The Bad and the Beautiful:
Public Persona and Genre in Three Film Adaptations of William Faulkner

by

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To my parents,

For instilling and harboring a love of reading, and for only being initially disappointed that this led to studying the Arts

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Abstract

Direct study of the film adaptations of the works of William Faulkner's is relatively rare, and many of the few examples are still based entirely on the notion of textual fidelity as opposed to the more modern approach of intertextuality. With the aim of providing such an approach, this project purposes that adaptations of Faulkner novels can actually be seen as reflections of his developing popular persona at certain times in his career, and that the ways in which this persona is perceived by the filmmakers plays a large role in each film's adaptive and thematic expression. This adaptive process occurs under the heavy influence of both popular genre narratives and a variety of surrounding social and cultural contexts, all of which must be investigated if one is to fully explore the intertextual relationship between film and source.

List of Abbreviations Used

MPPDA	Motion Picture Producers and Directors of America
PCA	Production Code Administration
Story	*The Story of Temple Drake*
Summer	*The Long, Hot Summer*
Sound	*The Sound and the Fury*

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Chapter I
Introduction

Hollywood is the only place in the world where a man can get stabbed in the back while climbing a ladder.

- William Faulkner (Blotner 294)

Between the years of 1932 and 1942, William Faulkner produced the final masterpieces during what is considered the his major artistic phase, including the likes of *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, *The Hamlet*, and *Go Down, Moses*. This ten year period also marks the beginning and end of another aspect of Faulkner's career as a writer – a phase that he is less likely to be remembered for. I am of course referring to his first bout with Hollywood screenwriting, where he worked on such not-so-masterpieces as *Flesh* (1932), *Slave Ship* (1937), and *Submarine Patrol* (1939), as well as a fair share of winners too, including *Gunga Din* (1939) and John Ford's *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939). As countless quotes like the above indicate however, Faulkner did not think much of Hollywood creatively or ethically. Like other modernists Hollywood had attracted, like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Nathanael West, screenwriting served as just a means to an end – a source of income to fund the writing of his novels and provide financial support where literary artistry could not (at least at the time).

Faulkner's tumultuous relationship with Hollywood, and on a larger scale, popular culture in general, has become a distinct point of interest in the realm of Faulkner criticism. The intriguing sense of conflict between Faulkner's apparently strong disdain for pop culture work and his often skilled participation in it means that most analysis of Faulkner, film, and pop-culture is examined in terms of very limited interactions or a guarded utilization of certain aspects. A number of critics have noted the "cinematic" nature of Faulkner's writing and have tried to draw a line of influence from early

filmmaking to his style, most often through the visual concept of montage (Kawin 5-6),

but this is usually the closest the author is connected to film in any creative sense. Efforts

have also been made to salvage his screenwriting and reconcile the movies he worked on

with the quality of his literary works. He would, after all, go on to write classics like *To*

Have and Have Not (1944) and *The Big Sleep* (1946). For the most part, critical work on

Faulkner's interaction with Hollywood and pop-culture is one-sided in this way,

primarily focused on praising the ways the author used the system and decrying the ways

the system was believed to have used or mistreated him.

     Less attention has been given to the perception of the author himself within these

systems, or how this perception was constructed and presented within them. Perhaps in

lieu of this, direct study of the film adaptations of Faulkner's works remains relatively

rare, with a majority of the nine feature length films based on Faulkner's work[1] now

wallowing in relative obscurity. What little there is tends to lean towards this sense of

mistreatment, providing a laundry list of flaws and instances of unfaithfulness to the text

(which are commonly conflated), usually boiling down to descriptions of why and how

the films fail to compare to Faulkner's work. Little interest has been given to the thematic

roles that these changes may have played in the adaptive process or the film's overall

expression, and these changes have simply been seen as failures, shortcuts, or

misreadings on the part of the filmmakers.

     Two of the very few academic works that centre on the adaptation of Faulkner's

work, Bruce Kawin's *Faulkner and Film* and Gene D. Phillips' *Faulkner, Fiction, and*

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[1] The full list is as follows: *Today We Live* (1933) from "Turnabout", *The Story of Temple Drake* (1933) from *Sanctuary*, *Intruder in the Dust* (1949) from the self-titled novel, *The Tarnished Angels* (1957) from *Pylon*, *The Long, Hot Summer* (1958) from *The Hamlet*, *The Sound and the Fury* (1959) from the eponymous classic, *Sanctuary* (1961) from both *Requiem for a Nun* and *Sanctuary*, *The Reivers* (1969) from *The Reivers*, and *Tomorrow* (1972) from "Tomorrow", a story from Faulkner's *Knight's Gambit* collection.

Film, fall into the above traps at various points throughout. Although only Phillips announces outright his alignment with fidelity criticism in analyzing the films (2-3), and Kawin actually tries to avoid such an approach[2], they approach the films in similar fashions and usually reach similar conclusions regarding what they see as the stylistic and thematic failures of the films, treating most with a sense of reduction. Kawin is easily the most negative of the two, charging the *The Sound and the Fury* film with being a "betrayal" of its source (29) for example, with both saving most of their praise for only two films – *Intruder in the Dust* and *The Long, Hot Summer*[3]. While I agree with many of their more formal, less combative points, neither critic goes very far beyond a basic survey, listing differences and similarities and noting which of these help or hinder the film overall.

In one rare occasion where Kawin views Faulkner as a kind of intertext, it is with that aforementioned sense of mistreatment, mentioning Hollywood's "upsetting" use of the author for "the box-office value of his name – first as the author of *Sanctuary* and later as Nobel laureate" and the changing of his works to "fit their own preconceptions of the South and of the audience" (66). While this is where Kawin ends such analysis, faulting the films for possibly creating a false impression of the author, this notion of the films using Faulkner's "name" and what it represented at different points in time to better mould his works into their own "preconceptions" is precisely where my project begins. This thesis will seek to re-examine three feature length films that were adapted from

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[2] "It is not proper to attack an adaptation for being *different* from its source; the changes must be evaluated in their own terms" (Kawin 23).
[3] Phillips ends his book declaring *Intruder* as "leading the list" (188), and refers to *Summer* as "very entertaining" 142). Kawin calls *Intruder* "the best movie yet made from a Faulkner novel", and cannot help but add that it is also "coincidently, the most faithful to its source" (40). He also notes that *Summer* "achieves its own legitimacy" (23), though later gives it the glowing designation of being "not a bad picture" (53).

Faulkner works – *The Story of Temple Drake*, *The Long, Hot Summer*, and *The Sound and the Fury* – and develop what I believe to be a more complex intertextual interaction than previous critics have explored. I will go about this by viewing the films not just in terms of their relation to a textual source, but through the various cultural contexts surrounding their productions, which I believe have a significant impact on each film's adaptive and thematic expression of Faulkner and his work.

With a timeline of release dates spanning from 1933 to 1959, there is obviously a wide range of contexts to consider, so my study will be based around two crucial factors of adaptation that I believe are best exhibited by the three films I've chosen to explore – the development of Faulkner's literary and public persona within popular-culture, and the heavy influence of the genre narratives that the films correspond with. Public perception of Faulkner shifted drastically from the time of the 20s and 30s to his Nobel Prize win in 1950, and I will argue that this changing persona and the ways it is utilized by filmmakers can sometimes act as an even more influential intertext than the texts themselves. Popular genre elements, which are tied closely with specific social and cultural meanings within each of the films' era, will also prove crucial to the presentation of this persona and the adaptation's overall engagement with its source. These adaptations are not just unfortunate reductions of a great artist's work, but are in fact part of a series of complex processes connected to various long-standing critical and thematic traditions in both film and Faulkner criticism – and the aim of this project is to provide a more detailed look at the roles they play within them.

Due to the often wide-open theoretical range involved in adaptation studies, it would be beneficial to establish the framework that I will be using to explore these films

before going on much further. For more reasons than I could ever hope to detail here, "fidelity" criticism, the evaluation of films based on their faithfulness to the source, is a shallow and rather limiting conception that has already marked most of the analysis done on these films, and is thus best left avoided[4]. Standard procedure for more recent adaptation studies is to avoid any hierarchical binaries that may present the process of text-to-screen translation as a linear move downwards or away from the source, and the notion of intertextuality has become the most common approach. Whether it is the original Bluestone concept of "paraphrasing" (Hutcheon 17), Neil Sinyard's image of the adaptation as a critical essay on its source[5], or the many other ways in which this engagement has been theoretically presented, the central purpose is to envision the adapted text as an open outside resource that influences the film in however many different ways the filmmakers decide. The focus is no longer on evaluating changes for their own sake, but on, as adaptation critic Brian McFarlane puts it, "the choice of a specific source and how the approach to that source serves the film's ideology" (10).

Even with this more neutral methodology in place, the essential practice of exploring an adaptation and its differential relation to its text may still be seen as conforming to a type of binary that leaves the film secondary (Hurst 174-5). While this may seem like a necessary evil due to the inevitable comparisons that one must make, some recent critics have tried theorizing ways to avoid any such possible contradiction. Rochelle Hurst, for instance, utilizes Derrida to define film adaptations as "undecidables"

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[4] The debate against fidelity and the countless academic approaches within it have been raging on for quite a while, but some common key ideas more than sum up its theoretical shallowness. The essentialist notion that there is a single valid interpretation of what the text "is" that trumps any other countless interpretations is a central one (Hurst 173), and the presumptuous and "morally loaded" (Hutcheon 7) binary of "follow" or "violate" that this places on a filmmaker can lead to some very stagnant analysis (McFarlane 8).
[5] Something that "stresses what it sees as the main theme...selects some episodes, excludes others, offers preferred alternatives" (Metz 21).

– objects that "simultaneously [inhabit] *both* sides of the binary" and yet "refuse to correspond to either side...thus defying its strict, dichotomous division" (186). Just as a zombie can be considered "neither alive nor dead", or a ghost "neither present nor absent", adaptations may be seen as both films and books...and yet neither (186). Instead, an adaptation becomes: "a hybrid, an amalgam of media – at once a cinematized novel *and* a literary film, confusing, bridging, and rejecting the alleged discordance between page and screen, both insisting upon and occupying the overlap" (187).

Hurst's idea provides a valuable and interesting way of viewing the adaptive relationship from a general standpoint, but it is also limited in many ways. For one, its frame of comparison for intertextual origins can be taken to rather confusing extremes[6], and it also lacks a clear notion of how to deal with the comparison of differences that one must make. Still, it is a useful starting point for seeing the kind of "doubled" or split nature of a film's relation to its intertext – a notion that Linda Hutcheon also posits in her book *A Theory of Adaptation*, along with some critical tactics for analysing such relationships. Covering a wide variety of mediums and forms to offer a generalized investigation of adaptive processes, Hutcheon also stresses the importance that a sense of doubling holds for any intertextual analysis. She states that: "Although adaptations are also aesthetic objects in their own right, it is only as inherently double or multilaminated works that they can be theorized *as adaptations*" (6). This leads her to a kind of terminology very similar to Hurst's, calling an adaptation a "derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary" (9), and a "double process of interpreting and then creating something new" (20).

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[6] Are films based on historical events adaptations of this history? Are these films thus an "undecidable" hybrid of cinema and past events?

In either case, this notion of an adaptation's "hybrid" nature allows one to move the centre of the analysis away from the general process of "text → film" towards a more liberated sense of intertextuality. This type of intertextual freedom allows not only a more fluid conception of the process of engagement with the source, but, as Hutcheon explains, also makes space for a variety of social, cultural, economic, and creative aspects of a film's production that all may be considered as part of its intertext – what she terms "contexts of creation" (28). Huctheon goes on to detail the importance of analysing the "culturally and historically conditioned reasons for selecting a certain work to adapt" (95), as well as the choices involved in the adaptation's "creative" and "interpretive context", as "the text bears the marks of these choices, marks that betray the assumptions of the creator" (108). By exploring Faulkner adaptations with this attitude, one may begin to view the films within the cultural contexts of their respective eras and the popular perception of Faulkner himself, examining the kind of interpretive "assumptions" made in the process of remediation and the influence they might have on its thematic construction.

It would useful at this point to explain just what is behind my use of the term "remediation", and for this I turn to Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's book on the subject. Even though they are primarily interested in the remediations of older media by interactive new media, there are certain aspects of their idea of the process that will prove useful overall. At its most basic definition, remediation is said to be "the representation of one medium in another" (Bolter 45), or, more specifically, "the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms" (273)[7]. Bolter and Grusin also stress the doubled

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[7] Or as Hutcheon puts it: "translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions for one sign system to another" (16).

nature of such a translation, seeing the process as a mixed logic of "immediacy", a style which desires to make the medium "disappear" for the viewers and leave them only "in the presence of the thing represented" (6), and "hypermediacy", a style of representation where the objective is "to remind the viewer of the medium" (272). The process of remediating the prior medium for a more "immediate or authentic experience" is thus always entwined with some sort of awareness of both the process itself and the reforming medium "as a medium" (19).

Investigating this "oscillation" between immediacy and hypermediacy then becomes "the key to understanding how a medium refashions its predecessors and other contemporary media" (19). Although Blotner and Grusin see film adaptations as a much simpler form of remediation, where the prior medium is not "appropriated or quoted" but simply borrowed from with no guaranteed "conscious interplay between media" (44-5), Hutcheon and Hurst's notions of hybridity can provide a more complex way to view this process. If cinematic adaptations *are* seen as undecidables in a double-process of interpretation and creation, then perhaps this mixed oscillation occurs not in the purely representational relationship between their mediums, but in the intertextual interaction with the source. Hypermediacy then becomes how the presence of the source is utilized or acknowledged in the adaptation, always called forth in some capacity while at the same time being refashioned intertextually for whatever "immediate or authentic experience" the filmmakers wish to convey. As we'll see, the source alone is not the only thing that can be utilized in this fashion, with the film studios remediating Faulkner himself to create perceptions of his persona that create a sense of hypermediacy that they can capitalize on.

With this theoretical framework in place, it would be beneficial at this point to go into more detail concerning my two central concepts, starting with Faulkner's public persona. In his book *Creating Faulkner's Reputation*, Lawrence H. Schwartz details the many facets of Faulkner's literary, critical, and public personas as they developed throughout his career. His chief purpose is to explore the author's sudden rise in critical acceptance during the late 40s, leading up to his canonization with the 1950 Nobel Prize, a rise that he sees as congruent with the postwar and "cultural cold war" era's search for "an important American nationalist writer" (3). While pre-war Faulkner was commonly seen an overly violent, "macabre", and stylistically focused author (3), postwar Faulkner became recognized by critics like Malcolm Cowley and Robert Penn Warren as, among other things, an "important novelist, a literary genius, and a *serious moralist*" (my emphasis), one who inspirited both America's cultural achievement and moral values, a shift that Schwartz believes "coincided with United States political and economic hegemony at the end of the war" (4). Over the course of the next two chapters, I will argue that the popular perception of Faulkner as either a violent nihilistic or a national moralist is utilized, abided by, and subverted all at once in a fashion that is crucial to the process of remediation of all three films.

The next aspect of my analysis, film genre narratives, requires a more immediate and involved elaboration, as genre studies can be as expansive and evasive of a field as adaptation, especially since the categories I will be focusing on (pre-code "vice" films and domestic melodrama) are usually seen as genres only in the loosest sense of the term. My employment of genre theory and its tenants is primarily informed by three books on the subject: Rick Altman's *Film/Genre*, Steve Neale's *Genre and Hollywood*, and Barry

Langford's *Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond*, with all three providing useful explorations on genre's formation and relation to society and culture. Genres are of course in their most basic definition a form of classification – a grouping of specific stylistic and thematic elements and formulas that indicate an individual text's meaning in relation to a number of other texts that share such elements (Altman 14, Neale 31). Perhaps the most important part of this construction of meaning is the built-in expectations that audiences hold for specific genres (Altman 14), creating what Langford calls a "'contract' of familiarity" between the studio and the viewers that offers "some guarantee" of a previously enjoyed experience (1).

Genres can thus be used by critics to establish and study "family resemblances" between various different films (1), and the result of all these factors is the production of a "narrative image" for each film created by their studios to convey these resemblances, meanings, and expectations to their audiences (Neale 39). A significant component of how these narrative images are presented lies in the type of media and press surrounding a film, what Neale sees as the "indication and circulation of what the industry considers to be the generic framework...most appropriate to the viewing of a film" (39). Things such as "posters, stills, and trailers" (39), as well as "star personae", are crucial in the "sending out" or modification of "generic signals" that let audiences know just what kind of film they can expect (Langford 3). As Bolter and Grusin point out, these kinds of images can also be seen as part of the remediation process, with the studio often seeking not to erase the presence of the previous medium outright, but distribute their perception of the content "over as many markets as possible" (67-68). As we'll see, the ways in which these adaptations advertise their connection to Faulkner and their sources and alter

them in accordance to their unique "narrative image" is a major factor in their utilization of the author's persona and their remediation of the texts.

Genre studies also allows us to, as Langford puts it, mediate the "relationship between the mythologies of popular culture and social, political and economic contexts" (1), with genres allowing "social reality to be mapped onto individual fictional texts in a more subtle and indeed plausible way" than reading the possibility of a film's social themes as a set of direct "one-to-one correspondences" (25). This is usually done by exploring why certain genres succeed in different social contexts and eras but then fail or fade away in others. The idea that genres are closely connected to the changing tide of culture and can reflect a society's shifting values and perception of itself at a given time in history is a tempting notion that has been debated and dissected in genre studies for decades. Traditionally, this debate has fallen between two different approaches: the ideological and the ritual.

Following in the steps of Horkheimer and Adorno's Marxist analysis of the culture industry, the ideological approach views genre films as "products of a capitalist film industry" that are used to "produce meanings that support the existing social relations of power and domination" (21). The situations and conventional elements of genres are thus seen as constructing presentations that reinforce the power of the status-quo, appeasing audiences with "*deceptive* non-solutions" (Altman 27) to the real-life problems of society by offering them pleasing, comfortably fictional experiences that move audiences towards "satisfaction rather than action" and "pity and fear rather than revolt" (Wright 41). In this approach, genre films are formed by Hollywood and subjected on to audiences, lulling them into an acceptance of the world as they show it –

a world designed to serve whatever Hollywood's current political, economical, and social interests may be (Neale 227).

In contrast, the ritual approach argues that genres are formed by the desires of the audience themselves, with a film's generic elements and narrative spawning from "existing societal practices", being designed to "imaginatively [overcome] contradictions within those very practices" (Altman 27). Hollywood is thus seen as "serving, for a price, the national will", "responding to societal pressure" and thus "expressing audience desires" (Neale 227) by offering solutions that, while still imaginary (Altman 27), can nonetheless serve to represent the mass's reaction to certain aspects or problems within their society. Some of the most common examples of this approach have almost become standard conceptions in films studies, such as the heroic reflection of American identity seen in westerns that boomed in the 40s and 50s before giving way to the more cynical revisionist types in the 60s and 70s (Langford 54-55), or the understandably widespread appeal of musicals in the Great Depression.

Of course, both approaches have their own advantages and flaws. Ritual theory, Neale explains, relies heavily on a series of assumptions, namely that "audiences are representative of the American population" and that "American population as a whole is always preoccupied in the same way with the same cultural issues and dilemmas" (Neale 226). More damning in my opinion however are the flaws of the ideological approach, which often overlooks much of Hollywood's "policies...practices...structures and the nature of its output" to postulate the enveloping nature of its power (228), and tends to ignore the constantly shifting nature of genres and any "self-critical or self-aware examples that exist" (Langford 21). Both Langford and Altman stress a multifaceted and

fluctuating view of genres that I find extremely useful for the purposes of this project.

Genres are best viewed not as "static entities", but "moving targets – subject to ongoing

reappraisal and reconstruction" (35), or as Altman puts it, not as "the permanent product

of a singular origin, but the temporary by-product of an ongoing process" (54). As this

project will hopefully exhibit, the myriad of ways that genres shift and get redefined

overtime is absolutely crucial to how they relate to and reflect society, which in turn can

greatly affect a film's production, public perception, success, and in the case of these

films, an engagement with a source novel[8].

My own analysis will lean mostly on the side of ritual, though it is impossible to

ignore the ideological aspects of these films that can be seen as serving both the

economic and political interests of their studios. Pre-Code vice films were definitely

responding to a need of Depression ravaged Americans disillusioned with the standard

system of values for an alternative kind of escape, but a shift back towards moral

conservatism, reflected by the full enforcement of the Production Code, soon put a swift

end to such alternatives. The rise of domestic film melodrama in the 50s can easily be

attributed to a Cold War audience's desire to see social problems solved by the virtues of

middle-class family values, though the immense political pressure put on Hollywood to

produce such presentations is more readily observed. This pressure was so intense in fact,

that it actually caused a thematic split in this genre, with just as many films subversively

critiquing society as reinforcing it. Above all this also lays the most common Hollywood

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[8] Altman also stresses this idea of process in terms of academic study, exploring the arguments of certain critics (Neale included) who criticize the development and use of the term melodrama as a genre for domestic dramas and woman's films of the 50s, seeing it as incorrect due to its incompatibility with how the term was used historically (73). Altman argues that critical redefinition of genres is an important part of the genre process as well, and that one should not "assume that generic labels have – or should have – a stable existence" (82).

genre conventions – the need for a central love story and a happy ending. A major part of this thesis will be an exploration of the development of these genre elements and conventions and their relation to society, as I believe this dynamic is incredibly influential in the kind of remediations these films make of their sources and Faulkner's persona.

Before getting into the specifics of the works at hand and the kinds of intertextual relationships with Faulkner and his novels that I believe they share, it is worth explaining why I chose these three particular films for this investigation. While time and length limits are obvious factors in the number of this project's selection, I also believe that contexts surrounding each of these films and sources display some of the clearest connections between Faulkner's public persona and the effect it can have on an adaptation, something slightly lacking from the earliest (*Today We Live*) and latest (post 1960s) adaptations. Perhaps partly in defiance of the fidelity based criticism that has dominated most of the previous work on Faulkner adaptations, the other crucial factor in my decision was the extreme nature of each film's remediation, with all three making a multitude of vastly different changes to their sources. *Intruder in the Dust* and *The Tarnished Angels* are fine, "faithful" films that can definitely be seen as influenced by Faulkner's persona and their genre narratives, but I believe a more complex process of remediation is better presented in adaptations that greatly alter their sources, as the existence and influences of other intertexts and surrounding contexts can be more clearly defined and qualified.

My first chapter will start this exploration in the early 1930s, where, despite coming off a series of what are now seen as early masterpieces, Faulkner was viewed by

most critics as an overly violent stylistic oddity, with both critical and financial success still eluding him. Published in 1931, *Sanctuary* was Faulkner's first profitable success and, for many years, was one of his most popular and well-known novels (Phillips 79). A violent, scandalous, and perversely charged potboiler as only Faulkner could write one, the book ignited a storm of controversy upon its release over its unflinching depiction of murder, rape, and moral corruption. Though it was never without some early critical defenders, the novel was for many the clearest example of the author's thirties reputation for violence and depravity. By investigating some early reviews of the author, as well as the initial critical and public reaction to *Sanctuary*, I will establish that this sordid reputation was a significant aspect of Faulkner for both his defenders and detractors, and that the controversial popularity of the novel entered it firmly into the public consciousness – where it was picked up and altered by Paramount for use in promoting their adaptation, *The Story of Temple Drake*.

This scandalous notoriety first appeared to be a blessing for Paramount during the Pre-Production code era, with controversy, word of mouth, and lurid advertising methods seeming to ensure a sure-fire vice film hit. Increased outside pressure from this notoriety, however, led to a self-consciousness of genre and censorship that noticeably affected the film's still sensational content, which was still deemed worthy of a nationwide ban. Delving into the social contexts of Pre-Code cinema's popularity in the early Depression years and the eventual full enforcement of the Production Code in 1934, the second part of the chapter will look at internally conflicted ways the film comes to remediate its source's controversial content. Stuck somewhere between flaunting what were at the time extremely scandalous depictions of sexuality and crime and providing a moralized

message to appease the censors, the film tries to strike a balance between sexualizing its central character and brutally punishing her for this sexuality, ending with a contradictory mix of both. This split nature manages to illustrate both the immense influence of Faulkner's public persona and the extremely divergent effects that surrounding social pressures can have on an adaptation.

My next two chapters make a jump to the late 50s where, following a positive reassessment in the 40s that was capped off with a Novel Prize for Literature in 1950, Faulkner's critical and cultural reputation was never higher. This newfound widespread acceptance eventually resulted in more attention from Hollywood, and the decade ended with three adaptations of his novels in the last three years – all which can be considered, interestingly enough, as part of what is now recognized as the genre of film melodrama. Set apart by their romanticized treatments of social conflict and usually lavish depictions of middle-class values and life, most critics have viewed this shift as a reductive moralization of the novels in direct opposition to what Faulkner stood for, but I will argue that this moralized view is not so out of sync with the author. In fact, a crucial part of Faulkner's 40s revival was his representation as a morally concerned author focused on the significance of traditional values, a persona that, as Schwartz argues, took on a distinctly nationalized context as the cultural Cold War raged on.

By investigating how the public image that Faulkner cultivated throughout his post-Nobel prize years was produced and how it affected Faulkner criticism afterwards, as well as exploring the expansive definition of melodrama and its social contexts, I hope to connect this persona to the melodramatic and moralized version of the author that these films present. The rest of the project will illustrate the ways in which this persona is

utilized by two of the films, Martin Ritt's *The Long, Hot Summer* in Chapter III and *The Sound and the Fury* in Chapter IV. Both films remediate the author and his works to present a romanticized and melodramatic vision of his world, containing thematic structures designed to reinforce the kind of capitalist, patriarchal, and middle-class system of values that most melodramas are seen as subversively attacking. *Summer* achieves this by refashioning its source's themes of capitalist amorality and of public life and relationships into a sultry romantic-comedy that mildly challenges traditional capitalist individualism and gender roles in order to reinforce them in the end. *Sound* on the other hand takes the closest figure its source has to a central villain and turns him into a sternly noble hero, making him a symbol for the patriarchal domestic values that its rebellious central female character must come to accept, lest she fall into a lifestyle of promiscuous immorality.

With all of this multilayered remediation and re-contextualizing of Faulkner, are these films thus to be seen as a series of misunderstood classics, wrongfully buried in obscurity and attacked by fidelity critics who couldn't recognize this process? This of course lies in the subjective eye of the beholder, and while I can personally say that I enjoyed many aspects of these films, they are at many points awkwardly acted and written, not to mention thematically uneven. However, I can also say that within the contexts that I plan on examining them, these views are rather unimportant. Whether or not these films are ever considered great in of themselves, let alone great "versions" of Faulkner, matters very little in the study of them as adaptations. Viewing them through the contexts of their era, genre narratives, and the utilization of Faulkner's public persona shows that they are engaging a unique process far beyond the basic text to film

relationship – a process worth investigating, in my opinion, on its own terms. By surveying the films in this way, I hope to firmly establish a nuanced relationship between Faulkner and adaptation cinema – a relationship that I believe will provide some fresh insight into the author's embattled interaction with pop culture.

Chapter II
All That Hays Allows
Bad Reputations and Pre-Code Pressure in *The Story of Temple Drake*

 What is the function of the Hays Office if it doesn't keep projects like this off the screen?
- The *New York News* on *The Story of Temple Drake* (Doherty 114)

The writing, reception, and critical legacy of *Sanctuary* are all particularly interesting aspects of Faulkner criticism, especially when on the topic of his relationship to the mainstream public. With his novels being released to mild critical praise and no financial success, Faulkner apparently decided in 1929 that it was time to fix the latter problem by writing himself a potboiler. With what he would infamously call later a "cheap idea...deliberately conceived to make money" in his introduction to the book's Modern Library edition (Millgate 103), Faulkner wrote *Sanctuary*. And then, under what he would also come to explain in this introduction as the concerns of his publisher[9] and his own desire not to release something that would "shame" his other works (Garrett 64), Faulkner would rewrite it. This re-write was, in many ways, even more violent and gruesome than the previous version, though Faulkner would claim decades later that he made it "as honest and as moving and to have as much significance as [he] could put into it" (Millgate 113-5). When it was released two years later, it was met with a mix of outrage and mass appeal, resulting in the author's first experience of mainstream attention.

The construction of the novel displays not only a knowledge of popular genre elements from pulp and gangster fiction and a spirited intensity in their implementation, but also an awareness of the desires of a mainstream audience and at least a partial

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[9] One Harrison Smith, who was memorably quoted by Faulkner as saying: "Good God, I can't publish this. We'd both be in jail" (Millgate 114).

attempt to meet them. Faulkner would later claim to disdain all such things and attempt to distance himself from them entirely, and accordingly, many critics view the author's forays into popular genres and the mainstream in the aforementioned terms of forced interactions and begrudging utilization. Following this recent criticism, many critics have taken to task the initial reaction to the novel and Faulkner's own dismissals, re-evaluating its depths and merits and moving it to the relative "second-tier" position it has today (Ramsey 10). More recent studies have sought to scrutinize even these standard takes on the novel's reception and Faulkner's contemptuous interaction with the mainstream, and exploring such nuances is crucial in analysing *The Story of Temple Drake*'s engagement with its source and Faulkner's persona.

From just a basic plot summary, it is understandable to see why the novel was approached by many as a potboiler, and why its violent content could have attracted so much attention. The narrative follows two central characters: Horace Benbow, a depressed yet begrudgingly noble lawyer who flees an unhappy marriage only to get henpecked by his cold, social reputation obsessed sister, and Temple Drake, a college age southern belle from a respected family with a reputation for being a tease and having her name on the "lavatory wall" (Faulkner 38). The drunken exploits of one of her beaus leaves Temple stranded and abandoned with a seedy group of bootleggers, including a sadistic gangster named Popeye, who in short turn murders her only protector, rapes her with a corncob (he is impotent), and whisks her away to a Memphis brothel for further degradation. Meanwhile, Benbow finds himself defending one of the bootleggers for the murder Popeye committed, determined to achieve justice even if it means defying his sister and associating himself with "moonshiners and street-walkers" (108).

Both plots come crashing together in the end when Temple, suddenly returned to

Jefferson, shows up in court and commits perjury, attributing Popeye's crimes to the

innocent bootlegger and subsequently causing, in one of Faulkner's most chilling scenes,

his lynching and burning. Horace, shocked, as Olga Vickery puts it, at the "shoddy

foundations of his vision of a moral and rational universe" (105), returns to his troubled

home life in defeat and despair. Temple flees with her father on a face saving trip to

Luxembourg, feeling "sullen and discontented and sad" (Faulkner 317), though whether

or not she is experiencing remorse for her actions or simply self-pity is left ambiguous, as

is the true motive of her action – fear, or Popeye's corruption (Brooks 126)? As we'll see,

the sheer intensity and relentlessness of this dark, pessimistic content was the main focus

of attention upon the novel's initial release, and it found success with a pulp hungry

public while causing fervent debates among critics of the time.

We can start then with the 30s perception of Faulkner himself, which, as touched

on in the introduction, seemed to be caught somewhere between promising modernist

genius and indulgent gothic nihilist. Although it certainly caused the most stir, the

violence and depravity of *Sanctuary* were actually considered endemic of Faulkner's

work by many critics over the course of the decade. As Schwartz describes, while

Faulkner always had early defenders, much of the criticism was not only negative but

"superficial and hostile", with many reviewers unable to get past the unflinchingly

explicit and dark nature of his content (11), often boiling down to attacks on the author.

Saturday Review critic Bernard De Voto chastised Faulkner for an obsession with the

"primitive violence of the unconscious mind" and a partiality towards "rape, mutilation,

castration, incest, patricide, lynching, and necrophilia" (12), while Marxist critic

Granville Hicks claimed that Faulkner's style consisted mainly of piling "violence upon violence in order to convey a mood that we will not or cannot analyze" (15).

While more vitriolic criticisms such as these may be expected to overemphasize Faulkner's depravity in their attack on his content, references to Faulkner's penchant for disturbing content can also be found in his positive reviews. These types of reviews often stressed the more unpleasant aspects of the novels by linking them with what they saw as the effectiveness of Faulkner's overall style and meaning, usually suggesting an implicitly woven thematic burden that the author has skilfully shaped. Ted Robinson, one of Faulkner's early advocates, saw in *The Sound and the Fury* a "sordid and revolting story", but praised the style and power of the writing for giving that "sordidness...a certain tragic dignity" (Inge 36). Julia K.W. Baker, another early admirer, called *As I Lay Dying* "a horrible book" that "will scandalize the squeamish", yet also an "admirable" one that would "delight those who respect life well interpreted in fine fiction" (47). Sceptical of his earlier books, J. Donald Adams' review of *Light in August* complimented Faulkner for transforming his "brutal power" and "furious contempt for the human species" into something "astonishing" (87). All of these examples not only help partially exhibit Faulkner's violent and sordid 30s persona, but also show that it was often considered an emblematic characteristic of the author for those on either side of the critical fence – not just those who misunderstood his themes and content in fits of academic rage, as the Post-War critics and even Schwartz seem to imply.

While this perception existed before it, *Sanctuary* appears to have both amplified and crystallized the darker aspects of Faulkner's content, a development that left many of

even his most loyal supporters somewhat uncomfortable (Inge xiii)[10]. Robinson, for

example, tried to eke out praise, granting that while "its construction is masterly, its style

memorable", it was also "the most brutal book" he had read, one "so unutterably violent

so obscenely diabolical" that he found "difficulty in talking about it at all" (54). It also

effectively delivered Faulkner and this persona into the mainstream, becoming the

author's first (and until *Intruder in the Dust* in 1948, his only) substantial commercial

success, and it was the only one of his novels still in print by the end of the 40s (Schwartz

9)[11]. Accordingly, *Sanctuary* received double the amount of reviews as did his previous

works (Inge xiii), ensuring an expanded word of mouth and setting it up for the

widespread readership it eventually achieved.

Of course, the many outraged readers and calls for censorship throughout the

country (Ramsey 11) no doubt fuelled much of this increased notoriety, with mounting

claims of the book's disturbing content and offensive nature more likely enticing the

public as opposed to warding them off. D. Matthew Ramsey argues for something very

interesting in regards to this effect in his own look at Faulkner's reputation in the thirties.

Citing reviews from a variety of sources[12], Ramsay believes that the book's initial

reaction was more "balanced" than the near universal rejection claimed by later

champions of the novel and Faulkner's re-evaluations (10). He claims that many

reviewers shocked or dismayed by Faulkner's content were, just like the critics that I

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[10] Though not nearly as notorious now, the novel still carries a bit of a repute with critics decades after its release and eventual "re-evaluation", often seen as Faulkner's "bitterest" (Brooks 127) or "bleakest and angriest" (Minter 103) and other such designations.

[11] Faulkner was never comfortable with the enduring popularity of *Sanctuary*, fearing that he might be eternally remembered as "the corn-cob man" (Schwartz 58).

[12] Purely positive examples include a piece from *Vanity Fair* that saw *Sanctuary* as verification of Faulkner's "genius" (10) and a blurb from *The New York Evening Post* that deemed the book "compulsory reading" for those with the "desire to know the important accomplishment of contemporary American writing" (12).

quote above (which Ramsey neglects to mention), impressed by Faulkner's inherent skill in presenting it. Such sentiments can be seen even in Robinson's highly critical comments, and are perhaps best summed up by a reviewer for *The American Mercury* who claimed: "I don't think I have ever read a more terrible book. But I do know that it is a great novel" (12).

Ramsey sees this reception as the cause for the novel's popularity, with its focus on the novel's intense sensationalism and "horrible" nature in both outraged attacks and stunned praise likely "warning off readers who might be offended" (or driving them to public outcry) and "spurring the interest of those attracted to such content" (12). A look at the almost equally lurid persuasiveness of some of the reviews bears this notion out, as they play up the book's sensationalist content while treating it with a mixture of allure and repulsion. A review from *Time* claimed that the "horrors of any ghost story pale beside the ghastly realism of this chronicle" (12), while Paul H. Bixler described the story as "error heaped on error, perversion on perversion" and "too much of an evil thing" – but nonetheless urged his readers to buy it and bolster the popularity of Faulkner and his other work (Inge 53). Most indicative of this method is B.K.H. of the *Providence Journal*, who stated that even while he couldn't "think of anything...more harrowing, more instinctively revolting" than the book, one "can't let it alone, can't throw it across the room, into the fireplace as you'd like to, because under its sordid, creeping, haunting, terrifying context something sings" (55).

Once again, these reviews demonstrate that for many, Faulkner's sensationalist reputation was seemingly inseparable from his style and sometimes even his talent. This general perception of the author was likely perpetuated further by *Sanctuary*'s

controversial success – especially considering the increased amount of critical attention focused squarely on the book's disturbing content. Whether it was to decry this content or to make a case for the enticing style that accompanied it, critics rarely left its shocking intensity and sordid nature in question, creating a violent impression of Faulkner that critics like Cowley would later tout as the chief misrepresentation or misreading of the author in their postwar rehabilitation (Schwartz 21). At the time however, the publicity surrounding the book and the success that followed it brought this perception to a mass audience, sustaining it throughout the thirties and possibly colouring the general reaction to Faulkner and his work.

While the above point may be supported through even more en masse quoting of critical reviews, that is both a restricted and oft treated aspect of Faulkner's public perception. More interesting is the fact that the perception is just as clearly reflected by the production of *The Story of Temple Drake*. Within the context of a Pre-Code Hollywood on the cusp of entering an era of dominating censorship, this perception of both Faulkner and his novel can be linked intertextually to the film's pre-production, advertising style, thematic content, and harsh treatment under the Code upon release – making it crucial in an analysis of the relationship between the film and its source. While the studio utilized this sordid perception to drum up interest in the film and advertise it, the book's controversial nature made it a target for censors from its very inception, and the film presents an interestingly mixed attempt at rendering the novel's violent content and delivering on its lurid promises, as it must also alter them to fit Production Code morality.

In order to fully map this intertextual engagement, it is important to not only explore the Production Code itself, but also the unique era of Pre-Code cinema, a term referring to the variety of risqué and exploitive Code defying films produced between 1930 and 1934. The development of the Motion Picture Production Code began in the 1920s amid a growing national concern over the immorality of both Hollywood's denizens and its artistic output, spurred on by high profile scandals like the murder trial of silent film star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle (Belton 136). Decades away from having the audacity to claim free speech protection under the Constitution and constantly in fear of outside regulation, studios formed the Motion Picture Producers and Directors of America (MPPDA) and hired one William H. Hays as the head censor, charging him with the "cleaning up" of Hollywood through screenplay regulation and editing guidelines (136).

In 1927, the Hays Office (as his organization came to be called) penned and released a general list of what came to be known as "The Don'ts and Be Carefuls" for film producers to follow, but this list was mostly ignored until pressure from religious organizations resulted in the writing of the more meticulous and authoritative Production Code (136). The Code is actually a bit more than just a listing of moral guidelines. As Thomas Doherty says in his book *Pre-Code Hollywood*, it is in fact a relatively refined social document on mass culture and the influence of aesthetics on the public (6). It opens with a statement on the "high trust and confidence" that has been placed in the hands of movie producers by a film hungry public and the importance of realizing their "responsibility" in making entertainment and art that "may be directly responsible for spiritual or moral progress, for higher types of social life, and for much correct thinking"

(Belton 138). Later sections stress the moral importance that entertainment is "universally" known to hold, noting that art can be both "*morally good*" and "*morally evil*" in its influence and that "*correct entertainment raises*" a nation, while the "*wrong*" kind lowers it[13] (142).

It goes on to note that such influence is enhanced by the medium's status as "the art of the multitudes" (143), mentioning that a lowered "moral mass resistance to suggestion" due to larger audience sizes, and how the mass interest in celebrities can make one more "receptive" to the "emotions and ideals presented by their favourite stars" (144). Interestingly, the Code's overall mix of aesthetic theory and Victorian sensibilities almost reads like a manifesto for the kinds of reinforcement of status-quo that Marxist critics like Horkheimer and Adorno would come to charge Hollywood and the culture industry with[14]. The moral guidelines begin with three "General Principles":

1. No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown to the side of crime, wrong-doing, evil or sin

2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and environment, shall be presented.

3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation. (138-139).

[13] The proof being the evidently "healthy reactions" to "moral sports" like baseball and golf as opposed to cock-fighting and bear baiting, and the "effect" of gladiators and "obscene plays" on the Roman empire (ibid).
[14] Of course, they would come to see the Hays Office as a symptom of such hierarchical power as opposed to its external enforcement, seeing it as a confirmation of the deferment of pleasure that "the culture industry has established anyway" (1231).

These are then further explicated in a series of broken down categories, including *Crimes Against The Law*[15], *Sex*[16], and other assorted examples like *Profanity*, *Costume*, and *Religion* (139-41), all with their own regulations to follow.

Armed with its reactionary aesthetic philosophy and an elaborately detailed moral absolutism, the code was now ready to rescue the nation from cinematic indecency and was released in 1930 – where it was again mostly ignored (136). In the words of Steve Neale, the Code was used primarily in the early thirties as a "frame of negotiation" for filmmakers to work around as opposed to an unbreakable ruling, acting more as "a public statement of the ideological principles Hollywood claimed to uphold" than something actually practised (195). The next few years, however, would see the release and success of a multitude of blatantly Code defying films, causing concerned religious and citizen groups in 1934 to begin pressuring studios with threats of national boycotts unless the code was upheld (Belton 136-7). This resulted in the formation of the Production Code Administration (PCA), headed by Hays employee Joseph Breen, which finally began strictly enforcing the Code in July of that year, which it continued to do so until the mid fifties (137). This period of four years in between the Code's inception and enforcement, a time populated by violent gangster films, bawdy sex comedies, ghastly horror flicks, and risqué "vice films" is now referred to as the Pre-Code era[17].

The sudden popularity of these types of films in that specific moment of time is often connected to the variety of social and economic effects that the Great Depression

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[15] All criminals must be punished by the end, and crimes are not to be shown in detail in fear of "imitation" (139).

[16] Films must not present any "general passion" that may "stimulate the lower and baser elements" (139) Rape can be "suggested", but never shown, while things like *Sex perversion* and *Miscegenation* must be avoided completely (140).

[17] Though as Thomas Doherty points out, "Pre-Breen" might be a little more fitting (10).

had on both Hollywood and moviegoers in general. Hollywood was able to stay relatively healthy during these hard times, and most studies view this stability as a result of a nationwide need for escapism, often attributing the rise of crowd pleasing genres like the musical and the western to such desires (Cripps 62-3). Of course, purely fanciful escapism may not entirely explain why so many grim, violent, or lecherous films were so frequently viewed as well, and there was obviously an occasional dark side to the kind of "escape" that some audiences wanted. Many critics see *this* desire as disillusioned reaction to the apparent failure of American power and values that the onset of the Depression seemed to herald, with millions of citizens seeking an at least a glimpse at an entirely alternative situation – a desire Hollywood rushed to fill, Code or not (Cripps 64-5, Doherty 16, 20)[18]. This era of film thus exhibts a wide assortment of unique contexts, themes, and styles, and *Story* is a prime example of many of them.

Getting back to literary works and their reputations, Hutcheon points out the significance of the Code's censoring influence on adaptations in particular. In addition to its general sentiments on sex, violence, and depictions of evil, the Code restricted the filming of many literary properties based on their relation to the modernist movement, fearful of the corruptive capability of such works (92). Faulkner was for a long time deemed capable of such corruption due his violent and often disturbing subject matter (119), and looking back at the reactions and watchdog tactics of Hays, Breen, and other offended parties with a critical hindsight is rather interesting considering that long after the novel's initial response, many critics have come to view *Sanctuary* as being focused

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[18] As Altman puts it in his article "Ciname and Genre", the success of genre films relies heavily on the knowledge and acceptance of genre elements by the mass audience, and thus audiences must be "sufficiently committed to generic values to tolerate and even enjoy in genre films capricious, violent, or licentious behaviour which they might disapprove of in 'real life'" (Langford 11).

on some similar issues. According to readings like these, Faulkner was deeply concerned with what he saw as a growing amorality in society, using the book to explore both this and the corrupting nature of evil. In "Faulkner's Mythology", a precursor to the thematically encompassing looks at Faulkner from postwar revivalists like Cowley, George Marian O'Donnell somewhat backhandedly analyses *Sanctuary* as an allegory for the further debasement of "Southern Womanhood Corrupted but Undefiled (Temple)" by "amoral Modernism (Popeye)" and the failure of "The Formalized Tradition (Horace Benbow)" (28). Ideas like this were picked up and expanded upon decades later by critics like Cleanth Brooks, who sees in the narrative the dilution of "traditional society" by "a modern world in which amoral power is almost nakedly present" (116).

As opposed to the censoring values of the Code however, Faulkner explored these issues by depicting this evil and violence without any filters to protect the "innocent" masses, using the intensity of his presentation to provide, as Vickery argues, a "shock" to both the reader's "nervous system" and "moral intelligence" (103). This of course made him part of the problem in the eyes of Hays and Breen, and while the degradation and corruption of Temple is easily the most salacious aspect of the novel, the failure of Horace is the most damaging to their ideology. Horace is driven entirely by a sense of chivalrous duty to protect the downtrodden, aiding the bootlegger's wife Ruby because "She has nothing. No one" (Faulkner 117) and taking the case because he "cannot stand idly by and see injustice" (119). His confidence in the matter is fuelled not only by an immense faith in the moral system he is so dedicated to uphold[19], but also by his own

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[19] Faulkner makes clear the slightly self-serving aspect of this desire as well, with Horace needing to win the case not so much as an affirmation of this system, but as an affirmation of his self within it in the face of his suffocating home and family life. When asked by Ruby about payment at time when he is

understanding of evil, since he believes that it follows a "logical pattern" that few people realize or are willing to admit (221).

When injustice prevails in the end, he is left speechless and powerless as Temple gets off and the bootlegger is lynched, returning to his unhappy existence at home. Evil and corruption do not follow the set patterns that he envisioned, and a mere sense of duty and moral superiority does not make him an entitled protector of those deemed to be below him. As Vickery puts it, "Horace's sanctuary, his imaginative world of moral and aesthetic perfection, has been violated by his one excursion into the world of concrete existence" (114). While they are of course dedicated to very different things in comparison to Horace, I believe that an "imaginative world of moral and aesthetic perfection" is a perfect description of the kind thing that the Hays Office felt it was fighting for. In addition to violence and corruption, Faulkner was intent on presenting a world where such blind moralistic duty is ultimately ineffectual against the harsh realities of the modern world, creating a moralistic expression that reflects these realities as opposed to ignoring or censoring them.

It is unlikely that the censors picked up on these themes, though the violent reputation that Faulkner had built by 1931 was more than enough to make him a major target. This can be seen quite clearly in the venomous reaction that Paramount received at the mere announcement that they had purchased the rights to turn *Sanctuary* into a film. The studio was instantly hit by a swarm of attacks in the press that called for them to halt production due to the infamy of the novel (Phillips 69), with New York based publications like *Harrison's Reports* claiming it had the potential to be "the greatest harm

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particularly confident in his victory, he tells her "Forget it, I've been paid. You won't understand it, but my soul has served an apprenticeship that has lasted for forty-three years" (Faulkner 280).

to the motion picture industry that has ever been done in its entire history" (Vieira 150).

Hays himself even took particular notice, telling Breen that they "simply must not allow

the production of a picture which will offend every right-thinking person who sees it"

(Vieira 149). While it ultimately couldn't stop the film's production, the Hays office did

hound it with restrictions from inception to release, the first of which forbade the studio

from using the title *Sanctuary* or mentioning it in any advertisements (Barker 140).

The film seemed set up to be made an example of from the very start, and a

description of its plot may sound like the censors had their way, with most of the overly

disturbing parts of the novel left out and many aspects altered to provide clearer heroes

and a positive resolution. Temple (Miriam Hopkins) is still a hopeless tease, and is still

raped (Her assailant slowly approaches her as the screen fades to black with her scream)

and brought to a brothel, but it is now by an attractive, decidedly not impotent gangster

named Trigger (Jack LaRue), whom she later kills in retribution[20]. The film ends with the

young lawyer *Stephen* Benbow (William Gargan) gallantly convincing Temple, with

whom he is in love, to ignore her reputation and admit to her degradation and sins, saving

the bootlegger, redeeming her soul, and paving the way for the young couple's

marriage[21]. These changes were not enough for the film to avoid a "Class 1" ban two

weeks after its release, being deemed "never to be released" again (Ramsey 16)[22].

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[20] Popeye does receive comeuppance for his actions by the end of the novel, but gets it by being hanged for a crime he did not commit, an ironic end that fits well with Faulkner's morally nihilistic modern world.
[21] Though most would see the film's need to redeem Temple as a weakness, it is a need that Faulkner himself would apparently come to develop, releasing a 1951 sequel to *Sanctuary* entitled *Requiem for a Nun*, where Temple would eventually earn her redemption through a confession and a reconciliation with her husband Gowan. This does, however, come at the cost of the lives of her child and a loyal servant, with the latter smothering the former in order to punish Temple for almost running away again, getting subsequently executed soon after.
[22] Phillips states that the outrage lasted well after the film was released and banned, with Paramount's president being "urged to burn the negative of the finished film in order to keep the movie from ever being exhibited" (69).

Obviously, aspects of *Story*'s production were still found to be offensive, and as we shall see, its interaction with the Code is a bit more complex than an absolute surrender. For one, despite all of the protests and stipulations, Paramount didn't exactly shy away from the kind of publicity that *Sanctuary* guaranteed, with advertisements celebrating the notorious nature of the book (thus implying it for the film) and making the connection to the author clear. Some posters invited the audience to view how "The year's most sensational novel unfolds its flaming story", and more still included the credit "by William Faulkner" over the name of director Steven Roberts, giving many the false impression that Faulkner himself had written the screenplay (Barker 140). While not necessarily mentioning the novel by name, the studio ensured that the film's relationship to its scandalous source was made clear through the emphasis of Faulkner's "involvement". The use of the author's name in juxtaposition with those flashy adjectives serves almost as a symbolic stand in for the book itself, hopefully allowing filmgoers to pick up on any sensationalist perceptions that Faulkner's name carried in relation to that "flaming story".

In other words, when more direct hypermediacy with the source was denied to them, studio advertisers turned to a quasi-remediation of the author himself, utilizing Faulkner's public persona to promote the film's proposed sensationalism and further legitimize its connection to the source through his implied involvement. This method proved successful, as a variety of articles reported on this supposed association, even giving Faulkner a false writing credit in some cases (Ramsey 18). In the event that Faulkner's sordid persona and *Sanctuary*'s disturbing reputation had not already entered into the public consciousness, then surely this public battle over the film and Paramount's

advertising tactics were the last push. This entrance may even be reflected in the way that many media outlets covered the situation, working under the assumption of their readership's knowledge of both the novel and some specifically sordid details of its content (Ramsey 18, Barker 140).

The actual imagery of the advertisements, as well as the suggestive tone that many of the taglines take, also contribute to the remediation of this perception in their own way. One poster warns that "If your Aunt Minnie from Duluth happens in be in town next week, don't invite her to *The Story of Temple Drake*...That is, if she happens to be an old-fashioned Aunt Minnie who shies away from gin and sex" (Doherty 108). Another positions the words "No! No! Please Don't!" above the image of a terrified Temple, with a text box below explaining "She lived recklessly...dangerously. Flirted and teased...Because she thought she knew how to handle men" (Barker 140). An ad in the film's press book displays some harsh lines of dialogue spoken by Ruby in critique of Temple's teasing nature alongside an image of Trigger lording over her: "I know your kind...you get kick out a playing with kids...burning their gas...spending their money...stringing 'em along! But you're not dealing with a kid now...you're dealing with a man!" (152).

Not only are these ads blatantly up front about the film's odious content and its rejection of "old-fashioned" values, but they present a rather unpleasant moral reading of Temple's situation and what the audience is supposed to take from it. Even if these ads are not working on the same assumption as the press in regards to the novel's specific content (ie., the rape), the imagery of a cowering, protesting Hopkins at the mercy of a leering LaRue serves as a strong enough indication for what will befall the heroine. What

is more, the text of the ads implies that this event is, or at least is part of, a deserved comeuppance for thinking she "knew how to handle men" or for stringing along those boys for so long. As Barker explains, Ruby's sentiments in both novel and film express her view of Temple as fully deserving of what she gets, and the juxtaposition of these sentiments and the ad's imagery promotes this specific view to the public (151). Not only are we invited to view the character's sexual wantonness and manipulation, we are also invited to view her punishment – which is, on not so subtle a level, also guaranteed to be sexual in nature[23].

This is the first example of the thematically mixed method in which *Story*'s remediation is handled, where the film breaks the Code to present its intertext in the process of transforming it to appeal to the Code's values in some way. While the film advertises and presents itself and its source with the kind of "promiscuous embrace of sex" and "spirit of enthusiastic indulgence" common to all "vice" films at the time (Doherty 103), it also implies punishment and retribution for such behaviour, asking us, in effect, to enjoy both sides on some level. Doherty explains that this was not altogether uncommon for vice films, which often "dangled the promise of salacious material with lurid advertising" (107) and then "diluted the damnation with a dose of redemption" in the actual product, usually in the final reel (113). The film is far from didactic or moralist at its core, of course, embracing its salacious content as fully as a film could at the time with its visceral use of sin and damnation as the vehicles for the redemption of its characters. This is expressed in Temple's "punishment" by rape and her emancipating murder of Trigger, both of which must occur for her to come to her courtroom

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[23] The nature of these advertisements were not lost on those members of the concerned public, and Paramount met with a host of angry letters complaining about the content of the film's posters (Vieira 150).

deliverance, where she confesses her sins and is re-entered into legitimate society through

a loving relationship with a man (Hollywood's go-to solution for almost every

problem).[24].

Thus, by circumventing many usual Code tenets in order to keep others intact, the

film offers the pleasure of an immoral alternative situation (as per usual in the Pre-Code

era) along with an eventual reinforcing of the standard system of values in the end –

albeit a very conflicted one. The nature of this conflict lies in the film's attempt to render

visually both the book's scandalous content and its particular thematic reading of this

content, all while trying to adhere simultaneously to popular demand, public perception,

national concern, and the rules of the Code. By attempting to balance its utilization of

Faulkner's content in terms of his violent public perception with a forced dose of Code

morality, the film offers a remediation that mixes the two just as much as it circumvents

both in various ways. The rest of this chapter will explore in detail the contexts in which

this remediation was formed and utilized, as well as how it manifests itself intertextually

within the film – a manifestation primarily expressed in the presentation and treatment of

Temple.

At first, my above concept of *Story*'s use of the code may seem like a direct

endorsement of the ideological genre approach of Hollywood "assisting in the

maintenance of the status quo" (Wright 41). However, it is important to note that while

the ruling system of values is eventually reinforced in the end, it is reached only through

an exploitive aestheticization of their denial. It is hard to imagine Hays and Breen seeing

rape and revenge as acceptable tools to present social betterment and the importance of

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[24] Such a hard road to salvation was rare even in the "fallen woman" cycles that vice films like *Story* were often exaggerations of (Doherty 104), which would often resolve such actions with the heroine's tragic demise.

these values[25], even as "*deceptive* non-solutions" possibly serving the purposes of the government (Altman 27), as seen by their decision to ban it. From a ritual perspective though, this mix of defiance and compliance may be a telling reflection of audience desires of the time, or at least of the film's unique Pre-Code context.

For one, the presentation and advertising of Temple's "punishment" as comeuppance for her decadent ways is in keeping with what is now seen as a general reaction against higher class pre-Depression lifestyles. Jack Vizzard, a Hollywood censor himself, describes it as such: "With the crash, the party was over. In the littered debris of confetti and tickertape, an enormous sense of guilt set in...In a mood of sobriety, a chastened citizenry reacted against those symbols of its great debauch and began to punish them" (Barker 151). This notion corresponds well with what Cripps identifies as the US's turn to "a compensating social conservatism" over the course of the Depression (83), blaming the crash on the degeneracy and excess of the flapper generation (and many other facets of modernity) and desiring to move away from it. Pre-Code filmmakers thus found themselves caught with a public that came to be split between revelling in alternative degenerate excess and in some ways wishing to see it punished, so it was perhaps inevitable that some would attempt to provide both sordid pleasures and a sense of security in their films. These sentiments seemed to have been augmented in the wake of the New Deal, which Doherty argues was seen by the public as "the within-the-system salvation of the American experiment" that restored the country's confidence in its "democratic vistas" when passed in 1934 (17).

Both Cripps and Doherty see a connection between the onset of social conservatism and this perceived validation of America's system and values in regards to

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[25] Upon seeing the film, Breen deemed it "sordid, base, and thoroughly unpleasant" (Vieira 150).

the rise of Breen and the end of the Pre-Code era, which was born in a period of doubt and defiance of that same system of values (Cripps 83-5, Doherty 16-17). Of course, the Depression continued on until World War II, but as Doherty explains, the New Deal provided a moral victory for a general American public in doubt of their system of values but afraid of any radical upturning of it, a fear and gradual return of confidence reflected in Hollywood and the Code: "the radical overthrow of capitalism and constitutionalism was averted – in part, by the cultural work performed by and enforced upon Hollywood cinema" (17). As public confidence in the system and its values returned, the salacious kind of alternatively rebellious viewpoints that Pre-Code films provided had perhaps run their course. They simply became too easy a target for the likes of Hays and Breen, whose moralistic battle against transgression was finally given power and legitimacy in 1934 by a vocal enough part of the public who desired to view films with absolute fealty to the system – and to see any characters or films that were not duly punished.

In this regard, I believe that *Story*'s mixed engagement with the code and its treatment of its characters is ultimately linked to the timing of its production, being made and released in the wake of this social conservatism and just on the cusp of full Code enforcement. While the growing social influence of the Code and a concerned public obviously pressured the filmmakers into punishing Temple and Trigger (and redeeming the former), they still flaunted their independence by making the film (and its forms of punishment) unabashedly sordid and sexual, dedicated to capitalizing on the novel's scandalous perception. As seen in some of the film's advertisements, the studio even co-opted this public desire for punishment to bolster this perception, sexualizing the idea of Temple's eventual comeuppance and teasing the audience with it in an aforementioned

mix of exploitation and moralizing. This displays an interesting air of acknowledgement on the part of the studio of the immense pressure that they were facing, and an even more interesting attempt to utilize this pressure to its advantage. Accordingly, the subsequent banning of the film demonstrates how harsh the social climate surrounding Pre-Code films had become, with the patience for such subversion finally running out[26].

At this point, it is worth noting that while the thematic concept of punishing Temple for the audience's pleasure certainly stems from the social contexts around the film, it is not wholly separate from the novel itself. In fact, it is a theme that some modern critics see Faulkner directly aiming for, viewing it as a rather bitter voyeuristic presentation of the author's previously mentioned lament over the destruction of old values by a nihilistic modernism. A sense of anger aimed at Temple's position as a high society party-girl is presented clearly in the book via Ruby's chastisement of Temple soon after meeting her; the same "I know your kind" lines of insult and warning are reused in both the film and its advertisements. In fact, the class based nature of this anger appears even clearer in the novel[27]. Ruby venomously accuses Temple of being "Too good to have anything to do with common people", and makes a point out of the ironic dependence those in Temple's position have on said people – the proof of which she sees

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[26] In fact, many critics see the controversy over *Story* as one of the major contributing factors that lead to the 1934 reinforcement of the code. Kawin believes that the release of the film "considerably strengthened the hand of [the] censorship office" (33), and film historian William K. Everson sees the film as causing the eventual nation-wide dominance of the Code "almost single-handedly" (Phillips 69).

[27] Hints of such criticism of the upper class in the film are brief and few and far between, but nonetheless striking. An early scene depicting the stuffy Judge Drake lecturing Benbow on the importance of adhering to the law ends with him enjoying and offering a glass of whiskey to the young lawyer, a move Barker sees as "an act of hypocrisy that surely would not be lost on a Prohibition-era audience" (167). Later, Judge Drake is laughed at behind his back by his black servants over his ignorance of Temple's disrespectful behaviour. Bemused at the tears and stains of her under garments, one exclaims: "If he'd a done her laundry, he'd know more about that child".

in Temple's plight[28](Faulkner 57). These lines set up Temple as, as Barker puts it, "a tease and an upper-class hypocrite who deserves whatever she gets" (151), a sentiment that *Story*'s filmmakers and advertisers evidently picked up and ran with.

Attributing Ruby's perspective on matters as Faulkner's sole intention is of course a risky endeavour, but the idea that Temple is being "punished" is borne out by many critical readings, particularly feminist ones. Such readings often see Faulkner's treatment of Temple as a portrayal of the inevitably destructive effects that the character's sexually extroverted nature brings down upon herself and those around her. For example, Leslie Fielder believes *Sanctuary* to be a "profoundly misogynistic" novel, and just one instance in a long line of stories that display Faulkner's fear of "fully sexed women", who are punished for "refusing in 'reality' to live up to the idealizing stereotypes of them as inviolate temples" (80-1). Barker picks up on a similar theme, seeing the novel as a demonstration of what happens to a wanton "belle as flapper" in a time where "the social structures that guard and limit her behaviour are removed" (150). She also argues that Faulkner seeks to make Temple "an object of pity" while at the same time presenting "a kind of vicarious pleasure in witnessing the belle get her comeuppance", something she believes exists in the adaptation as well (151).

As we'll see, the novel is undoubtedly voyeuristic in nature, and while I believe that Faulkner's treatment of Temple stems from more than a misogynistic fear of her sexuality, it is an interesting notion to view Faulkner as being so caught up in a critique of the upper class that he would write a novel partially taking pleasure in the rape and punishment of one of its members. Conversely, the argument could always be made that

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[28] "But just let you get into a jam, then who do you come crying to? to us, the ones that are not good enough to lace the judge's almighty shoes" (Faulkner 57-8).

this "punishment" might be a prime example of Faulkner knowing the desires of his presumably lower class thirties pulp audience. Whether or not such "pleasure" truly is an aspect of the book's depiction of moral corruption or a symptom of the author's general problem with female sexuality is a debate for another type of project, and more crucial to my analysis is the observable evidence that this is the reading the filmmakers chose to remediate. Based on the previously explored social contexts surrounding the film's production, not to mention Faulkner's well established reputation for sordidness, it is unsurprising that this is the reading the studio decided to present and promote.

Of course, when it comes down to the film itself, interference from the Code and social standards of the time prevented a direct visual translation of the book's content no matter what the reading. Though as mentioned, this hardly caused the filmmakers to shy away from a salacious and transgressive presentation, even if it meant mixing it with a reinforcement of the status-quo. The object then was to render the content and portray Temple in a way that would engage with the sensational reputation of the novel and deliver on the lurid pleasures expected of the genre (and later promised by the ads), all while trying to balance this with the morality of the code. The attempt to achieve this balance is reflected in three major aspects of the film's presentation: the conflicted nature of Temple's sordid character, the ways in which she is both corrupted and redeemed (and the roles Trigger and Benbow play in this), and how she is voyeuristically presented to both the audience and the characters within the film.

While the changing of the title to *The Story of Temple Drake* was forced upon the studio, it is a fitting emblem for the thematic shifts the film makes from its intertext. Changing the conflicted and hopeless Horace Benbow of the novel to the stalwart

supporting character of the film not only makes Temple the undisputed main character, but also puts her at the centre of the film's moral reading of the novel. Thus, the struggle between traditional values and modern amorality that Horace believes himself to be fighting must be somehow presented entirely through Temple. Not only that, she must also reflect both sides equally to sustain the film's mixed engagement of the code, acting for the audience as a figure who is both pleasurably punishable and reassuringly redeemable. As we'll see, the film illustrates this struggle by more clearly internalizing it within Temple, turning her "story" into a battle between an inner immorality (that Trigger brings out in her) and an ultimate longing to be good[29].

While it would be risky to imply that this battle does not occur for Temple in the novel at all, it is at least partially obscured by Faulkner's style of presentation. Looking at *Sanctuary* in part as an anti-detective novel, Brooks noted how Faulkner "deliberately refrains from entering into the minds of his characters at the moments when they make their decisions" (119), leaving the moral shifts in Temple's character and the motivations behind them a mystery. I would also argue that direct representation is avoided for not only Temple's thoughts, but most of her general character as well, with much of what the readers learn about her moral disposition coming from the dialogue and observations of others. Her introduction in the book, for example, barely goes on for three pages and is bereft of almost any description of her, with a single offhand line by a drunken admirer the only initial indication of her sordid ways: "Don't think I didn't see your name where it's written on that lavatory wall" (Faulkner 38).

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[29] This battle would have been presented even more directly if the film had kept its original title "*The Shame of Temple Drake*" (Doherty 114, Barker 172), calling forth a clear sense of guilt or atonement over an immoral act.

Furthermore, the few times that we are made privy to Temple's thoughts they mostly express the fear and apprehension she is experiencing, while much of her dialogue reveals an immense naivety and upper class ignorance that blinds her understanding of social (and conceivably moral) matters. The biggest indication of this is the way Temple attempts to find comfort and protection from her situation through her status and connections, repeating to herself "My father's a judge; my father's a judge" as a protective mantra (Faulkner 51), telling Ruby that her brothers consist of lawyers, a journalist, and a current attendee of Yale (54), as well as mentioning the fact that the governor is a frequent dinner guest (56)[30]. This leaves it up to Ruby's diatribe to contextualize and comment on the hypocrisy and danger of her behaviour[31].

Another crucial point is that while Temple expresses her feelings and thoughts in the events leading up to the rape, the rape itself is never illustrated from her direct point of view, nor directly illustrated at all for that matter. This point is stressed by her oddly disassociated reaction to the rape, crying "Something is happening to me...I told you it was!" to a nonexistent observer as Popeye draws near and the narrative cuts out (102). It is instead expressed later in the novel as a distraught story she recites to Benbow, something that allows him to play the part of the involved moral observer, experiencing Temple's brush with evil second hand and claiming to understand its nature, even though in the end he greatly misjudges its corrupting effects on her. While this serves Benbow's

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[30] Barker actually sees these claims as part of a subconscious acknowledgement on Temple's part of her own fallen/immoral state, attempting to "fall back on her privileged background to salvage...an appearance of virtue" when she knows she has actually violated her upper class propriety (150).
[31] This does, however, lead to one quick instance of Temple acknowledging her immoral state directly, responding to part of Ruby's telling of her own debauched history with a whispered admission that she too has been called a "whore" (Faulkner 58). This not only expresses a possible sense of shame behind her actions, but also acts as an attempt to looks past her class difference and connect with Ruby on some level, however slight (and ultimately ignored) the attempt is.

arc and the novel's overall themes, the internal aspect of the rape's effect on Temple, as well as its apparently corruptive effects, are ultimately left vague.

Through this technique, Temple is almost like an empty vessel, corrupted and modified by Popeye to transgress the values of her high station while being protected by an unjust world too amoral to punish such transgression. Readers are never made sure of the extent of her personal struggle between moral values and the amoral choices she comes to make, lending to the unsettling world of amorality Faulkner wished to present. The filmmakers obviously felt that they could not afford to have such disconcerting ambiguity surrounding what was going to be their central moral message – as mixed or contradictory as it proves to be. With *Story*'s new focus on Temple and the role of its Benbow reduced and uncomplicated, Temple's obscured moral conflict is made to take centre stage, and various aspects of the film ensure that it is both visually represented and thematically evident. One way that the film achieves this is by spending more time introducing Temple and establishing her sordid tendencies, often making clear the ethical contrast the film sets up between her "high" status and "low" behaviour.

This is exemplified in our very first glimpse of Temple, which is preceded by a scene with Judge Drake and the romantically interested but conflicted Benbow, with the former ensuring the latter that Temple is "a good girl" over a shot of whiskey. This sentiment is ironically followed by an immediate fade-in to a shot of Temple returning home late with boy and flirtatiously fending off his advances. She then has a series of lines which illustrate that her attitude towards the boy teeters between coy willingness and teasing denial: "Men are so funny...I said no...Of course I like you, dreadfully, but I'm not a wrestler". When he gets too seductively physical, she exclaims "You're too

rough" before pushing him away and rushing inside, but pauses to give a smile and a sensuous sounding goodnight before closing the door. When soon confronted with a disapproving Judge Drake, she throws off his questioning by asking him to unhook part of her dress, and escapes punishment by telling him that the boy attends his old alma mater.

Through this introduction, the film wastes no time in clearly establishing its Temple as the sexually manipulative tease implied by Ruby's denunciations, thus delivering at least partially on the promises of its ads. She is well aware of the power of her sexuality over men (even her own grandfather), and even though she has a strict limit, she seems to place herself dangerously on its very edge. This can be seen in the way she sends the boy away for being rough, but offers a seductive farewell through the door before he leaves, literally closing the door on his physicality, but figuratively leaving it open and inviting on herself similar behaviour later. From the very first frame she is in, Temple is shown to teasingly place herself in physically sexual situations she has no intention of going through with. The sexual power she wields in this scene becomes the first instance of her "handling" of men, a trespass the film will later punish with a physical situation she cannot escape from. Her power over Judge Drake is also interesting, not only for its incestuous undertones, but for Temple's manipulative mixing of her sexuality and her upper class status, knowing that the boy's collegiate connection will appease her grandfather and legitimize their less than chaste fraternization[32].

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[32] A similar mixing of these two aspects occurs later with a scene at a high society dance, with Temple constantly switching between dance partners, playfully frustrating each one's attempt to impress and woo her with their affluence before moving on to the next. Again her power over men is exhibited through an avoidance of physical commitment and a roguish awareness of her high station.

While Faulkner depicts evil as a concealed, amorphous, and almost unknowable force, the film (striving to clarify its protagonist's moral conflict) portrays Temple's sordid behaviour as a distinct, antagonistic form within her. This concept is first mentioned by Benbow's confidant Aunt Jennie, who warns her nephew that while the Drakes are usually a "stiff necked lot", each generation has one with a "wild streak" or "something bad in them. Something wrong". This "something" and the internal struggle which it implies is expressed by simply splitting Temple's personality in two, which is explained outright by Temple herself when pressed by Benbow on why she refuses to marry him:

> "It isn't you Steve, it's me...I'm no good....I do love you. Well part of me does.
>
> It's like there were two me's, one of them says "Yes, quick, don't let me get away..."
>
> And the other?
>
> I won't tell you...of what it wants, does, and what'll happen to it. I don't know myself. All I know is I hate it".

This is hardly a complex or subtle technique, but it proves very useful overall to the film's mixed Production Code interaction. Through it, the film can present Temple as both a punishable sexual tease and a sympathetic moral being, engaging in immoral behaviour because there is a part of herself she can't control, but also being lucid enough to at least know it is wrong and that something will eventually have to "happen to it". This part of her, this internal longing to be good (and in essence, to deserve to be in a relationship with Benbow), is the film's way of ensuring the audience that Temple has a

chance to be redeemed. However, this cannot happen before this "other" Temple is fully marginalized (something both Trigger and Benbow see to by the end in their own very separate ways), shown by the fact that this anxious rejection of Benbow is exactly what sets Temple on her drunken course into the punishing arms of Trigger. From the studio's ideal perspective, this would allow the audience to enjoy each aspect of the film's mixed thematic engagement with the Code, finding pleasure in Temple's sexualisation and punishment, yet also comfort in the eventual return to the societal status-quo.

As Ramsey notes, the studio also commissioned ads to promote specifically this thematic division of its main character. The most striking one is styled as a personal testimonial from Temple, declaring herself "a half-good girl" who "tried to be...longed to be respectful", but her "other side", the "wild Drake streak" is "too strong", ending with the full "two me's" line (Ramsey 20. 26) [Fig. 1]. He goes on to argue that the persona of Miriam Hopkins may have bolstered this split identity theme in both the film and the posters, claiming that the actress was "widely known in Hollywood" to be gay or bisexual, though such stories were common for leading ladies at the time (21). In addition to this, Hopkins had by 1933 garnered a reputation for playing "bitchy", "sexually transgressive", or "alternative" female roles during her time at Paramount (21). If all this notoriety surrounding the actress truly was as widespread as Ramsey argues it was, then the aim and effect of the posters are intensified. By using Hopkins as a recognizable symbol for contested identity and alternative female roles, the studio sought to appeal to the public even more directly, with the ads cementing the central conflict and perhaps
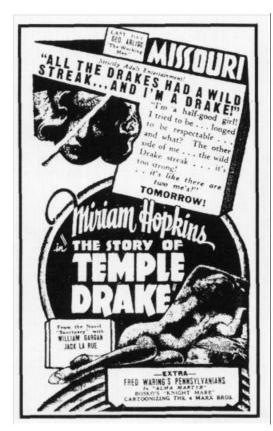
Fig. 1. Two posters for *The Story of Temple Drake*, advertising the film in terms of the character's split nature, "wild streak", and the fact that she "Thought She Knew How to Handle Men". Both taken from Ramsey (20, 26).

even enhancing the lurid promises of punishment – all by capitalizing on the actress's

reputation and reminding moviegoers of her previously boundary breaking female roles[33].

With its central theme (and advertising campaign) focused around the punishment

of female sexuality, it is needless to say that the film is hardly feminist in nature.

Ascribing itself to one of the oldest and most sexist gender dichotomies, the film defines

the development of Temple's internal conflict entirely by her move from a tainted,

immoral physical relationship with Trigger to a virtuous, morally ideal one with Benbow.

The film's attempt to reconcile both of these relationships with its moral themes displays

its most blatantly mixed engagement with the Code, depicting the violence and

sordidness of Trigger's world while simultaneously trying to solve everything with

Benbow's love and the virtues of an honourable system of values. These points are

emphasized by the subservient positions Temple comes to take under each male character

in order to complete the moral progression the film has set up for her, requiring her to be

violently victimized for her gender on one hand and, in the process of being redeemed

and reinforcing society's values, symbolically submit to the male gender on the other.

Within the film's reading of the novel, the roles of Popeye and Trigger are

brutally simple: they are the inevitable end to the slippery slope that is Temple's immoral

behaviour – a destructive encounter with evil. The central event of this encounter is, of

course, the rape; an unwanted physical situation that Temple cannot escape from, acting

as the advertised punishment that Temple is thought to have invited upon herself for

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[33] Barker also brings up some intriguing points about some of Hopkins' past roles and their connection to this split-identity/unconventional female role reputation. Prior to *Story*, she had two different roles as a dancehall girl: one in a 1931 version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, where she strips down and attempts to seduce the former before being murdered by the later; the other in the gangster film *Dancers in the Dark* (1932), which also had advertisements that called attention to her character's split, half-bad, half-good nature (161-2).

wielding her sexuality the way she did[34]. The result is the complete breakdown of Temple

as a moral being within society, with Popeye/Trigger violating any sense of virtue or

propriety she had left and forcibly removing her from the social order, making her live in

squalor in a Memphis brothel under his lecherous control. In the both the novel and film,

this destruction of Temple's morality is portrayed as a kind of death. Each contains a

scene immediately following the rape which depicts an immobile Temple seated in

Popeye/Trigger's car as he speeds her off to Memphis, her face completely blank and

unresponsive like, as the novel puts it, "a small, dead-colored mask" (Faulkner 104).

The time that Temple spends under Popeye/Trigger's influence is considerably

longer in the novel, and as evidenced by her perjury at the end, a much more damning

experience. Novel Temple is forced back into society by her family and Benbow as a now

fully corrupted being, using the power and protection of her regained status to sacrifice

the life of Ruby's lowly bootlegger husband. Why she does this is, as mentioned, is never

made clear, but I agree with Brooks in seeing the most likely motivation as either an

attempt to cover up her complicity with Popeye and save face, or an attempt to protect

him from harm – though a mixture of both seems likely as well (Brooks 121-24).

Regardless, Popeye's lasting power over her is made tragically evident, with Temple

unable to recover from the damage he has done or shake the subservient relationship she

has developed with him. Though her immoral actions are shielded by her privileged

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[34] This notion that Temple invites the rape on herself is seen in an even more extreme light in some of the first major critical readings of the book. Vickery's analysis, for example, sees Temple as "impressing her fear and desire on the men" through her anxious behaviour, and argues that the character is "half-fascinated by the idea of her own rape and half dreading the actual experience" (107). Readings like this are primarily informed by Ruby, who views Temple's hysterics and expressions of fear as her "Playing at it" for the men (Faulkner 60-61), and also perhaps Temple's eerie recount of the rape later on, where Benbow notes that she recounts the event "with actual pride, a sort of naive and impersonal vanity" (216). While film Ruby throws out a similar accusation ("Now you're satisfied, you got em all fightin over ya. You nice women"), this notion is ironically not as strong in the film, mostly due to a sympathetic performance by Hopkins that presents Temple as convincingly terrified of the whole situation.

position in society, she can never truly return to a normal place within it, as evidenced by the fanciful escape to Luxembourg in the novel's final pages.

In accordance with movie Temple's heavily foreshadowed and essentially unavoidable redemption, her time with Trigger is marked with resistance as opposed to corruption, allowing her to escape the condemning actions of her textual counterpart. From the moment she is brought to Memphis she attempts to leave, but is halted by unstated threats of violence implied by Trigger's imposing figure. There is only one time she willingly submits to his lust, and it is done in order to save Benbow's life, faking corruption with a falsely passionate kiss so that the young lawyer will abandon an attempt to save her and avoid getting shot by Trigger for meddling. Benbow's presence serves to remind Temple of the moral and romantic ideal he represents and immediately inspires her to save herself and leave. When Trigger tries to stop and presumably rape her again, she is forced to commit a final sin – murder.

Fitting with her split nature (and the film's mixed attempt to follow the Code), Temple's actions are primarily determined by her moral side even in a state of immoral disgrace, with all of her sins (lust, murder, revenge) justified by their motivation and ends (saving Benbow, saving herself, punishing evil). In fact, she almost becomes an extension of moral law through her actions, bringing Trigger to a kind of vigilante justice through her act of self-defence. As Barker describes it, Temple's "good/bad girl position" allows her to "act as both gangster's moll and victim", letting her "take the law (the gun) into her own hands" – which she does only after law itself (Benbow) has been threatened (165). As exhibited before with her self-awareness of her internal struggle, this lets the audience

know that even in a fallen state there is a part of Temple that is driven by moral ideals, setting things up for her eventual redemption.

As justifiable and well motivated as these actions are, as the film continues, they are shown not be enough in of themselves to redeem Temple. The shame of her previous actions and her experience with Trigger has, according to the film, tainted her in some way, and it will take more than his death to restore her. This is illustrated in a scene directly following Trigger's murder, where Temple is unable to remove the stain of his blood from a fancy dress hat as she taxis home, soon breaking down in tears. This sentiment is unsurprising considering the film's need to end on a comforting reinforcement of the ruling system of values, which would be undone if Temple were able to save herself completely through actions that technically lie on the outside of both the social order and the law[35]. In order to make complete its thematic message and fulfill its engagement with the Code, the film must reintegrate Temple into society and redeem her through its system of values – something the film feels she can only achieve through the high-minded guidance of her love interest and a complete submission to him.

Returning to society, Temple is faced with the same decision as her novel counterpart: let Ruby's bootlegger husband die, or publically shame her family's name and herself by admitting to her sordid experiences – this time with the added stigma of Trigger's murder. Despite pressure from her grandfather to be silent, Benbow calls on the moral side of Temple's internal struggle, ensuring her that telling the truth will finally

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[35] Interestingly enough, Doherty believes that even with the film's last scene redemption, the moral ramifications of these actions are left open in a way that doesn't quite mesh with the Code, arguing that "The degree of Temple's complicity in her rape and culpability for Trigger's murder is unresolved", leaving room for "profane thoughts" and possibly leading to its harsh treatment after release (117). While this openness is most likely attributed to narrative holes in the screenplay than a conscious effort on the part of the filmmakers, it is nonetheless the closet the film comes to remediating the troubling moral vagueness of the novel.

cure her split soul. He tells her that it is time for "All that's good and fine in you to stand up and take your medicine", promising that facing society and restoring its lawful order will "destroy" her wild side "forever". When Temple takes the stand and appears ready to forgo this chance at redemption, he steers her towards it by appealing to the very thing she is terrified of hurting: her family name and reputation. While novel Temple's corruption is shielded by her family status and eventually results in her separation from society, the film instead makes them an integral part of the moral system of values which will grant Temple her redemption.

Benbow achieves this by reminding Temple of the strength and honour of past Drakes; how they've been a part of the community "for generations before the civil war" and how her father "Died serving his country in the world war", asking her "You're proud of your family, aren't you Temple?". When she responds, "Naturally", he stresses the importance of this honour and her pride for it, framing for her the notion that her lying on the stand and committing injustice would cause far greater damage to the Drakes than the reality of her sordid past ever could. Convinced by his rhetoric and moved by his sentiment, Temple passionately confesses everything before fainting in Benbow's arms – another "death", but this time for her immoral wild streak. This "death" also doubles in many ways as a moral rebirth, as she will wake up fully restored, returned to society, and intimately connected to the moral ideal Benbow represents. Temple's immorality is thus cleansed in almost religious fashion by the moral ideals of society's values and law, as she confesses her sins not alone in a church to clergyman, but to Benbow, in a house of law, in front of the whole community, finding her salvation through, as Barker puts it, "the principle of truth, justice, and the American way" (172).

While this ending is more than serviceable for the film's thematic purposes, it is impossible to ignore the uniformly sexist way it is achieved, relegating Temple to a submissive gender position much in the same way her victimization does. By having Benbow as a physical embodiment of society's moral system and law, Temple's developmental move towards living under them is also presented as a move towards submitting to Benbow himself, as her desire to follow these values is expressed chiefly through her desire for a romantic relationship with him.

The side of her psyche that only gets her into trouble and can only solve problems through further (albeit justifiable) sin and murder is shown to be her natural state, while the honour, nobility, and high-mindedness needed for real redemption is something she can only achieve with Benbow's help. Furthermore, this moral, more mental side is referred to by Benbow solely in male terms, restoring Temple by appealing to the honour and power of her male ancestors only: "You're a woman, but you're still a Drake. You want to act like one, don't you?".

In other words, living up to her Drake namesake and redeeming herself with the truth is a distinctly male "act", and through Benbow's coaching, she metaphorically becomes a man in order to achieve it (Barker 170)[36], though this change is only a temporary part of what becomes her complete submission to these "male" values. Following this idea, Barker sees Temple's fainting "death" in a more complex light, arguing that it ensures Temple's brief and transitory time as a male allows her to "reassume the role of the innocent, fragile woman" under Benbow's protection, setting right the reversal of Trigger's murder, where she gained a "phallus (gun)" to protect the

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[36] This notion is actually expressed in Benbow and Temple's very first scene together, where Benbow's insistence to talk to her "man to man" results in Temple's explanation of her "two me's", and her unwillingness to hear his reasoning sends her off drinking with Gowan, a path that ends with Trigger.

young lawyer and herself (170)[37]. She is thus reborn not only into a new moral being, but a feminine one as well, one firmly placed in gender roles the film finds more acceptable. Of course, reinforcing male superiority in a male/female binary is hardly an unusual treatment of femininity by conventional Hollywood standards.

Still, the increased emphasis that is placed (inside and outside the theatre) on both Temple's harmful sexuality and the masculine nature of her redemption cannot help but make *Story*'s treatment stand out. With so much of the film's publicity campaign and visuals focused on alluring an audience with the sexualisation and punishment of female power, perhaps the filmmakers decided to balance this out with a complete *moralization* of "proper" male power at the end, offsetting the immorality of both Temple's sexuality and Trigger's virile brutality[38]. It's almost as if the film is compensating for the more risqué or exploitive aspects of its presentation by going out of its way to reinforce the moral superiority of its targeted male audience, once again playing both sides of the Code in its counteracting attempt to offer both sordid pleasure and a moral message. Evidently, the only way the filmmakers felt they could achieve this fusion is by making Temple a subordinate object to male power on either side of the moral scale.

The notion that Temple is being used an object to bolster male power and pleasure fits well with the final aspect of the film's remediation that I will be exploring: voyeurism. It is very difficult to explore *Sanctuary* without discussing this subject, as so much of Temple's sections of the novel can be seen as being centred on her perception as

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[37] A similar effect is used in the novel to reinforce Temple's dissociative reaction to her situation and the behaviour that got her there. When telling Benbow the story of her rape, she mentions how she reacted to her fear by trying to make herself into a boy "by thinking", desperately fantasizing of a way to foil her male aggressors and their desires for her (Faulkner 216-7).
[38] A kind of male power that is ultimately emasculated and destroyed by the female, as Temple steals Trigger's own gun and uses it on him.

a sexual being by both the readers and the characters, leading critics like Fiedler to see the book as "essentially voyeuristic in its appeal" (91). Although Faulkner's narrative style is based on obfuscation and vagueness, his presentation of Temple (particularly the indirect masking of her thoughts) actually calls attention to the reader's action of viewing her, making her a figure that in many ways can *only* be known through outside observation. This is primarily reflected in the aforementioned technique of supplying readers with insight on Temple almost exclusively through the observations of other characters. This layering of point of view or "reflexive voyeurism", as Fielder calls it (92), forces readers to view Temple through the voyeuristic observations of others, underlining the entire process itself and putting readers on a certain level of guilty complicity with these characters[39].

In his book *Vision's Immanence*, critic Peter Lurie refers to Faulkner's "deliberate act of de-centering the reader's gaze" in cinematic terms, likening it to a "blurring of focus like an unsteady camera" (45). This is a wonderful way of describing Faulkner's technique, yet also becomes amusingly ironic when compared to *Story*'s actually cinematic treatment, where blurring the audience's view of Temple is the last thing it wishes to do. As the non-assertive and objective nature of film narrative requires no distinct narrator figure to interpret to the audience what they are witnessing (Chatman 438), no narrative de-centering is required to posit viewers as complicit voyeurs to Temple's sexuality and punishment. In fact, as a pre-code film sold to the public on the basis of its lurid advertisements, a large part of the film works on the assumption that its

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[39] Fiedler displays this effect by calling attention to one scene in particular where Popeye salivates over a place where Temple and a man are having sex in the brothel. This is recounted to the readers by the character of a maid, which puts us "in the position of voyeurs at the forth remove – watching the author watching her watching them" (92).

audience is well aware of this complicity. With the audience able to view Temple entirely for themselves, the film has no problem delivering on its genre promises with absolute objective clarity, presenting Hopkins as a voyeuristic object in various states of peril and undress with little concern for the strictures of the Code.

In other words, while the story must thematically progress towards a moral resolution that will appease the Code and reinforce its values, the majority of the film's visuals are aligned with the sordid pre-code side of the film's presentation. That being said, the film does implement its own kind of stylistic obscurities through the skilled cinematography of Karl Struss, which is filled with subtle touches that suggest a slightly moralized treatment of the film's overt voyeurism. The use of close-ups, fade-out cuts, and scenery to block or confound the audience's view of Temple when she is in a particularly risqué situation with a man are the most common of these touches. The film has no problem sexualizing Temple as a voyeuristic object by herself, but seems to go out of its way to obscure the audience's view of her when she is about to be used sexually by male characters. While these techniques can simply be seen as censorship brought on by the surrounding social pressure, there is a certain stylistic aspect to them that lends to their repeated occurrence a more nuanced purpose.

While the fade-out that spares the audience from viewing a second of Temple's rape was indeed an unavoidable move on the part of the filmmakers, two other major instances of this obscuring occur in situations that could have easily been presented objectively, each centred on the same motif. In the very first scene with Temple, the flirtation at her home, we view the entire encounter from inside the Drake household with Temple and her beau outside in front of the door, our only immediate visual of her being

a close-up of her hand as she reaches back inside through the barely opened entrance. Only Temple's words are audible, and the only clear visual we get of the man is his hand when it slowly enwraps hers, at which point things get too physical and she breaks it off, jumping inside and coming into full view for the first time. The second instance is Trigger's death scene, where we never actually see Temple pull the trigger. Instead, the camera moves in close on Trigger's right hand putting out a cigarette as he prepares to rape Temple again. Gunshots are heard, Trigger's hand goes limp, and our next full view of him is his death throes.

The film seems intent on keeping Temple a singular voyeuristic object, avoiding the depiction of overt physicality by coding its existence through a visual focus on hands. In fact, even the rape scene was originally envisioned to be more explicit in this fashion, with an assistant producer describing preliminary sketches that "suggested with hands, fingers, and so on", something obviously deemed too much by the filmmakers come shooting (Phillips 72). Hands thus become a symbolic precursor to unwanted intimacy and violence, marking moments when Temple is about to be forcibly moulded into and used as a sexual object without actually showing them, thus preserving, in a way, her purely voyeuristic relationship with the audience. The obvious thematic effect of this is the visual preservation of her moral side as well. The audience is shown enough to know Temple has a partly sinful nature that will eventually be punished, but never actually see her in truly heinous act of sin or punishment, perhaps making it easier to view her as a moral being worthy of redemption. Notably, the only man who gets to "handle" Temple for any length of time is Benbow at the end, carrying her away after her moral rebirth. The only way the film allows Temple to be used as a sexual object at all, even for

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characters in the film itself, is visually and symbolically, taking its pre-code promise to the extreme while concurrently adhering to it by masking any sense of physicality.

Though it never attempts anything as complicated as Faulkner's layering of point of view, *Story* also sports some interestingly self-conscious twists on the action of voyeuristically viewing Temple. The film of course spends most of its time presenting Temple as a sexual object for the audience to view, but it also has a tendency to switch suddenly back and forth between perspectives when she becomes such an object for characters in the film, calling attention to the audience's act of viewing Temple as well as temporarily making them be viewed *as* her. One of the most potent examples of this effect occurs when Temple is first seen by the degenerate inhabitants of the bootlegger cabin for the first time. As she enters the room, the film portrays a series of individual close-up reaction shots depicting the lustful glares of the men and an indifferent look by Ruby, all angled towards the audience. Temple then receives one as well, starting at the viewers as she reacts uncomfortably to facing the entire group and becoming subject to their voyeurism. The quick succession of these shots makes this effect easy to gloss over, but the obvious sequencing used to connect these varied reactions and direct them right at the audience is hard to ignore.

This onslaught of close-ups gives the impression that we are following Temple's eyes as she surveys the reactions she has caused, and the last shot returns to the standard voyeuristic position, with us observing her own response to being viewed. Thus the audience is temporarily put in Temple's position before they are immediately put back and reacted against, making them experience this moment as both the victim and the victimizer. This doubling is used even more effectively in certain scenes between Trigger

and Temple, where Trigger's threatening power over her is extended onto the audience. Whenever Trigger imposes himself, usually with passively intimidating orders like "I ain't keeping ya... You're crazy about me...You're going to stay...You like it here", he is shown starting directly at the audience in extreme close-up, talking to Temple and the viewer in a blank, almost hypnotic fashion. Their final confrontation reuses the successive close-up technique, repeatedly switching between the two as they scream and threaten each other. This battle of perspective makes the audience experience both sides before siding with Temple, putting us in her shoes as Trigger menacingly skulks towards her in that close-up shot before he is gunned down.

Though these stylistic treatments of voyeurism and their effects on the audience may not be purely intentional of the part of the filmmakers, these techniques are perhaps best viewed not as auteuristic aesthetic decisions, but as by-products of the film's mixed engagement with the Code. By attempting to express its inherently sordid pre-code style in terms of the Code's moralization, the film exhibits some noticeable splits, calling attention to and almost contradicting its voyeuristic nature. By avoiding overly risqué moments via obscurity and visual coding, the film reinforces its representation of Temple as a sexually voyeuristic figure made primarily for the audience's pleasure while still partially adhering to the Code's rules against such presentations. Yet by stressing the action of Temple being viewed[40], the film destabilizes this voyeurism, putting the audience in the position of its immoral gawking villains as well as the figure they are there to see sexually punished. It is these kinds of splits in the film's presentation that

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[40] This is done in order to emphasize the unpleasantness of Temple's situation, the depravity of her bootlegger gawkers, and Trigger's unpleasant power of will.

illustrate how deeply affected it was by this mixed engagement and the outside pressure surrounding it, going on to influence even its visuals.

Until that final redemption, Temple's character is in many ways emblematic of the film itself, with both being caught between immoral pleasure and some sense of moral duty (enforced as it may be) and never quite conforming to the extremes of either. Touting its own split identity, the film revels in showcasing sordid behaviour under the promise that it will punish it, unabashedly sexualizes its main character in the process of moralizing her, and exhibits alternative situations to the social system that it will eventually come to reinforce. It too would be punished for its immoral side, but there would be no redemption afterwards, with Hays and Breen banning the film into the obscurity it still exists in today. *The Story of Temple Drake*, while hardly a lost classic, was still a truly undeserving victim of its time – a meticulously made pre-code film that was made at essentially the exact moment when even just partially following the Code was deemed socially and morally unacceptable.

What was for most pre-code films just an arbitrary ruling only followed in the final frame was for *Story* a constant struggle from the very announcement of its existence. Behind all this, of course, lay Faulkner and *Sanctuary* – or more specifically, the violent and lurid perception that they carried with the public in the 1930s. It is hard to imagine *Story* existing as it does or even getting made at all if it were not for the novel's raucous reception and scandalous reputation, as the filmmakers' desire to capture and capitalize on this perception while rendering it morally lies at the heart of the film's split nature. This appropriation of Faulkner's sordid reputation into a moral reading of the novel so closely tied with a Depression-era society is reflected in almost every aspect of

the film's remediation of its source – from the film's visuals, plot, and thematic structure to the even its advertisements and press. This is why an analysis of the film/source relationship cannot be limited to just a sense of fidelity to the text, as the social factors and perception surrounding the text, author, and film can be shown to carry just as much (if not more) influence than the text itself.

Chapter III
Flem on a Hot Tin Roof
Faulkner's Post-Nobel Prize Persona and Melodramatic Remediation in *The Long, Hot Summer*

At once I began to hear the man in charge talking of "angles," "story angles," and then I realized that they were not even interested in truth, the old universal truths of the human heart without which any story is ephemeral – the universal truths of love and honor and pride and pity and compassion and sacrifice.
-   Faulkner on screenwriting for studios (Kawin "Sharecropping" 199)

The banning and subsequent disappearance of *The Story of Temple Drake* showed

that adapting Faulkner could be an incredibly risky and unprofitable endeavour – at least

with the kind of reputation he had in the cultural and social climate of the early 1930's. It

is unsurprising then that it would be sixteen years before another attempt was made,

MGM's *Intruder in the Dust* (1949), and that at the time of its production, the critical and

cultural perception of Faulkner had begun to shift in his favour. While Faulkner's 1948

writing of *Intruder in the Dust* comes far past what critics mark as his major artistic

phase, it marked the beginning of his postwar entrance into the "public consciousness"

and "literary mainstream" as a concerned moralist crucial to the nation and a long

overlooked genius (Schwartz 29). The novel's tale of racially motivated injustice in the

South seemed like a timely comment on the Civil Rights movement fitting for this new

persona and revival. Even though the novel ultimately split these critics and angered

those on either side of the racial debate[41], it was the author's most successful release

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[41] This split is centered almost entirely on the character of Gavin Stephens, the main character's worldly mentor, who subjects the readers to a series of almost chapter length speeches promoting a gradualist approach to civil rights with a Southern nationalist leaning, blaming Northern interference as causing the racial tension and violence it seeks to stop. While modern readings of the novel have established the danger of taking Stevens at his word and viewing him as Faulkner's mouthpiece (Evans 33-34), Schwartz notes that at the time, these sentiments were seen as "sharply at odds with the existential moralism that many critics had claimed for his work" (152).

since *Sanctuary*, and one that finally ushered him into a state of critical and financial

stability (62).

  While the commercial success of the novel *Intruder in the Dust* may have marked

the initial establishment of Faulkner's national and cultural acceptance, the adaptation did

not enjoy similar success, and despite a largely positive critical response, the film was a

box office failure (Fadiman 38-9)[42]. Insult was added to injury for MGM one month after

the film's lacklustre November 1949 release and disappearance from the box-office,

when the critical redemption of Faulkner was (as we'll see) finally justified with his

Nobel Prize win, legitimizing the author as a figure of American artistic achievement and

firmly placing him within the country's cultural consciousness (Schwartz 31-32). Even

with this new legitimization, the failure of *Intruder* must have signalled Faulkner's

material as still too high risk for studios at the time, as it would be nearly a decade before

adaptations of his work were brought to the screen again. Evidently, public reputation

alone was not enough for Faulkner adaptations to achieve mainstream success, requiring

something else in their remediation of his work in order to connect to a mass audience.

  In the late 1950's, this certain something seemed finally to appear with the rise of

the film subgenre now recognized as *melodrama*, a classification established by film

critics in the 1970's to group together films that shared similarly exaggerated visual and

performance styles and a focus on middle-class social themes (Byars 14-15). While this

group includes the likes of such respected filmmakers as Nicholas Ray and Vincente

Minnelli, it is the domestic dramas of director Douglas Sirk that have come to emblemize

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[42] Perhaps audiences were simply not ready for the film's rather unflinching depiction of racial inequality and an eternally defiant African-American figure like Lucas Beauchamp, as Fadiman argues (39). Or, being the fourth and final social problem film about race released that year (preceded by *Home of the Brave, Lost Boundaries, Pinky*), perhaps the market for such films had become saturated at that particular moment (Phillips 99).

the genre, with their colourful and meticulously constructed mise-en-scène and their romanticized class-based angst. Hiding under the excesses of many of these melodramas, claimed 70's critics, were harsh commentaries on American society, made via an ironical "bending" (in Sirk's words) of the film's genre conventionality against its "explicit meaning", subversively critiquing the current social order in the process of presenting it (Bourget 51). The final three years of the 50's saw the partly successful release of three Faulkner adaptations connected to this concept of film melodrama, a development that I believe is closely tied to Faulkner's post-Nobel reputation and popular perception.

In 1957, Universal released an adaptation of Faulkner's airplane racing novel *Pylon* entitled *The Tarnished Angels*, which was directed by the king of melodrama himself, Sirk. Released to modest if not ambivalent responses both critically and financially, the film is an interesting case, being based on an atypical Faulkner novel and eventually ending up as a somewhat atypical Sirk film, filmed in black and white and light on the usual melodramatic touches that form the director's style and social themes[43]. It is a fine film and a worthy entry into Sirk's impressive canon, but not the ideal case for the purposes of this chapter. As mentioned in the introduction, I believe the process of remediation is best visible in films that alter greatly from their sources textually and thematically. With *Angels*, Sirk creates a greatly romanticized yet relatively faithful rendition of *Pylon* that, while definitely "bending" Faulkner's themes to fit a postwar society and his post-Nobel reputation, is not all that complicated of a remediation. The

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[43] Taking place on a airplane racing course near a New Orleans airport, both novel and film follow a nomadic family consisting of stunt pilots, parachutists, and mechanics as they deal with the malaise of a modern, and in the case of the film, postwar, world. While thematically similar perhaps, the settings and character types are relatively uncommon to both artists, far removed from Faulkner's insular Yoknapatawpha County, as well as the middle-class domestic sphere of Sirk's usual fare

film is also, ironically, not quite "melodramatic" enough in the subgenre sense for the kind of analysis I wish to apply to the other two films and their contexts.

Just four months after *Angels'* January premier came 20th Century Fox's *The Long, Hot Summer* (1958), a minor hit with a warm critical reception and a respectable box-office return, an outcome that inspired the studio to produce and release *The Sound and the Fury* almost a year later to considerably less success. These ambitious, melodramatic, and, in the opinion of many, misguided adaptations of Faulkner's *The Hamlet* and *The Sound and the Fury* were constructed by the same core group of filmmakers – producer Jerry Wald, director Martin Ritt, and screenwriters Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank Jr.. Conservative in both theme and construction, the films unreservedly restructure and reinterpret the plot, characters, and themes of their intertexts in a variety of ways, producing heavily moralized and melodramatic versions of the novels that romantically dramatize the social orders and behaviours that their sources explore. While Sirk's melodramatic rendering of Faulkner may be expected of him due to his well established style, the ensuing releases of *Summer* and *Sound* show that the melodramatic mode became *the* post-Nobel Prize era method for bringing the author to the screen.

These drastic changes and melodramatic shifts have become lightening rods for negative criticism and have rarely been granted any substantial attention, often simply being seen as failures, misreadings, or reactionary escapes from the greater complexities of the novels. I, however, will argue that the films can be seen as adaptations of a particular conception of Faulkner's post-Nobel Prize cultural persona. The conservatively moral and excessively melodramatic interpretations these films create are not entirely

extraneous to Faulkner, nor do they completely ignore or betray his post-prize persona and themes. In fact, I believe that the films are best viewed as partial reflections of the national moralist persona created by the late 40s critics, augmented and remediated under the heavy influence of a Cold War emphasis on traditional American values in ways that prove crucial to each film's thematic reconstruction of their source. The nature of each film's reconstruction complicates even their genre elements, as while they exhibit many aspects of what film critics now recognize as melodrama, they are implemented not to ironically critique society, but to further "bend" Faulkner's themes towards reinforcing it.

A good place to start then would be a look at the nature of Faulkner's moralist persona and its path towards critical and popular acceptance at the end of 40's, including the nationalist contexts surrounding the author's rise and this persona's persistence. Briefly touched on in the last chapter, the general thesis behind many of the 40's critics was that Faulkner, despite all the violence and depravity of his content, was in fact deeply concerned about moral matters and traditional values, using his writing to critique what he saw as the rising tide of amorality in the modern world. Critics who followed this notion saw the majority of 30s Faulkner criticism as wrongheaded and misguided, being focused too much on the violence of his content and the Gothic nature of his themes and misreading the message behind them (Schwartz 21). Many of these critics also saw Faulkner as an unfortunate victim of the literary establishment's socio-political situation at the time, subject to the biases of far-left critics who mistrusted his dense style and apparent indifference to the nation's social problems.

Robert Penn Warren, one of the major figures in Faulkner's 40s reconstruction, would later reflect on this social climate as "that of a para-Marxist neo-naturalism", one

which often equated Faulkner's style and themes to that of fascism ("Past and Present" 7). Maxwell Geismar, one of Faulkner's most prominent detractors in the 30s, was a prime example of such readings for 40s critics, praising Faulkner's technical skill but claiming such skill was being wasted on what he saw as the author's disturbing "denial of humanity" (Schwartz 13). These criticisms were later taken to task by Cowley in the 40s, who noted Geismar's tendency to find value in modernist authors only when they were reacting to the social crisis of the 30s (13). Critics fighting against these kinds of readings and assumptions of Faulkner thus had to argue for a greater significance to his work – something that would have to counteract the claims of nihilistic violence or fascism and convincingly portray the author as nationally acceptable and important.

The earliest and most influential example of such work is George Marion O'Donnell's 1939 article "Faulkner's Mythology", published in the *Kenyon Review*. In it, O'Donnell calls the author a "traditional moralist, in the best sense", taking note of a "Sothern social-economic-ethical tradition" that gives his works "unity" and "significance that belongs to great myth" (23). For O'Donnell, Faulkner's world and the message behind is formed by his opposition to "antitraditional forces" (23), a conflict that is depicted primarily through the struggle between the "vital morality, [and] humanism" represented by the faded gentry of the Satoris family and the self-interested and "amoral" rise of the middle-class Snopes clan (24). While O'Donnell's actual development of these ideas makes his analysis of the novels almost reductively black and white, his article puts forth two ideas that would form the basis of much of the 40s critical reconstruction. First, the notion of conflict between the worlds of the traditional and the new, and second, a

unified thematic world for his work comparable to "myth" and "mythology", adding a sense of profundity and deep social significance to his moral message.

The critic at the vanguard of this kind of reconstruction was Malcolm Cowley, whose analysis of the author, which culminated in his edited 1946 anthology *The Portable Faulkner*, became one of the most popular ways in which to envision Faulkner and his work (Schwartz 21-22). In the mid 40s, Cowley wrote a series of essays attacking the 30s critical view of Faulkner, eventually taking up many aspects of O'Donnell's argument. In a 1945 piece in the *Sewanee Review*, Cowley insisted that at the heart of Faulkner's work there always lies "a sense of moral standards and a feeling of outrage at their being violated" (24), and refers to him in the introduction to *Portable* as "a creator of myths that he weaves together into a legend of the South" (Cowley 45). Very soon after its publication, Robert Penn Warren would further expand on Cowley's thesis in a lengthy review of *Portable* for the *New Republic* that argued for the universality of Faulkner's moral message (Schwartz 26). There, Warren emphasized the significance of Faulkner's themes and the issues he dealt with, believing them to be "common to our modern world" and crediting the author for creating a "legend" not just for the South, but for "our general plight and problem" (26).

The stage was set then for Faulkner to finally get his due, with this spirited and persuasive group of critics soon dominating the critical voice on the author (Urgo 6). Those fighting for Faulkner's genius and universal significance would not have to wait long for their efforts to be rewarded, as Faulkner received the Nobel Prize in Literature in late 1949, accepting it personally at a banquet held later the next year. The award would not only legitimize Faulkner's new reputation as an important literary master, but also

lead to the spread of the moralist image critics like Cowley and Warren had created for him, with sales of *The Portable Faulkner* and the rhetoric within it increasing greatly after the win (Schwartz 26). It is also safe to say that this persona was further strengthened by Faulkner himself in his impassioned calls for mankind's return to "old universal truths" and the like in his prize acceptance speech (Faulkner "Banquet Speech"). In fact, the entire speech reads more like an acceptance of this moral persona than just the award itself, with Faulkner longing for the return of truly worthy writing concerned with "problems of the human heart" and "old verities" ("Speech"). The author also declares that it is a writer's duty and "privilege" to "help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past" ("Speech").

Of course, Faulkner's public representation of himself tends to be just as complex and multilayered as his prose, with the author spending much of his career alternatively supporting and contradicting most critical readings of his work. Still, the sentiments expressed in his speech show that at times, Faulkner had no problem embracing this moralist persona. In his book *William Faulkner, William James, and the American Pragmatic Tradition*, David Evans notes the conflicted nature of Faulkner's self-representation[44], viewing the prize speech as a prime example of Faulkner's occasional "ability" to "represent himself and his work in vein of those admiring him" (33). In his essay "The Publically Private Artist", Louis J. Budd notes that Faulkner engaged more and more with the public sphere after his prize win, taking part in more interviews than

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[44] Evans mentions, for example, the author's "fondness for wearing the mask of the guileless countryman" and his "rejection of the notion that his writings engage philosophical issues in any fashion" (9), stances often at odds with the readings of his critical supporters. This other persona is evidenced in such quotes as: "I am not a literary man. I am a farmer that just likes to tell stories" (Budd 49).

ever before and branching out even further with things like Q&A tours at universities

(42). Budd sees this increased involvement with the public as proof that the author "grew

comfortable in the role of world recognized, immortal artist that the Nobel Prize gave

him beribboned right to play" (48). While certain critics see a gradually developing

resistance to this persona in Faulkner's late 50's works like *The Town* and *The Mansion*

(Urgo 7-8), the author's initial acquiescence can be seen as a major aspect of the

persona's perpetuation in the public mind, especially since his win marked such a

renewed presence in the public sphere.

To better contextualize the perception of Faulkner that I believe the two films

came to reflect, I again turn to Schwartz, who details the more specifically political

aspects of the author's rise in the American cultural consciousness. A major part of the

author's critical shift from macabre stylist to a nationally irreplaceable moralist was, as

Schwartz sees it, a generalized interpretation of Faulkner's themes in a nationalized

context:

> Faulkner became universalised as an emblem of the freedom of the
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> individual under capitalism as a chronicler of the plight of man in the
>
> modern world. Faulkner was seen to exemplify the same values that
>
> Western intellectuals saw in capitalism which made it morally superior to
>
> communism. (4).

This focus on autonomous power and determination in the face of a modern world "in

moral confusion and social decay" became closely tied to Faulkner's image (32), and the

general argument made this representation of "individual struggle against an irrational

world" the centre of the author's sense of morality (36). Schwartz also notes that the

"dominant themes" of such interpretations were "accorded a universal value" after Faulkner's Nobel Prize win (31), creating for him an intrinsic association with these themes no doubt bolstered by his speech.

Thus, Faulkner's popular persona didn't just come to represent the author as a culturally important moralist, but as a distinctly national one as well. In the context of an "emergent cultural cold war" with the Soviets (3), it became important that Faulkner's work didn't just present universalized moral messages, but did so in ways that were aligned with particular American ideologies, so to present the American system of values as both morally and culturally superior to its opposition. Through this, Faulkner became an invaluable figure during the Cold War, "a symbol of resistance to Fascism and to delimited individual freedom" (199), aligning his themes with American values because, as Urgo puts it: "individualism was meant to mean something opposed to communism, and so implicitly meant capitalism and Americanism" (209). Achieving this level of meaning and value would require the smoothing over of some of the more fractured and ambiguous aspects of Faulkner's work – part of an effort to make the author more significant and acceptable to a general US audience.

In this vein, some modern critics have explored how the creation of this persona led to some of the darker, more challenging aspects of Faulkner's work being passed over to form more unified readings of his moral themes and values. In studying Faulkner's career-long tendency to refer to his works as "apocryphal" fiction – situating them outside any objective sense of history, time, and truth – Joseph Urgo argues that the "radicalism" of this desire became "muted" due to the author's 50s public image as "a nonconfrontational, cordial, and rather self-indulgent style of Nobel Laureate" (4). As

one of the first and most prominent attempts to recast Faulkner as "one of the primary showpieces of American cultural achievement" (9), Urgo sees in Malcolm Cowley's influential interpretation a domestication of the writer, arguing that the violent and sordid reputation of the 1930s was "suppressed" and replaced with a "sanitized and recuperated Faulkner for a middle class, postwar culture in which such cleanliness and healing were becoming national virtues" (10). Urgo also credits Cowley's reading of Faulkner as creating an image of the author as "a gentle, pipe-smoking conservative and a brooding, self-educated, moralist anomaly" (6), an image that he argues even Faulkner would later come to contest (7).

Evans also makes note of a similar effect, suggesting that Faulkner's more pragmatic tendencies were ignored or repressed by the timing of his critical rediscovery. Taking place during a "philosophical reconfiguration" in the US that sought more distinct political and philosophical classifications between American thought and values and those of its enemies (Fascism followed by Communism), the author's moralist reconstruction naturally distanced him from a "rejection of transcendental values" and the "moral relativism" that pragmatism was often attacked for before and after WW2 (Evans 28). Instead, critics of the 40s reconstruction became influenced by the Modern Man discourse, a theoretical attempt to "come to terms" with the dehumanizing atrocities of WW2 by viewing man not as a "simple transparent entity", but a "profoundly divided being, consisting of a thin crust of convention and reason covering a dark abyss of inchoate instinct, irrationality, and potential violence" (30).

This "abyss" could be viewed as "residual primitivism" or a "secret unconsciousness" lying underneath the "veneer of civilized man" or "layers of careful

repressions", and texts under this discourse were categorized by their stressing of the need to "unearth and confront" this hidden nature of mankind (30-31). In the process of doing this, the text would create "a more authentic personal life and a more realistic social order" (31), turning works like Faulkner's into "significant moral and social texts containing urgent lessons for modern man" (32). Although these lessons were often hidden under an aesthetic form that seemed to resist any direct declaration of objective meaning (13), the clear social purpose and moral value that they held for America were never in question, nor was the apparently forthright way in which Faulkner expressed them.

With such a powerful perception of Faulkner floating around the cultural consciousness by the 1950s, it is interesting then that 20th Century Fox should produce two films that not only reflect a similar image of Faulkner, but go out of their way to reinforce it. This is not to say that filmmakers were definitely interpreting Cowley or these other critics, or that either of the films is particularly political or nationalist in nature. Yet the fact that a sanitized, moralized, and refashioned perception of Faulkner had already been dominating his public image is too close a connection to just gloss over. As seen above, many critics involved in Faulkner's reconstruction rooted his morality and virtues in his presentations of individual struggle against a corrupt, decaying modern world deficient in the social values of old. In the contexts of a socially conservative 50s mainstream Hollywood and the rising tide of Cold War sentiments, I believe these films take Faulkner's persona as an American moralist to an exaggerated extreme, with the notion of individual struggle and moral order tweaked to more clearly represent the

significance and superiority of individual power, traditional domestic values, and the cultural status quo.

Instead of reacting against the modern world, these films (both updated to 1950s settings) make it a place worth living, just as long as the right social and moral codes are clearly defined and followed. The battle of old universal truths and individualism against modern corruption and decay are reinterpreted as a battle of a protective conventional order versus a dangerous and unpredictable disorder, and unsurprisingly, both films see the former defined through traditional American middle-class values – the new "old order" under threat. Of course, such themes cannot be directly linked to the critical works of Cowley, Warren, and others, and in many ways are directly opposed to their personal and political views. Nonetheless, their influential readings moved the author to a privileged national and cultural position of acceptance that clearly portrayed him up as a writer concerned with American morals and values, reinforcing such interpretations of Faulkner.

The probability of these interpretations increases even more when you factor in the restrictive (albeit waning) influence of the Production Code, especially during the post-WW2 era, with the war having "affirmed and reinvigorated America values" for many (Doherty 16). Still, even when viewing the films as intensified versions of Faulkner's public persona, at a certain level, the cautiously favourable to overwhelmingly negative range of responses that the films have incurred is still somewhat understandable. *The Sound and the Fury* is a novel of immense literary complexity and reputation, and even though *The Hamlet* is less complicated than some of Faulkner's other acclaimed work, it is still a largely episodic work with a rather epic scope of characters and events.

From an initial standpoint, it can be hard to see these adaptations' more conventional and melodramatic remediations of their sources as anything but a reduction, but a closer look at the style and social contexts of the melodramatic mode can make each process of remediation become more complex and distinct.

It is very difficult to use the term melodrama without a specific contextualization, as the term by itself is an incredibly comprehensive concept that has taken on a myriad of meanings throughout various ages and media. From its simplest denotation as a "dramatic narrative in which musical accompaniment marks the emotional effects" (Elsaesser 358) to its still common use today as a pejorative marker of something overly emotional or too reliant on cliché and convention (Langford 34), melodrama in its most general sense is a mode of representation that contains a irrevocable degree of performative or thematic "excess" (37). The generality of this concept of "excess" and its relation to "the system of genre in US cinema as a whole" (31) has made melodrama a highly contested issue in film-genre studies, with critics engaging in a decades long debate on its origins, critical boundaries, and proper use (Altman 70-81, Neale 179-86, Langford 29). Sticking with the multifaceted approach to genre suggested by Altman and Langford, the concept of melodrama best suited for my purposes is the notion of film melodrama established in the 70s, along with a few modern elaborations more fitting for the films at hand.

As originally explored in Thomas Elsaesser's highly influential article "Tales of Sound and Fury", classical melodrama is said to a story with a clear "moral/moralistic pattern" (351), marked by an "ironic parallelism" that functions by "crisscrossing the moral of the story by a 'false' or unexpected emphasis" – the aforementioned excess in its most basic definition (352). Elsaesser goes on to focus his definition of melodrama to

categorize a "specific cinematic mode of expression" displayed by domestic film dramas that became prevalent in the 50s and 60s, a genre he refers to as *family* melodrama (350). Known for their glossy and colourful visual sense and exaggerated dramatic style (Geraghty 92), Elsaesser saw the films as primarily focused on themes of "moral identity" and "social pressures" within an American middle-class setting (363-4). Essentially an "interiorization and personalization of...ideological conflicts"(class based ones in particular), something Elsaesser equates with all classical forms of melodrama (353), the films depict a world where "social pressures" and "the frame of respectability [are] so sharply defined, that the range of 'strong' actions is limited" (363-4), leading to both social and internal conflicts within its characters.

Almost always, it is the conventions and conformities of this middle-class setting which are shown as the cause of any conflict or crisis, depicting the failure of the hero to "influence the emotional environment" or "change the stifling social milieu" (363). This domestic middle-class setting is so crucial to the general style that its representation via mise-en-scene often plays a major role in the film's thematic structure. As Elsaesser puts it, there is a "sublimation of dramatic conflict into decor, color, gesture, and composition of frame" (360) wherein the social pressures are "emphasized by the function of the decor and the symbolization of objects" (371), usually symbolising how the characters are trapped in "ineluctable situations" (372). In any standard conception of 50s melodrama, a crucial aspect of reading these conflicts lies in the ideological contradictions that occur when a film critiques the social order it is presenting while simultaneously emphasizing its enveloping power. Most commonly represented by melodrama's tendency for having highly unrealistic or unlikely happy endings (Klinger 83, Mercer 14), many films are

forced (either by the Production Code or perceived audience expectations) to eventually

find a suitable place for their characters within these "ineluctable situations", no matter

how harsh or damning their presentation has been.

These contradictory endings are seen as one of the many examples of

melodrama's aforementioned ironic "bending" of meaning, understood now as a

technique for subversively critiquing the social order that the film must present and

restore[45]. This "bending" becomes the central purpose of the characteristic "excess" in

this definition of melodrama, using an exaggerated sense of style, performance, or

generic elements in order to, as Langford puts it, "indicate ironic distance from, and thus

call into question, the ideological, aesthetic and generic conventions of their basic

narrative material" (37). Langford sees this as especially crucial in regards to the family

melodrama, arguing that it is "often understood in terms of its contradictory imperatives

to reveal and to repress issues, tensions and stresses around the family", having to resort

to "the fantastic, the highly stylised and the 'contrived'" to present and solve the

controversial social issues it wishes to deal with (47). Analyzing a melodrama is thus a

matter of exploring not only its thematic incongruities, but the "stylised" methods it uses

to both represent and suppress the issues it deals with.

As mentioned, these two adaptations can be considered closer to the standard

conception of 50s film melodrama than Sirk's remediation of *Pylon* – something that I

believe can be easily attributed to the nature of the books themselves. In their most

general thematic sense, *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Hamlet* are centered on large

scale social communities and the kinds of personal, familial, and communal conflicts

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[45] In the case of happy endings, Barbara Klinger describes this technique best: "there is a veneer of optimism present that is not only unconvincing, but countered by a system of meaning produced stylistically, which imbues the conclusions with unmistakable irony" (83).

depicted within them, lending themselves much more to domestic melodramas than the roving modernity of *Pylon*'s characters. As I've been arguing however, they are most likely reflecting a persona of Faulkner that seeks to champion traditional middle-class order, not dissect or subversively attack it. In this way, many of the tropes that have come to be recognized as part of the standard melodramatic mode become themselves altered or contradicted in order to reinforce this middle-class moralism. While this would seem to disqualify the films from the standard definition of the genre, both Byars and Langford have more recently expanded on the kind of social conflicts that melodrama represents, creating a distinct space for these films.

Basing her investigation of melodrama firmly on the work of Peter Brooks and his book *The Melodramatic Imagination*, Byars states that melodrama has always been traditionally concerned with "the problems of the individual within established social structures" (11). Its particular focus on the "personal" and the "everyday" (11) is said to be the result of the modern "desacralization of Western culture and the resulting epistemological gap in bourgeois ideology" with melodrama attempting to make sense of this new world by "[insisting] on the realities of life in bourgeois democracy" (17)[46]. As opposed to Modernism, which "obsessively seeks to expose the gap", melodrama instead recognizes the "limitations of the conventions of representation", attempting to "force into an aesthetic presence...desires for identity, value, and fullness of signification beyond the powers of language to supply" (17). In expressing this mix of realties, desires, and limitations, melodrama displays the "contradictions" of everyday life, thus also exploring

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[46] Namely: "the material parameters of lived experience, individual personality" and "the fundamental psychic relations of family life" (Byars 17).

the "negotiations over the conflicts they cause", acting as what Brooks called "a drama of morality" (18).

The often "contradictory" endings of these more subversive melodramas are explained as the genre's function as an essentially "non-contestatory mode" (Langford 39), exploring the complications and contradictions of society before returning to it in the end, and displaying its problems while also stressing its importance in the ultimate formation of modern life and moral identity. As Langford puts it, melodrama explores "conflicts *within* a given order...rather than conflicts of order", trying to find solutions and define identity among modern society's contradictions as opposed to changing or defying the "conditions" which cause them (39)[47]. This conception of melodrama allows one to explore more openly the aspects of the presented social conflict itself as opposed to only valuing subversion, making the analytical focus a question of what kind of moral identity the text creates and how it is formed through the complications or "realities" of the modern world it decides to insist on or exaggerate. Melodrama is thus seen by Byars as "the modern mode for constructing moral identity" (11), or as Langford elaborates, a "form that seeks to make moral sense of modernity itself" (40), making it a seemingly ideal form through which to remediate a modernist author's moralist persona.

In many ways, this conception of the genre sets up film melodrama as a Cold War-era riff on the Modern Man discourse that so dominated Faulkner's critical reconstruction and post-Nobel image[48], with middle-class society providing the "thin

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[47] Or as Byars says: "...although melodrama may focus on problems within society, it shows society as the ultimate answer to those very problems" (18).
[48] It also matches up quite well with aspects of melodrama thought to exist in Faulkner's work around the time of the Nobel Prize win. In a review of *Intruder*, critic Edmund Wilson claimed that the most "striking" aspect of Faulkner's novels is the "romantic morality that allows you the thrills of melodrama without making you ashamed, as a rule, of the values which have been invoked to produce them" (219).

crust of convention" and "layers of careful repressions" that covers the "dark abyss" lying within man. Standard film melodramas, like the ones Elsaesser profiled, present these repressions as stifling to mankind's true nature, needing to be called attention to and confronted before its characters achieve that "authentic personal life" and "realistic social order". As we'll see, melodramas like Ritt's films focus a bit more on the "irrationality" and "potential violence" that may lie within man, viewing society and convention as the only things saving their characters from immoral disorder and primitivism, and challenging them only in order to stress their significance. The melodramatic nature of the films comes not from exaggerating and distancing their themes from society, but from their sources, attempting to more clearly remediate and capitalize on the moralist perception of Faulkner by forging clear moral identities for its characters through their social conflicts.

The socially consciousness nature of 50s melodramas is seen by some critics as a development from the postwar social problem films of the mid to late 40s (Byars 22), with the political climate of the Cold War explaining both the compliant and subversive styles of convention. As explained by Peter Roffman and Jim Purdy in their book *The Hollywood Social Problem Film*, while victory in WW2 and its apparent revalidation of the American system of values didn't prevent Hollywood films from making harsh social commentary, it did change how these films dealt with society, as well as the kinds of problems they presented. Since the Depression had finally passed and American Capitalism had proved triumphant and "solvent", filmmakers did not have to fret over the corruption and dangers of the social system at large (227). Instead, social problems were located on a purely individual and personal level, with conflict stemming not from the

social structure's ill effects on those within it, but from a character's "inability to adapt" to this structure and the "personal neurosis" this causes (227).

While not overthrown, perhaps the American system was "desacralized" in its own way after the Depression, leading to the more interiorized presentation of society marked by Brooks as a common precursor to melodrama.

In the 40s, this led to a variety of films that, as Byars puts it, explored the "inequities within American institutions and examined their influence on the lives of individual Americans" (112). Themes covered by these films include the readjustment of veterans to postwar life as in *The Best Years of Our Life* (1946) and *Home of the Brave* (1949) (Roffman 230-31), a particular boom in race films at the end of the decade (*Intruder in the Dust* and the others of 1949 being a major example), and as posited by many modern critics, the sardonic cynicism of film-noir in general (Schrader 215). However, when McCarthyism and the Communist witch-hunt hit Hollywood full force in the mid-fifties, the edge of these films was worn off, and those still being made became less challenging to the status quo (Byars 113). Instead, as Byars explores, they moved towards the domestic sphere, exploring and solving social problems in ways that ultimately amounted to a "celebration of the family" (113), resolving issues like "alcoholism" (*The Lost Weekend*) and "juvenile delinquency" (*Rebel Without a Cause*) through "a return to traditional family values and structure" (114).

This move set the stage for melodramas like Ritt's, which solve their issues much in the same way, as well as Sirk's, which were forced to hide their social commentary subversively under their genre conventions. This move towards the domestic also brings us to another crucial genre concept connected to film melodrama – the "woman's film".

A somewhat catchall term, it is most commonly used to describe a variety of drama films from as early as the 1910s that focused on "woman's experiences, specifically domestic, familial and romantic" (44-5). Before the critical redefinition of 50s melodrama in the 70s, most family melodramas were considered as clear examples of this group. This is unsurprising considering the developments of the genre mapped above by Byars, as well as what Mercer and Shingler identify as film melodrama's propensity to make "the family and the domestic context the arena for articulating social pressures and problems, frustrations and dissatisfaction", usually putting "the burden of solving social problems...largely with the female characters" (25).

Certain aspects of this conception of family melodrama has come under scrutiny in more modern feminist film studies, with Linda Williams arguing in her essay "Film Bodies" that melodrama's are regarded as "excessive" by critics because of their "gender and sex-linked pathos" (140), and that most melodramas are aimed at women either in "their traditional status under patriarchy" or "in their traditional status as bodily hysteria or excess" (142). Following this notion, Byars provides the most detailed and useful breakdown of these generic connections, seeing the "female-oriented melodramas" of the 50s as a "regenerated form" of the woman's film which illustrated "gendered identity construction" at a time when traditional gender roles were being called into question (146-7). Although these films always depict and reflect a "capitalistic and patriarchal" reality (146), and still usually end in a fantastical way that seems to contradict their conflict, Byars stresses the fact that such narrative progression is determined entirely by the female character (148-9).

The result of this is a "contradictory combination of female independence (the willingness to confront social norms) and dependence (the need for male companionship)" which mark the main themes (149). Byars also explains that as traditional gender roles in the family and the workforce were being examined and challenged in the late 50s, this shift towards the domestic produced certain films that sought to "champion a residual ideology", desiring to create an "overt expression of the value of the patriarchal dynasty" (232). This is in slight opposition to standard film melodrama, where the father figure and his influence are commonly shown as harmful and unsympathetic, especially when "absent or deceased" (Mercer 13). The South in particular became a very popular setting for these types of "dynastic melodramas", stressing the power of the patriarchy through the "symbolic significance" of the region's extreme morality and generations of powerful family stock, now under threat from modern "decay" (227).

Detailing these genre characteristics is important for the analysis of these two films, as perhaps the most radical change from the intertext that each of these adaptations make is to focus their presentation of social conflict on the romantic relationship between their male and female leads. In both cases, it is the female lead[49] who finds herself the most directly opposed to a ruling patriarchal and domestic order, and how she comes to find herself properly (and romantically) back within it forms each film's thematic centre, placing them well within a more specifically melodramatic framework. Byars sees *The Long Hot Summer* as one of the chief examples of the "dynastic" melodrama, and *The Sound and the Fury* follows suit in many ways, with both films defining the moral

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[49] Who in both cases, perhaps not with coincidence, is Joanne Woodward, a native Georgian easily capable of embodying the Southern belle archetype both films play off of (Phillips 140).

identities of their characters and the sexual politics involved in their development by this sense of patriarchy. These melodramatic shifts are thus more than an easy way out of modernist complexity, acting as the method through which the films construct their themes and remediate this perception of their intertexts.

Moving on now to explore each film handles this remediation in turn, we can start, as before, with some of the non-narrative aspects of the adaptation process, which is in fact a particularly interesting area in the case of these films. This is due to the somewhat more aggressive nature of their calls for hypermediacy in comparison with the previous films, especially in the case of *The Long, Hot Summer*. While all of the Faulkner adaptations used their posters to call direct attention to their source's presence and their status as adaptations, *Summer* seems determined to downplay the former in order to somehow better authenticate the latter. No mention of *The Hamlet* appears anywhere on the posters or in the opening credits, but we are still assured that it is "William Faulkner's *The Long, Hot Summer*" in both. This representation of "ownership" is very different from the usual "Based on the novel by..." credit, as even though an engagement with a source is acknowledged, the actual intertext is obscured by the film's declaration of itself as a distinct version or expression of Faulkner's.

In other words, the film uses a sense of hypermediacy to position itself as an immediate and "authentic" visual representation of the intertext, making the intertext disappear in the process –much in the same way, according to Bolster and Grusin, remediation is believed to treat a reworked medium. The posters intensify this claim even more, with one containing a tagline that states "The people of Faulkner...the language of Faulkner...the world of Faulkner!", and another setting the film up as "In the Language of

Faulkner...the Frankness of Faulkner" [Fig. 2]. These claims are juxtaposed with clear

melodramatic genre iconography, displaying the four young stars that make up the two

main couples embracing each other romantically[50], associating these images directly with

the author's writing, style, and thematic forthrightness. In the process of aligning the film

with Faulkner's persona, the studio also determines and promotes what they want or

believe this persona to be, remediating then, once again, Faulkner himself – or, as I've

been arguing, particular perceptions of him. In the case of these posters, the attempt to

refashion Faulkner's world into that of a sultry Southern melodrama is never clearer, a

move made obvious enough through the title itself.

The film itself delivers wholeheartedly on this romantic revision of its

disappeared source, boiling down the expansive cast and largely episodic nature of *The

Hamlet* into the romantic trials and tribulations of three couples. Gone is the entire

amoral Snopes clan and their vie for middle-class power, replaced only with the film's

Flem equivalent Ben Quick, portrayed by a young Paul Newman as a fiercely determined

and unashamedly ambitious man constantly rejected by society for his reputation of being

a barn burner. Arriving in a new town, he is taken under the wing of Will Varner (Orson

Welles), the old, enterprising master of most of the town's capital, who admires Ben's

tenacity and conspires to have him marry his daughter Clara (Joanne Woodward), a

demure school teacher who remains defiantly single in the face of a patriarchal system

that values a type of male aggression she is fed up with. Will, a widower who values his

social independence, is faced with the henpecking affections of his mistress Minnie

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[50] The positioning of each actor even foreshadows the themes and conflicts of each relationship. Jody and Eula are laying down and embracing in a ways that make Jody submissively behind or below her, and Ben is shown almost predatorily approaching Clara from behind, with her looking back in temptation, but avoiding direct eye contact.

Fig 2. Posters for *The Long Hot Summer*. Both images from moviegoods.com.

Littlejohn (Angela Lansbury) who is determined to marry him no matter how many times he refuses. Ben's rise in affluence comes at the cost of Will's son Jody's (Anthony Franciosa), a pampered dolt whose emasculation by Ben and Will leads to friction with his sexpot wife Eula (Lee Remmick).

There are fights, misunderstandings, cons, and of course, barn burnings, but in the end, like most romantic comedies, everything works out and all the couples reconcile and live happily ever after. A far cry from the novel's stone-faced black humour, the film offers instead a melodramatic mixing and alternation of the novel's two main themes: the lack of human values and sensuality in modern capitalism. While the film offers a relatively effective look at the former, portraying much of Ben and Will's pragmatic behaviour towards others as crass, manipulative, and wrongheaded, their economic success and determined hard work is equated with a virile masculinity that ultimately justifies their dominance and most of their actions in the end – a positive spin on these characters that the novel lacks. Clara and Jody spend the film conflicting with this sense of masculinity; battling against her forced compliance to and a repressed desire for it in the case of Clara, and subjugated by an apparent lack of it in the case of her brother. Of course, both are able to come to terms with it in the end and achieve their designated places within the social order along with everyone else.

The novel's treatment of modern capitalism's amoral nature is markedly more wary and bitter, though Faulkner imbues much of these themes with sardonic touches of black humour. *The Hamlet* is, in its simplest form, the tale of a small town's invasion and domination by the Snopes clan, those profit-driven middle-class upstarts that critics like O'Donnell saw as so directly opposed to the traditional values that Faulkner represented.

It starts with Flem Snopes, the first invader and their de facto leader, who begins as a clerk in the Varner store before rising to the trading of property and livestock, gaining capital and making way for his family members to obtain major positions in the town regardless of their actual skill[51]. The townspeople are powerless to stop this spread, gawking at Flem like "half-wild cattle" viewing a "strange beast upon their range" (Faulkner 52), aware of his family's "usurpation of an heirship" (89) but never lifting a hand to stop it. They are stalled by what Vickery notes as a "double standard of judgement", wary of his "heartlessness" but admiring of his determination and "success" (174)[52]. Kawin actually sums up the themes of the novel quite well in his rather brief comparison of it to the film, seeing Faulkner as both "amused and horrified" by how easily the traditional moral order is made victim to "the bourgeois cult of money and social status" (57).

As a main character, Flem Snopes is impenetrably nondescript; we never once glance into his mind or see his perspective of things, and he is defined almost entirely by his actions and treatment of others. Because these actions only consist of his working habits and continuous efforts to make profit off the townsfolk and obtain a higher social status, he becomes a pure avatar for the type of capitalism Faulkner wishes to satirize – the emotionless and one-dimensional lack of any purpose or concern that isn't related to one's own success. Any physical description given of Flem only works to reinforce his superficial blandness of character, having "no establishable age between twenty and

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[51] Their first acquisition is the lease of the town's blacksmith shop, replacing the longstanding holder of this position with Eck Snopes, who starts his job unable to work the fire and shoe a horse, his cousin ensuring customers that "He'll pick it up though...Just give him time. He's handy with tools" (Faulkner 64).

[52] The one character who does set himself against what Flem stands for is V.K Ratliff, a sewing machine salesman who declares himself "...strong enough to keep him from it...Not righter. Not any better, maybe. But just stronger" (201). He is humiliated in the end by Flem in a con that sees him purchasing and digging up barren land under the impression that there is buried treasure there, an emasculation given to Jody in the film.

thirty" and a "broad still face" with "stagnant water" for eyes (Faulkner 52). His only

distinguishable feature is a "tiny predatory nose like the beak of a small hawk", said to

appear on his face like "a sudden paradox", ironically acting as the one indication of his

inner nature that penetrates the surface-level (52).

Of course, with the Cold War emphasis on American exceptionalism and

Faulkner's persona as an important national moralist going strong, the film makes some

adjustments to its central character and the kind of capitalist values he represents. The

most obvious change that Ben Quick represents lies on the surface level as well, referring

to his portrayal by Paul Newman, who employs the same type of roguish charm that he

would go on to perfect in films like *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and *Cool Hand*

Luke. While many of the character's interactions with others are still presented as cold

and ignoble, as Phillips notes, Newman's attractive persona ensures that the audience is

on his side long before he is fully redeemed by the film's happy ending (142). And to be

sure, Ben does engage in some less than righteous behaviour in his pursuit of social

status: usurping Jody's position in his father's store and leaving him without a job,

auctioning off a group of wild horses to the townsfolk and keeping their money as their

new purchases break free and run off[53], as well as his overly aggressive attempts to woo

Clara and marry into the Varners (at Will's behest).

As the film's events unfold, however, these actions are shown to be a front – the

putting on of a gruff exterior that, as with most romantic comedies, is gradually stripped

down by the love of the other lead. Cracks in this front appear here and there, most

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[53] A scene taken from the beginning of the novel's fourth part, "The Peasants", itself a redone version of
an earlier Faulkner story entitled "Spotted Horses". In the novel, the actual auctioneering is done by third
party, with Flem silently observing and collecting the money afterwards. In the film, Ben does it all himself
in a display of sales charm and aggressive confidence, a show of masculine power that proves his worth
to Will but still leaves Clara "unsold" so to speak.

clearly in a scene where the wife of one of Ben's marks in the horse auction scam begs for him to return the thirty dollars her husband paid, which he complies with after she cites their current financial troubles. Ben claims to Jody that this was merely good business practice, building up good rapport with the customers, and since Jody turns the wife down first, it can even be seen as yet another attempt on Ben's part to demean him, but even veiled flashes of morality are miles ahead of anything a figure like Flem offers. In the novel's equivalent of this instance, Flem just lies to the wife and says he doesn't have the money, buying her some five cent goods soon after in compensation and adamantly refusing to give up any earned profit (Faulkner 320-22).

Furthermore, as we learn in the end, Ben's gruff exterior is essentially forced upon him by society, as the reputation for barn burning that sees him repeatedly rejected from communities comes from the past actions of his father, not his own. Even though he was disgusted and fled from his father's violent rule at a young age[54], he is made to carry the stigma due to this familial connection and a proud refusal to give up his name, providing the motivation for his angry and defensive social interactions and his constant desire to prove himself by rising above his lower station ("Knocking around this whole countryside...floating around from town to town..looking into other people's kitchen windows from the outside. Boy, that man sure left his mark on me"). After seeing Ben stripped bare of his surface-level pragmatism and recognizing a fellow victim of a forceful patriarchy, Clara begins to develop true affections for Ben, allowing her to act on

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[54] This development effectively makes the film a partial adaptation and quasi-sequel of Faulkner's short story "Barn Burning", the first introduction to Ab Snopes and his son Flem, told from the perspective of the young "Sarty" Snopes. Unable to contend with the violent and amoral nature of his kin, the character flees, disappearing from both the story and the Yoknapatawpha County canon.

the desires she has for him and reciprocate those he has for her, finally earning them both a space in the social order.

The more negative aspects of Ben's capitalist desires are thus attributed to the repressions of general society, with his true nature, that of a moral and emotional being, lying in wait underneath to be brought out and confronted by Clara. Once this true nature is revealed, Ben's character is redeemed and his actions justified – as are his hard working nature and all of the success he has achieved. Urgo argues that Flem is an "apocryphal reflection" of Faulkner's own life, meant to express the author's desire to "master his community...of literary artists" while sardonically depicting his wariness of middle-class acceptance and the literary establishment (149-50). If one follows this notion, then Ben can be seen as the moralist equivalent, reflecting the transformation Faulkner undertook in his reconstruction and the kinds of themes he came to represent. While on the surface Ben/Faulkner may seem harsh, violent, and difficult, what lies beneath him is a strong moral sense that, when unearthed, expresses the power of traditional values and their importance to the social order.

Ben's arc is a prime example of the film's more constructive view of capitalist values, but it is actually just one element of a thematic presentation that, as mentioned, expresses these values in terms of their relation to the patriarchy's masculine power and virility. This is in almost direct opposition to the novel, as a major factor in Faulkner's presentation of the cold, calculating world of modern business is the almost inhuman denial or indifference to sexuality and human relationships exhibited by the rising middle-class order (Urgo 148). This shift is first presented in the novel via the contrast between the elderly Will Varner and his son Jody, with former introduced as having a

"Rabelaisian turn of mind" and being "very probably still sexually lusty" (Faulkner 5), while the latter is said to posses the "quality of invincible bachelorhood" and be the "apotheosis of the masculine Singular" (7). Urgo sees this comparison as a reflection of new "middle-class bifurcation of human life into public and private realms", with the unsuppressed sexual nature of men like Will and its "inseparable" connection to their public lives not making it through to the new generation of businessmen (177).

This suppression of sensuality appears even stronger with the Snopes clan, who seem incapable of experiencing any form of passion besides anger at having their pride hurt, and have a penchant for loveless, mercantile marriages. The revelation that blacksmith Eck Snopes has a child from a previous marriage is remarked by the villagers as the only indication that there is more "force and motion to his private life, his sex life, anyway, than would appear on the surface of his public one" (Faulkner 67). Flem meanwhile finds himself married into the Varner estate with a union to Will's daughter Eula, an arrangement that is made less than a day after Eula becomes pregnant with the illegitimate child of a drifter, an exchange that earns Eula's child a reputable name and Flem some money and land (147)[55]. One of the most memorable expressions of this theme of sexlessness is when Faulkner counterbalances it in an absurdist manner, giving the most passionate love affair in the whole work to the mentally disabled Ike Snopes and a rival rancher's cow. Their tryst is treated with a sardonic straightness, the narrator describing the animals "shame" and "outragement of privacy" as Ike attempts to explain how his "violent violation of her maiden's delicacy is no shame" (176).

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[55] Eula's perspective on the relationship is offered briefly, with observations like "She knew him so well that she never had to look at him anymore" (Faulkner 147) and repeated mentions of how she "never saw" or "would not see" him during times of obvious interaction (supper, helping her on a buggy) (148) reinforcing both his absence of character and any sense of feeling in their relationship.

With the film being a melodramatic rom-com, sex and sensuality take up more active roles, with the dynamic of their suppression serving a similar yet considerably lighter purpose. Will Varner, acted with the kind of overblown zeal that only Orson Welles can muster, is still glowing sign for old age lust and decadence, but is now much more concerned with his public image, and is defined primarily by his attempts to pragmatically control the sexuality and relationships of others. He tries to keep his union with Minnie based purely on midnight affairs, wary of kissing her in front of any "friends and associates" at the horse auction and rejecting any plans she has for marriage. His fear of marriage is an ironic reflection of his treatment of Clara, whom he only views as a piece of property to marry off and ensure a "crop" of grandchildren for his legacy. Although mostly a comic figure, he is also the closest thing the film has to a villain, heartlessly devaluing Jody when he doesn't live up to his gendered standards of success and threatening Clara with a marriage to "That Quick...that big stud horse" if she doesn't wed soon.

Loveless and mercantile relationships in the film are thus seen not as a denial of sexuality, but as consisting of a base sexuality that lacks emotion and moral meaning. Ben is the exact opposite of the emotionally and sensually impotent Flem, with a primitive masculine allure that sets him up as the "Prize blue ribbon bull" that Will wants in order to get "some good, strong, strapping men" in the Varner family line. However, Clara requires more from a relationship than the purely psychical aspects that Will and Ben spend most of the film trying to cajole her with, defying their masculine aggression and self-interested attempts to procure and profit from her. This sentiment is expressed in a scene near the end of the film clearly meant to echo the wild horse auction, where Ben

wins a bidding war at a church bazaar for a picnic lunch with Clara. This time around however, his frank masculine power earns him reproach instead of success and profit, with Clara rejecting his claims of ownership ("We gonna be married Miss Clara, haven't you heard?") and his sexual appeal ("Ben: You're gonna wake up in the morning smiling. Clara: That's not enough...That's not nearly enough") before running off on him.

It is only when Ben forms the above detailed emotional connection with Clara does she become willing to form a relationship with him, and this revelation doesn't demean or remove Ben's masculinity, but hone it into something worthwhile for both of them – as he puts it: "You couldn't tame me, but you taught me". Learning the error of his heartless ways, Ben confronts Will in the very end, declaring that they "started out playing a horseflesh game" and made the error of leaving horses and moving "around to people, and that's something different", because "Life's a pretty valuable thing, and it oughta be treated with a certain amount of respect". Will rejects these platitudes ("Life around here is what I say it is"), and seems determined not to learn anything from the experience, with his claims to power made ironic by the fact that he has since been conquered by Minnie, who has successfully convinced him into matrimony by ignoring his refusals, planning the wedding entirely behind his back, and threatening to deny him sex.

Though Will's patriarchal power is challenged and satirized, it is hard to ignore the fact that in the end, he gets exactly what he wants: Ben and Clara together, a stronger relationship with his son, and sexual gratification for the rest of his life. His manipulation of sexuality was wrongheaded due to its emotional indifference, but the final result is shown to be the most beneficial and natural result for everyone involved, as shown with

his line after he overhears the two leads finally getting together: "Do *I* know human nature. Didn't I say that fella Quick was the man for my Clara?". The film's final lines indicate that Will has indeed learned something about life – the importance of love and family – and that with these things, a patriarchal rule can endure for a long time: "Minnie it sure is good to be alive this summer evening. Yes, alive with friends and family, and a big healthy woman to love ya...I like life Minnie. I like it so much, I might just lay here forever." While the novel ends with Flem mercenarily abandoning the small town that he has successfully taken over for a move to the city in hopes of more power[56], the film ensures us that the loving patriarchal community promised by capitalist values is easily achieved, just so long morality and emotion are part of the equation.

This ideological presentation of masculinity becomes even more pronounced when looking at the characters that lack the sexually charged capitalistic drive of Ben and Will. Jody Varner is no longer the hardworking eternally self-interested bachelor of *The Hamlet*, instead presented as an oversexed and pampered dolt who lacks the ambition and work ethic his father sees in Ben. He spends most of the movie running around with his wife Eula, failing to live up to the "big footprint" that Will believes he has left behind for him, which Jody admits he "doesn't have it" in him to fill. Ben gradually usurps his place and Jody's already tenuous relationship with Will is ebbed away. First, Ben takes an equal position at the store, then moves into the Varner household (Will: "I brought you home a big brother...Look alive Jody"), with Will once again playing the role of human rancher by pitting them against each other: "Youse a couple of race horses, starting out even...we'll see who is the fastest, who's the smartest". The final defeat comes when Ben

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[56] Rejecting the "lusty world of stallions and heifers" for "banks and middle-class craving", as Urgo says (171).

cons Jody into buying barren land under the impression there is hidden treasure there, an indignity that even Will can't stand to see his son suffer, begging him to come home while Jody refuses and digs manically.

Jody's lusty marriage to Eula shows that he isn't completely lacking in masculine drive, but without work ethic and ambition, this drive is ultimately portrayed as emasculating and weak In a scene that later becomes crucial to the film's sexual themes, all of the main characters are sitting down outside after dinner when a group of local school boys hide far off in the bushes, making cat-calls to Eula and flirtatiously calling out her name. Eula is amused and excited by the attention, sending Jody off into a rage, running into the darkness in a fruitless chase after them. Jody is even denied sex after he loses his job at the store to Ben and starts lazing around, told by Eula to "find some other form of recreation". In what has to be one of the most ludicrously unrealistic happy endings in 50s melodrama, Jody proves his masculine power to his father by trapping him in a barn and setting fire to it in hopes of framing Ben with his murder. Unable to go through with it, Jody opens the flaming barn and saves Will, who, impressed with the "hellfire", "damnation" and "redemption" the act exhibited, tells him: "When I think of the hate that put me in there and locked the door...and set fire to it...when I think of the love that would let me go, I got me a son again".

The film's clearest representation of the importance of capitalist masculinity lies in the portrayal of Alan Stewart, Clara's aristocratic friend and Ben's rival for her affections. An emblem of the old Southern gentry, Alan is a kind, calm young man from a long prestigious line, shown to be at least partly aware of his growing irrelevancy ("Some people say I'm fighting the 20th century") yet also bitter at the middle-class

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power of people like Will Varner ("Quality is one thing he can't buy"). His main

characteristics, laid out by Will in a tension filled dinner scene, include his non-working

status and the fact that he spends most of his time at home with his mother, either keeping

her company or being taken care of by her due to his sporadically sickly state. These

aspects are combined with an utter lack of sex drive, making him the complete antithesis

to the strong, hard working, and sexually alluring Ben, ultimately costing him a

relationship with Clara.

After the episode with the cat-calling schoolboys, a display of sexuality he

wrongly believes offended Clara, Alan remarks that she is "a nice quiet self-contained

girl...and everything [she] wants is gonna happen to [her]", unaware that the thing she

really wants to happen relies entirely on his action. Later, after losing Clara in the date

auction to Ben and then walking her home after she rebuffs Ben's lewd advances, Clara

asks Alan if he wants her "the way a man wants a woman?". He replies with "What I

want is to help you Clara", which she refers to as a "good, kind, pitiful answer" in

obvious disappointment. Alan reflects a masculinity that usually takes centre-stage in

more standard melodramas within the Sirkian mode – an individual failure to act that

prevents the male hero from solving his social conflict (Byars 16). However, while these

melodramas usually present this inability of a character's masculinity to "realize or

express itself in action" in society so it can question the actual effectiveness of masculine

power (Neale 186), this film poses it as a question easily answered by Ben's eventual mix

of work ethic, virile sexuality, and emotion.

At the centre of all this is Clara, who spends most of the film railing against her

father's rule and whose all important decision of which lover to take will come to dictate

the restoration of the community the film wishes to reinforce. Her personal social conflict lies in both her anxiety over not fitting into her designated feminine place as a wife in a patriarchal system on one hand[57], and her refusal of being forced into it by her father on the other. As detailed above with Ben's arc, she only consents to this inclusion within the order once he has revealed his moral and emotional self, but the film presents this coming together as mutually developmental, with Clara learning to embrace the sexuality she represses and denies in herself while defying the system. She sets herself against the kind of masculine aggression she sees in both Ben and her father[58], and constantly rejects Ben's seductive advances, but her failed relationship with Alan reveals that their total absence is also far from ideal, leaving room for the balance that Ben comes to strike.

The catalyst for this development also lies with the aftermath of the cat-calling schoolboy scene. In addition to the exchange with Alan detailed above, Clara expresses her apparent distaste at this blatant expression of masculine sexuality and equates it with the negative traits she sees in her father, believing that he "stayed longest and yelled loudest" when he was young. She is stopped cold however by his reply of "Your mama listened", calling attention to the naturalness of such desires and behaviour, and the contradiction involved in her objection to them. This repression is brought up again when she is confronted by Ben, who calls her out on her true feelings about the behaviour around her: "I know what's bothering you. All those boys hollering for Eula the other night. And Eula with her hair hanging down, and Jody with his shirt off chasing her, and

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[57] As evidenced in her conversation with Alan's sister near the beginning, where they discuss how all of their schoolmates are either pregnant or married.
[58] At one point, Ben tells Clara that he thinks she is "riled" by his "mean and dirty nature", but Clara calmly sets him straight: "I spent my whole life round men who push and shove and shout and think they can make anything happen just by being aggressive, and I'm not anxious to have another one around the place". She makes a similar connection later, where insists she will never be with Ben, stating: "You're too much like my father to suit me".

your old man at 60, and his calling on his lady love". Implying that her exclusion from these types of relationships is her real problem, Ben leans in for their first kiss, which she reciprocates. She then nervously admits: "Alright you proved it. I'm human", before her anger gets the best of her and she rejects him again with the scream of "Barn burner!" right to his face.

While her rebellion against Ben and her father's cold and pragmatic ways is shown to be admirable and right, the film never comes close to implying that there are any alternative solutions to be found outside the system, as Clara's problem lies not with the patriarchal order as a whole, but in the denial of her ability to choose and define her own value within it. She all but admits this herself during a confrontation with Ben after he wins her in the auction, declaring that she is a "human being" that sets a "high, high price" on herself, and while she is fully prepared to be "the best wife any man could hope for", she will not be "bought and sold" or "given away to some passing stranger". She recognizes her place in the system, but refuses to work within it until Ben realizes her true value, making him just as important to Clara's return to the social order as she is to his emotional entrance into it[59]. Naturally, this inevitable coming together is delayed until the end of the film, allowing all the members of their family community to learn their lessons and reform the (firmly patriarchal) social order shown at the end.

True to its melodramatic nature, all of those pesky complications within the system (denial of emotion, mercantile treatment of life, denial of sex) are smoothed out with the adjustments each character comes to make within themselves – revealing the

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[59] Ben is in fact a rather textbook example of the "intruder-redeemer" figure common to many melodramas – a male who starts outside the system and must solve the problem of "the female protagonist's lack of connectedness to a male", which allows them both to enter "the larger community as the core of a family unit" (Byars 149).

moral and social identity that these problems have formed. The film investigates the

amoral complications of capitalism before solving them with romantic justification virile

masculine self-interest and the restoration of "proper" gender roles, allowing all

characters to function happily within the American middle-class system of values. While

critics like Colwey and Warren would most likely scoff at the notion of these themes

being in any way connected to Faulkner, the film in many ways carries on with their

rhetoric and brings it to the extreme, presenting a moralized Faulkner made more

pertinent to the social needs and concerns of the masses. Of course, Cold War era

Hollywood had a much different idea about these needs and concerns than literary critics

of the 40s, and the strength of the author's moralist persona that these critics (and, to an

extent, Faulkner himself) had promoted made *The Hamlet*'s themes of rampant capitalism

and prevailing self-interest more than suitable for a melodrama makeover.

Chapter IV
A Streetcar Named Respectability
More Melodramatic Remediation in Martin Ritt's *The Sound and the Fury*

I made some mistakes on that…
- Martin Ritt on his adaptation of *The Sound and the Fury* (Phillips 162)

Summer would go on to be the first substantial financial and critical success for a Faulkner adaptation, and in the hope that lighting would strike twice, Fox immediately started production on *The Sound and the Fury*, which had since become one of Faulkner's most popular and critically acclaimed novels. Now a fully canonized work, it also stands as one of the author's first forays into the experimentally non-structured and non-linear style that caused so much division in his initial critical responses, containing split narratives categorized by a disjointed sense of time and place and an occasionally frenzied stream-of-consciousness. Its stylistic complexities aside, the story of the Compson family is a darkly tragic one that helped earn Faulkner his 30s reputation for disturbing content, and themes like familial violence, sexuality, loss of innocence, and of course, the fall of the old moral order, are all dealt with in an often unsettling frankness.

None of this, however, prevented Ritt and company from straying from the recipe of success that resulted in *Summer*, resulting in an extreme melodramatic remediation even more upfront with its middle-class moralist themes. Whole sections of the novel are dropped in order to accommodate a new narrative focus centered firmly on two characters, Jason Compson and Quentin II – both of whom are reinterpreted as sympathetic and romantic figures as to better match their new roles. Once again, a combination of masculine capitalist drive and domestic values (here represented by Jason) are portrayed as the ideal, with a conflicted female character (Quentin II) again

attempting to define herself outside of such values before gradually coming to realize her "natural" place within them. This conflict is represented even more directly than *Summer* through the film's interpretation of Caddy Compson, who is shown to be a fallen, disreputably wanton Southern belle that acts as a warning for what Quentin could become should she stray too far down her rebellious path, making the film's thematic focus a blending of *Summer*'s moral responsibility and *Story*'s moral respectability.

Most likely due to its source's more storied reputation and popularity, 20th Century Fox did not attempt to conceal the presence of the source as they did with *Summer*, with the book receiving due mention on the posters and a "Based upon the Novel by..." credit in the opening crawl. It is, however, still introduced as "William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*", and thus the film makes a similar claim to ownership and authenticity. The film's posters also serve the same purpose of aligning itself with Faulkner's persona and melodramatic iconography, depicting Yul Brynner either passionately kissing Joanne Woodward, standing over her in a stern, dashing hand-on-hips pose (with his shirt partly open no less), or saving her from an assailant[60] [Fig. 3]. In fact, even the presence of the source is filtered through this melodramatic perception, with the novel being referred to as a "blistering best-seller of love and transgression that broke the unwritten commandment".

Although the studio did its best to amalgamate the two, it is obvious that the filmmakers decided to take their adaptation in some very different directions from its intertext. Even without seeing the posters, as soon as Alex North's sultry, discordantly

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[60] Like *Summer*, these posters foreshadow certain themes and character relationships, displaying Jason's protective, romantic, and disciplinary power over Quentin. Two of the images are from a sequence (Benjy's attack on Quentin) that serves an important thematic role, as will be discussed shortly.

Fig 3. Posters for *The Sound and the Fury*. First image from moviegoods.com. Second from scootermoviesshop.com.

booming score comes in at the starting credits, one gets the feeling that Martin Ritt's *The Sound and the Fury* might have a few changes in store. Fidelity criticism has generally approached the film with a mix of bewilderment and contempt, and unsurprisingly, Kawin and Phillips are never more unified than in their critiques of this film. The general plot progression and themes are the major targets for both, with Phillips lamenting a denial of the novel's tragedy since Caddy is "redeemed from a disreputable existence by returning to the bosom of her family" (163), and Kawin summing up the entire thematic structure as a "conventional demonstration of the value of convention" (25). While these general assessments are more or less sound, if a little evaluative, neither critic actually explores the construction of this conventionality, nor how it functions within the film.

Perhaps the biggest change, and most definitely the one at which critics took most umbrage, is the choice to adapt primarily the final two sections of the novel for the film's central plotline – passing over the chance for a visual representation of Benjy and Quentin's much celebrated narrative styles and voices. The complex shifting of time, space, and memory used to present Benjy's inability to differentiate his past and present, as well as Quentin's destruction of the latter through his obsession with the former (Vickery 37, Bleikasten 129), is replaced by what producer Jerry Wald saw as a creative need to focus on the present, with the object being to "gradually reveal the weight of the past" and make it "function in the present" (Phillips 158). This shift in narrative results in new central characters that can better reflect the film's thematic and ideological content, much like increased focus on Temple over Benbow in *The Story of Temple Drake*. In the case of this film, these new roles fall on to Jason and Quentin II, the former now a

symbol of virtuous hard-working individualism and the latter facing a moral dilemma not unlike Miss Drake's.

This new narrative focus naturally transforms the representation and roles of essentially every other character as well[61], mostly in accordance with the new nature and stakes of the central conflict itself. With no immediate access to his narrative voice, Benjy (Jack Warden) is ultimately defined by his partial role in the novel's final sections: an inarticulate and sympathetic public monument to the decline of the Compsons. Quentin (John Beal), alive and well and renamed Howard, becomes a reflection of the alcohol induced hopelessness of Mr. Compson, with any narrative mixing of the past and present done solely through verbal dialogue and allusion (Phillips 158, Kawin 24). Like Alan in *Summer*, Howard serves as a representative of the simpering ineffectualness of modern Southern gentry, acting as a jobless, weak, and effeminate counterpoint to the capitalistic and masculine power of Jason just as Alan did for Ben and offering a small but effective reflection of the ideological shift both films share.

Unarguably, the central character most affected by this shift is Caddy. In the novel, Caddy is an ethereal figure of rebellion that both haunts and unifies the narrative, viewable only through the biased points-of-view of her brothers (Millgate 98, Minter 67). It is her actions and behaviour that are the main catalyst for the novel's events, with her sexual awakening, illicit affairs, and eventual escape from the Compson household being interpreted in different ways by each of her brothers as the book progresses. Despite this centrality, she is never granted a narrative voice, nor is she even directly presented,

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[61] Dilsey (Ethel Waters) is the only one more or less unchanged in both presentation and thematic role through this shift, though she does not receive nearly the same level of focus that the novel's fourth section grants her, and, for reasons soon to be discussed, comes to lose her higher position of moral authority to Jason.

existing entirely in the obsessive memories of her brothers as they cope with her actions

and their effects on the family. As Bleikasten puts it, "Caddy cannot be described; she

can only be *circumscribed*, conjured up through the suggestive powers of metaphor and

metonymy" (60), presented to us through Benjy's indirect sensory associations[62],

Quentin's stream-of-consciousness crisis over her sexuality and their family honour, and

Jason's vengeful grudge.

Due to the intangible depiction of her character and the nature of her

indiscretions, critical interpretation of Caddy's thematic role in the novel is often split on

the issue of Faulkner's treatment of femininity. Some see Caddy as another example of

the author's early method of condemning female sexuality (Fiedler 80-81), with her

improprieties being portrayed as "the ultimate cause of the family's ill-fortunes" (Metz

21) and the indirect narrative style working to stifle and isolate her feminine voice and

nature (25). Others see this condemnation as existing purely in the biased "obsessiveness

and fundamental irrationality" of each brother's viewpoint (Millgate 101), and interpret

Caddy's existence only on the periphery of these views as a rebellious refusal to be

defined and subsequently "damned" by them (Bleikasten 161). Faulkner's own

explanation for Caddy's lack of voice, that she was "too beautiful and too moving to

reduce her to telling what was going on" and that she was his "heart's darling" (Metz 24),

implies an immense value placed on her nature and actions that is set against or outside

the narratives describing her. Although, many feminist critics see this justification ("too

beautiful to have a voice, must only be looked at") as sexist in of itself as well (25).

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[62] The earliest example of this consists of Benjy hearing the word "caddie" near a golf course on the very
first page (*Sound* 3), and the most prevalent is his tendency to associate via smell: "Caddy smelled like
tress and like when she says we were asleep" (6), *"Caddy smelled like trees"* (44).

As with *Sanctuary* and *Story*, Faulkner's presentation of female sexuality is a complex issue, and while I find myself firmly in the latter camp mentioned above in terms of *Sound*, the more important factor here once again is not my own reading, but the film's. And also much like *Sanctuary* and *Story*, there is little question as to what side of the debate the film places itself, as Margaret Leighton's Caddy is the farthest thing from an ethereal rebel. She is embodied in full view in a performance that, as many have pointed out, strongly channels withered Southern belle Blanche DuBois from Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Kawin 22, Phillips 161), making her an almost ready-made emblem for fallen Southern propriety, reckless irresponsibility and sexual wantonness. Now shown in an objective visual sense and existing entirely in the narrative present, Caddy is made to bear the kind of moral/societal burden for her rebellion that her textual counterpart appears defined outside of, becoming a representative for the decayed moral order that the film aligns itself against. Her sexual freedom is no longer a possible means of breaking away from the overbearing order that restricts her, but is a symptom of what the film depicts as an uncontrollable immorality similar to that of Temple's in *Story*.

This is exemplified in one of the few scenes taken directly from one of the first two sections, where Howard/Quentin angrily confronts Caddy about her illicit relationships with men. In the novel, this scene is one of many memories that establishes Quentin's unhealthy fascination with an archaic sense of Old Southern honour and family prestige, unable to reconcile Caddy's sexual independence within his own worldview (Vickery 36, Millgate 96, Minter 42-45) and obsessive desire to "isolate her out of the loud world" (*The Sound and the Fury* 177). While the novel's sequences are filtered entirely through Quentin's obviously troubled mind, the film depicts the confrontation in

present time, with Howard dredging up the past to say things like "As long as we had our name we were rich" and accuse Caddy of dooming their family. Howard's pathetic nature hardly makes him a character to be highly regarded, but the scene is handled in such a way as to give these claims of moral superiority a sense of actuality, confirmed when Caddy admits to having "something terrible" inside of her[63]. As evidenced by his suicide, the novel dooms Quentin to his moral worldview while Caddy is bound to it only figuratively[64], whereas the film appropriates it in the process of subjecting her to its own social themes.

With the final two sections of the novel becoming the central focus, the conflict between Jason Compson and Quentin II takes centre stage. And with the desire to depict only the immediacy of the present and the past's function within it for both plot and characters, Jason's narrative voice becomes the one most clearly represented in the film, making him our main hero. Yet this Jason is not the vile, cruelly pragmatic bastard who exploits and subjugates others for his own self-interest of Faulkner's book[65]. In fact, he is no longer even a full Compson, now made to be an adopted stepson from Mr. Compson's second marriage to a Cajun woman. He is now a noble, morally upright individual who, despite being a bit hard-nosed, virtuously supports his adopted family by himself. He is also portrayed by Yul Brynner, who by 1959 had probably cornered the market on harsh-

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[63] However, this awareness fails to help her control herself, as a scene immediately following this one depicts her impulsively sleeping with Jason's unlikeable boss.

[64] This is best illustrated in Quentin's attempt to claim to his father that he and Caddy have committed incest, hoping that such a shocking transgression against his beloved Old order will affirm its existence and importance (Vickery 38, Bleikasten 114). He fails to convince his father and receive this validation, and his failed attempts to conform Caddy to this plan are marked with an ironic self-confidence: *"Ill make you say we did Im stronger than you Ill make you know we did"* (*Sound* 149).

[65] Primarily seen in his stealing and extortion of money from Caddy's relationship with Miss Quentin, taking the former's cheques for the latter on a regular basis (and viewing it as bad business on Caddy's part whenever they are late, *Sound* 190) and accepting a bribe of one hundred dollars from Caddy to allow her to see her daughter, eventually granting her only a glimpse from a carriage window before speeding away (203-5).

yet-noble foreign authority figures thanks to *The King and I* (1956) and *The Ten Commandments* (1956).

In keeping with his new role as a protagonist and Brynner's dignified demeanour, Jason's misogynistic lines and exceedingly cruel actions in the novel are either excised, given to his overbearing and lecherous boss (named Earl *Snopes* no less), or refashioned to illustrate a strict moralist nature. The novel's ending scene with Benjy, for example, where Luster goes against his usual driving route and takes him closer to the town – receiving a beating from an angry and embarrassed Jason for his troubles – is moved close to the beginning. Originally an image of Jason's hollow dominance over the artificial order that his brother relies on (Phillips 156), the film instead transforms it into an image of brotherly virtue. Here, drives close to town are common, but this time Luster has been paid to drive Benjy around by the carnival as poster-boy for the freak-show, making Jason's anger at Luster and desire to return Benjy to the mansion not the product of embarrassment, but a rescuing of him from objectification. Similarly, Jason's act of burning carnival tickets in front of Luster is no longer another act of bullying and extortion (*Sound* 254-5), but punishment for allowing such a thing to happen to Benjy.

Jason also carries a host of ironically arrogant delusions of superiority in the novel, most of which are made positive attributes in the film. Novel Jason prides himself on being the only Compson capable of supporting the family despite the fact much of his money is stolen from Caddy, and he also sees the weakness and wildness of Caddy and Quentin as a matter of heredity and blood, blissfully ignoring his own relation and heritage (Bleikasten 151)[66]. Meanwhile, film Jason's realism, pragmatism, and hard work

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[66] "I like I said blood always tells. If you've got blood like that in you, you'll do anything" (*Sound* 238). As Jason is an adopted Compson in the film, his claims to superiority are legitimized.

are shown to support the family in ways that their name and legacy now cannot. When provoked by Caddy (of all people) about the former prestige of the Compson name and this unfair and changing world that they "weren't meant to live in", Jason curtly responds with his belief that the only major change is that "Somebody works for a living now", as opposed to relying on a "provident god" to help them because of their last name. His superiority over them is made all but absolute at the scene's end, commanding them with the line: "Hang on to me Compsons...I'm all you've got".

With this moralized transformation, Jason is made a legitimate protector of Miss Quentin (Joanne Woodward) as opposed to her ruthless exploiter, with his harsh demeanour and unbending imposition of order designed to prevent her from descending into a lifestyle like that of her mother. This new relationship between Jason and Quentin II is perhaps the most jarring shift the film presents for those expecting fidelity to the novel, as Jason's change to an adopted Compson allows him to develop from not only her stern fatherly protector, but an eventual romantic interest as well. Jason then comes to embody a strict but beneficial domestic order and familial unity, controlling Quentin's money not out of exploitation, but out of support for the family and an affectionate desire to keep her "close to home". This role is solidified when he finally allows Caddy to stay with them in the end, saying "This is home. And we'll keep it together. Cause this is the only family I've got", an interesting twist on his earlier claim to superiority.

By refashioning Jason as a hero, the film creates a character that more clearly embodies Faulkner's perceived themes of "freedom of the individual under capitalism", spurning the prestige of old family names and feelings of entitlement for hard work and dedication, and taking a hard moral line against what he sees as corruptive social decay

and immorality. Even though the novel's Jason is essentially a satire of small town

businessmen (Vickery 43), with his contradictory musings on money and self-interest[67]

and inability to understand the world outside his own point of view[68], he is nonetheless a

fiercely motivated and independent figure, and in many regards earns the power over the

household he so ruthlessly exploits. If Faulkner did indeed come to represent "the power

of the individual will" against "moral confusion and social decay" for many critics

(Schwartz 32), then Jason is the only Compson that could fit that role in a purely

traditional sense, with the others cut off by disability, crippling infatuation with the old

order, or a rejection of society in general.

Quentin II, who now shares the narrative spotlight with Jason equally, is also

given a moralistic makeover. Miss Quentin's role in the novel is to act as a darker

reflection of her mother, becoming under the cruel power of Jason a compassionless and

even more bitterly defiant female Compson, driven to sexual and social rebellion by the

restrictions placed on her by Jason's rule. In other words, Caddy's unpredictable

influence and indefinable nature is ironically recreated via Jason's cruel treatment of her

daughter, outsmarting him, fleeing the social order, and cheating him out of capital once

again[69]. In Joanne Woodward's hands, Quentin becomes a feisty, disobedient, and yet

also principled young woman who, like Clara before her, is uncomfortable with her

designated place within a middle-class patriarchal system. Instead of erring on the side of

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[67] "After all, like I say money has no value; it's just the way you spend it. It don't belong to anybody, so why try and hoard it. It just belongs to the man that can get it and keep it" (*Sound* 194).

[68] "It never occurred to him that they might not be there, in the car. That they should not be there, that the whole result should not hinge on whether he saw them first or they saw him first, would be opposed to all nature and contrary to the whole rhythm of events" (*Sound* 308).

[69] This is shown when Quentin steals back the money given to her by Caddy that Jason has been hoarding and runs away with a man from the carnival, something that his fragile egotistical worldview cannot bear: "...what they did would be of no importance to him, while otherwise the whole world would know that he, Jason Compson, had been robbed by Quentin, his niece, a bitch" (*Sound* 309).

chastity however, Quentin finds herself narrowly avoiding degeneracy and the fallen path of her mother. She spends most of the film at odds with Jason, running away from the protective domestic order he represents and resenting the power he holds over her, but a series of encounters with the possible alternatives to this order eventually convinces her of her place within it. Jason's strict upbringing still comes to make Quentin who she is, but now serves as the moral standard through which she avoids immorality and disorder, as opposed to the reason she becomes forced into them[70].

Probably the most illustrative example of this is the tension filled relationship that is created between Quentin and Caddy and their interactions, with the latter now representing the kind of social disorder that the former must rise above. The film presents an entirely original scene where these characters actually get to meet and experience the reflective nature of their situations, with each seeing a version of themselves within the other that creates only distress and disappointment for both. Caddy can only see in Quentin her own lost youth and missed opportunities, comparing their meeting to "looking in a mirror with time all washed away" and wistfully regretting that her "chances are all used up". She follows these sentiments with somewhat trivial relationship advice like "Clothes and parties are just bait for the trap" and "A girl can't start too early", with the film presenting her as ready to relive her mistakes vicariously through her daughter. Quentin, on the other hand, seeks a type of role model to justify her desires to leave the domestic order, a kindred rebellious spirit to grant her a reprieve from Jason. She begs her mother to "go and tell him to leave me alone", and tearfully explains

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[70] A process she is at least partially self-aware of: ""If I'm bad, it's because I had to be. You made me" (*Sound* 260).

the hopeful expectations she has for a mother: "I don't care if she loves me...I don't even care if she likes me. All she has to do is stand up for me".

Caddy, however, is ultimately unable to bring herself to go against Jason's domestic rule, nervously making excuses and worrying about her own position in the house before bypassing the stress of the situation by putting on some makeup, exclaiming "I look a fright". Expecting an independent saviour, Quentin instead gets yet another familial example of the ineffectuality and weakness of those outside the conventional social order, with Caddy directly representing what the film sees as Quentin's inevitable fate should she continue to set herself against it. This scene is an evocative example of what Linda Williams states as film melodrama's focus on a "melancholic sense of the loss of origin", presenting an "impossible hope of returning to an earlier state...most fundamentally represented by the body of a mother" (154), a hope made impossible because the "Origins are already lost; the encounters always take place too late" (155). The effect is especially potent here because it is twofold, as Caddy's body represents Quentin's dashed hopes for the return of the protective maternal figure she should have had as a child, and the reflection of her own body that Caddy sees in Quentin evokes a desire for her now lost state of innocence and youth.

The now romantic relationship between Jason and Quentin also results in this conflict of order becoming displayed in purely melodramatic terms, with the "prurience and voyeurism" (Bleikasten 160) that marked Jason's disturbing power over Quentin II in the book being changed to romantic sexual tension. In this sense, Jason is made to serve double duty, acting as both the patriarchal representative of the traditional social order that Quentin resists, and the romantic figure through which she is able to re-enter this

order and complete her "integration into the larger community" (Byars 149). This double role is actually a prime example of one of the ways in which the film's support of middle-class moralism alters the standard tropes of 50s melodrama. The most common melodramatic presentation of this kind of relationship is "the search for the ideal husband/lover/father by anxious offspring" (Mercer 10), or even just the replacement of an "absent patriarch" with a romance (Byars 148). Jason is given the unique position of conflating all of these roles into one, shifting into whichever one best serves the film's themes at the time.

In keeping with the melodramatic mode, the romantic nature of the battle between Jason's authority and Quentin's potential wanton rebellion becomes primarily displayed via a love triangle between the two of them and Charlie, Quentin's fling from the circus (Stuart Whitman). Little more than a malevolent shadow with a red tie in the novel, Charlie's character is expanded in the film, carrying a traditionally rebellious sexual presence and masculine allure akin to that of Ben Quick that acts in opposition to the orderly and protective principles of Jason. He exists to test Quentin's moral principles and tempt her with corruption and disorder, pressuring her into sex, seducing her with alcohol, and offering an escape from the traditional domestic sphere to a wild, rootless lifestyle. He is, in many ways, a flipping of the standard "intruder-redeemer" figure that Ben Quick represented, standing for an outside disintegration of the larger communal order as opposed to the female lead's entrance back into it (Byars 149). However, lacking the masculine drive of characters like Ben and Jason, his wild sexual presence falters and is emasculated at every turn by the protective stability that Jason represents.

In one scene, Jason catches the two kissing in the family garden and scares

Charlie away, an action that Charlie later describes as showing the "real" him. When

Quentin attempts to defy Jason by saying she no longer fears him because Charlie makes

her "feel like a woman", he retorts with "Anybody could make you feel like a woman"

before the two kiss passionately, effectively matching and cancelling out Charlie's

supposed power. It is worth noting that what leads into this exchange is another reworked

scene from Quentin's section made to fit the new romantic situation. In the book, Caddy

makes Quentin repeat the name of her lover while his hand is on her throat so that he can

feel her pulse rise and come to terms with her as a passionate being. The film however

has Jason feeling Quentin II's throat as he makes her do the repeating, acknowledging her

passionate response to Charlie before invalidating it with his own. This flips the book's

power structure (Kawin 25) and reflects the film's gendered status-quo, which entails

Jason's moral and emotional superiority over Quentin as expressed in their developing

romantic attraction to each other.

This conflict is further exemplified in what becomes Benjy's only thematic role in

the film, where he almost strangles Quentin to death near the end after she returns from

sneaking out and planning to run away with Charlie[71]. In the film, Benjy is made to

function as a sympathetic but misguidedly violent enforcer of the film's moral order,

making a vague connection between her birth and Caddy's disappearance and leering at

Quentin with judging looks as she sneaks out or fools around with Charlie. Whether it is

meant to be a projection of his anger at Caddy onto a less beloved target, an outburst

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[71] In the book, Benjy is trapped in a life of mixed associations and an obsession with stable order, and at one point attacks a schoolgirl out of confusion and a desire to make himself understood, with his many repetitions of him "trying to say" something through his actions, seen through his section, appearing again here (*Sound* 53).

directed at whom he mistakenly believes *is* Caddy, or a confused attempt to "punish"

Quentin in an almost Trigger-like fashion, the attack serves the same purposes. It is an

excessive and painful warning to Quentin that she may be going down the wrong path,

and it gives the chance for Jason to come to her rescue and further legitimize his

protective dominance and her vulnerability, carrying her away to the safety of her room

where he strikes that domineering pose over her used in the posters[72].

      At the end of the film, when Quentin almost flees with Charlie and her stolen

savings, Jason doesn't even need to raise a finger to thwart them, simply stating that

Charlie can have either the girl or the money, but not both. He chooses the money, of

course, making Quentin realize the shallowness of his love and the kind of hollow life his

"freedom" would lead her in to. After stating to herself that she "would have been too

much woman" for Charlie anyway, Quentin returns home to the safety of her family and

the affections of Jason, with the implication that they, as Phillips points out, "will marry

and continue to perpetuate the Compson family" (161). While the moral "principles" she

prides herself on are tested constantly by the influence of Caddy, Charlie and her

rebellious attitude towards Jason, they eventually come through in the end, and she is

rewarded with a renewed sense of purpose within the domestic sphere.

      Needless to say, the film seems to have little interest in challenging the

"prevailing social standards" (Byars 150), and, like *Summer*, comes to "champion a

residual ideology" (232) in a way that circumvents the usual melodramatic mode. The

"social pressures" she does face are caused by her reluctance to enter common societal

order, not her subjugation under it, and although she at first views Jason's stern

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[72] To avoid (or at least minimize) the contradiction of this violence being a part of the domestic sphere, Benjy is sent away to an institution soon after, a move the film intends to be sadly cathartic, yet loses its impact due to the clashing thematic roles the character has played.

upbringing as subjugation, she comes to realize through him the importance of her position within it. As in the case of Clara and Ben, the initial complications of their relationship serve to develop the moral identities of both (though it is much less mutual this time around), and their eventual coming together represents her safe entrance into the patriarchal order. Miss Quentin's conflict with Jason then becomes more than just a matter of conventional respectability, but of her individual acceptance of a society that her mother, uncles, and people like Charlie can never quite fit in to. Jason expresses this sentiment directly in a series of scenes where he drives Quentin around town to make social calls, declaring: "You're going to live in this town, and you're going to be accepted in this town. That's one thing I'm going to do for you if you like it or not".

As previously mentioned, the presentation of the domestic sphere is a crucial component in the majority of Hollywood melodramas and their critique of middle-class society, though with *Sound,* this technique serves a different purpose. This film's domestic setting is dominated by scenes in kitchens, dining rooms, and occasionally drawing rooms – all places that carry an obvious image of family unity and community. While they start off as spaces of tension and conflict, the film's plot progression suggests that this pressure is temporary and not eternally stifling[73]. They become the space where the characters can air their grievances in the process of coming together, making their situation far from unchangeable. The most important scenes regarding the central conflict almost always occur outside the domestic sphere, with Quentin's constant breaks from the order represented by her wandering around town and potentially running away. As the

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[73] Phillips calls attention to a single instance to the contrary of this in the first meeting between Caddy and Quentin, where the opposite sides of the four-poster bed in the centre of room "symbolizes visually that it will not be easy for them to relate to each other", and creates a "visual metaphor for the barrier that the years have placed between them" (162).

film is about the importance of the domestic order, it makes sense that Quentin's social pressures are truly emphasized when she is removed from it. The domestic sphere is thus transformed from a space of restriction into an ideal space that she must return to.

With their moralized messages and conflicted female protagonists, both *Summer* and *Sound* can almost be seen as reimaginings of *The Story of Temple Drake* – updating and reworking the battle of respectability and the romanticized return to the social order for the Cold War era. One would think that having more independent and less victimized female protagonists would equal a substantially stronger opposition to the status-quo, but even with their melodramatic focus on society's complications, these films never offer up anything as challengingly contradictory as *Story*'s risqué pre-code content. Though the ultimate progression of the films and their themes are determined by the power of Clara and Miss Quentin's personal choices, with each character defined by her ability to place herself against the system, the style of their characterizations and the resolution of their conflicts makes Byar's concept of melodrama's mixture of female independence and dependence seem heavily favoured towards the latter. Though characters like Ben and Jason are not without their own flaws, the films leave little room for interpreting the romantic return to the middle-class domestic order that their harsh-yet-noble figures offer as anything but the "right" decision.

The traditional social and gendered milieus are indeed challenged and qualified at various points, but only to show the weakness and danger that lies in sustaining such challenges over time. Such themes are of course worlds away from the kinds of meanings for Faulkner that critics like Cowley and Warren envisioned and fought for during the 40s, but by the time of the production of these films, his moralist persona had taken on a

life of its own. In a time of cultural warfare, Faulkner became a valuable symbol not only of American genius, but of American ideals, striving to represent the significance of the individual in a society that needs to hold on to its "traditional" values. However, traditional values meant something a bit different to Hollywood in the Cold War era than they did to Faulkner writing in the 20s and 30s, but studios like 20th Century Fox were not going to let that get in the way of capitalizing on the kind of cultural cachet and national significance the author now enjoyed.

As I've detailed throughout this chapter, this shift in values resulted in the aggressive remediation of both the sources and Faulkner himself in each film's moral reinforcement of an American middle-class society. Some major reworking was required, and a recent rash of successful, morally themed, and exaggerated domestic dramas provided the perfect framework for such reworkings – a framework that now, thanks to decades of genre criticism, we can now better understand the complexities of. It is easy to write off these melodramatic remediations as a shallow step down from the stylistics of literary modernism, but doing so ignores so much of the techniques and themes that (through their implementation or alteration) must be understood if one is to analyze fully each film's adaptive relationship to its source. These films are very much so a "domestication" of Faulkner and his themes in many ways, but I believe that exploring these surrounding contexts show that their interpretations are no more incorrect or wrongheaded than most others, with the added benefit of providing great insight into Faulkner's public persona and the ways in which it was adapted itself.

Chapter V
Conclusion

I think Hollywood has so often failed with him because they insist on improving him –
for whatever reasons: to make him more palatable, more popular, more commercial...He
can be dramatized; he can't be improved.
- Horton Foote on adapting Faulkner (Phillips 111)

The movie *The Sound and the Fury* failed to recapture even the mild success of its

predecessor, though this didn't mark the end of this sudden boom in melodramatic

Faulkner adaptations. Fox would try again two years later with *Sanctuary* (1961), which,

despite what the title implies, is actually based more on the *Sanctuary* sequel *Requiem for

a Nun*, using the bootlegger and Memphis sections of the former as flashbacks to build up

on the remediation of its source's storyline. According to Phillips, the title of *Sanctuary*

was used because producer Richard Zanuck believed that connecting the film to what was

still Faulkner's most popular work would help its box office return (79), showing that the

popular perception of the novel still carried the potential for an effective hypermediacy.

By most accounts the film continues with the melodramatic trend set before it,

remediating what is seen to already be Faulkner's most moralized tale into a domestic

drama about respectability, the shame of sins past, and of course, redemption and

reinforcement of middle class values (Phillips 82-84). Unfortunately, the film took more

after *Sound* than *Summer*, failing to make a splash financially or critically and quickly

fading into obscurity.

The popularity and frequency of domestic melodramas also waned and

disappeared as the 60s went on, and without this generic framework and the measure of

success that originally came with it, this rapid production of Faulkner adaptations finally

halted. Since then, only two other full length adaptations of Faulkner have been made.

Screenwriting couple Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank Jr., the writers of *Summer* and *Sound,* would take one last shot at adapting Faulkner with *The Reivers* (1969), based on the author's final novel. Starring Steve McQueen, the film is a beautifully picturesque comic romp that gleefully evokes a nostalgic image of a pre-modern South that owes much to the works of Mark Twain; an image and nostalgia that is both shared and complicated by the source novel (Urgo 27). The film enjoyed an enthusiastic response from both critics and audiences, and managed to attain something no other Faulkner adaptation had before or has received after – Oscar nominations (Phillips 174)[74].

Three years later came *Tomorrow* (1972), from Faulkner's short story of the same title, penned by playwright and Oscar winning screenwriter Horton Foote (*To Kill a Mockingbird* in 1962), who adapted the script from his own teleplay version of the story. A stark, low budget independent drama with a much acclaimed performance by Robert Duvall, the film captured the attention of critics but lacked mainstream distribution, and now stands for many critics as a forgotten gem of American cinema (Phillips 110). Despite the small victories that these two films achieved, they represent the end of any major adaptive relationship between Hollywood and the author, at least for now. With the fall of film melodrama and the vast majority of remaining Faulkner works operating on levels of literary complexity that only the much maligned *The Sound and the Fury* attempted to remediate, studios seem to have either run out of ideas or have grown tired of the many risks that adapting Faulkner appears to entail.

Many critics that share similar sentiments to those of Kawin or Phillips likely see this as a lesson well learned, with filmmakers finally taking notions like Foote's above

[74] Two nominations to be exact – a Best Supporting nod for Rupert Crosses' portrayal of Ned and one of the first of many nominations for the score work of John Williams.

quote to heart and ceasing their foolish attempts to "improve" that which is deemed to be above improvement. This essentialist fear of "failing" Faulkner has perhaps taken hold of modern Hollywood much in the same way that admonishing this supposed failure has dominated the critical reputation and analysis of these adaptations for so long. While my own views may not bear repeating at this point, over the course of these last two chapters I hope that this project has been able to dissect such notions and explore these attempts of "improvement" for what they truly are – multifaceted intertextual processes tied to the cultural contexts that surround a film's production.

As I've tried to exhibit, the methodology behind making Faulkner more "palpable", "popular", and "commercial" is not some irrevocably shallow or misguided drive by Hollywood to reduce Faulkner's work, but a complex desire to remediate the author and have him become reproduced (and re-perceived) within these cultural contexts, whether it be the sordid Depression years of pre-code vice films or the middle-class reinforcing days of Cold War melodrama. Furthermore, the contexts of these remediations are not nearly as detached from Faulkner as some critics believe, as they closely coincide with the author's own public persona at the time in ways that can be shown to heavily impact a film's content and popular perception of itself. Though it turned out to be rather costly in the end, Faulkner's scandalous reputation in the 30s was invaluable to Paramount in the production of *The Story of Temple Drake*, and the image of being a traditional American moralist created by the author's Nobel Prize win was more than enough for him to become a symbol of middle-class values perfectly fit for film melodrama.

With all of this in mind, what then can these films tell us about Faulkner's relationship with popular culture? For one, they show that it very much goes beyond the one-sided interaction of guarded influence versus author mistreatment purported by many critics, and that the films are using Faulkner in ways that are just as varied and complex as the ways Faulkner is said to have utilized popular culture. In fact, I believe that the best way to view these films are as very specific interpretations of Faulkner and his themes, acting as cultural artifacts that can display how the author was read in a popular context and what he may have meant to the masses at very different points of his career. While Faulkner criticism has evolved greatly from both the 30s and the 50s, the ways in which these three films in particular remediate certain aspects of the author (his use of violence or his treatment of women, most notably) can still provide interesting points of comparison for how such themes used to be interpreted. Their treatments may now seem oversimplified or outdated, but they are nonetheless readings that are inherently connected to the American values and culture of their time, and exploring the various ways that Faulkner was made to fit within them is an area worthy of further study.

This method also opens up some interesting concerns about more recent cultural history, as with such a large space of time since the last Faulkner adaptation, does this mean that American pop-culture over the last four decades has simply had none of its own readings of the author to contribute? This is of course a question for a different type of project, but if there is anything that this project has hopefully displayed, it is the tendency for Faulkner adaptations to appear in sporadic bursts, appearing most often when some surrounding cultural context makes filmmakers feel that they can successfully utilize and present the author in some way, often reflecting a cultural and/or ideological

shift in the process. So perhaps it is only a matter of time before such conditions occur again. Before hypothesizing about the future, however, it is crucial to start looking more critically at the past, and to better understand these films as artistic receptions of literary texts that are unique texts in of themselves – more than just the products of their one to one textual in/fidelity, but of their cultural, social, and political environments. While these films will never be considered classic or even competent works by many, an analysis of their readings of Faulkner and the contexts surrounding them show that they should, at the very least, be considered interesting ones.

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