

5-2005

Expanding the Patriarchal Binary: The New Feminine in William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and The Wild Palms

Melissa Harrigill

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/honors_etd



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Expanding the Patriarchal Binary: The New Feminine in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Wild Palms*

by

Melissa Harrigill

Undergraduate honors thesis under the direction of

Dr. Brannon Costello

Department of English

Submitted to the LSU Honors College in partial fulfillment of
the Upper Division Honors Program.

May, 2005

Louisiana State University
& Agricultural and Mechanical College
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Introduction: A Critical Overview of Faulkner and Gender

Deemed a misogynist by many critics, a feminist by others, William Faulkner writes the feminine into his texts with such complexity as to polarize critical opinion and rouse a heated debate. I enter into this discussion on Faulkner and the feminine by first examining the critical context on this subject. Paving the road for our discourse, Anne Goodwyn Jones's *Tomorrow Is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South, 1859-1936* explores not the writing of Faulkner, but that of seven southern white women writers, "raised to be southern ladies, physically pure, fragile, and beautiful, socially dignified, cultured, and gracious, within the family sacrificial and submissive, yet, if the occasion required, intelligent and brave" (xi). Jones's historically based analysis of the Southern woman offers a sound cultural context within which to view Faulkner's creation of female characters. Jones argues that Southern women were generally consumed with self-contradiction in maintaining this outward ideal image while simultaneously fulfilling their own human needs. In "Dixie's Diadem," she describes the ideal Confederate woman as a beautiful statue who, by definition, "was linked directly to fundamental southern questions of race, class, and sex [and] revealed more about the needs of white planters than about the actual lives of women, white or black" (8). Jones continues by outlining the historical roles of the Southern woman, citing her as the "heart of the ideology of the South" (8). As an ideal, the Southern woman upheld the patriarchal hierarchy through her perfection and submissiveness to the white aristocratic male—the idealized feminine served to affirm the white patriarchy's authority over not only women, but also over the entire black community. Further, the image of Southern womanhood

defined the actual roles for southern women of the white middle-to-upper class. Tension arose from the obvious contradictions between this ideal and the actual lives and feelings of southern women. Jones argues, “The woman writer in the South, then, participates in a tradition that defines her ideal self in ways that must inevitably conflict with her very integrity as an artist: voicelessness, passivity, ignorance” (39-40). She concludes optimistically, stating, “Just as they found themselves both romanticists and realists, then, these seven Southern women writers find themselves, at one point, ‘strip[ping Southern life] of the veil with which ethical and conventional standards have draped it’ and, at others, carefully draping the figures they create” (362).

In a nod to Jones’s introductory examination of sex roles in the South, Ilse Dusoior Lind’s “The Mutual Relevance of Faulkner Studies and Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Inquiry” attempts to reconcile the seemingly oppositional studies of Faulkner and feminism. Lind explains Faulkner as a product of as well as a producer of his culture, a society that idealizes the Southern white woman to the extent of realistic impossibility, which, for Jones, leads to a psychic division. Lind elaborates on these social roles, saying, “the demands of the cult caused the Southern woman to become alienated from herself because the ideals to which she was expected to conform did not come from within herself; rather, they were socially imposed from without, evolved within the society to serve its special needs as a racist culture” (29). These conflicting ideas of womanhood so prevalent in the culture are mirrored in Faulkner’s female characters: his women embody the dichotomous nature and “paradoxes that are inherent in his culture’s veneration of white women” (30).

Adopting a more biographical approach to his analysis of Faulkner, Joseph Blotner in “William Faulkner: Life and Art” draws upon the women in Faulkner’s life as basis for his fictional characters. Blotner opens his essay with the following quote from Faulkner in 1957: “I think women are wonderful. They’re stronger than men.” Although many critics, male and female alike, would disagree with Faulkner’s professed admiration for the opposite sex, Blotner makes a positive case to disprove their labeling Faulkner a misogynist. He further identifies several major feminine “types” in Faulkner’s work: the admirable little girl, the slim and virginal young woman, the voluptuous young woman, the mature temptress, the matron, and the venerable matriarch. With this categorization, however, Blotner contradicts Linda Welshimer Wagner, whom he cites in his introduction to Faulkner criticism: “if there is a pattern in Faulkner’s characterization of women, it is that women are never to be stereotyped. Faulkner’s women are uniformly unpredictable.” Wagner concludes, “I term Faulkner a feminist because he neither denied or disapproved that variety. Instead, he celebrated it, immortalizing it in some of his greatest fiction, and giving Western literature some of its most memorable women since Shakespeare” (4).

Like Blotner, Philip M. Weinstein in “Meditation on the Other: Faulkner’s Rendering of Women” identifies Faulkner’s opinion of women as admirable, even remarkable, but as continuously “the other” and essentially alone in a male dominated society. Using Caddy Compson as his prime example, Weinstein notes Faulkner’s tendency to place his female characters on display—they are always limited in his narrative. “His women are marvelous,” states Weinstein. “But they are marvelous in the

service of a narrative urge, present throughout his career, to probe the deepest recesses of his men” (96).

Refuting Weinstein’s contention of woman merely as “the other,” then Minrose C. Gwin in *The Feminine and Faulkner: Reading (Beyond) Sexual Difference* asserts that Faulkner bridges the chasm between male and female in his writing, utilizing what she terms “bisexual spaces” that confirm a distinction between genders and simultaneously oppose traditional means of conceptualizing those genders. She states, “The paradox is that Faulkner himself, although very much of his culture, becomes in his greatest works the creator of female subjects who, in powerful and creative ways, disrupt and sometimes even destroy patriarchal structures” (4). By examining the “unheard” voices within Faulkner’s texts, Gwin contends, “In several of Faulkner’s most compelling and, I would suggest, most problematic texts, woman is force—not force which derives simply from procreation, as many of Faulkner’s critics have maintained, but one which extends procreativity beyond its obvious boundaries toward an intellectual velocity relating to subversion and modernity” (5). In her conclusion, Gwin addresses the difficulty of listening and interpreting these bisexual spaces, saying, “These voices, as they emerge through character, language, and structure, both disclose and reproduce the intricate workings of male/female difference at the same time their very presence in the text dismantles binary ways of thinking, speaking, and reading sexual difference” (153).

Critically aligning herself with Gwin, Deborah Clarke in *Robbing the Mother: Women in Faulkner* lends her attention more to issues of maternity than Gwin’s focus on bisexuality. Like Wagner, Clarke resists stereotyping Faulkner’s characters, stating, “To define Faulkner’s women by classification, then, and to miss the creative potential in the

collapse of conventional gender boundaries is to commit the same acts of misreading into which his male characters invariably fall. Even within their female roles, his women defy categorization” (7). Clarke goes further by noting that, despite Faulkner’s dominant ideology arising from a white patriarchal society, his texts “illustrat[e] the power of the mother and brea[k] down gender itself as a stable construct; he [thereby] reveals the precariousness of patriarchy’s hold on cultural identity” (16).

Adopting the feminist perspective established here by Gwin and Clarke, John N. Duvall in *Faulkner’s Marginal Couple: Invisible, Outlaw, and Unspeakable Communities* addresses the problematic potential in reading Faulkner from a man’s point of view while maintaining his feminist ideals, stating, “the contradiction was clear: How could I endorse liberal feminism, [...] participate in a reading group on feminist theory and pedagogy, and at the same time read, teach, and write about that misogynist William Faulkner?” (xi). He continues, acknowledging his weaknesses in calling himself a feminist, by explaining Faulkner’s texts as potentially liberating, not repressive as many critics have posited. Duvall, arguing against the traditional Agrarian influences in interpreting Faulkner, examines not the community, but rather outcast couples within the fiction, what he terms “deviants,” that “invert the hierarchy of male dominance (the males are passive; the females, active), [are] androgynously marked in appearance, and [whose] women characters desire roles not traditionally allowed them by their culture” (xiv). Through his analysis of *The Wild Palms* and other “non-Yoknapatawpha” novels, Duvall explores not only the marginalized other, but also the very social construction of gender: “Although no hopeful alternative couple survives to continue the struggle against gender dichotimization, [...] *The Wild Palms* continues to push us away from an

uncritical appreciation of community and toward a scrutiny of the socially constructed nature of gender” (55).

Echoing the trends established thus far by Gwin, Clarke, and Duvall, Diane Roberts’s *Faulkner and Southern Womanhood* refuses reductive stereotyping of Faulkner’s complex and contradictory characters. That being said, however, Roberts organizes her examination of Faulkner’s women into stereotypes from popular culture, citing this as a useful means of understanding Faulkner’s various manipulations and revisions of these stock characters. Agreeing with Gail Mortimer when she says “the deepest dis-ease in Faulkner’s fictive world is a dis-ease with women, a basic conviction of their threatening otherness,” Roberts portends that Faulkner “writes the feminine” such that, as his characters break from socially imposed stereotypes, “the extreme ends of the hierarchy tend to move toward each other, undermining the social edifices on which the binary is built” (xiii). In other words, as Faulkner’s women challenge, revision, and rewrite Southern gender roles, we see the symbolic order of Southern culture move toward collapse.

If Faulkner’s women break from socially imposed stereotypes in his fiction, as argued by Roberts, what exactly is gender? What is the feminine, if it refuses to be classified? In “The Work of Gender in the Southern Renaissance,” Anne Goodwyn Jones focuses on defining gender and gender ideology within Southern literature. Breaking from the concept of gender essentialism (the idea that gender differences arise singularly from biological sources), Jones suggests that Faulkner’s women are produced through socialization, a revolutionary turn in gender ideology. This shift intensely affects a South in which rigid gender divisions supported and were supported by racial and class

boundaries. By disturbing this gender hierarchy, Faulkner challenged the delicate balance of the entire South. Jones cites Sacvan Bercovitch in defining ideology as “the system of interlinked ideas, symbols, and beliefs by which a culture—any culture—seeks to justify and perpetuate itself; the web of rhetoric, ritual, and assumption through which society coerces, persuades, and coheres” (45). Faulkner’s women defy that “dominant fiction” of our sense of reality, a fiction resting primarily on the phallus, as articulated by Jacques Lacan. Jones’s idea of the “work of gender,” then, allows for gender ideology to “reproduce the status quo by reaffirming the equation of phallus and penis, or revise it by challenging that identification” (45). Gender is not only mutable, then, but challenging to our very notions of reality.

Leaning heavily on Lacanian theory, Doreen Fowler’s *Faulkner: The Return of the Repressed* explores the various roles of the marginalized other and attempts to “decode unconscious meanings that return disguised in Faulkner’s texts” (ix). Fowler utilizes a poststructuralist method in her interpretations, focusing on language as the site of repression and return. In this way, Faulkner’s marginalized women (Caddy Compson, for example) act not only as alter ego to his white masculine characters, but represent forbidden and repressed desires of the unconscious. Agreeing with Jane Gallop’s feminist explanation that the “male’s own sense of lack as a subject alienated in language is projected onto women,” Fowler argues specifically that Caddy Compson represents this lack in her brothers, “a sense of their loss of the mythical phallus that might reconnect them with the lost first other” (xvii).

As this brief overview illustrates, many critics, adopting a profoundly feminist perspective, have argued for Faulkner’s complex creation and articulation of the feminine

within his texts. However, as Rebecca Mark's recent article indicates, the critical debate over Faulkner's women remains unsettled. In a sweeping departure from the critical trends thus established, Mark's "As They Lay Dying: Or Why We Should Teach, Write, and Read Eudora Welty Instead of, Alongside of, Because of, as Often as William Faulkner" likens Faulkner's fictive women to corpses, not the living and breathing feminine characters described by Gwin, Jones, and many others. Mark disclaims Roberts's depictions of Faulkner's conventional feminine roles, saying rather that these "types" of women are mere "masks of femininity" lacking in the life and breath of humanity. She elaborates, "At its worst, Faulkner's portrayals of women are narcissistically spun webs of projection. At their best they are brilliant *tour de force* exposes of embattled manhood desperately seeking some form of imagined independence, trying hopelessly to come to terms with the ever present voices of the feminine ghosts it has created" (111). And although Roberts does allow for Faulkner's departure from stock characterizations of women, she refuses to acknowledge his women as fully developed or little more than ghosts: "They are the ghosts of the murdered stereotypes, but as corpses they have very little to say for themselves and even less to say to me" (118).

In my investigation of Faulkner and the feminine, I argue against Mark's assertions of the inherent moribund nature of Faulkner's women—I view *The Sound and the Fury*'s Caddy Compson and *The Wild Palms*'s Charlotte Rittenmeyer as disruptive, complex feminine forces, women Faulkner utilizes in expanding and complicating the traditional, stereotypical Old Southern definitions of femininity. My argument critically departs from Mark's thesis in that I understand Faulkner's female characters to be

progressive, as pushing the limits of the patriarchal society that surrounds and attempts to reductively classify them into stereotype. Mark claims, Faulkner “does nothing to resurrect this female presence through the creation of believable, highly nuanced embodied portraits of women, and [...] he often substitutes the repressed lady with the nymphomaniac, sexually obsessed whore” (111). In asserting this, Mark errors in the same manner of the Old Southern patriarchy—she ignores the complexities of Faulkner’s women as they disrupt the text to break from the traditional virgin/ whore dichotomy. In the following discussion, I will draw upon many of the critical insights of Jones, Gwin, Duvall, and Clarke to argue against reductive claims, such as Mark’s arguments, that Faulkner creates mere feminine corpses. I assert that Faulkner articulates a new feminine, at once profoundly modern and disruptive, to challenge traditional patriarchal classification.

Rare are the men able to venture into the brink where writing, freed from law, unencumbered by moderation, exceeds phallic authority, and where the subjectivity inscribing its effects becomes feminine.

Helene Cixous, "Sorties"

Conjuring up images of the Old South, we imagine a stately plantation landscape: docile slaves overseen by a paternalistic lord of the manor, his dignified and statuesque wife, perhaps their virginal and charming daughter, the Southern belle, and a myriad of other stereotypical characters. In this *Gone with the Wind* type of scenario, we almost subconsciously accept and validate these characterizations—this idealistic vision must have been the reality of the South. However, just as no period in history can possibly be condensed to summary and stereotype, so do the complexities of Faulkner's cannon defy reductive explanation. Born and raised in the South, Faulkner acts uniquely as a production as well as a producer of his culture, taking in his history and surroundings and manipulating this culture through language into art. Though he has often been deemed a misogynist, Faulkner, like his fictional characters, resists this over-simplified classification. Minrose C. Gwin in *The Feminine and Faulkner: Reading (Beyond) Sexual Difference* articulates this seeming contradiction, saying, "The paradox is that Faulkner himself, although very much of his culture, becomes in his greatest works the creator of female subjects who, in powerful and creative ways, disrupt and sometimes even destroy patriarchal structures" (4). Beginning with *The Sound and the Fury* and continuing through *The Wild Palms*, I endeavor to investigate Faulkner's construction of

the feminine throughout his career, noting the influence of the often phallogentric societal pressures on his work, and, in turn, the influence of his work upon society.

“I think women are wonderful. They’re stronger than men.”

William Faulkner

The University of Virginia, 1957

Faulkner lived in the South. Faulkner died in the South. Faulkner wrote the South. Yoknapatawpha, his intricate, intense, complicated microcosm of the South, tells us much about Southern living and cultural identity. Moreover, and more importantly, Faulkner tells us about Southern people, especially Southern women, and in turn, he tells us about ourselves. With *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner gives us Caddy Compson, his “heart’s darling,” but he does so without offering her a conventional narrative. Her brothers Jason, Quentin, and even the mentally retarded Benjy articulate themselves through their personal sections of narration; Faulkner controls the conclusion. So where does this leave Faulkner’s professed favorite darling girl? Voiceless? Repressed, as many critics claim, by the overriding male presence of her brothers and Southern patriarchal society in general? Minrose Gwin discusses Caddy’s supposed silencing at length in *The Feminine and Faulkner*—I align myself with her arguments insofar as understanding that Caddy need not possess a personal narrative for us to hear her voice.

Andre Bleikasten asserts in *The Most Splendid Failure: Faulkner’s The Sound and the Fury* that Caddy lacks true presence—she exists merely as an image in the words of her brothers. He states, “She is in fact what woman has always been in man’s imagination: the figure par excellence of the Other, a blank screen onto which he projects both his desires and his fears, his love and his hate” (qtd. in Gwin 34). Can this “otherness” really be the sole purpose for women in Faulkner’s literature? I assert that the

feminine and Faulkner are decidedly more intertwined than the Bleikasten quotation would lead us to believe.

Woman as “the marginalized other” is no novel concept to feminist interpretations of Faulkner. Doreen Fowler goes so far as to attribute this marginalization of Caddy Compson to a cultural repression identified with the unconscious, a “disguised return of forbidden desires” (ix). My purpose here is not merely to adopt and adapt Fowler’s Lacanian methodology in examining Caddy Compson and Charlotte Rittenmeyer, but rather to explore Faulkner’s creation of the feminine and the complexities that inherently accompany our attempts at categorizing his creations. In my first readings of Southern literature, my papers on Faulkner constantly willed his characters into stereotype, a categorization with which I was more familiar and better able to comprehend. Like Faulkner’s men, I searched for basic female types to easily classify within the societal design. Faulkner’s characters, and especially his female characters, however, refuse this simplistic order. Early on in *The Sound and the Fury*, we understand Caddy Compson to be rebellious yet nurturing, virginal yet promiscuous, strong yet silenced. Her presence (and literal lack of a conventional narrative section) in the text extends beyond any juvenile characterization: her very character embodies paradox that disrupts the patriarchal order not only of the Compson household but also of the entire South. As Gwin asserts, “Caddy *as character* flows beyond our ability to read her. She is *something more* than we can say, yet her presence is crucial to the development of language” (36). Acting as antithesis of the virginal, submissive Southern belle, Caddy simultaneously breaks from categorization as a whore, and thus destabilizes a social binary crucial to a particular form of Southern culture.

From the opening pages in Benjy's narration, Faulkner clearly delineates Caddy's importance in her brothers' lives: even as a child, Caddy serves as the comforting mother-figure for Benjy while Mrs. Compson, acting the Southern matron, remains aloof and cold. Benjy recalls her maternal instincts with pleasure: "Caddy knelt and put her arms around me and her cold bright face against mine. She smelled like trees." Caddy envelops Benjy in her nurturing embrace, saying, "You're not a poor baby. Are you. Are you. You've got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy" (SF 9). Gwin elaborates: "Although [Caddy] is a girl and although she speaks as a girl, her voice carries this referential weight because she speaks from the *position* of the mother, whose very acts of giving birth, of gestation and nurturance, dissolve the otherness of the other" (43). Even from this initial stage in the novel, we understand Caddy to be disruptive in the text: society would have her play the role merely of Southern belle, yet she goes beyond these restrictions to encompass the more complex position as pseudo-mother. Anne Goodwyn Jones explains the patriarchal definition of Southern womanhood, as created and upheld by the white male aristocracy:

More than just a fragile flower, the image of the southern lady represents her culture's idea of religious, moral, sexual, racial, and social perfection. Pious, [...] the ideal Southern lady also acts as a moral exemplar. She embodies virtue, but her goodness depends directly on innocence—in fact, ignorance of evil. She is chaste; [...] she lacks sexual interest altogether. Because it is unthinkable for her to desire sex. (9)

It is against this very definition of the Southern womanhood as the virginal, statuesque belle that Caddy struggles. In other words, Caddy blurs the socially imposed boundaries

of femininity and gender roles. She is at once an innocent child and a consoling mother, combining the weakness of youth and the fortitude of age—Caddy overflows the restrictive bonds of Southern patriarchal order.

In addition to her adopted mothering role, Caddy begins to display her sexual rebelliousness at a young age. While playing with Quentin, Versh, and Benjy at the branch, Caddy defies her brother's command not to undress in the water: "Caddy took her dress off and threw it on the bank. Then she didn't have on anything but her bodice and drawers, and Quentin slapped her and she slipped and fell down in the water. When she got up she began to splash water on Quentin" (*SF* 18). Even at the age of seven, she exhibits a defiance to societal norms of modesty and submissiveness that Faulkner's male characters attempt to impose upon her. Caddy blatantly refuses to obey Quentin's command to remain dressed and strips to her underwear. Not only do we recognize her insubordination toward the boys' control efforts, but we also see the initial stages of sexual adolescent development.

Caddy's feminine roles complicate immensely as she matures into a woman, especially with the loss of her virginity. The unclassifiable (virginal, yet rebellious) pseudo-belle figure, then, disrupts Southern societal order further as she embraces her sexuality. Throughout Quentin's complex and depressively suicidal narrative, he obsesses over his sexual inexperience in comparison to Caddy—this neurotic obsession is, of course, open to Freudian interpretation as Quentin directs his frustrations and sexual longings toward his sister. "*It's like dancing sitting down [...] How do you hold to dance do you hold like this Oh I used to hold like this you thought I wasn't strong enough didn't you Oh Oh Oh Oh*" (*SF* 135, underlining added). Quentin yearns for the proximity to

Caddy that he assumes sex will provide; he is at once utterly insecure with his own sexuality and powerless to control hers. Judith Bryant Wittenberg utilizes a psychoanalytic approach in discussing this situation, noting “the first two Compson brothers’ neurotic obsession with their sister as representing a displacement of attachment to the mother [as well as] the various quasi-oedipal triangles in which they find themselves” (76-77). Quentin’s fixation with Caddy’s sexuality, however, also mirrors Southern male society’s attitudes toward its women: if not a virgin, a woman must be a whore. There seems no compromise in this dichotomy; for Quentin and all men of his class and era, sexuality is equated with promiscuity. In fact, in his neurosis, Quentin would rather have his sister pregnant out of wedlock through incest by him than by sexual promiscuity. “*Poor Quentin you’ve never done that have you and Ill tell Father then well have to go away amid the pointing and the horror the clean flame Ill make you say we did Im stronger than you Ill make you know we did you thought it was them but it was me*” (SF 148-49, underlining added). Even in his disjointed stream of consciousness, Quentin asserts his power as a man over Caddy; he desperately needs his sister to be the virginal Southern belle to reinforce the order of the patriarchal gender hierarchy. Faulkner’s phallocentric culture makes no room for Caddy as a sexual being. Women are virginal Southern belles or wanton, fallen beings; any combination or ambiguously gray area is intolerable.

Caddy’s position as fallen woman is solidified in Jason’s violent and hateful consciousness by his section of the novel—he articulates this attitude toward women in general and especially Caddy’s daughter Miss Quentin with the opening lines, “Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say. I says you’re lucky if her playing out of school is all that

worries you. I says she ought to be down there in that kitchen right now, instead of up there in her room, gobbing paint on her face and waiting for six niggers” (*SF* 180). Jason articulates his frustrations toward Caddy by redirecting his ineffectual anger at Miss Quentin. In other words, because of his inability to control his sister’s sexuality, Jason directs his resentment toward the product of Caddy’s sexual rebelliousness: her daughter. Here, Jason’s thoughts parallel the popular patriarchal mind-set: by birthing a child out of wedlock, Caddy’s societal position can be as none other than a whore. Faulkner complicates Caddy’s classification, however, as he depicts her less as the fallen belle, as Jason would have her, and more as an apprehensive young mother trying to handle her difficult condition. Despite much critical discourse to the contrary, I argue for Caddy’s responsible nature here, for her realization of herself as a young, unwed mother and of her inability to raise Miss Quentin properly as such. Caddy gives up her daughter for Mrs. Compson and Jason to raise, but she does not relinquish her responsibilities as a mother—she continually sends money and letters to Miss Quentin throughout her daughter’s childhood and adolescence. With this financial stipend, Caddy provides for her daughter to the best of her ability at the time. Because of her societal dismissal as a promiscuous, fallen woman, however, Caddy’s attempts at financial responsibility are deemed unacceptable, and, and Mrs. Compson states, “the wages of sin” (*SF* 220). Nonetheless, Caddy assumes the position of mother, despite patriarchy’s attempts to classify her as strictly a whore, through non-traditional and independent means. In this way, Faulkner expands upon the societal virgin/ whore dichotomy, allowing Caddy to achieve definition outside of these strict Old South boundaries on femininity. Deborah Clarke asserts that Jason’s is the sole narrative to openly condemn Caddy, and even then

much of his resentment is misplaced and directed toward her daughter. Clarke attributes Jason's anger to frustration over his unavoidable maternal link to his sister: Caddy "serves as a mother as well, not just to Benjy but to all her brothers, who find themselves confronted with problematical maternal ties to both their biological and symbolic mothers [...] ties which *deny them full control* over their own identities" (21, italics added). In other words, Jason, as well as Quentin and Benjy, fail in asserting their masculine authority over Caddy because of her complex classification and roles in their lives—Caddy disrupts the societal binary here with this added complexity of her authority as a mother figure. Clarke continues, "Faulkner has allowed Caddy to approach the position of all-powerful and all-encroaching mother rather than simply mother of Miss Quentin" (21). It is through her various feminine roles that Caddy obtains the strength to break stereotype and blur traditional patriarchal controls.

As Caddy refuses reductive classification at any level, Southern societal hierarchies, sexual and otherwise, begin to break down. Faulkner challenges Southern standards of gender and femininity with his unique treatment of Caddy's narrative. Through her lack of a formal internal monologue, Caddy must speak through Faulkner's male figures as a disruptive force, challenging, as Gwin explains, "the phallic illusions of authority" (35). I align myself with Gwin's understanding of hearing Caddy's voice here, for if Faulkner means to silence the feminine in *The Sound and the Fury*, as other critics have contended, Caddy would come across as weakened and suppressed—I argue she does the exact opposite. Destabilizing the sexual binary requires a strength and originality that Faulkner singularly provides his feminine subject. Quentin goes so far as to attribute Caddy's sexuality and his lack of control over her actions to a blurring of

racial lines: “*Why won’t you bring him to the house, Caddy? Why must you do like nigger women do in the pasture the ditches the dark woods hot hidden furious in the dark woods*” (SF 92). Ilse Duso Lind elaborates on the tendency for white aristocratic men to identify sexuality with African American women, for the venerated white woman “was expected to be the incantation of personal beauty, chastity, and social grace [...] always controlling her libidinous urges and always being gracious” (29). The ideal Southern woman is not only beautiful and statuesque, then, but also devoid of sexuality by definition—sexuality is essentially considered black and not white. In defying this virginal ideal and embracing her sexuality, then, Caddy disrupts the patriarchal binary and, as Quentin articulates, acts “like nigger women do in the pasture.” Again, through his deconstruction of the stereotypical woman, Faulkner reveals the instability of patriarchy’s hold on the organization of modern Southern identity. Women, especially the venerated perfection of white women, like Caddy are not virgins and not whores. The confusion of this aged and crumbling dichotomy parallels the collapse not only of the Compson family fortune as their land is sold and modernized to become a golf course, but also the collapse of the very paternalistic plantation order of the Old South, leaving Quentin, representing the Old Southern gentleman, unable to cope with reality—everything he has formally understood as a stable construction, especially Caddy’s sexual classification, now moves toward ambiguity and modern terms. The chaos resulting from the complication of Caddy’s character leads him only to the ultimate escape of suicide.

The fiction Faulkner creates uniquely explores the complicated feminine and lends new voice to tired stereotypes. Diane Roberts succinctly states, “As Faulkner confronts the representations of women he inherited from Southern culture, he finds the

distance between high and low is smaller than the symbolic order can tolerate. And while political and social forces were trying to reinscribe the binary and tear it apart, Faulkner makes fiction out of the struggle” (xv). In this way, Faulkner writes a new feminine, a new morality without the strict boundaries previously imposed in literature. Yes, Caddy engages in premarital sex. Yes, she gives birth out of wedlock. However, through the spaces of his male narrative, Faulkner saves Caddy from reduction to merely a fallen woman. With Caddy, Faulkner expands the limits of Southern womanhood to encompass a more progressive definition of femininity to parallel the complexities of our modern reality. In this newly destabilized landscape that Caddy has created, women are more than virginal belles or promiscuous whores; they expand these limited boundaries previously imposed by Southern phallogentric society to complicate the very definition of femininity. With Caddy’s refusal to conform to patriarchy’s expectations of her character, she enables the feminine to encompass sexuality without the necessity of blackness and motherhood without the necessity of marriage. In other words, Faulkner creates Caddy as the modern feminine.

We must not think that by saying yes to sex, one says no to power; on the contrary, one tracks along the course laid out by the general deployment of sexuality.

Michael Foucault, The History of Sexuality

From the opening lines of *The Wild Palms*, we understand Charlotte Rittenmeyer disrupts the confines of the stereotypical female. Neither her appearance nor her situation adheres to what society (presented as the real estate agent Cofer, the doctor, and his wife Martha in the opening chapter) deems respectable. Charlotte is the antithesis of a virginal young bride; rather, the doctor describes her as a sullen, “dark-haired woman with queer hard yellow eyes in a face whose skin was drawn thin over prominent cheekbones and a heavy jaw” (*TWP* 5). Her dress further distinguishes her and troubles the real estate agent, who tells the doctor, “She’s got on pants [...] I mean, not these ladies’ slacks but pants, man’s pants. I mean, they are too little for her in just exactly the right places and man would want to see them too little but no woman would unless she had them on herself. I reckon Miss Martha aint going to like that much” (*TWP* 6). Because Charlotte refuses conformity to the traditionally feminine mode of dress and appearance, the patriarchal society around her attempts to classify her as masculine. Faulkner complicates any clear masculine/ feminine distinction, however, with the real estate agent’s reaction to Charlotte’s tight fitting pants: they are “too little for her in exactly the right places.” Cofer is thus impressed with the way in which the masculine pants emphasize Charlotte’s female physique—she is oddly masculine while concurrently quite feminine. While Caddy refuses an easily categorizable place along the binary, acting

neither the virgin nor the whore, Charlotte similarly denies reductive classification as strictly feminine, thus destabilizing patriarchal convention. John N. Duvall elaborates, “In Cofer’s risible silence lurks the judgment of patriarchy—female sexuality, manifesting itself through tight jeans, is a dangerous surplus. In this one small piece of delineation—Charlotte’s jeans and Cofer’s reading of Charlotte’s jeans—we find a microcosm of conventional society’s relation to the lovers” (40). In other words, because of Charlotte’s lack of conformity to societal “norms” of feminine dress and manner, we understand Cofer’s/ patriarchy’s reaction as an attempt to reduce her complex character to stereotype: the masculine characters label Charlotte as strangely masculine in an effort to maintain control of the societal binary that her unclassifiable nature threatens. With Charlotte, Faulkner creates a progressive and disruptive feminine within the text to defy reductive stereotypical classification—Charlotte remains profoundly feminine throughout the novel, despite attempts by the real estate agent and others to neatly classify her as, if not feminine, then oddly masculine.

In addition to distrusting Charlotte’s appearance, the real estate agent suspects Charlotte and Harry Wilbourne to be living together out of wedlock. He tells the doctor, “I don’t think they are married. Oh, he says they are and I don’t think he is lying about her and maybe he aint even lying about himself. The trouble is, they aint married to each other, she aint married to him. Because I can smell a husband” (*TWP* 7). At this point in the narrative, Faulkner allows the reader to see Charlotte only through the eyes of men; she, like Caddy, is partially silenced by the text. The patriarchy judges her character and involvement with Harry based on appearances, defining her according to traditional Southern stereotypes. In “Feminism and Faulkner: Second Thoughts or, What’s a radical

feminist doing with a canonical male text anyway?” Gwin states, “Some of the tension of Faulkner’s most memorable work actually derives from women’s struggle to get out of the boxes in which patriarchy has sealed them” (61). These opening pages of *The Wild Palms* indeed do seal Charlotte within the confines of male opinion, which classifies her as oddly masculine and sinful for living out of wedlock. Gail Mortimer’s “The Smooth, Suave Shape of Desire: Paradox in Faulknerian Imagery of Women” asserts, “Because we view [Faulkner’s female characters] only through the (often troubled) consciousness of his male characters and narrators, they attain a degree of reality determined by the quality of the male’s awareness that they exist” (149). I argue that Charlotte struggles against this over-simplified male consciousness to expand the heretofore limited definitions of femininity as passive, subordinate, and virginal.

Adding to this complex female classification, Faulkner presents Charlotte as desired by men, but, more importantly, as desiring of men, a sexual drive utterly unacceptable to the Old Southern definitions of female identity. Despite her children and husband, Charlotte initiates the affair with Harry. Patriarchy would have Charlotte act the virginal belle or wanton whore; faced with a disruption of this binary, the doctor and real estate agent describe her in masculine terms to maintain a semblance of their masculine control—they cannot conceive of aggressive sexuality as feminine. Upon their first meeting, Charlotte is at once sexually sensuous and straightforward: “She took [Harry’s] hand and drew his finger-tips along the base of her other palm—the *broad, blunt, strong, supple-fingered hand*” (*TWP* 35, italics added). Charlotte’s femininity is difficult to classify at this point: her actions toward Harry are obviously sexual advances, yet run with the masculine undercurrent of her “broad, blunt” hand. Faulkner obscures

the patriarchal definition of femininity by blurring gender distinctions, allowing for Charlotte's sexual aggressiveness, described here in masculine terms, but also noting Charlotte's feminine, "supple-fingered hand." Charlotte is concurrently strongly independent and sexual here—she disrupts the societal binary with her complicated nature, and, like Caddy, expands the definitions of femininity.

Many have criticized Charlotte's desire and sexuality, noting the problem, according to Jessica Benjamin, as the lack in literature of a "female image or symbol that would counterbalance the monopoly of the phallus in representing desire, [the closest being] motherhood and fertility [which are] both firmly eschewed by Charlotte" (83). Faulkner describes Charlotte's sexual aggressiveness in phallic terms, articulating the Old South conventions of patriarchal control (sexual pro-activeness cannot be linked with femininity). However, Faulkner expands upon this phallocentric language by portraying Charlotte as concurrently sexual and profoundly feminine. Though she is a "better man" (*TWP* 113) than her lover, Harry describes Charlotte adjusting her hat "in the immemorial female gesture out of the immemorial female weariness" (*TWP* 105). The traditional male and female roles are blurred here in *The Wild Palms*, confusing what Gwin calls "a cultural paradigm resting on a binary model, a 'male/active equals female/passive' equation which makes women's lack of sexual agency seem part of the natural order" (145). Charlotte defies this socially constructed and phallocentric order which calls for her passivity—she is a strong sexual presence in her relationship with Harry. I align myself with Duvall in asserting that reducing Charlotte to mere masculine classification denies her feminine presence throughout the novel: "Gendering [Charlotte] as masculine suggests a reluctance to classify as feminine a woman who speaks her desires clearly and

asserts her will forcefully” (Duvall 112). If we make the mistake of reducing Charlotte to stereotype, masculine or feminine, we err in over-simplifying the complexities of a Faulkner attempting to break patriarchy’s stiff hold on the definitions of modern femininity.

Charlotte is a modern woman, not only more experienced in sex, love, and life because of her marriage and children, but also more willing and able to take control in sexual matters. After leaving Rittenmeyer, Charlotte takes Harry’s virginity in the drawing room of the train to Chicago. Overlooking his apparent nervousness as he fumbles with the lock on the door, she removes her own dress and stands before Harry in her underwear: “When he turned she had removed her dress; it lay in a wadded circle about her feet and she stood in the scant feminine underwear of 1937, her hands over her face. Then she removed her hands and he knew that it was neither shame nor modesty, [...] and he saw it was not tears.” Charlotte is unafraid of sex here, and she sheds no tears expected of a virginal belle figure. Instead, she stands nearly naked before her lover in expectation and longing, fully understanding her experienced control over Harry. Despite her authority over the situation, reversing the attribute traditionally assigned to the male figure who takes the young woman’s virginity, Faulkner/ Harry notes the details of Charlotte’s underwear: they are “scant” and “feminine.” Faulkner complicates the masculine/feminine binary here not through a simplistic reversal, but rather more of a blurring of expected gender roles. Defying her “passive female” role, “she stepped out of the dress and came and began to unknot his tie, pushing aside his own suddenly clumsy fingers” (*TWP* 51). Duvall contends that Charlotte becomes problematic as “the woman who desires, for to desire is to be a subject (no matter how socially constituted that

subject is), not an object [...] Charlotte's quest for subjectivity is too much to ask for in the world of 'Wild Palms' because she threatens society's traditional gender distinctions" (46).

Charlotte controls Harry's loss of virginity as she goes on through their affair to dominate other aspects of their relationship. Rather than adhering to a "feminine" passivity of allowing Harry to find work to support them, Charlotte sets out to make money through her artwork. She tells Harry, "You live *in* sin; you cant live on it" (*TWP* 71). Charlotte, adopting the traditionally masculine role, is forced to educate Harry in the ways of relationships and love. It is she who worries about money and food and she who first earns ten dollars by selling several of her sculptures. "I like bitching, and making figures with my hands. I don't think that's too much to be permitted to like, to want to have and keep" (*TWP* 75). Charlotte plays the typically masculine role here, enjoying work and sex, while Harry who is left to play the "female/passive" role in their home, writing women's pulp fiction beginning, "I had the body and desires of a woman yet in knowledge and experience of the world I was but a child" or "At sixteen I was an unwed mother" (*TWP* 103-104). But instead of merely reversing the male/ female binary, Faulkner blurs these stereotypical distinctions. Clarke argues that Charlotte challenges the fixity of gender in the novel, saying, "Just as maternal power can be expressed both literally and figuratively, thus debunking the Lacanian identification of discursive reality as falling under the Law of the Father, so gender identity overruns its expected boundaries, calling into question the most basic ways we categorize people: as men and women" (112). Faulkner disrupts our most basic human distinctions, then, by blurring the boundaries of gender with Charlotte. She earns money through artistic creation—no

longer just the literal mother and natural creator, Charlotte in effect gives birth to her sculptures, becoming what Duvall terms a “cultural creator” or artist (46). Here, both Harry and Charlotte create art with feminine overtones (Harry his women’s fiction and Charlotte her sculptures), but it is Charlotte’s productions that support the couple financially—Harry’s attempts are not only largely ineffectual, but also forged under a false, female pen name. Faulkner destabilizes the traditional patriarchal society here, for instead of heading the household and financially supporting a submissive wife, Harry works from home, assuming not only the stereotypical role of the wife, but even taking a female pseudonym. Assuming the authority the Old Southern patriarchy would deny her, Charlotte financially supports herself through her internal feminine expressions; her figurative mothering role is realized through the birth of her sculptures.

It is impossible to examine Charlotte’s sexual nature without discussing the abortion that takes her life. Janet Carey Elred’s “Faulkner’s Still Life: Art and Abortion” notes, Charlotte “is likable until she cons, pressures, or seduces Harry into performing the abortion. [...] she is responsible for the abortion and even for Harry’s part in the decision and act” (140). Though I do not fully submit to Elred’s harsh judgment on Charlotte’s abortion, I do concur with her over-all sentiment that Charlotte exerts her authority as a woman in denying birthing the baby. Further, I argue that Charlotte does not lose amenity with the reader once she insists upon the abortion; rather, I understand her choice to be emerging from necessity and economic practicality. Being a modern sexual woman, Charlotte employs birth control (against the social norm). But after her “douche bag” breaks, she states, “I should have known better. I always did take easy. Too easy. I remember somebody telling me once, I was young then, that when people loved, hard,

really loved each other, they didn't have children, the seed got burned up in the love, the passion" (*TWP* 172). As she laments her situation, Charlotte subconsciously reveals her character flaw: her innate inability to view love as life-giving. Where Charlotte has previously embraced her sexuality, here she denies its possible repercussions by insisting upon aborting the fetus. Clarke notes that with Charlotte, "Faulkner opens up the possibility of a woman who combines sexuality, maternity, and linguistic power, only to close it off when she rejects her maternal capability by insisting on an abortion" (109). With Charlotte, Faulkner expands patriarchy's control in defining femininity—Charlotte acts as a complicated, modern woman here who exerts her authority over phallogentric society and her own body. Rather than severing her maternal capability and thus limiting her femininity, as Clarke asserts, I argue for Charlotte's decisive strength in expanding the boundaries of stereotypical femininity while disrupting the conventional societal binary.

Charlotte persuades her lover to perform the abortion, again acting the strong female character while Harry adopts a more stereotypically feminine role as he worries in indecision. Charlotte "boiled the water herself and fetched out the meager instruments they had supplied [Harry] with in Chicago and which he had used but once" (*TWP* 185). Charlotte, rather than indulging any of her own fears, continually reassures Harry in his ability to perform the abortion; he remains trapped in passivity, hesitating in fear. Harry states, "Simple. You just have to let the air in. All you have to do is let the air—" His anxiety and perpetual weakness utterly engulf his emotions, and "he began to tremble again" (*TWP* 185). Here, in preparation for the abortion, Charlotte displays the stereotypically masculine attributes of strength and resolution: she attempts to calm her

lover's stereotypically feminine apprehension while remaining absolutely resolute herself. Again, Faulkner blurs the traditional gender roles as Charlotte maintains the composure and strength typically associated with the masculine as she undergoes the uniquely feminine procedure of abortion. Though many criticize her choice of abortion, Elred notes, "Charlotte's decision is not motivated by callousness, but rather by genuine fear and concern" that they will be unable to feed and support an infant (143). Charlotte cannot be classified as entirely selfish in her desire for an abortion, but rather as economically intelligent and aware of the reality of the situation. I do not intend to advocate for or against abortion; my argument focuses rather on Charlotte's disruption of stereotypically feminine/passive or masculine/active roles within the text. I agree with Clarke's explanation of Charlotte's decision: "Her literal rejection of mothering [...] reflects a desire for autonomy, for the opportunity to live her own life. Even willing to abandon the children she has already borne, Charlotte seeks creativity through art and love rather than childbirth" (115). As I previously asserted that feminine strength and responsibility are present in Caddy's handling of Miss Quentin, Charlotte acts unromantically and intelligently, yet femininely, in her decision.

Many critics argue that Charlotte has "abandoned the natural role of mother, usurped the male role, and celebrated carnality and lechery. She is sexually loose [and] what she calls 'bitching' boards on nymphomania" (Elred 141). However, I would suggest we take a more moderate view and attribute Charlotte's abortion to admittedly self-serving, yet intelligent, motives. Although her quest to abort her child is seen as "immoral" by some, we cannot be too quick to reductively classify Charlotte as the stereotypical and unscrupulous whore. Charlotte's motives to have an abortion go

beyond being selfish and are based more on the reality of their economic situation. Charlotte plainly states, “I can starve and you can starve but not it. So we must [have an abortion], Harry” (*TWP* 173). Further, even though she has left her children with Rittenmeyer and “abandoned the natural role of mother,” Charlotte visits her family before her death to see her children. It is true that she is often shown in a masculine light, as a strong female whose desire, as Benjamin notes, is equated with a struggle for power (78). But it is this power and desire that pushes the action forward. Charlotte acts throughout the novel as the strong and sexual woman, disrupting the patriarchal hierarchy with her assertive nature. However, in a final irony, as Gwin states, “love turns upon [Charlotte] and leads to her own powerlessness. Her own inner space, like her infected uterus, is filled up with an excessive fluidity which kills” (148). In conclusion, not even an assertive, powerful woman can defy the natural course of death.

Charlotte’s strength and desire that propelled Harry and their relationship forward cannot sustain her body in the end. Charlotte’s final rejection of society is her own death. Clarke notes that Harry’s only true source of power lies in his ability to survive in the end where Charlotte’s body expires. His survival, however, is a mere continuation of his ineffectual life: sentenced to serve jail time at Parchman, Harry is in effect stereotypically feminized through his forced passivity and absolute loss of self-autonomy in the patriarchal hierarchy of the prison. Utterly de-masculinized, Harry complacently sits during his trial, pleading guilty and throwing himself upon the mercy of the court. Once convicted, he even refuses Rittenmeyer’s attempts to aid him in suicide—Harry remains trapped in inaction and passivity. Charlotte, despite her tragic death, maintains her stance against that patriarchy until the end of her life—she chooses to undergo an abortion,

asserting her feminine authority in controlling her own body. Here, Faulkner confirms what I previously argued he accomplishes with Caddy: he writes a progressive and disruptive feminine within the text to defy reductive stereotypical classification—Charlotte remains profoundly feminine throughout the novel, despite attempts by the real estate agent and others to neatly classify her as, if not feminine, then oddly masculine. As Gwin states, “this male text speaks itself as something more than itself—as something feminine which derives from a male author (one accused at times of misogyny), and so as something which unhinges those systems of binary representation which make one thing ‘masculine’ and another ‘feminine’” (129-130). With Faulkner’s creation of Charlotte as sexually desirous, he challenges patriarchy’s understanding of passivity/ femininity, blurring the boundaries that equate masculinity with strength and sexuality. In her final disruption of the binary, Charlotte defies masculine definition with her utterly feminine death.

To define Faulkner's women by classification, then, and to miss the creative potential in the collapse of conventional gender boundaries is to commit the same acts of misreading into which his male characters invariably fall. Even within their female roles, his women defy categorization.

Deborah Clarke, Robbing the Mother: Women in Faulkner

As I conclude this investigation of Faulkner's construction of the feminine in *The Sound and the Fury* and *The Wild Palms*, I return to Faulkner's 1957 quotation: "I think women are wonderful. They're stronger than men." Serving not only as a creator of Southern culture through the language of literature, but also as a unique production of his Southern background, Faulkner writes a complex feminine into his texts, a feminine that struggles against the reductive classification of a patriarchal hierarchy. As we have seen with Caddy and Charlotte, Faulkner articulates a modern, sexual, strong woman to destabilize the "female as passive" or "female as whore" tradition of the Old South. This exploration of Caddy and Charlotte as disruptive to feminine stereotype disproves Mark's vehement assertions that Faulkner's women are mere corpses and "ghosts of the murdered stereotypes" (118) rather than "believable, highly nuanced embodies portraits of women" (111). There is, as Gwin notes, something more complex going on in the text—Mark critically errs in dismissing Faulkner's females as ghosts. I argue for Caddy and Charlotte's expressed ability to expand and modernize the societal binary through their refusal of patriarchal repression. Caddy speaks to us through her brothers' discourse, disrupting the phallogentric hierarchy imposed upon her with her sexual yet

nurturing nature—in doing so, she rejects societal classification through embodiment of Faulkner's new feminine. Similarly, Charlotte, despite her tragic death, maintains self-autonomy until the end: she displays a strength stereotypically attributed to men as she dies an utterly female death. In this way, I view Charlotte's death as a verification of her life. It is true that Charlotte dies indirectly because of her sexuality; I argue, however, for Charlotte's strength and authority over her life, and ultimately over her death.

Increasingly pushing the limits of the feminine as strong and sexual, Faulkner continues throughout his cannon to complicate and re-define femininity, forgoing convention to explore and articulate a modern feminine. With this progressive movement, Faulkner encourages us to actively participate in analyzing his characters, especially the feminine, to refuse dull and tired stereotypes, and to challenge the restrictions imposed by society.

Works Cited

- Benjamin, Jessica. "A Desire of One's Own: Psychoanalytic Feminism and Intersubjective Space." *Feminist Studies/ Critical Studies*, ed. Teresa de Lauretis, 78-101. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986.
- Bernhardt, Laurie A. "Being Worthy Enough: The Tragedy of Charlotte Rittenmeyer." *Mississippi Quarterly*. 39.3 (1986): 351-364.
- Blotner, Joseph. "William Faulkner: Life and Art." *Faulkner and Women: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha*, 1985. Ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1986. 3-20.
- Cixous, Helene. "Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/ Ways Out/ Fortays." *The Newly Born Woman*. Ed. Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986. 61-132.
- Clarke, Deborah. *Robbing the Mother: Women in Faulkner*. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1994.
- Duvall, John N. *Faulkner's Marginal Couple: Invisible, Outlaw, and Unspeakable Communities*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1990.
- Eldred, Janet Carey. "Faulkner's Still Life: Art and Abortion in *The Wild Palms*." *The Faulkner Journal*. 4 (1988-1989): 139-158.
- Faulkner, William. *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Vintage International, 1990.
- . *The Wild Palms: If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*. New York: Vintage International, 1995.
- Fowler, Doreen. *Faulkner: The Return of the Repressed*. Charlottesville: U P of Virginia, 1997.

- Gwin, Minrose C. "Feminism and Faulkner: Second Thoughts or, What's a radical feminist doing with a canonical male text anyway?" *The Faulkner Journal* 4.1-2 (1988-1989): 55-65.
- . *The Feminine and Faulkner: Reading (Beyond) Sexual Difference*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 1990.
- Jones, Anne Goodwyn. "The Work of Gender in the Southern Renaissance." *Southern Writers and their Worlds*. Ed. Christopher Morris and Steven G. Reinhardt. 1996. Baton Rouge: LSU P, 1998. 41-56.
- . *Tomorrow Is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South, 1859-1936*. Baton Rouge: LSU P, 1981.
- Lind, Ilse Dusoier. "The Mutual Relevance of Faulkner Studies and Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Inquiry." *Faulkner and Women: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1985*. Ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1986. 21-40.
- Mark, Rebecca. "As They Lay Dying: or Why We Should Teach, Write, and Read Eudora Welty Instead of, Alongside of, Because of, as Often as William Faulkner." *The Faulkner Journal*. 19.2 (2004): 107-119.
- Mortimer, Gail. "The Smooth, Suave Shape of Desire: Paradox in Faulknerian Imagery of Women." *Women's Studies* 13 (1986): 149-61.
- Roberts, Diane. *Faulkner and Southern Womanhood*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1994.
- Weinstein, Philip M. "Meditations on the Other: Faulkner's Rendering of Women." *Faulkner and Women: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha, 1985*. Ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1986. 81-99.

Wittenberg, Judith Bryant. "Teaching *The Sound and the Fury* with Freud." *Approaches to Teaching Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury*. Ed. Stephen Hahn and Arthur F. Kinney. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1996. 73-77.