: a brown one in white sleeve, a soiled white one beneath a dirty cuff, setting bottles on the table. She had a glass in her hand. She drank, gulping” (*S* 235). Then “the music started;” “she had another drink. They danced again [and] when the music ceased she had another drink” (235). Allowed a final drink, Temple claims she “[hasn’t] felt it at all” (237). Thus, “she drank,” and “when she set the glass down she realized that she was drunk;” only then did “she [believe] that she had been drunk for some time” (237). As Bleikasten also notes, “consciousness...seems to be a mere flicker: it is not only unable to cleave to the body, its very existence is threatened every moment with obliteration” (19).

The scene at the Grotto reveals “the playful construction and demolition of the world of individuality as an outpouring of primal pleasure and delight” (*BT* 114). As the embodiment of the Dionysian, Temple is “the essence of nature [that] is bent on expressing itself” (21). Temple is thus something acted upon, “feeling the desire going over her in wave after wave, involved with the music and the smell of her own flesh” (*S* 238). In the Grotto, Temple is very much at “the heart of [the Dionysiac] festival,” where there is “almost everywhere an excess of sexual indiscipline” (*BT* 20). In what is arguably Faulkner’s version of the “Greeks’ Dionysiac orgies,” Temple is passed from one male (dance) partner to the next “in a voluptuous swoon, unaware that they [are even] moving” (239). Temple’s “last dance” at the Grotto exemplifies this best:



The music was playing. She moved up the corridor, staggering a little. She thought she was leaning against the wall, when she found that she was dancing again; then she was dancing with two men at once; then she found that she was not dancing but that she was moving toward the door between the man with the chewing gum and the other with the buttoned coat.

(S 240)

Here in the Grotto, “the very wildest of nature’s beasts [are] unleashed, up to and including that repulsive mixture of sensuality and cruelty” that Nietzsche describes (20). That “repulsive mixture,” which Nietzsche calls “the true witches’ brew,” characterizes Temple Drake. To use Nietzsche’s words, Temple “is no longer an artist;” rather, she “has become [the] work of art: all nature’s artistic power reveals itself here, amidst shivers of intoxication, to the highest, most blissful satisfaction of the primordial unity” (BT 18).

According to Nietzsche, “the primitive Dionysiac orgy is not an Attic tragedy... although tragedy is in some sense a development of the orgy” (Geuss xxx). Similarly, Temple’s representation of the Dionysian alone does not guarantee *Sanctuary*’s status as a (Greek) tragedy.<sup>5</sup> For example, Temple has already played the witness by the time the actual trial occurs. As the embodiment of the Dionysian, Temple “is stimulated to the highest intensification [and] something that [she] has never felt before demands to be expressed” (BT 21). In response to Horace’s gentlemanly, though injudicious, offer to allow Temple her privacy and silence, Temple affirms:

“Don’t think I’m afraid to tell,” Temple said. “I’ll tell it anywhere. Don’t think I’m afraid. I want a drink.”

(S 215)

Temple continues her testimony “in one of those bright, chatty monologues which women can carry on when they realize that they have the center stage” (216). Temple exhibits what Nietzsche defines as “that phenomenon whereby pain awakens pleasure” (21). In recounting the

“comparative inviolation” of her experience, Temple evidences a rapture in the telling itself, exposing what Nietzsche defines as the “blissful ecstasy that arises from the innermost ground of man” (*BT* 17). Eventually Horace realizes that “she was recounting the experience with actual pride, a sort of naïve and impersonal vanity, as though she were making it up, looking from him to Miss Reba with quick, daring glances like a dog driving two cattle along the lane” (*S* 216). Her bedside testimony is therefore the “essence of the Dionysiac,” and cannot, by definition, constitute Nietzschean tragedy (*BT* 17). The difference between her bedside testimony and that given in the courtroom reveals why the trial is not only “the central analogy of *Sanctuary*” but also the key to Faulkner’s treatment of tragedy in the novel (Kinney 117).

“If you could imagine dissonance assuming human form – and what else is man [or Temple]? – this dissonance would need, to be able to live, a magnificent illusion which would spread a veil of beauty over its own nature” (*BT* 115). As Nietzsche defines it, “this is the true artistic aim of Apollo” (115). This veil of illusion is composed in the trial scene of the theatrical elements surrounding Temple’s presence, specifically the District Attorney’s appeal to the audience and jury. In his performance, Eustace Graham<sup>6</sup> addresses “these good men, these fathers and husbands” with exaggerated respect, even bowing and genuflecting in their direction (*S* 285). As an example of Greek tragedy, the trial scene contains an equal measure of both the Dionysian and Apollonian impulses. As Nietzsche explains, “Tragic myth can only be understood as the transformation of the Dionysic wisdom into images by means of Apolline artistry” (*BT* 105). The District Attorney permits only as much of Temple’s Dionysian nature as he can overcome in his own performance (*BT* 115). Indeed, the control of the Apollonian semblance only affords a “glimpse” of Temple’s Dionysian essence.

Temple's black hat represents the basic functioning of Apollonian semblance: it adds an appropriate semblance pleasing to the court's decorum. However, glimpses of the Dionysian are provided when "from beneath [this] black hat her hair *escaped in tight red curls*" (S 284, *my emphasis*). Ultimately, as Nietzsche defined it, Greek tragedy permits only as much of the Dionysian elements "to enter an individual's consciousness as can be overcome, in its turn, by the Apolline" (115). Thus, the wild, red curls "escape," yet only to form "clots of resin," stuck in place (S 284). The rest of Temple's costume provides this glimpse of the Dionysian as well: for each functioning element of clothing, there is an irrational accessory.

The hat bore a rhinestone ornament. Upon her black satin lap lay a platinum bag. Her pale tan coat was open upon a shoulder knot of purple.

(284)

Her position on the witness stand, however, reveals the effect of Apollo's "will to bring rest and calm to individuals" (BT 50). There, "above the ranked intent faces white and pallid as the floating bellies of dead fish, [Temple] sat in an attitude at once detached and cringing, her gaze fixed on something in the back of the room" (S 284).

The Dionysian, "as the imageless art of music," depends entirely on the Apollonian for its appearance (BT 14). Indeed, "the fact that [the Dionysian] appears at all with such epic definitiveness and clarity, is the effect of Apollo," the image-making god (52). Taken literally, Temple would not have appeared in court if not for the District Attorney. Horace tries to reach Temple the night before the trial begins because he "may need her," but he makes no real effort to track her down, nor seems concerned with the loss (S 268).<sup>7</sup> The Apollonian impulse functions in two ways through two different characters during the course of Goodwin's trial. Once Temple is secured in her dais, the District Attorney acts as the "the interpreter" of her experience, translating to the jury and courtroom her "Dionysiac condition" (BT 52). Judge Drake, as the

second Apollonian impulse, serves to protect and insulate the citizens of Jefferson from such feverish Dionysian stirrings, including their own (*BT* 20).

As the Apollonian interpreter, Eustace Graham “puts his directorial skills to good use in his interrogation of Temple Drake [and] here prompts his witness to deliver her lines on cue and to project to her audience” (Watson 61). As Watson notes, Graham’s cross-examination is almost entirely composed of prompts and directions aimed at Temple: “Louder. Speak out,” “Speak a little louder,” and “Look at where I’m pointing” (*S* 285-286). The District Attorney’s performance consequently reduces Temple to the status of a puppet. In addition, Temple’s own performance smacks of rehearsal. Noticeably behaving “like a drugged person,” she is nonetheless polished and primed for her interrogation (289). Her answers are “parrotlike,” unemotional and immediate (286). So well prepared for her interrogation, Temple correctly answers the District Attorney before he finishes his questions:

“Come. Tell these good men ——”  
“My father.”

(285)

In his most obvious act of control, the District Attorney silences Temple completely, actively denying her any agency. At three different times, Temple tries to reveal what “He [Tommy] said,” but Graham impedes each attempt (287). In her silence, Temple is *made* to testify: she acts without acting, providing an empty vessel through which the District Attorney can feed the (all male) jury “his melodramatic oration” (Watson 61). Controlled by the commands and movements of the District Attorney, Temple waits in a state of doll-like passivity. “Her hands lay motionless, palm-up on her lap,” her legs are “lax-ankled,” and “her two motionless slippers...lay on their sides as though empty” (*S* 284). The only movement Temple seems capable of is her gaze; Graham, however, seamlessly performs around this obstacle, almost like a

dancing partner. Indeed, Graham consistently “move[s] into her line of vision,” and “hold[s] her eyes” (284, 286, 286, 287).

Eustace Graham orchestrates every step of this proceeding. Thus, it cannot be a coincidence that “the testimony of the chemist and the gynecologist” immediately precede Temple’s own (283). Though the experts’ depositions are meant for “you gentlemen” of the jury, Temple cannot avoid witnessing their statements of “the most sacred affairs of [*her*] most sacred thing” (283-284, *my emphasis*). As Michael Millgate observes, “The whole character and direction of Goodwin’s trial – even, it can be said, its entire claim to be considered a legal proceeding – is distorted and subverted in a moment by the introduction of the rape element, and especially of the blood-stained corn-cob said to have been used in the assault” (Millgate 164-165). Though Eustace Graham does provide a “reason” for the new evidence, it is flimsy at best (283).<sup>8</sup> As an audience-savvy lawyer, Graham undoubtedly knew the best result would come from the very combination he provides. He anticipated and arguably desired Temple to be in the state she appears, and the courtroom, “hav[ing] just heard the testimony of the chemist and the gynecologist” and seen the bloodied corn-cob, is primed for her performance (S 283).

Charmaine Eddy claims that “when Temple takes the stand, she thus functions doubly as a figure of violation” (Eddy 34). To elaborate Eddy’s point, Temple Drake is essentially re-raped in this trial. Her body language, controlled by the Apollonian “will to bring rest and calm,” mirrors the very position she assumed in the moment of her ambiguous rape:

She sat quite motionless, her mouth open a little...then *he crossed her field of vision...*in the cottonseed-hulls and the corn-cobs...she sat there, her legs straight before her, *her hands limp and palm-up in her lap...*

(101-102, *my emphasis*)

Originally, Temple appears to have been scared into submission, allowing Popeye to “cross her field of vision” and violate her. The gynecologist, the chemist, and the appearance of the bloodied corn cob also function to intimidate her into submission, into producing the testimony she is made to give. The immediate result is perjury: Temple lies.<sup>9</sup> As Joseph Urgo argues, “to overemphasize the ‘perjury’ reveals a misunderstanding of Temple which does Faulkner’s novel a disservice” (“Truthful Perjury” 439). The perjury itself cannot be ignored, but the function of the lie remains arguably more important than any speculation as to why Temple lied. In the same way that the [sexual] encounter of the Apollonian and Dionysian engenders tragedy, the District Attorney’s orchestrated (re)rape of Temple directly generates her perjury. Thus, Temple’s perjury illustrates the need for tragedy itself.

During Goodwin’s trial, “events are grossly manipulated by Eustace Graham and then grotesquely sanctioned by that dignified representative of the legal profession Judge Drake – supported, of course, by a phalanx of sons, at least two of whom are lawyers themselves” (Millgate 162). Judge Drake, in this way, completes the second Apollonian function present in this scene. As Nietzsche might describe the entrance of “the old man,”<sup>10</sup> “this is where the power of the Apolline, bent on restoring the almost shattered individual, bursts forth, bringing the healing balm of a blissful deception” with him (*BT* 101). However, Judge Drake restores the “shattered individual,” Temple, only to protect himself. “Superficially the very type of Southern judgeship and gentlemanliness,” Judge Drake is “in practice concerned only to defend his family’s name” (Millgate 163). Thus, in escorting Temple out of the courtroom, Judge Drake overcomes his daughter in order to maintain appearances. Further complicating this action is the fact that “*Sanctuary* virtually reeks with sexual tensions, sexual energies, and sexual threats” (Urgo, *Novel Frames* 105). Indeed, the overtly sexualized language of this familial encounter

reveals what is arguably Temple's second (re)rape: in protecting his good name, Judge Drake essentially violates his daughter.

Like the District Attorney, Judge Drake "passe[s] the witness stand...walking right through her line of vision," and Temple "return[s] down the aisle, the old man erect beside her," with "four younger men (her brothers)...standing stiffly erect near the exit" (S 288-289). Together, the five men move "in a close body, the girl hidden among them" when she is not "cring[ing] back" or "arching slowly" away from her father (289). Just inside the door, Temple "appeared to be clinging there, then the five bodies hid her again and again in a close body the group passed through the door and disappeared" (290). Here, the Apollonian ultimately overtakes the Dionysian by physical means and sexualized force. Temple, in her "shrinking and rapt abasement," is physically consumed by the "close body" of her "erect" father and "stiffly erect" brothers. As Amy Lovell Strong notes, "Once she returns to her family, [Temple's] identity [is] literally circumscribed under the law of the Father" (Strong 79). Faulkner again depicts Temple as involuntarily submissive: she cannot exercise any power against or even separate herself from "the five [male] bodies" of her family (S 290).

Interestingly, Joseph Urgo's definition of pornography offers a telling metaphor for what occurs in this scene: "Pornography, then, acts to assert the conscious, rational power of culture over the sensual, irrational compulsions of erotic existence" (Urgo, *Novel Frames* 80).<sup>11</sup> Thus, in an arguably dramatic sexual encounter, Temple and her father "appear paired and, in this pairing, finally engender a work of art which is Dionysiac and Apolline in equal measure: Attic tragedy" (BT 14, *my emphasis*). In addition, the ceremony associated with walking "on down the aisle" elaborates Nietzsche's point (289).<sup>12</sup> Nietzsche focuses his attention "on the sublime and exalted art of Attic tragedy as the common goal of both [the Dionysiac and Apolline] drives

whose mysterious *marriage*, after a long preceding struggle, was *crowned with such a child* – who is both Antigone and Cassandra in one” (28, *my emphasis*). Here, “that mysterious unity [of] the Dionysiac-Apolline genius,” is both spousal and parental (*BT* 28).

As the only remaining woman in her family, Temple accepts her father’s hand, “return[s] down the aisle” beside him, and consummates the ceremony in a “close body” of her immediate patriarchy (289). The Oedipal allusions here are obvious and widely discussed;<sup>13</sup> however, overemphasizing the Freudian elements at play perhaps limits Faulkner’s intentions. For example, Nietzsche states that “Dionysos never ceased to be the [ultimate] hero,” and therefore “all famous figures of the Greek stage [including Oedipus] are merely masks of that original hero” (51). Thus, in discussing Temple’s similarity to “the unfortunate Oedipus,” the incestuous elements implied in this passage more importantly serve to place Temple as a tragic hero; specifically, connecting Temple with Oedipus makes her “the most suffering figure on the Greek stage” (*BT* 51). As Philip Weinstein notes, “Temple actually suffers [in *Sanctuary*] as a full-fledged Faulkner heroine” (Weinstein 132). Like Dionysos, Temple remains “the true hero of the stage and centre of the vision” (*BT* 45). However, the extent of Temple Drake’s role as a tragic hero in this drama and her function in the trial depend more upon her reception in the courtroom than upon her performance on the dais. As Watson explains, “The hint of theater actually enters the Goodwin case before Temple does with the entrance of the courtroom audience” (60). The role of the audience therefore remains just as important as Temple’s, considering Nietzsche’s point that “Enchantment is the precondition of all dramatic art” (*BT* 44). Graham certainly understands this: he projects his case to “the room” like “a rhetor who has his listeners right where he wants them” (Watson 62).



With the conclusion of Temple's "testimony," Graham "turn[s] away" from Temple to face his audience: "Your Honor and gentlemen, you have listened to this horrible, this unbelievable, story which this young girl *has told*" (*S* 288, *my emphasis*). And yet, Temple has "told" nothing; her answers are "parroted," one-worded, or otherwise interrupted by the District Attorney himself:

"He shot him." The District Attorney stepped aside. At once the girl's gaze went to the back of the room and became fixed there. The District Attorney returned, stepped into her line of vision. She moved her head; he caught her gaze and held it and lifted the stained corn-cob before her eyes. *The room sighed, a long hissing breath.*

"Did you ever see this before?"

"Yes."

(287-288, *my emphasis*)

The "long hissing breath" from "the room" essentially connects "he," Goodwin, with the "stained corn-cob." According to Nietzsche, "choral passages which are interwoven with the tragedy are, to an extent, the womb of the entire so-called dialogue, i.e. of the whole world on stage, the drama proper" (*BT* 44). "The whole world on stage" here is thus born from "you gentlemen," "these good men, these fathers and husbands" (*S* 283-285). In this way, "the room" of "these men," the jury and gallery, arguably composes the chorus of this tragedy, completing the gaps in dialogue necessary to connect Goodwin directly to both the murder and the rape. In doing so, "the room" also affirms a connection between the murder and the rape itself.

"The tragic chorus of the Greeks is required to see in the figures on stage real, physically present human beings" (*BT* 37). Unlike any of the actors involved in the trial's proceedings, "the room" remains oblivious to the performance at hand. As illustrated in the above passage, "The only 'reality' is precisely that of the chorus, which creates the vision from within itself" (*BT* 44). The "room" *believes* Goodwin to be guilty of both rape and murder. Therefore, "the room"

fulfills what Nietzsche believes to be a natural response to tragedy: it desires “to listen, but at the same time [it] long[s] to go beyond listening” (S 114). The chorus listens intently to Temple’s testimony, but also, and more importantly, “the room” reads into Temple’s silences.<sup>14</sup> “[I]n a certain sense, a lie is told which causes pain to disappear from the features of nature,” and as a result “you gentlemen” hear only what they want to hear (BT 80). The lie Temple “has told” eases the suffering of “you gentlemen” who desire to maintain control of their traditional society. Amy Strong explains that “[t]he important thing to the men in this courtroom is not how to protect Temple’s body, but how to maintain the power to define it” (S 79). Perhaps writing to a readership not unlike “the gentlemen” in the courtroom, Robert Moore captures this sentiment with his statement that “If [Temple] demands our sympathy and protective impulses, she is also fair game for our sexual fantasies” (114). However negative the implications, the point remains that Temple, as the tragic hero, embodies and reflects the needs and desires of her audience. Indeed, “when the tragic hero appears on the stage, [the audience] see[s], not some grotesquely masked human being, but rather a visionary figure, born, as it were, of their own ecstasy” (BT 45). As such, Temple, like Oedipus, exhibits the “glory of passivity” (48). Just as the jury determines Goodwin’s conviction by “go[ing] beyond listening” to Temple, the chorus again “goes beyond” the reality presented to them in order to fulfill their own needs and preserve their ruling ideology. Thus, Temple is made to suffer in order to protect the very patriarchy against which she attempts to rebel and from which she attempts to escape.

“The chorus which *shares in suffering* is also the *wise* chorus which *proclaims* the truth from the heart of the world” (BT 45). As Judge Drake enters the courtroom, parting the “living wall” of the chorus “like a prolonged sigh,” the collective “heads [turn] as one and [watch]” him walk straight to the stage (BT 41, S 288). The chorus, sharing Temple’s suffering, records every

step of the interaction between Judge Drake and his daughter Temple. Indeed, “the held breaths” of the room await the Judge’s acknowledgement of his daughter (S 288). When “the old man [does] turn to her and extend his hand,” Temple retains “her attitude of childish [and sedated] immobility” (289). In response, “the room expel[s] its breath, suck[s] it quickly in and [holds] it again,” and did not “breathe again [until] they moved on down the aisle” as a couple (289). Silence accompanies “the old man” and “four younger men” as they frighten and force Temple down the aisle and out of the courtroom (289). The chorus waits with baited breath, *witnessing* the effect of Temple’s father on the young girl: she cringes back from him, “her arm tautening in the old man’s grasp;” he bends to speak to her, immediately causing her “shrinking and rapt abasement.” Furthermore, the chorus remains mute as “the girl could be seen shrunk against the wall just inside the door...clinging” and desperate to be saved from the “close body” of men “like soldiers” who eventually take her away (289-290). These descriptions clearly note some form of abuse, yet the chorus refrains from even a breath of alarm. “The room” does not dare exhale until the cast “passe[s] through the door and disappear[s]” off-stage (290).

With the Drakes’ mass exodus, “the room breathe[s]: a buzzing sound that” carries an undeniable tune of delight (290). Raymond Guess explains that people “take pleasure in *watching* Oedipus’s demise because deep down we know we would experience our own dissolution as deeply pleasurable (and also horrible)” (*BT* xviii, *my emphasis*). Unknowingly (yet importantly) connecting this idea to Faulkner’s fiction, Michael Gresset observes that “with Faulkner, *watching* is an explosive activity” (Gresset 197, *my emphasis*). “Watching silences telling” and essentially provides the movement of the scene’s conclusion as the audience “pace[s]” the interaction between Temple and her father (Watson 62). Thus, the chorus again witnesses Temple’s (re)rape, this time pursuing “a supreme delight reached by a path leading

through destruction and negation” (*BT* 100). Through Temple’s suffering, the chorus finds an affirmation of its own status and way of life, and therefore remains responsible for presenting that “metaphysical solace... derive[ed] from every true tragedy, the solace that in the ground of things, and despite all changing appearances, life is indestructibly mighty and pleasurable” (39). Temple’s suffering is therefore inevitable.

As Noel Polk observes, “*Sanctuary* is [considerably] less concerned with either crime or justice than it is with punishment (Polk 230); “the room” itself is just as invested in Temple’s punishment as they are in Goodwin’s sentence. In this sense, Temple not only functions to affirm a patriarchal, traditional way of life, she more importantly functions to affirm suffering itself. This affirmation of suffering is arguably the “wind” that washes over the entire courtroom after Temple’s forced departure:

The room breathed: a buzzing sound like a wind getting up. It moved forward with a slow increasing rush, on above the long table where the prisoner and the woman with the child and Horace and the District Attorney and the Memphis lawyer sat, and across the jury and against the Bench in a long sigh.

(*S* 290)

The reaction of the chorus surges forth, spreading its effect over everyone including the jury and Judge (or “Bench”). Temple, “in [her] purely passive behavior, achieves the highest form of activity which has consequences reaching far beyond [her] own life, whereas all [her] conscious words and actions in [her] life hitherto have merely led to [her] passivity” (*BT* 47). In other words, Temple’s experience of Dionysiac rebellion and excess has led to this moment of complete passivity, in which she achieves “the best and highest of which [humanity] is capable” (49). According to Nietzsche, Temple achieves this “by committing an offence and must in turn accept the consequences of this, namely the whole flood of suffering and tribulations which the

offended heavenly powers must in turn visit upon the human race” (49). Temple has indeed sinned against “her father”: the patriarchal system represented in the close body of her family and in the courtroom of “gentlemen.” Thus, her suffering is not only inevitable, but crucial to the determination and affirmation of tragedy itself.

Noel Polk points out that Temple “joins a host of other Faulkner characters with tendencies toward self-destruction” (232). To discuss Temple’s role in terms of mere “tendency” underestimates the power and extent of Faulkner’s work. Indeed, “People enjoy watching tragedy because in watching this *ritual* of self destruction they are gaining insight into *the fundamental human condition*,” that is, the condition of suffering (*BT* xviii, *my emphasis*). Nietzsche explains this process, stating that the coexistence of “the experience of being compelled to look and, at the same time, of being filled with a desire to go beyond looking...is the most remarkable of the peculiar effects of tragedy” (*BT* 112). In watching this Attic tragedy (or “pornography”), the chorus exhibits “[t]he enormous power of tragedy to stimulate, purify, and discharge the entire life of the people” (99). This point is not unrelated to Laura Tanner’s claim that “[t]he trial, then, serves as a reenactment of the reading process in which prosecutor and jury dramatize the interactive dynamics that govern the relationship between *Sanctuary* and its readers” (570). Urgo acknowledges the active role the reader plays in *Sanctuary*, noting that “[t]he reader’s judgment of Temple and his level of sympathy for her condition – personal or societal – will determine his understanding and judgment of the novel as a whole” (“Truthful Perjury” 439). Indeed, Faulkner’s reader, like the tragic chorus, has ‘witnessed’ Temple’s constant violation, as well as her punishment: the testimony itself and the ominous fortress of her family, respectively. Anne Goodwyn Jones offers a critique of Faulkner, arguing that it “seems impossible for him to imagine a conclusion that is not, however agonizing it may be, *tragic* for

these women who resist the Southern Patriarchal sex-gender system” (71, *my emphasis*). More telling, however, than the inevitability of Faulkner’s penchant for this kind of tragedy is his ability to conjure and create it.

*Sanctuary* was “a deliberate book” that is also, in Joseph Blotner’s judgment, “a satisfying work of art” (234). Faulkner “may have considered something like a three-horse parlay: a spectacular mystery-detective-gangster story, a commercially successful novel, and *a work of art* that would mirror the corruption of society at large in the lives of a small number of people from different levels of society” (234, *my emphasis*). Some of the more superficial (and harmful) critiques of *Sanctuary*<sup>15</sup> describe it in terms that echo “the ethical foundation of pessimistic tragedy, its justification of evil in human life, both in the sense of human guilt and in the sense of the suffering brought about by it” (BT 50). Nietzsche further explains that pessimism exists “wherever *art has not appeared* in one form or another” (74). Thus, as “a work of art,” *Sanctuary* exists as the evolution of Greek tragedy, that “supreme art” Nietzsche defines, rather than simply “the *intrusion* of Greek tragedy into the detective story,” as Malraux’s expresses in his preface to the 1933 French edition of the novel (BT 106, Blend 104, *my emphasis*). Finally, Nietzsche believes that “if Dionysos and Apollo are successfully brought into alliance in a given tragedy, the result will be a transformation of ‘pessimism’ – not into optimism, to be sure, but into a kind of affirmation” (Geuss xxv). Faulkner’s philosophy evolves this idea, as well. Indeed, Faulkner presents an affirmation of tragedy itself: like humor, “It’s a part of man [and] it’s a part of life” (FU 39). In this way, as Jay Parini notes, with *Sanctuary*, Faulkner got at the very heart of his time, anticipating “much of what was to come in the latter half of the twentieth century” (136).

As Nietzsche insisted, “If we look now, with eyes strengthened and refreshed by the Greeks, at the world around us, we can see how the insatiable zest for knowledge...has been transformed into tragic resignation and a need for art” (*BT* 75). By creating art that expresses the need for art itself, “Faulkner in *Sanctuary* taught modern and contemporary writers exactly how to embody this dark world of violence and corruption, of moral failure and intellectual waste” (Parini 136). As Nietzsche comments, “Art alone can re-direct those repulsive thoughts about the terrible or absurd nature of existence into representations with which man can live,” and “[o]nly as an aesthetic phenomenon do existence and the world appear justified” (*BT* 20, 113). Faulkner, however, uses art itself to present “the terrible or absurd nature of existence” (*BT* 20).

As Patrick McHugh correctly notes, “The link between Faulkner's novel and the philosophies of Nietzsche...once identified, is hard to deny” (McHugh 57). More important, however, is the link between Faulkner and Nietzsche as philosophers. In another lecture at the University of Virginia, Faulkner was again questioned about “the craftsman’s tools” of writing. He replied:

You don’t write a story just to show your versatility with your tools. You write a story to tell about people, man in his constant struggle ... in the ageless, eternal struggles ... shown for a moment in a dramatic instant of the furious motion of being alive, that’s all any story is. You can catch this fluidity which is human life and you focus a light on it and you stop long enough for people to be able to see it...

(*FU* 239)

Faulkner did not write *Sanctuary* to display his familiarity with Nietzsche or understanding of Greek tragedy. Rather, this novel, supposedly “basely conceived” by a writer who is “not a literary man,” communicates Faulkner’s philosophy, his expression of the “eternal struggles” of the “fluidity which is human life.” Patrick McHugh observed that Faulkner’s “engagement with

Nietzsche's ideas is [often] satiric" (58). In light of his role as a philosopher, however, Faulkner is not "engaging" Nietzsche at all; rather, he is creating and presenting his own philosophy.

In this sense, perhaps the "evolution" of tragedy exhibited in *Sanctuary* speaks less of its coming into being than it does of its end. Like Hegel's "end of poetry," perhaps Faulkner here determines the end of tragedy: the use of art solely to affirm, not ease, suffering. This would certainly explain the genre change: a trial is inherently dramatic, but a drama presented inside a novel speaks of a contextual complexity not fully explored in this examination. Thus, in discussing Faulkner as a philosopher, we can claim the trial scene in *Sanctuary* to be more than evidence of Faulkner's knowledge of Nietzsche: the trial scene reveals the evolution beyond Nietzsche, the end of tragedy itself, and therefore the innovation of Faulkner's own philosophy.



Q. Some people say they can't understand your writing, even after they read it two or three times. What approach would you suggest for them?

FAULKNER: Read it four times.

Interview with Jean Stein, 1956

FAULKNER, HEGEL, AND “THE TELLING”:  
CONSCIOUSNESS AND HISTORY IN *ABSALOM, ABSALOM!*

“It’s just incredible. It just does not explain.”  
*Absalom, Absalom!*

As French philosopher Merleau-Ponty claimed, “All great philosophical ideas of the past century...had their beginnings in Hegel,” and, for this reason, our greatest task must be “reestablishing the connection between...the doctrines which try to forget their Hegelian origin and...that origin itself” (Merleau-Ponty 63-64). Although Merleau-Ponty refers to works of philosophy, it seems negligent to speculate upon Hegel’s influence on William Faulkner’s literature without the biographical context of this influence: in other words, we must go searching for origins. During his conference series at the University of Virginia, Faulkner revealed,

Of course, [a writer] collects his material all his life from everything he reads, from everything he listens to, everything he sees, and he stores that away in sort of a filing cabinet... and [later] he digs out something that he has read or seen to throw flashlight on the particular moment [he is] writing.  
(*FU* 116)<sup>16</sup>

Although there is very little information on Faulkner’s intellectual history, I argue that, based on his literary interests and associations, Faulkner possessed, at the least, an awareness of Hegel’s philosophy. There exists no documented evidence of Faulkner’s contact with Hegel, yet, with the numerous possibilities I explore, I hope to offer at least a probable speculation

The early influence of Phil Stone on Faulkner is certainly not a new topic for discussion. “From the summer of 1914, when Phil Stone came home from Yale with a B.A., until the fall of 1916, when he returned to New Haven to study for a second LL.B, he and William Faulkner spent a great deal of time in each other’s company” (Blotner 168). As Stone’s wife, Emily

Whitehurst Stone, would later recount, “Phil liked to talk, and Bill liked to listen [and] [t]hey both had a passion for literature” (Ferris 539). Indeed, the two Oxford natives would take “walks through the country...and on these occasions [they] discussed aesthetics” among other things, as Stone wrote Louis Cochran on December 28, 1931 (Meriweather 139). The two would also “read or talk” at Stone’s father’s expansive home, which “contained thousands of books” (Blotner 168). Surrounded by first editions and “volumes by...Philosophers, dramatists, and poets, too,” it is perhaps warranted to suppose that a single volume of Hegel could be discovered (Blotner 169). During his time with Stone, as Blotner learned in preparing the two volumes of *Faulkner: A Biography*, Faulkner was even known to read “German volumes in translation” (169). Thus, during the course of his friendship with Stone, as Tom McHaney notes, Faulkner “under[went] a personal tutorial with a man who had four college degrees and a splendid library” (McHaney, “At the P.O.” 185). Unfortunately, a fire destroyed much of the library’s contents in 1942, and no full inventory exists.

Phil Stone took an early interest in Faulkner after reading his poetry and remained not only a friend, but also an advocate, publicist, and, in many ways, manager. During that pivotal period between his stints at Yale, Stone introduced the young Faulkner to Stark Young. Young had come to Oxford, Mississippi at the age of fourteen, and he returned after college as a member of the English department faculty at the University of Mississippi from 1904 to 1907. When he met Faulkner, Young was then a professor at the University of Texas, interested in literature, literary theory, and philosophy. To claim that Young possessed knowledge of Hegel is therefore not unreasonable. Indeed, in Young’s short story “Italian Notes” (1926), an engineer and a priest fight over the need for a system in Italy:

“Kant,” shouted the engineer. “Where’s any Kant in Italy? Kant, *Hegel*, Schopenhauer? In philosophy we had Croce, but he is past, out of date.”

“Kant, yes,” said the priest, “but Kant too is out of date, he is taught in the schools, in the history of philosophy and of method, but he has become merely historical.”

(Young, *Encaustics* 165-166, *emphasis added*)

Thus, we know Faulkner had a direct connection with at least one person who would eventually, though quite briefly, put Hegel’s name in print. Stone and Young collaborated more than once during the course Faulkner’s ‘intellectualization.’ For example, to prevent Faulkner from damaging his prospective literary career by eloping with Estelle in 1921, Stone encouraged him to go stay with Young in New York. Young, in turn, recommended Faulkner to the manager of the Doubleday bookstore. “I promised,” Young later recalled, “that my friend Elizabeth Prall,<sup>17</sup> who directed an important bookstore, could give him a job there to tide him over till he could settle into something that suited him better, and meanwhile he was welcome to stay with me” (Young, *The Pavilion* 59-60).

As Blotner gathered, “When customers picked up books he thought worthless he would be abrupt, almost rude. “Don’t read that trash,” he would say, pressing other books on them, “read this.” People bought piles of books from him” (Blotner 326). Faulkner was not there long, however, before Phil Stone realized that he was doing no better for his career in New York than he was in Oxford. He wired Faulkner his fear, warning him that “If he stayed in New York he’d be around people who would talk the Great American Novel, not write it” (326). After much convincing, Stone finally drew Faulkner back home, where a job already awaited him at the local post office. In his December 28, 1931 letter to Louis Cochran, Stone revealed that he “forced Bill to take this job over his own inclination and refusal [and] [h]e made the damndest postmaster the world has ever seen” (Meriweather 139).

From a bookstore where, as Faulkner wrote his mother, “any book you see advertised, [they] have got it” to a post office where free time and reading material were apparently abundant, Faulkner, at the very least, was cultivating a propensity for putting his own interests first (Watson 161). According to Emily Stone, “He spent his days with his feet on a table so he could be comfortable while he read the magazines that came in” (Stone 146). The post office in Oxford routed mail for town citizens, as well as University students and professors; thus, the magazines he read perhaps did not exclude scholarly journals. As postmaster, Faulkner therefore had the opportunity to receive quite an education while he spent “Three years of reading other people’s mail, and borrowing other people’s books, on a university campus” (McHaney 185). The rightful recipients were perhaps less impressed,<sup>18</sup> and Faulkner was eventually (allegedly)<sup>19</sup> fired.

Tom McHaney provides an intriguing speculation in “What Faulkner Read at the P.O.,” and I clearly follow his lead here. McHaney lists several publications the post office could have routed, publications to which the University of Mississippi Library apparently subscribed. Among these are included the *Atlantic*, the *New Republic*, *North American Review*, and the *Yale Review* (McHaney, “At the P.O.” 184). In addition to these publications, I suggest the University Post Office also received what were two of the most prominent philosophical periodicals of the time, *The Philosophical Review* and the *Journal of Philosophy*. Indeed, issues from these years are present in the University of Mississippi Main Library stacks, worn with age. Articles published in these journals at the time Faulkner had such access to them included reviews of works such as Hugh A. Reyburn’s *The Ethical Theory of Hegel: A Study of the Philosophy of Right* in *The Philosophical Review* and *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* by J.M.E. McTaggart, published in *The Journal of Philosophy*.<sup>20</sup> Among the original essays in these magazines were

several articles on Bernard Bosanquet, who, throughout his studies, “holds the secret of Hegel and is qualified to reveal it” (Smith 135). Indeed, according to J.H. Muirhead, “If Bosanquet had been asked to what philosophical writers he owed most, he would have named Plato and Hegel” (Muirhead 674). Articles on Bosanquet from *The Philosophical Review* alone included, “An Estimate of Bosanquet’s Philosophy,” “Humor and Bosanquet’s Theory of Experience,” and “The Nature of the Absolute in the Metaphysics of Bernard Bosanquet.”<sup>21</sup>

In reference to a June 1922 *Atlantic* article by G. Stanley Hall, “Flapper Americana Novissima,” McHaney asks, “Could Faulkner, whose interest in flappers, adolescence, and Jesus would meld in more than one book, have missed completely the man who brought Freud to Massachusetts during the fall Quentin Compson matriculated at Harvard?” (McHaney, “At the P.O.” 184). Interestingly, Hall was initially influenced by and even connected to the St. Louis Philosophical Society, a group more commonly known as the St. Louis Hegelians. Hall even published in the Society’s influential publication, the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, the means with which the St. Louis Hegelians disseminated Hegel’s philosophy across the country.

According to Hall, “True greatness consists in seeing everything, past, future or afar, in terms of Here and Now, or in the power of presentifications” (Hall 106). In his *The Mind in the Making*, James Henry Robinson “quotes from G. Stanley Hall [this] notion of time,” which is also, as M. Gidley asserts, “endorsed by Faulkner” (Gidley 310). Interestingly, Stone owned Robinson’s book in his personal collection (*Catalogue* 126). Hall eventually disclaimed Hegel’s philosophy, but his work in psychology undeniably reveals Hegel’s influences, particularly the ideas of time, space, and motion (Goetzmann 129). “In 1909 [Hall] arranged to bring Freud to [Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts] on his first visit to America” in 1910 (Goetzmann 130). Quentin entered Harvard that year; his only course, as far as the reader is told,

is Psychology (*SF* 64). Furthermore, Quentin entered Harvard when its own faculty included George Santayana, whose lectures formed the five volumes of his *The Life of Reason* (1905-06). Arguably written as a response to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Santayana's lectures (and philosophy) reflected an obvious understanding of the German Philosopher. Knowing this link, perhaps it could even be speculated that, not only did Faulkner read Hegel, Quentin Compson did, too.<sup>22</sup>

Jack Falkner once said that his brother William "was perfectly capable of making his own selections (of reading material), and...that, to a large extent, is what he did" (Blotner 170). This is most certainly not untrue; however, during those "formative" years, Phil Stone, at the very least, helped to shape the course and conditions of Faulkner's career. Indeed, Faulkner's brother stresses that "No one could have helped [Faulkner] more than Phil did" (Falkner 153). During this period in his life, as Faulkner would later write, "[he] was subject to the usual proselyting of an older person, but the strings were pulled so casually as scarcely to influence [his] point of view" (*EPP* 116). Although Stone would later (and often) exaggerate his influence on Faulkner for his own personal gain, his early influence is undeniable.<sup>23</sup> "He paid attention to Faulkner as a writer," which is, as Jay Parini asserts, "the best thing he could have done to encourage him" (Parini 32). For this very reason, their relationship deserves further consideration.

Specifically, I want to introduce a possibility that remains surprisingly under-explored. "Really," as Emily Stone recalled, "it was not until after Phil first went to Yale that [he and Faulkner] became close friends" (Ferris 538). Faulkner's biographers all diligently note that Phil Stone returned from Yale with a wealth of knowledge to share with Faulkner, yet in expounding what this knowledge might encompass, few do more than provide a short list of authors Stone preferred. Indeed, at best we are told, "At Yale [Stone] had been exposed to contemporary

currents,” and he returned to Oxford imbued with “the essence of a Yale education” (Blotner 163, Singal 42). By all accounts, Stone preferred literary ideas and studies, thus ruling out the economic and political “current” circulating at Yale in 1913-1914. Snell explains that, “Unlike the dilettante, who rarely ventures into the maze of literary theory, Stone found the abstractions and generalizations riveting” (Snell 79). Furthermore, “the essence of a Yale education” includes “not only literature,” according to Daniel Singal, “but [also] philosophy” (42). For this reason, I turn our attention to the Department of Philosophy.

Charles Montague Bakewell was the Sheldon Clark Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Yale during the very period in which Stone was an undergraduate. He earned both his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at Harvard in 1892 and 1894, respectively, and began teaching at Yale in 1905. Bakewell apparently noted his greatest influences to be Socrates and William James, and “Because Socrates and James were so personally a part of him, certain other philosophers were important also” (Northrop 189). Indeed, the “idealism of Socrates enforced the importance of Aristotle, Kant, *Hegel*, Emerson, Royce, and Hocking [and] [t]he skepticism of Socrates...made it easy to reconcile the idealism of Socrates with the pluralism of James” (Northrop 189, *emphasis added*). Significantly, according to Thomas Lloyd Malone, Bakewell wrote his dissertation on Hegel, titled, “Hegelianism and Man: Or, the Problem of the One and the Many from a Modern Standpoint” (Malone). Finally, at Yale, Bakewell’s “major course was the history of philosophy, which he taught...in such a manner that the historical philosophical problems became one’s own problems” (Northrop 189). While Snell provides details regarding Stone’s heavy load of English and Greek literature courses at Yale, with no complete class schedule for Phil Stone, this evidence draws yet another speculative line in Faulkner’s intellectual history, however faint, between the author and Hegel.



My hope is that these faint lines of connection, if listed and layered together, form probable evidence of Faulkner's awareness of Hegelian philosophy. "I set out to learn all I could sooner in my life than you did," Faulkner advised Joan Williams in 1952. "I mean, the reading..." (SL 338). In addition, Faulkner told Williams to read Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution*: "It helped me" (Blotner 1302). Interestingly enough, however, Bergson, like Hegel, is not among the catalogued authors in Faulkner's library. In this sense, *William Faulkner's Library: A Catalogue*, one of the only sources of what Faulkner studied, cannot be considered an effective guide to the author's literary history. When dealing with a life so consciously veiled in mystery, however, perhaps proof cannot be expected. Should we instead take the author at his word? If so, we are to believe, "For years [Faulkner] read anything and everything" (Campbell, 3).<sup>24</sup>

Such shreds of evidence suggest the possibility of Faulkner's strong philosophical foundation. When coupled, however, with the evidence of an Hegelian strain found in his writing, mere speculation achieves a certain legitimacy. Perhaps there would be no better place to explore Hegel's influence, than in *Absalom, Absalom!*,<sup>25</sup> the novel in which Quentin Compson enters Harvard, where, according to Santayana, philosophers "were consciously teaching and guiding the community, as if they had been clergymen without a church... at once genuine philosophers and popular professors" (Santayana 43). Thus, at the risk of imposing an Hegelian machine to explain Faulkner's text or forcing Faulkner's words beyond his intentions, I begin my examination.

\* \* \*

Sometime near February of 1934, Faulkner wrote his publisher Hal Smith about “The one [he was currently] writing [that would] be called *Dark House* or something of that nature” (SL 78). As Faulkner described it,

It is the more or less violent breakup of a household or family from 1860 to about 1910. It is not as heavy as it sounds. The story is an anecdote which occurred during and right after the civil war; the climax is another anecdote which happened about 1910 and which explains the story.

(SL 78–79)

Essentially, the work that would become *Absalom, Absalom!* revolves around the act of telling the story at its heart, as Faulkner reveals in his notes. Although he usually burned these “working papers” of his novels and short stories after their completion, Faulkner’s notes for *Absalom, Absalom!* managed to survive. This “working paper” reveals the complexities Faulkner faced in telling this story, as well as the way in which he planned to address them. Tellingly, “The immediate crux was, exactly what did Quentin (and some others) know, and how did they find it out” (Blotner 890). Faulkner’s approach in *Absalom, Absalom!* is therefore perhaps not unlike Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which is, according to Hegel, “an exposition of how knowledge makes its appearance” (PhS 76). In making this link between writer and philosopher, one must remember Hegel’s explicit advice that “the real issue is not exhausted by stating it as an aim, but by carrying it out,” and, in doing so, “the result together with the process through which it came about” is the actual whole to be studied (PhS 2).

Despite several false starts, the “basic idea” for *Absalom, Absalom!*, according to Parini, “remained constant: traumatic events from the last century would be recovered, retold, and confronted in the early part of the twentieth century by Quentin Compson” (Parini 193). As Ursula Brumm maintains, “The Sutpen story in the way we see it emerge, does not exist outside of Quentin’s mind” (Brumm 56). “It’s still Sutpen’s story,” Faulkner revealed to a graduate class

in 1958. “But then, every time any character gets into a book, no matter how minor, he’s actually telling his biography” (*FU* 275). Thus, if Sutpen is still the story, then the way in which the story is told weaves a complex structure of which Quentin is the root. Even Faulkner found the complications difficult, as evidenced from the diagram he created in his salvaged “working paper” (Blotner 890-891). Hegel, in his discussion of the Unhappy Consciousness, perhaps offers the best model for the unique position in which Faulkner creates Quentin.<sup>26</sup>

As the Unhappy Consciousness, Quentin reflects Hegel’s notion of “self-consciousness in a new shape, a consciousness which, as the infinitude of consciousness or as its own pure movement, is aware of itself as essential being, *a being which thinks*” (*PhS* 120, *emphasis added*). Furthermore, to use Kartiganer’s words, Quentin’s role as the Unhappy Consciousness proves to be “the [very] means by which [Faulkner] confronts and illuminates that complexity” of both the structure and substance of *Absalom, Absalom!* (Kartiganer 69). This study will therefore begin by focusing on Quentin Compson as the Unhappy Consciousness in order to explain the way in which Faulkner perhaps knowingly uses this character to present an understanding and appropriation of Hegelian philosophy. Furthermore, in speculating Faulkner’s “metaphysics of history,” this study explores the serious implications of self-consciousness to the whole of Hegel’s “system.” Just as Heidegger questions the “extent [to which] the system of science require[s]...the experience of consciousness,” I explore the extent to which “the experience of consciousness” expresses Hegel’s system as a whole, in line with Faulkner’s own “design” (Heidegger 10). In other words, I will explore the way in which Faulkner’s notion of history, as the confrontation and confluence of the past and present, *and* time and space, is an appropriation of “*the science*” Hegel claims his philosophy to be. However, we must first understand Quentin before we can understand the significance of his telling.

In September 1909, Rosa Coldfield, dressed in “the eternal black which she had worn for forty-three years” and outraged for just as long, introduces to Quentin the telling of the story. Joseph Blotner describes how Faulkner, “Writing with abbreviations that reduced –ing endings to a trailing line, told how Quentin heard the story of Rosa Coldfield” (Blotner 892). The story itself is not what matters, and even Quentin realizes this: “It’s because she wants it told” (AA 5). From this point on, Quentin is aware of himself as a “being which thinks,” and his experience – and ours – is moved into his consciousness. As Heidegger explains, “Becoming aware of itself, this consciousness turns into what we may accordingly designate *self-consciousness*” (Heidegger 15). Furthermore, from Quentin’s experience of Miss Coldfield’s telling “emerges a new form of consciousness which... knows that it is the dual consciousness of itself, as [both] self-liberating, unchangeable, and self-identical, and as self-bewildering and self-perverting” (PhS 126). According to Hegel, this new form is “the awareness of this self-contradictory nature as itself” (126). Indeed, as “this *unhappy, inwardly disrupted consciousness*,” Quentin,

[When] hearing would reconcile... would seem to listen to *two separate Quentins now* – the Quentin Compson preparing for Harvard in the South, the deep South dead since 1865 and peopled with garrulous outraged baffled ghosts, listening, having to listen, to one of the ghosts...; and the Quentin Compson who was still too young to deserve yet to be a ghost but nevertheless having to be one for all that, since he was born and bred in the deep South the same as she was – the two separate Quentins now talking to one another in the long silence of notpeople in notlanguage.”

(AA 4-5, *emphasis added*)

“The duplication of self-consciousness within itself, which is essential in the Notion of the Spirit, is” for Hegel, “thus here before us, but not yet in its unity” (PhS 126). Thus, for Hegel, “the *Unhappy Consciousness* is the consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being” (126). As illustrated, Quentin is aware of his internal lack of unity, this division of consciousness into opposites: one Quentin preparing to leave the South, preparing for his future,

and the other Quentin already “having to be” a ghost and “having to be one [ever] since he was born” (AA 5). The “two separate Quentins” embody what is essentially the split between “the deep South dead since 1865” and the possibilities of Harvard for which he is now preparing and from which he distinguishes the South. While Harvard is “Where the best of thought [Quentin’s] Father said clings like dead ivy upon old dead bricks,” the dead South, to use Hegel’s terms, composes and therefore remains his “unchangeable” essence (SF 61, PhS 127). The South essentially embodies the “personal, familial, and cultural pressures to accept a static... vision of the past” (McHaney, “Faulkner’s Cosmos” 327). Thus, more accurately stated, this division of the “two Quentins” is itself the separation between the past and the present.

“For Quentin Compson, the chief narrator of *Absalom, Absalom!*,” Hoffman tells us, “relating history to his own present is his existential concern” (Hoffman 281). Indeed, “This Unhappy Consciousness essentially moves towards its accomplished goal of Spirit,” yet, according to Hegel, “this goal is remote and implicit: its two sides are always being forced together in unity, only to fall painfully apart.” (126). Thus, Quentin can never reconcile what is, essentially, the two Quentins, the past and present within him, embodied in the South and the “New England dark,” respectively (AA 303). When Shreve asks, “Why [Quentin] hate[s] the South,” Quentin arguably evidences this struggle, responding “at once, immediately,”

‘I don’t hate it,’ he said. *I dont hate it* he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark: *I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!*

(AA 303)

Furthermore, “Quentin knows that... what he wants to know, the connecting link between past and present is very rarely attainable” (Hoffman 282). For this reason, the Unhappy Consciousness is “the tragic fate of the certainty of self that aims to be absolute,” yet never achieves that for which it yearns (PhS 455). As Heidegger explains this state, “The unhappy

consciousness...is *not yet* happy, but in such a way that it *knows* about happiness precisely in knowing about its *unhappiness*” (Heidegger 140). Thus, for Quentin, as typical of a Faulknerian protagonist, there is no “achieved reconciliation” between the past and the present, and “Quentin’s two selves have split irrevocably” (Porter 271). This failure to achieve reconciliation, this failed attempt at absolute knowledge is imbedded in Quentin’s palindromic exchange with Henry Sutpen, arguably his double:

*And you are ——?*  
*Henry Sutpen.*  
*And you have been here ——?*  
*Four years.*  
*And you came home——?*  
*To die. Yes.*  
*To die?*  
*Yes. To die.*  
*And you have been here ——?*  
*Four years.*  
*And you are ——?*  
*Henry Sutpen.*

(AA 298, *emphasis added*)

“What Quentin confronts here,” as Carolyn Porter explains, “is death,<sup>27</sup> the maddening rebuttal to all designs for transcendence and immortality” (Porter, 269). Death indeed solves the opposition between the past and the present by ending opposition altogether, but, as Hegel defines it, death “has not yet completed the reconciliation,” and for this reason, “death is [merely] the painful feeling of the Unhappy Consciousness that God Himself is dead” (*PhS* 476). This is not, however, to say that the dualism between the past and the present is never overcome. To explain how Faulkner accomplishes this, I turn our attention to the novel’s climax.

In “the dead moment before dawn” and in this death-like state, Quentin “could see” the burning of Sutpen’s design and the escape of Sutpen’s ruined blood, Jim Bond, “the scion, the last of his race” (299-300). Thus, as Faulkner promised Hal Smith, the climax of *Absalom*,

*Absalom!* occurs in 1910, and from his “tomblike room,” Quentin, as Faulkner emphasizes in relentless repetition, “could see it” all, that which was to be “nevermore,” as it was happening “though he had not been there” (AA 276, 299-300). The climax of *Absalom, Absalom!* I maintain exists not in this moment’s action, but in the act of *telling* this moment “In the room *now*” (298, *emphasis added*). In this way, the climax occurs in the confluence of the South “dead since 1865” and the “iron New England dark” of 1910, the confluence between the past and the present (AA 4, 303). Indeed, as Quentin qualifies his statement that “it seemed to [him] that he could actually see” the confederate regiment Sutpen led in the Civil War, “If I had been there, I could not have seen it so clearly” (154-155). Quentin envisions not what happened but what he was told and what he imagines, and he sees it “so clearly” because he has become a part of the telling itself.

Ursula Brumm claims that *Absalom, Absalom!* “is Faulkner’s fullest exploration of the working of a historic consciousness” and that Quentin Compson “is entirely a function of [this] historic consciousness, whose duty it is to receive, check, mull over, evaluate, and imaginatively complete the Sutpen story and its meaning for Southern history” (Brumm 54-55). Quentin, in a sense, has been groomed for this role since his childhood. Prepared now to receive and recreate Sutpen’s story, “his very body was an *empty* hall echoing sonorous defeated names [that were interchangeable and almost myriad]; he was not a being, an entity, he was a commonwealth” (AA 7). The “empty intuition” Quentin possesses is arguably Hegel’s definition of the way in which “Time [or] the Notion itself that *is there*...presents itself” (487). As Faulkner determined, “a man, a character in a story at any moment of action is not just himself as he is then, he is all that made him” (FU 84). More importantly, perhaps, Quentin transcends that which “[he] thought thinking *Yes, I have had to listen [to for] too long*” in order to create and, in a sense, become his

own telling (157). Tobin argues that Quentin's "narrative re-creation becomes the true ritual that permits him to transcend the weak present for the strong past" (Tobin 257). Specifically, "Rather than penetrating the past," Quentin's narrative allows him to "bring [the past] into line with [his] historical present" (261). In this way, the telling is the very reconciliation between the past and the "now" that Quentin is painfully unable to achieve within himself. Furthermore, the telling is "the experience of consciousness which is possible only when consciousness is the subject" (Heidegger 23). Thus, we return to Faulkner's letter to Hal Smith in this new light:

Quentin Compson, of the *Sound & Fury*, *tells* it, or ties it together; he is the protagonist so that it is not complete apocrypha. I use him because it is just before he is to commit suicide because of his sister, and I use his bitterness which he has projected on the South in the form of hatred of it and its people to get *more out of the story itself than a historical novel would be.*"  
(SL 78-79, my emphasis)

What makes *Absalom, Absalom!* more than an historical novel is the very way in which Quentin "ties it all together," or, more importantly and accurately, the way in which Faulkner uses Quentin to accomplish this.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Quentin is essentially how we, the reader, know what we know – not only Sutpen's mystery, but also Faulkner's own notion of history.

To return to Brumm's point, history in *Absalom, Absalom!* "is history as a content of mind, as a matter of consciousness" (Brumm56). Furthermore, as Hegel states, "it is clear that the [process of consciousness] is nothing else but the simple history of its movement or of its experience, and [consciousness] *itself* is nothing else but just *this history*" (*PhS* 64, *emphasis added*). In other words, consciousness, according to Hegel, is both history and the process of history. The purpose, however, of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, exactly like that of *Absalom, Absalom!*, is not "merely...to explore the experiences of consciousness" (Stewart 5).<sup>29</sup> *Absalom, Absalom!*, however, is also "not just about history," as Robert Penn Warren asserted (Parini



204). Indeed, Gerard Hoffman astutely notes that “not just the workings of consciousness and broadening of awareness are made the focus of [this] novel...but consciousness of history together with its always problematic integration into the concept of the self and its identity” (Hoffman 278).

History, as the telling by way of Quentin, is a reconciliation of the past and the present, as well as a study of human knowledge, the process of knowing, and as such it “moves beyond individual consciousness to a collective social-historical entity which [Hegel] calls ‘spirit’” (Stewart 5). Indeed, Hegel explicitly states in his *Phenomenology* that “we see language as the existence of spirit” (395). In this sense, the telling in *Absalom, Absalom!* makes the work more “than a historical novel would be” in the same way that John W. Burbidge believes “The *Phenomenology* is not primarily a philosophy of history” (Burbidge 205). As Faulkner evidences in his work and Hegel in his philosophy, history is inseparable from a study of human knowledge, and in this way, history is not only universal, but also fluid.

By claiming that Faulkner’s notion of history advocates these “universal conditions” of Hegel’s notion of history, *Absalom, Absalom!*, thus offers its own perspective of the *Phenomenology*, yet one that is arguably not foreign to the *Phenomenology* itself. At a basic (base) level, Faulkner illustrates that the specific “fact and history” Findlay claims “is always [Hegel’s] concern,” fall second to a focus on what Hegel himself determined to be the universal “movement or process of becoming” that is consciousness (Findlay viii, *PhS* 55). For example, Faulkner explained in Session Nine of his University of Virginia lecture series that “[he] used the Civil War to – for my own ends there” in *Absalom, Absalom!* (*FU* 73). In her interview with Ferris, Emily Stone recounted that “as far as history goes [Faulkner] was interested...in just the personal” (Ferris 537). Similarly, Findlay notes that the path Hegel takes in *Phenomenology* is

not the only path, but rather simply that which “had been rehearsed in the consciousness of Hegel” himself (Findlay vi). Most tellingly, Hegel himself stated that Spirit is a circular process whose “complete movement is therefore...to diffuse its nature throughout each of its movements as in its native element [and] since each of these spheres completes itself within itself, this reflection of one sphere into itself is at the same time the transition into another” (*PhS* 464). In what could possibly be interpreted as a response to Hegel’s statement, Quentin offers,

*Maybe nothing ever happens once and is finished. Maybe happen is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading the pool attached by a narrow umbilical water-cord to the next pool which the first pool feeds, has fed, did feed, let this second pool contain a different temperature of water, a different molecularity of having seen, felt, remembered, reflect in a different tone the infinite unchanging sky, it doesn’t matter: that pebble’s watery echo whose fall it did not even see moves across its surface too at the original ripple-space, to the old ineradicable rhythm...*

(AA 210)

History, then, is not merely process and progression, but fluidity and confluence. As Hegel explains in the introduction to his *Philosophy of History*, “The life of the ever-present Spirit is a circle of progressive embodiments, which looked at in one respect still exist beside each other, and only looked at from another point of view appear as past” (79). It is precisely in this way that history, *as the experience of consciousness*, explains how the “being which thinks” experiences that which “if he had been there he could not have seen so clearly.”

Faulkner conceived history in this way to be “a preoccupation, a responsibility, and a burden on the mind [and thus to] require new techniques of narrative structure” (Brumm 53). Similarly, Faulkner’s narrator and his roommate, Shreve, glare at each other, “each look *burdened* with youth’s immemorial obsession not *with time’s* dragging weight which the old live with but with its *fluidity*” (AA 240, *emphasis added*). Sartre, in his exploration of Faulkner’s *The*

*Sound and the Fury*, offers useful advice to the literary critic, stating, “A fictional technique always relates back to the novelist’s metaphysics,” and it remains our duty “to define the latter before evaluating the former” (“On *SF*” 79). Sartre specifically believed “Faulkner’s metaphysics are a metaphysics of time,” which is “immediately obvious” in *The Sound and the Fury*, where “Mani’s misfortune lies in his being time-bound (79). Sartre, however, disagreed with Faulkner’s theory of time, stating “J’aime son art, je ne crois pas à sa métaphysique” (Sartre, “La Temporalité” 80).

Basing my speculation largely on Sartre’s claim, I do not argue against him, but rather extend his demarcations directly to implicate History. Faulkner’s metaphysics therefore involve past and present, time and space.

According to Pitavy, “The second part of *Absalom, Absalom!* is framed by Mr. Compson’s letter, a letter informed precisely by negation in its two halves” (Pitavy 31). Quentin’s father writes to inform him that “*Miss Rosa Coldfield was buried yesterday*,” though the letter is primarily a venue for his nihilistic expression (AA 141). The letter’s emphasis therefore depends on Mr. Compson’s commentary: “*whatever they mean by that ... I don’t know... I don’t know that either* —” (141-42). It is at this point that Quentin can read no further, though where our reading of the letter stops does not, perhaps, answer why the letter stops, or, for that matter, why it later resumes. Pitavy claims somewhat shortsightedly, “There is no narrative reason to interrupt this letter [here] in mid-sentence and resume it 200 pages later, and to fit the whole Harvardian sequence of the novel between its two edges, as if the creased paper enclosed the whole narrative” (Pitavy 31). This letter, however, illustrates the very core of Faulkner’s metaphysics, and the “narrative reason” for its interruption is therefore not only present, but quite necessary.

The mere presence of the letter freezes motion in “this strange room” at Harvard (AA 141). From Shreve’s entrance, neither the letter nor the two roommates leave the table where “the two of them [sit] not moving except to breathe” (208). Quentin, it seems, does not even change positions. Indeed, Quentin “sat quite still, facing the table, his hands on either side of the open text book on which the letter rested,” and “He had not moved...the letter [still] lying on the open book on the table between his hands” (176, 207). Indeed, we are reminded several times throughout that “Quentin did not move” and “Quentin did not answer” (AA 214, 220, 222, 259; 176, 177, 220, 260, 289). Most importantly, this physically paralyzed state mirrors the larger distortion of time caused by the letter’s presence alone.

“Life,” Hegel determines, exists as “the simple essence of Time [which] has the stable shape of Space” (106). The opening paragraph of chapter seven, however, begins by reestablishing and then completely perverting the space of time. Indeed, an entire hour passes in the first three sentences of the chapter – an hour of which Quentin seems barely aware and for which he certainly seems unaccountable:

There was no snow on Shreve’s arm *now*, no sleeve on his arm at all *now*: only the smooth cupid-fleshed forearm and hand coming back into the lamp and taking a pipe from the empty coffee can where he kept them, filling it and lighting it. So it is zero outside, Quentin thought; *soon* he will raise the window and do deep-breathing in it, clench-fisted and naked to the waist, in the warm and rosy orifice above the iron quad. But he had not done so yet, and *now the moment, the thought, was an hour past* and the pipe lay smoked out and overturned and cold, with a light sprinkling of ashes about it, on the table before Shreve’s crossed pink bright-haired arms while he watched Quentin from behind the two opaque and lamp-glared moons of his spectacles.

(AA 176, *emphasis added*)

By following the progression of Shreve’s pipe, we realize that during the course of this passage Quentin watches Shreve “now” take, fill, and light “a pipe from the empty coffee can where he

kept them,” only to “now” see it lying “smoked out and overturned and cold” (176). Thus, both the start and finish//inception and culmination of the pipe occur, for Quentin, “now,” despite the hour that separates the two actions. According to Hegel, “Motion” consists of “the time elapsed and the space traversed,” yet, for Quentin, there is no motion in this hour, no movement and no speaking (92). Even Quentin’s last thought “was an hour past.” As Hegel defines it, “the true, the genuine Now [is] the now as a simple day which contains within it many Nows” (*PhS* 64). As Quentin supposes in *The Sound and the Fury*, “it takes at least one hour to lose time in,” and here we confront the very reason why Quentin cannot finish the letter (53, *emphasis added*). Quentin cannot finish the letter because he has not (yet) achieved “a Now which,” as Hegel defines it, “is an absolute plurality of Nows” (*PhS* 64).

Quentin’s narrative in *The Sound and the Fury* begins, “When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight oclock and *then [he] was in time again, hearing the watch*” (*SF* 48, *emphasis added*).<sup>30</sup> In *The Sound and the Fury*, Quentin’s sense of time involves an awareness of time’s progression, marked by shadows and, more importantly, the heart beat of a ticking clock. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, however, time is completely involved in “(the talking, the telling) [which] seems (to him, to Quentin) [to] depend as completely upon a formal recognition of and acceptance of *elapsed and yet-elapsing time*” (*AA* 15). For Quentin, losing time results here in an inability to grasp this fluidity and a resulting lack of what Faulkner determines to be “motion which is life” (*LG* 253). Thus, at the end of this hour, he examines the letter “lying at such an angle that he could not possibly have read it, deciphered it, even without *this added distortion*” (*LG* 253, *AA* 176, *emphasis added*). In order to finish reading his father’s letter, Quentin must recognize, accept, and restore the fluidity of time. To understand this

completely, it perhaps helps to first (re)define Faulkner's "métaphysique" in which Sartre did not believe (Sartre "La Temporalité" 80).

When Loïc Bouvard asked Faulkner to explain his "conception of time," the author responded that he "pretty much agree[s] with Bergson's theory of the fluidity of time [that] [t]here is only the present moment, in which [Faulkner] include[s] both past and future, and that is eternity" (LG 70). In his lectures at the University of Virginia, Faulkner elaborated upon this theory to discuss its implications for man. For Faulkner, "no man is himself, he is the sum of his past," meaning "There is no such thing really as was because the past is" (FU 84). Furthermore, Faulkner claimed to believe that "a man's Future is inherent in that man" because "if there is no such thing as *was*, then there is no such thing as *will be* [because] time is not a fixed condition" (FU 139). Indeed, for Faulkner, "time *is*" (FU 139). While Faulkner attributes this philosophy to Bergson, Heidegger claims these exact premises to be the "Hegelian thesis" he perceives in the *Phenomenology*: "Being is the essence of time – being, that is, as infinity," as the sum of past and Future, or eternity (145). In this sense, Faulkner's "Bergsonian" theory that "there isn't any time" is perhaps the result of what is, according to Heidegger, "Hegel's explication of the genuine concept of being [which] is nothing less than leaving time behind on the road to Spirit, which is eternal" (147). Unlike "losing time," to "leave time behind" means, for both Faulkner and Hegel, to establish motion as the "elapsed and yet-elapsing" fluidity of time, which Hegel called the "*universal flux*" or "Life" itself (106, *emphasis added*). Quentin, too, must therefore "leave time behind" in order to finish reading the letter, which requires "recognition of and acceptance of" this very theory. As Hegel explains,

The pointing-out of the Now is thus itself the movement which expresses what the now is in truth, viz. a result a result, or a plurality of Nows all taken

together; all taken together; and the pointing-out is the experience of learning that Now is a *universal*.

(*PhS* 64)

“In modern times,”<sup>31</sup> as Hegel disparagingly asserts, the student “finds [universality] ready-made” (19). Intriguingly, Quentin finds this “universal lying ready [at] hand in the hard, fixed form” of the letter (Findlay 499).<sup>32</sup> His own unflinching posture further emphasizes the positioning of the letter, as he sits with “his face still lowered, still brooding apparently on the open letter upon the open book between his hands” (AA 221). The mere presence of the letter, however, does not alone afford it universality. As Hegel explains, “the object represented” is elevated to universality once it “becomes the property of pure self-consciousness” (*PhS* 19). “The task nowadays,” and arguably Quentin’s task, is to “bring fixed thoughts into a fluid state” (19, 20). In other words, to restore the fluidity of time (the “motion which is life”), Quentin must set the letter itself into motion, and the letter in motion is, of course, the telling.

Mr. Compson’s letter brings “out of that *dead* dusty summer where [Quentin] had prepared for Harvard...that *dead* summer twilight... attenuated up from Mississippi and into this strange room” (AA 141, *emphasis added*). Although it essentially carries death into the room, Mr. Compson’s letter is not, as Zender claims, merely “the dead hand of the past [intervening] into an act of studying in which Quentin is apparently willingly engaged” (135). Rather, in “this dreamy and heatless alcove of what we call the best of thought,” the letter is no longer a mere “rectangle of paper folded across the middle,” but “the fragile pandora’s box of scrawled paper which...fill[s]” the room with Sutpen’s story (AA 176, 208). Furthermore, as Quentin and Shreve together advance the telling, “this room [becomes] not only dedicated to but set aside for...the best of ratiocination,” which makes Sutpen, in death, “a thousand times more potent and alive” (225). As Ohashi explains, “Quentin and Shreve exchange story-telling and listening in what we

might call ‘interior dialogue’ rather than ‘interior monologue,’” and their shared consciousness directly coincides with the arrival of Mr. Compson’s letter (201).<sup>33</sup> Thus, “in the cold room” at Harvard, “Where the best of thought [Quentin’s] Father said clings like dead ivy upon old dead bricks,” the past itself is elevated to something “more potent and alive” than a “dead hand” (*SF* 61, *AA* 225, 236). As such, the letter itself is the reciprocal “property” of Quentin and Shreve, elevated by their (obvious) “best of thought”<sup>34</sup> and directly responsible for the telling.

To use Hegel’s words, “the effort to grasp and appropriate” Mr. Compson’s letter exists in “the direct driving-forth of what is within [it]” (19). Returning to the letter’s contents, the specific line before Quentin’s interruption reads,

And if there can be either access of comfort or cessation of pain in the ultimate escape from *a* stubborn and amazed outrage which *over a period of forty-three years* has been companionship and bread and fire and all, I do not know that either —

(*AA* 142, *emphasis added*)

Driving Quentin’s need to set the letter in motion is a “fixed thought” of the past, and what Quentin brings “into a fluid state” by (re)telling the Sutpen story is therefore history itself, “a period of forty-three years,” which, in the course of telling, involve another fifty years of Sutpen’s past. In Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, “we observe that,” according to George R. Lucas, “the sense of something missing or incomplete impels consciousness on its historic journey” (Lucas 108). Similarly, in setting the letter in motion and attempting to explore forty-three years of “outrage,” Quentin essentially travels a hundred years without leaving his fixed position in an increasingly “tomblike” room in order to “to give actuality to the universal, and impart to it spiritual life” (*PhS* 20). Specifically, as Lucas continues,

Our...awareness of absence, of loss, of incompleteness, *even in the absence of a full knowledge of the forgotten details*, is what prompts and prods historical consciousness, in these instances, not to rest, not to remain content



with indifference and forgetting, but to press on along the highway of despair toward a full understanding of what actually occurred and why.

(109)

Thus, unlike his father who seems content with “I don’t know,” Quentin continues on the path to Absolute Knowledge. In his need to understand “what actually occurred and why,” he arguably adopts “the resolve in Science...to produce everything oneself, and accept only one’s own deed as what is true” (*PhS* 50). In this sense, the letter is not merely “interrupted” at all. Rather, Quentin stops because he “[was] soon needing, required” to “*Tell about the South*” (143). He answers Shreve’s question,<sup>35</sup> but more importantly, Quentin sets the contents of the letter itself in motion: the South, “dead since 1865” and “attenuated up from Mississippi,” is essentially brought into that “motion which is life” (143). By setting the letter in motion by “the best of *thought*,” Quentin essentially sets history, or “the fluid cradle of events (time),” in motion; only then is he able to leave time behind and return to his father’s letter; the need to tell drives the whole. Mr. Compson’s letter is thus not only the driving force behind Quentin’s need to tell, but also that which drives the motion of the novel as a whole. In this way, the “narrative reason” for interrupting the letter sets *Absalom, Absalom!* in motion. The letter, as both the need for and catalyst of the telling, affords the work its design.

Pitavy claims that “Faulkner’s ambition as an artist is appropriately Sutpen: to restore the fluidity of time – in other words, to escape the essence of time, to speak from the vantage point of eternity” (Pitavy 53). Although Pitavy attributes this ambition to Sutpen, it is perhaps more accurately Quentin, the “being which thinks” who shares and expresses Faulkner’s concern with “man in conflict with himself, with his fellow man, or with his time and place, his environment” (*FU* 19). Faulkner recognized this need for a system, telling Jean Stein that “not only did each book have to have a design, but the whole output or sum of artist’s work had to have a design

(LG 255). In what has become an overused quotation, Faulkner arguably provides one of the closer approximations of himself as the “being which things.” Indeed, Faulkner addressed his need for a design his creation of a “cosmos of [his] own”:

I can move these people around like God, not only in space but in time too. The fact that I have moved my characters around in time successfully, at least in my own estimation, proves to me my own theory that time is a fluid condition which has no existence except in the momentary avatars of individual people. There is no such thing as *was* – only *is*. If *was* existed there would be no grief or sorrow. I like to think of the world I created as being a keystone in the Universe; that, as small as that keystone is, if it were ever taken away, the universe itself would collapse.

(LG 255)

Thus, just as Hegel’s philosophy is a Systematic Science, Faulkner’s “design” functions as his philosophy: the need to restore the fluidity of time determines both the substance and structure of *Absalom, Absalom!* Unlike Hegel, however, Faulkner believed that “time can be shaped quite a bit by the artist” (LG 70). “Like fiction, history,” according to Andre Bleikasten, “is a discourse about something that is not actually there” (“Novelist” 345). For both Hegel and Faulkner “it takes imagination to fill the gap” (345). As Bleikasten continues, “In fiction, however, events are produced by and in discourse: they have no reality before the *telling*” (345, *emphasis added*).

“In ‘talking, telling’ the drift of time, the enigma of personalities, and the unexplainability of events,” as Hoffman determines, “calls for a notion of history which is characterized not by continuity but by discontinuity” (Hoffman 282). Hegel, however, provides an explanation in his *Philosophy of History*, using language that is very familiar to the student of Faulkner:

While we are thus concerned exclusively with the idea of Spirit, and in the History of the World regard everything only as its manifestations, we have, in traversing the past, however extensive its parts, only to do with what is present; for philosophy, as occupying itself with the True, has to do with the

eternally present. Nothing in the past is lost for it, for the Idea is ever present; Spirit is immortal; with it *there is no past, no future, but an essential now.*

(*Philosophy of History* 78-79, *emphasis added*)

“The ‘truth’ [in Faulkner’s works],” according to Robert Penn Warren, “is neither of the past nor of the future, [o]r rather, it is of both” (Warren 67). In this way, the telling is no different from “*the Science*” and, for that matter, “*the Telling*” is Faulkner’s notion of History itself. Thus, Faulkner in a sense translates the thesis for Hegel’s *Phenomenology*: “the way to [History] is itself already [*History*], and hence, in virtue of its contents, is the [History] of the *experience of consciousness*” (*PhS* 56). Quentin (and Shreve) essentially build their history – the telling – from “an echo but not the shot” (*AA* 121). As Hegel notes, however, “it is not the refraction of the ray, but the ray itself whereby truth reaches us (*PhS* 47). In this sense, Parini is correct to assume that “No absolute truth exists here” in *Absalom, Absalom!* (Parini 205). John Matthews, however, provides a defense, stating “that the truth of a narrative arises from the way it is created and shared and not strictly from its content” (Matthews 151) Similarly, in explaining *Absalom, Absalom!*, Faulkner says,

I think that no one individual can look at truth. It blinds you. You look at it and you see one phase of it. Someone else looks at it and sees a slightly awry phase. But taken all together, the truth is in what they saw though nobody saw the truth intact.

(*FU* 273)

In this way, the design of *Absalom, Absalom!* was, for Faulkner, “thirteen ways of looking at a blackbird” (*FU* 274).

Though the idea was not originally his, Faulkner’s “13 blackbirds” provides a way to describe the complexity of the system itself, the different approaches to Truth, that is not unlike the mosaic metaphor that Jon Stewart provides for the *Phenomenology*. Faulkner, however, generously adds, “But the truth, I would like to think, comes out, that when the reader has read

all these thirteen different ways of looking at the blackbird, the reader has his own fourteenth image of that blackbird which I would like to think is the truth” (274). The effort taken in this study is perhaps a direct reflection of attempting more than one image of a blackbird, in hopes of reaching the whole. Perhaps this is what Faulkner means for consciousness to be on the path to knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

Ultimately, it is impossible to know whether Faulkner made a conscious study of these philosophers. We know very little about Faulkner's understanding of philosophy, and his own tendency to skirt questions – even lie – does not ease our effort. When Jean Stein, for example, asked Faulkner about Freud in 1955, Faulkner replied:

Everybody talked about Freud when I lived in New Orleans, but I have never read him. Neither did Shakespeare. I doubt Melville did either, and I'm sure Moby Dick didn't.

(LG 251)

This is not to say that I do not believe Faulkner possessed an awareness or understanding of Nietzsche or Hegel (or Freud). On the contrary, I think that the evidence I present in both essays makes such a claim impossible. When we discuss Faulkner as a philosopher, however, whether or not Faulkner read Nietzsche or Hegel matters no more than whether or not Nietzsche read Hegel. In other words, in discussing Faulkner's philosophy, the importance exists not in influence, but precisely in innovation.

As a philosopher, Faulkner extends the modernist concerns of history and identity, forms of consciousness and forms of narrative. Specifically, this study exhibits the way in which Faulkner *the philosopher* defines two different views of selfhood in two different novels. *Sanctuary* presents a selfhood that is contextually determined, while selfhood in *Absalom, Absalom!* is defined more in terms of interiority, phenomenology. Furthermore, as a philosopher, Faulkner's claim that he is "not aware of [literary criticism]" becomes even more obviously a statement defending literary criticism as a function of his philosophy:

I'm not aware of [literary criticism]. I don't read the critics. I don't know any literary people. The people I know are farmers and horse people and hunters,

and we talk about horses and dogs and guns and what to do about this hay crop or this cotton crop, not about literature. I think – I’m convinced, though, that that sort of criticism whether it’s nonsensical or not is valid because it is *a symptom of change, of motion, which is life, and also it’s a proof that literature – art – is a living quantity in our social condition.*

*(FU 65, emphasis added)*

To treat Faulkner’s texts as the space between his own roles as an author and as a philosopher allows for such an examination as that which I hope this study provides: an exploration of Faulkner that does not separate the man from his art, but rather understands that the key to the first can only be found in the latter. Faulkner’s text provides the only means for exploring Faulkner not as a “literary man,” but as the craftsman he claims himself to be, a man of both (simultaneously) action and ideas. I am quite certain that the approach of my study – the search for Faulkner’s philosophical determinations – could be employed with equal success in dealing with any of Faulkner’s “major” works.

## REFERENCE NOTES :

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> In my own research, I came across two such works, both of which fell short by presenting “Hegel, *considerably reduced*” (Godden 257, *emphasis added*). Indeed, as Stewart determines, “Hegel’s account of the Enlightenment, lordship and bondage, Stoicism, and so forth, are treated in an episodic manner with no attention paid to their role in the overall structure of the work [and] [t]his clearly represents a fundamental problem of interpretation since for Hegel these analyses are only meaningful in their systematic context” (Stewart 10).

CHAPTER TWO: TRAGEDY AND THE TRIAL: FAULKNER’S *SANCTUARY* AND NIETZSCHE’S *BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

<sup>2</sup> “Q: Sir, I understand *Sanctuary*, you’ve said that it was written for sensational value. Would you say, now, for a young writer who might be trying to break into it, do you think that he should devote his time and talents, if any, towards a sensational type of work, or do you think that he should try to write more or less from the soul, you might say, or write as he feels rather than what he feels might be accepted?”

<sup>3</sup> As Raymond Geuss defines it in his introduction to *The Birth of Tragedy*, “Attic tragedy was a public spectacle [of ancient Greece] in which poetry, music, and dance were essential constituents” (x). Unless directly quoting Nietzsche, I will use “Greek tragedy” or simply “tragedy.”

<sup>4</sup> Goodwin is named once, but he arguably serves no greater role in this trial than the corn-cob. In fact, the corn-cob receives more attention in this scene than Goodwin: he is a stage-prop, but the corn-cob is at least “evidence.”

<sup>5</sup> Note: However, just as tragedy developed from the “Dionysian orgiastic festivals,” so too does the tragedy of *Sanctuary* develop from this scene, the root of Temple’s Dionysian impulse. As Joseph Uργο noted, Temple “is the source of the novel’s movement.” To take this point literally (more so than I suspect Uργο meant it) Temple’s “escort” from the Grotto will be the same man who (most likely) escorts her into the courtroom: The man sitting on his spine in his buttoned coat is the lawyer, sitting on his spine in the courtroom. “The fourth man *sat on his spine*, smoking, his *coat buttoned* across his chest” (235). Later, “she was moving toward the door between the man with the chewing gum and the other with the *buttoned coat*” (240). Finally, in the courtroom, “the *Memphis lawyer was sitting on his spine*” (290).

<sup>6</sup> Though this paper provides his name, it is important to note that the scene itself refers to him only as “the district attorney.”

<sup>7</sup> This marks one of the interesting revisions Faulkner made from the first to second manuscript. In the original, Horace decides, “He would sub-poena Temple; he thought in a paroxysm of raging pleasure of flinging her into the courtroom, or stripping her: This is what a man has killed another over. This, the offspring of respectable people: let them blush for shame, since could never blush for anything again. Stripping her, background environment, all.” Langford, Gerald, *Faulkner’s Revision of Sanctuary: A Collation of the Unrevised Galleys and the Published Book* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), 110.

<sup>8</sup> “The reason this was offered sooner is that its bearing on the case was not made clear until the testimony of the defendant’s wife which I have just caused to be read aloud to you gentlemen from the record” (283). Indeed, Graham’s “reason” shows further proof of his skillful orchestration: he only allowed “Mrs. Goodwin” to testify so that he could introduce this “evidence.” Furthermore, he reveals this “evidence” once Temple has already taken the witness stand (stage).

<sup>9</sup> Though irrelevant to my argument, I cannot help considering why this idea of “re-rape” is rarely (never?) offered as a reason for Temple’s perjury. Again, Michael Millgate touches on this idea, stating that “Goodwin is formally on trial for the murder of Tommy, and on that issue Temple clearly does perjure herself – always assuming, of course,

that she retains any clear memory of the whole disastrous train of events: the final scene...can no less plausibly be viewed as indicative of long-term traumatization."

<sup>10</sup> Though this paper provides his name, it is important to note that the scene itself refers to Judge Drake only as "the old man" and "Judge." Please refer to page 3 for more details.

<sup>11</sup> While Urgo did relate this definition of Pornography to *Sanctuary*, he made no mention of any form of tragedy.

<sup>12</sup> John T. Matthews, in "The Elliptical Nature of Sanctuary," mentions "[t]his dreamy reverse wedding." However, his analysis differs from mine in that he claims that the "wedding means to undo ravishment" (258).

<sup>13</sup> There is no shortage of criticism discussing Oedipus in *Sanctuary*. For example, Noel Polk, in "Law in Faulkner's *Sanctuary*," states that "Oedipus himself is everywhere in the novel" (235). Considerably fewer works explore Oedipus as a tragic hero without exploring Freud, as I attempt here.

<sup>14</sup> Again, it is arguable that Graham is not only fully aware of this, but that he also depends on it for his success.

<sup>15</sup> Among these harmful critiques, Faulkner's own produced the most damage, especially his introduction to the Modern Library edition of *Sanctuary*. Faulkner also told an audience at Mary Washington College, "Well, that book was basely conceived...I got married...and so I thought I would make a little money writing a book. And I thought of the most horrific idea I could think of and wrote it" (FU 90-91).

### CHAPTER THREE: FAULKNER, HEGEL, AND "THE TELLING" IN *ABSALOM, ABSALOM!*

<sup>16</sup> "But," as Faulkner continues, "he don't get out and do any research. I think if he does that he is not really a fiction writer" (116).

<sup>17</sup> Prall later married Sherwood Anderson and again took care of Faulkner when he stayed in New Orleans on his way to Europe in 1925.

<sup>18</sup> See Gerald B. Walton, "William C. Falkner, Postmaster: Some Correspondence," *Journal of Mississippi History*, 51 (February 1989), 1-15; "The Falkners and the University, Miss. P.O." *Faulkner Journal* 3.1 (1989): 49-50.

<sup>19</sup> Joan St. C. Crane makes a compelling argument that postal inspector Mark Webster's letter of dismissal is a fraud, in "'Case No. 133733-C': The Inspector's Letter to Postmaster William Faulkner." *Mississippi Quarterly* 42.3 (1989): 229-245.

<sup>20</sup> *The Philosophical Review* 32.5 (1923): 551-556; *The Journal of Philosophy* 20.15 (1923): 413-415.

<sup>21</sup> All citations from *The Philosophical Review*: 32.6 (1923): 625-32; 31.4 (1922): 352-68; 30.2 (1921): 178-91.

<sup>22</sup> Influenced by William James and Josiah Royce, Santayana came to Hegel by way of disputing his philosophy. His *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1915) evidences Santayana "undoubtedly reacting against the entrenched Hegelianism of American academic philosophy and educational policy" (Cowan 23). His students, however, would have required awareness of the material under attack.

<sup>23</sup> Note: In one of his more arrogant exaggerations, Stone claimed, "Nobody knew as much about Faulkner's literary history" as he did. He intended and attempted to share this knowledge by installments in *Oxford Magazine*. Unfortunately, the magazine, and the literary history, ended after just three issues. In addition, those first (only) three installments say more about Oxford, the Falkner family's history, and Stone's ego than about Faulkner himself.



<sup>24</sup> There is an anecdote, too, that recalls an admirer of Faulkner bringing to Rowan Oak a book for him. He explained to Faulkner's wife that the author did not have to read it; it was merely a gift. Estelle responded, "he reads everything" (McHaney, personal interview).

<sup>25</sup> It should also be noted that I am not ignoring Quentin's role as a Harvard freshman in *The Sound and the Fury*. Indeed, to quote Faulkner, "To me [Quentin] is consistent" (FU 274). My specific reasons for focusing on *Absalom, Absalom!* are made clear in the following study.

<sup>26</sup> As John Burbidge explains, "At the level of spirit, certainty claims that the social context must be understood before knowledge is possible [yet] at the level of self-consciousness, the individual claims that truth will be attained if one focuses simply on oneself" (Burbidge 197). Interestingly, Burbidge uses this argument to argue that the Unhappy Consciousness is a "universal form of human consciousness" (Stewart 15). According to Burbidge, "The parallels suggested between the unhappy consciousness and the phenomena of Oriental religions in the Roman Empire, of Buddhism, and of contemporary Marxism provide some support for the conclusion that Hegel, in this section of the *Phenomenology*, is not simply concentrating on medieval Catholicism" (205).

<sup>27</sup> Quentin, in his state of "unhappy, inwardly disrupted consciousness" attempts for personal unity as reflected in his identification, here and throughout AA, with Henry Sutpen, arguably (to use Hegel's language) the "immediately present unit" that represents for Quentin the unchangeable South/past. This reading offers new light on their connection, which is usually attributed to the incest theme pervading *The Sound and the Fury* (126, 129). Quentin identifies with Henry through death, "having [not yet] learned from experience that the grave of its actual unchangeable Being has no actuality, that the vanished individuality, because it has vanished, is not the true individuality" (§217, 132). "In fact, through the Unchangeable's assuming a definite form, the moment of the beyond not only persists, but really is more firmly established" (§212, 129)... Furthermore, in identifying with Henry, Quentin affects a mirror image of the state in which he found Henry. Quentin "lay still and rigid on his back," leaving Shreve's questions unanswered and looking "as if he were listening [to the clock chimes, like Shreve,] though he was not; he just heard them without listening as he heard Shreve without listening or answering" (298-99). Indeed, Quentin is himself "almost already a corpse" (298).

<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, Quentin's efforts mirror Faulkner's own process of creating *Absalom, Absalom!*: as Blotner details, Faulkner did not write this novel in a linear fashion, but rather tied together the events, characters, and narratives in much the same way Quentin does (See Blotner, 889-909).<sup>28</sup> According to Parini, "Faulkner approached the narrative again and again, working on the chapters in nonchronological order, [and] the story [therefore] grew by itself, without narrative lines so much as glassy filaments that tangle and disentangle in different strands" (Parini 204). In addition, the novelist and his narrator possess "the same yearning [and] obsessive desire... to go back to the origins [and] to play with possibilities and probabilities instead of incontrovertible facts" (Pitavy, "History and Fiction" Rewriting 53). Interestingly, Michael Kreyling considers Quentin to be Faulkner's "tragically damaged" alter ego (Kreyling 5).

<sup>29</sup> Stewart finds evidence of this in Hegel's evolving titling process of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* wherein he changed title from its original, *The Science of the Experience of the Consciousness*, to *Science of the Phenomenology of Spirit*. The content, however, did not change (Stewart 5).

<sup>30</sup> Quentin's narrative in *The Sound and the Fury* occurs on the day of his suicide and essentially traces his attempt to keep from falling back "in time again," noting that "Again. Sadder than was. Again. Saddest of all. Again" (61).

<sup>31</sup> It is crucial I note that while I am knowingly taking advantage of Hegel's definition of "modern times," I do so only in light of the possible universality of Hegel's 'history' suggested by Faulkner's work. In this spirit *only* do I proceed.

<sup>32</sup> J.N. Findlay's analysis of Hegel's *Phenomenology* provides a comprehensible key to an overwhelming work. It should not, however, be used in place of Hegel's writing. I use it here for the concision with which it expresses this thought.

<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Mr. Compson's letter directly informs their narrative, not in light of its nihilistic content, but rather due to its very construct. Their cooperative narrative is, in a sense, a series of letters they invent in order to defend the history they create. For examples, see pages: 214-215, 244-246, 256-257, 267, 269, and 271.

<sup>34</sup> This (over)emphasis of Harvard's status as the "Best of thought," though arguably sarcastic, does attest to the literary and philosophical scene at Harvard during the early 1900's. For a general overview, see "Pragmatism at Harvard, 1878-1913" in Bruce Kuklick's *A History of Philosophy in America* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001): 150-178.

<sup>35</sup> After all, Quentin is not concerned with Shreve's other questions; as we are repeatedly told, "he might not have [even] heard" them (AA 177).

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AA</i>	<u>Absalom, Absalom!</u> New York: Vintage International, 1986
<i>EPP</i>	<u>William Faulkner: Early Prose and Poetry</u> . Compiled and introduced by Carvel Emerson Collins. Boston: Little Brown, 1962.
<i>FU</i>	<u>Faulkner in the University</u> . ed. Frederick Landis Gwynn and Joseph Blotner. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1995.
<i>LG</i>	<u>Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner, 1926-1962</u> . New York: Random House, 1968.
<i>S</i>	<u>Sanctuary</u> . New York: Vintage International/Vintage Books, 1985.
<i>SF</i>	<u>The Sound and the Fury</u> . New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994.
<i>SL</i>	<u>Selected Letter of William Faulkner</u> . Ed. Joseph Blotner.
<i>Catalogue</i>	<u>William Faulkner's Library: A Catalogue</u> . Compiled and introduced by Joseph Blotner. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1964.
<i>PhS</i>	Hegel, G.W.F. <u>Phenomenology of Spirit</u> , translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
<i>BT</i>	Nietzsche, Friedrich. <u>The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music</u> . Eds. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

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