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Progression and Regression:
The Journey from Whore to Mother
In the Early and Late Novels of William Faulkner

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The works of William Faulkner are so amenable to criticism in large part because of the interconnectedness of his novels. His works are equally capable of standing alone or fitting in as part of the fictional framework of Yoknapatawpha County. By containing the vast majority of his settings within one region in northern Mississippi, Faulkner ensured that characters and places would reappear in novels and stories and that each character's story would be told not at once but in increments, with each novel providing details the others lacked or completing a chronology of events begun elsewhere. Many scholars have written about the connections between *Sanctuary* and *Requiem for a Nun*, the two novels that feature Temple Drake. *The Reivers* is an often overlooked novel which treats many of the same themes as the other two yet shows a markedly different philosophy and outlook. Prostitution is a major part of all three novels, and these are the only Faulkner novels to deal with prostitution in such a detailed manner. How this manner changes provides a way of tracing Faulkner's changing career from the early pessimism of *Sanctuary* to the later wistful reminiscence of *The Reivers*.

In these three novels there are four major woman characters who work or worked as prostitutes: Ruby Lamar, Temple Drake, Nancy Mannigoe, and Everbe Corinthia. There are three other characters who work in the bordello but are not prostitutes: Miss Reba, Mr. Binford, and Minnie. Several other girls appear for short scenes, but none of the other women have any character development or plot importance. *Sanctuary*, the first of these three novels, features Temple Drake and Ruby Lamar, two women from completely different backgrounds who become prostitutes under dissimilar circumstances.

In 1929, the year that Faulkner wrote *Sanctuary*, he was a relatively unknown author who had not achieved any commercial success with his previous novels. These novels, the

now classic *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*, were startlingly original experiments in shifting point of view and modernist narrative technique. *Sanctuary* makes no such pretensions to literary immortality; Faulkner claims in his introduction to the novel that the only reason he made the effort to get the book published is that he thought "It might sell; maybe 10,000 of them will buy it" (*Sanct.* 324). Despite Faulkner's assertion to the contrary, *Sanctuary* is not a story for popular tastes but a grotesque exaggeration of the pulp fiction of the day. It was based on "what a person in Mississippi might believe to be current trends" (*Sanct.* 323), but it is a far cry from cookie-cutter fiction of the bestseller rack. Faulkner presents a dark, violent world populated with criminals and gangsters. Those who attempt to impose civilization or ethics onto this world are defeated or corrupted.

Popeye, the center of the evil and cruelty in *Sanctuary*, appears in the first chapter directly opposite Horace Benbow, the ineffectual exemplar of virtue and law. Popeye takes Horace hostage in a parody of a gunfight. All Horace is able to draw from his pocket is a book, a symbol of law and education which has no power against Popeye's pistol and the threat of violence that it represents. Popeye orders a woman, unnamed by the narrator, to give Horace something to eat. When she expresses bitterness at the assumption that she must obey him, he tells her she is free to go and that "I'll take you back to Memphis Sunday. You can go to hustling again. . . You're getting fat here. Laying off in the country. I won't tell them on Manuel Street" (*Sanct.* 9). Although Ruby Lamar's (the narrator continues to refer to her only as "the woman" for the entire novel) history does not come to light for several chapters, even at this early point the reader has a hint that she is or was a prostitute. Moreover, Popeye enjoys reminding Ruby of her past and the power he holds over her because of it. Three times he reminds her that he can send her back to Manuel Street, and each time she replies with "You bastard" (*Sanct.* 9, 10). The reader can sense both her fury at Popeye and her feeling of helplessness. Her checkered past has sentenced her to the life of a servant, cooking in a shack for criminals and weaklings.

When Horace leaves the bootlegger's shack, later revealed to be the Old Frenchman's Place mentioned in other novels, he goes to Jefferson and his sister's house. Narcissa serves as Ruby's counterpoint and adversary. As her name suggests, Narcissa only cares about her own self-interests, especially her social standing and her image among the townspeople. Her vanity leads her to flirt with younger men, and she has a "broad, stupid, serene face" (*Sanct.* 25) that suggests a bovine personality. She considers herself to be one of the upstanding women of the community, evidenced by the "customary white dress" (*Sanct.* 25) proclaiming a kind of innocence which her widowhood belies. This moral superiority gives her the right, at least in her mind, to judge and manipulate the other members of the community, especially Horace. Narcissa and Ruby are generally stereotypical characters: Narcissa is the smug middle class housewife; Ruby is the powerless ex-prostitute trying to integrate herself into society. Since she is poor and an outsider, she is incapable of escaping her past. Her poverty stands in marked contrast to the practical invulnerability that Temple Drake has as a result of her father's importance and wealth.

The reader first sees Temple Drake from the perspective of a "bemused faculty-member or a candidate for a master's degree" (*Sanct.* 28) watching as she sneaks out of her dormitory at night and jumps into a waiting car. This is her usual weeknight diversion; on the weekends she attends dances and formal balls, ignoring the uneducated townies she usually rides with to enjoy the fancier pleasures that her affluence allows her. It is immediately clear that she is loyal to the participants of neither sphere, only interested in who can amuse her at the moment. She does not seem concerned with other people's emotions; she is practically emotionless herself. As the townies watch her enter the dance they are forbidden to attend, they notice her eyes, "cool, predatory, and discreet" (*Sanct.* 29).

Temple, unlike Ruby, is able to move effortlessly back and forth between the respectable parties of the collegiate socialite and the seamy nightlife of the townies. She uses her wealth and her family's prestige as a shield to protect her against the consequences that

she may have to face. The town boys, watching bitterly as she exits the ball on Gowan Stevens' arm, mock her with repeated comments of "My father's a judge" (*Sanct.* 30). To show that Temple is not the virtuous maiden she pretends to be in front of high society, one of her weeknight dates pulls a garter out of his pocket. He shows it to his friends both as a trophy and as a kind of mute revenge on Temple. His friend does not believe that the garter is Temple's; he claims that "Doc got that step-in in Memphis. . . Off a damn whore" (*Sanct.* 31). Whether or not Doc is telling the truth about the garter (he never explicitly says that he got it from Temple) is not as important as the association of Temple with the idea of the Memphis whore. She may think that she is special and above that kind of insinuation, but these men clearly do not see her as irreproachable. As we soon see, it does not take much to turn Gowan from a gentleman to an alcoholic, so it is not difficult to believe that a debutante can become a prostitute.

Temple, however, cannot conceive of a situation where her father's patronage could not get her out of trouble. After Gowan crashes the car and the two end up at the bootlegger's shack, Temple repeatedly refers to her family as a kind of protection. She is in a state of panic when she first enters the house and rushes from person to person without thought. In a desperate attempt to convince Popeye to drive them back to town, Temple offers to pay him in return for the ride. Perhaps misinterpreting her comment, Popeye tells Gowan "Make your damn whore lay off me" (*Sanct.* 51), stating directly what the town boys had only hinted. Temple becomes frantic with fear and runs away. She tries to pray, but all that comes out is "My father's a judge" (*Sanct.* 51). The repetition of this phrase is her attempt to comfort herself; she believes that her father's powerful position will keep her from the dangers in the house. It is also a refutation of Popeye's earlier statement—her father is a judge, so her own reputation must be spotless by association.

Temple's dependence on family connections becomes even more apparent when she first meets Ruby. Although the two had spoken briefly before, their first narrated conversation

comes after Temple's encounter with Popeye. Without any provocation, Temple asks Ruby (still referred to only as "the woman") if her brother is in the house. She then uses this flimsy excuse to talk about her own family and her four brothers. She mentions that two are lawyers and that another is a Yale student as if these kinds of achievements would impress Ruby. Once again Temple mentions that her father is a judge; she does not seem to understand that the status symbols which carry so much weight in her social circles do not apply in this world of lawlessness and cruelty. Ruby has no sympathy for Temple, who is so used to letting other people help her out of trouble that she cannot leave the house by herself as Ruby urges. Instead she waits for Gowan to take her away. When it becomes clear that he is too interested in the bootlegged liquor to go, she asks Ruby to help. She even threatens in a quivering voice to have the governor's soldiers come to the house to arrest everyone if Ruby does not help her. Ruby is both threatened by Temple's presence and angry at her. She realizes that the men will not be able to keep their hands off of Temple, but at the same time she is unsympathetic to Temple's plight. Temple seems incapable of understanding that not everyone's father is a judge; she does not realize that Ruby will take offense to her condescending comments and implied superiority.

Ruby interrupts Temple's self-pitying story with a personal attack charged with sexual judgment. She sarcastically refers to Temple and her sort as "Honest women. . . You'll slip out at night with the kids, but just let a man come along. . . Take all you can get, and give nothing" (*Sanct.* 57). Temple seems surprised at Ruby's anger and sits silently while Ruby talks about her own father, who was not a judge but who attempted to protect his daughter's honor by shooting her lover right in front of her. It is Ruby's own father who tells her to "Get down there and sup your dirt, you whore" (*Sanct.* 58). Temple had earlier said of the people in the house, "You're just like other people" (*Sanct.* 56), but Ruby wants her to realize that she is not in her element anymore. Arthur Kinney believes that "Ruby sees in the girl. . . a fundamental secret self" (Kinney 115), and it is this perceived kinship that allows Ruby to confide in Temple. But

while Ruby has experienced the bitterness of life as an outcast and whore, Temple has never had to suffer that fate. When Ruby first recounts her father's cruel line, Temple says, "I have been called that" (*Sanct.* 58) as if "whore" is simply an idea, an insult. She does not realize that for Ruby it is more than just a crude slur; it is an occupation and a fact of life. Simply by entering the house, Ruby argues, Temple has forfeited her right to be an honest woman. Only slowly does it dawn on Temple that Ruby is serious about the danger and that the men in the house do not care what happens to her as long as they get what they want. Ruby tells Temple she will soon learn the hard way what she is worth to the bootleggers. There is no insinuation that Ruby is still a prostitute, but it is clear that she is jealous that Temple's presence will upset her standing among the bootleggers.

It is this sexual hierarchy that prevents Ruby from being compassionate towards Temple. Her time as a prostitute has left her with little kindness to give to other women, especially young and attractive women like Temple. Ruby is hard and cruel when speaking to Temple; there are repeated references to the coldness in her eyes. Even though she claims that Lee is uninterested in Temple, she is obviously threatened by the younger woman. By the end of the conversation, however, Ruby softens her attitude towards Temple. She tells the frightened girl four times to "Go and eat your supper" (*Sanct.* 62-3) as she begins to revert to her role as mother and caretaker.

Ruby's sudden shift in demeanor from a jealous ex-prostitute to a nurturer is an indication of her attempt to get away from her past, but she is fated to repeat almost exactly the events that she had earlier narrated to Temple. Lee's imprisonment for the murder of a fellow soldier while the two fought over a woman is the original catalyst for Ruby's foray into prostitution. Now Ruby finds herself in a similar situation. Lee is in jail for Tommy's murder, presumably while fighting over Temple, and she again finds herself in need of a lawyer with no way to pay for one. Even though Horace is far too straight-laced to accept the same payment that the other lawyer did, the suggestion is there, and Ruby does not recognize Horace's strict

moral code. Even before he takes on Goodwin's case his sister complains because he talked with "moonshiners and street-walkers" (*Sanct.* 108). It is immediately obvious to Horace that Ruby is of this type; even from his brief time at the shack he is able to describe her as someone who has "owned diamonds and automobiles too in her day, and bought them with currency harder than cash" (*Sanct.* 109). This does not seem to bother Horace. He is surprised that a woman who once had such riches (Ruby mentions to Temple that she once owned three fur coats) is "doing a nigger's work" (*Sanct.* 109) of cooking and cleaning house. It is possible that there is a hint of admiration in Horace's voice. He is an optimist who probably sees Ruby's new role as an attempt at redemption, and he certainly has no hesitation in taking on their case.

Horace's sister Narcissa has the opposite reaction to Ruby's presence. She becomes hostile at the thought of Horace meeting an ex-prostitute, and she throws a fit when he agrees to help Goodwin and ensure that Ruby has a place to stay. She is extremely conscious of appearances and the townspeople's opinion. Horace defends her, echoing Ruby's earlier comments to Temple when he complains to Narcissa about "all you sheltered chaste women" (*Sanct.* 117) who judge Ruby without giving her credit for trying to leave her past behind. Narcissa is upset at the thought that the house she grew up in might somehow be marked or sullied because a woman who she sees as a criminal is spending the night there. A fight is averted only when Miss Jenny, reasonable and levelheaded as ever, reminds Horace that it is illegal for a lawyer and his client's wife to have such close relations while the client is in jail. Horace agrees to put her up in a hotel, and on the drive there Ruby tries to tell Horace that she has no money. He refuses to listen to her. To him this means that the fee is not an object; Horace is too unworldly to take on a case simply for money. Ruby thinks that there is a hidden subtext in the exchange, and as she remembers the lawyer in Kansas she assumes that Horace expects to be paid with sex. This part of the narrative is suspended after Ruby tells Horace about Temple's presence at the time of the murder.

Chapter 18 is the central and longest chapter of the novel. There is a temporal shift as the events in this chapter happen right after Popeye shoots Tommy and before the events of the previous chapter. It begins with Temple sitting with Popeye in the car as they flee the site of the murder and rape. She feels blood seeping down her legs and is stricken to complete obedience by the threatening power which Popeye exerts over her. When they reach Memphis, Popeye immediately heads to Miss Reba's house, a dingy place in a seedy neighborhood. It is on a "street of smoke- grimed frame houses. . . with now and then a forlorn and hardy tree of some shabby species. . . a scrap- heap in a vacant lot" (*Sanct.* 142), and the house itself is a "dingy three- storey house, the entrance of which was hidden by a dingy lattice cubicle leaning a little awry" (*Sanct.* 142). The cityscape is full of desolation and untidiness, and there is no counterbalancing with the liveliness and bustle that a city should have. This is Popeye's trip, and this part of the city reflects Popeye himself. When Miss Reba appears, she is making "wheezy, flatulent sounds" (*Sanct.* 143) and carrying a tankard full of beer. She brags about the important men and police officials who have visited her house, but she can barely move without complaining about her asthma. She is a figure of decadence living in a decrepit house in a decaying city. This is Temple's introduction to her new life as a prostitute, and the setting is a far cry from the formal balls and expensive amenities that she is used to.

Miss Reba takes a businesslike and unsympathetic attitude to Temple's suffering and seems ready to take advantage of her confused state. She says that Temple is lucky to have gotten Popeye and that the blood she is worried about will "be worth a thousand dollars to you" (*Sanct.* 145). This is the first time that anyone explicitly mentions that Temple will be trading sex for money. She assures Temple that she will be wearing diamonds from here on and tells her about all of the other women who tried to work for Popeye because of the money he has to spend. Only then does she bother to ask Temple's name.

Minnie begins to give Temple drinks to calm her down. At first she refuses the gin, but later she becomes dependent on it. Temple spends the next hours in the room much as she

spent the time in the barn before the rape; her mind wanders off on strange tangents, and in both situations she can only wait helplessly. Time has no meaning for her in this place, as the clock is forever stuck on half past ten. Her lonely reverie is interrupted only when Reba barges in drunkenly, crying loudly and discordantly about how happy she was with Mr. Binford. A few more hours pass while Temple simply listens to the noises in the house, then Popeye enters again. She tries to withdraw within herself completely, “cringing upon herself in as complete an isolation as though she were bound to a church steeple” (*Sanct.* 158), but in the end she cannot resist his advances as he assaults her once again.

The narration shifts back to Ruby’s story after Horace has heard about Temple’s plight and gone searching for her. Upon his return to Jefferson he finds that the Baptist women have chased Ruby out of the hotel. The innkeeper claims to feel sympathy for her, but says “I got a certain position to keep up myself” (*Sanct.* 180) and so he must give in to their pressure. The only person in the town who is willing to take Ruby and the child in is the woman who keeps the jail. Even though Ruby has committed no crime, or even come under suspicion of committing a crime, her past and her reputation have sent her to jail. When Horace tries to let her move into his house, Narcissa flatly refuses to allow it. He appeals to her sympathetic nature by reminding her that it means a young mother has practically been turned out onto the street, but she coldly replies, “That shouldn’t be a hardship. She ought to be used to that” (*Sanct.* 182). The unfeeling hardness and small- mindedness of the supposedly Christian women of Jefferson becomes more obvious as the novel progresses, and Horace loses his ability to successfully act against what he calls “their odorous and omnipotent sanctity” (*Sanct.* 184). Narcissa is so worried that her own reputation will be sullied by the family’s association with the Goodwins that she tries to convince Horace to drop the case and find another lawyer to defend them. She is so sensitive to scandal that she thinks Horace and Ruby are having an affair even though there is no evidence to suggest it. It is Narcissa’s “indifference to the moral qualities of any act including her own. . . [and concern for] the interpretation that may be

placed on these acts" (Vickery 19) which causes her to act so unfeelingly towards Lee and Ruby—they are undesirable, which to her is worse than being evil.

Faulkner presents an even more explicit attack on Narcissa's hypocrisy in the 1933 short story "There Was a Queen". Set some time after *Sanctuary*, it narrates the story of the end of the Sartoris line in the person of Miss Jenny. Narcissa receives anonymous obscene letters, but hides them from her family and refuses to try to find or punish the man sending them. Narcissa, who seems so uptight and proper in *Sanctuary*, enjoys reading the letters and tells Miss Jenny, "I was wild. . . It was like I was having to sleep with all the men in the world at the same time" (*Coll. Stories*, 739-40). Narcissa disappears to Memphis for two days, and when she returns she washes in the stream in a scene reminiscent of the Compson boys' attempts to make Caddy wash away her sexuality in *The Sound and the Fury*. When Miss Jenny confronts her, she confesses that she kept the letters but lost them. She refuses to tell Miss Jenny how she got them back, saying only that "I knew I couldn't buy them from him with money, you see" (*Coll. Stories*, 741). The implication is that she slept with a detective to get possession of the letters, in effect giving up her honor in order to keep up an honorable image. This is the most egregious example of Narcissa's concentration on appearances. Instead of the town learning of the letters, letters which prove no actual wrongdoing on her part but attest to the wild side of her sexuality, Narcissa would act as a prostitute. In her attempt to stop people from spreading rumors, she proves the rumors true. This is too much for Miss Jenny to take, and she dies because she cannot bear to see how the trash have taken over from the quality people.

Michael Lahey presents a more sympathetic opinion of Narcissa. She is simply trying to create a "meaningful and complex division between desire and duty" (Lahey 167), that is, she wants to be both a mother to young Bory and a desirable sexual object. Miss Jenny's death is both a punishment for Narcissa and a symbol of the passing away of the old sexual ethics in favor of more modern and permissive ideologies. This reading of Narcissa falls apart

when *Sanctuary* is taken into account. In *Sanctuary* she is not a revolutionary but one of the most ardent supporters of the conservative sexual ethic. Although Lahey sees these letters as containing both the “potentially liberating and potentially reductive power of images of the erotic” (Lahey 170), there is no insinuation that Narcissa is liberated in this story. Instead she undergoes a cleansing ritual and promises Bory that they will never be apart again. “There Was a Queen” is not a chronicle of Narcissa’s growth but of her hypocrisy.

The story of Virgil Snopes and his cousin Fonzo provides a touch of comic relief in *Sanctuary*, otherwise a grim and unhappy book. Their story sounds like the beginning of a joke—two rubes come into the city for the first time and do not realize that the boarding house they are staying in is actually a brothel. The Snopeses convince themselves that Reba runs a reputable household, and they manage to find excuses for all sorts of odd behavior such as the many different men who come in and out (“It’s a party”), the girls running around all day (“She’s got a big family, I reckon”), and the lingerie they find strewn about their rooms when they leave (“She’s a dress- maker”). When they do decide to go out and find prostitutes, they sneak back into the house to avoid incurring Miss Reba’s wrath for staying out so late. Eventually their cousin Clarence Snopes comes to that same brothel, only to discover that Virgil and Fonzo do not realize where they are staying. “I’ll be durned if you aint the biggest fool this side of Jackson,” (*Sanct.* 198) Clarence says, but instead of telling them what kind of a boarding house they are really in, he simply brings them to a house of black prostitutes to save money. Although the whole of this chapter is told in a lighthearted manner and is something of a joke, the prostitutes here are treated much the same as in other sections of the novel. Women are equated with money, and for Virgil at least, the women come up lacking. After they visit the prostitutes he complains “Aint nothing worth three dollars you caint tote off with you” (*Sanct.* 196), and after the second time he says “I caint eat that six dollars, noways. . . Wisht I could” (*Sanct.* 198). Clarence, the elder cousin and corrupt politician, is even worse. When he takes the younger men to the black brothel, they resist at first. He has no

compunctions with doing business with the black women, since to him all women are the same and can be had for a price: “ ‘Course they’re niggers,’ Clarence said. ‘But see this?’ he waved a banknote in his cousin’s face. ‘This stuff is color-blind’ ” (*Sanct.* 199). He later suggests that Horace visit the same brothel so as to avoid the high prices at Miss Reba’s. Even the chapter written as a comical counterpoint to the rest of the novel ends with a dehumanizing comment; women cannot even be high- class prostitutes in Snopes’s world.

Clarence, never a man to pass up an opportunity for profit, sees Temple in the brothel and sells that information to Horace. He goes to find Temple, but Reba refuses to allow him to disrupt her business, and she says that only “When he starts killing folks in my house, then I’ll take a hand” (*Sanct.* 211). As is typical with Reba in this novel, she is only concerned with the bottom line. Horace appeals to her sympathy by telling her about Ruby’s hardships, and she surprisingly relents and allows him an interview. When they go to talk to Temple we see that she is completely different than she was before she was forced into prostitution. She is sullen and withdrawn, and she hides under her covers without speaking when Horace and Reba enter the room. When she does sit up, the first thing she asks for is a drink, and we learn that she has had three since supper. As she relates her story to Horace, she mentions ways of altering her sexuality: she tries to become a male simply by concentrating, she imagines that she has a kind of iron girdle to protect her, and she finally wishes that she had a sharp metal spike, a kind of phallic symbol so that she could run through Popeye before he could do it to her. She sees herself dead in a coffin, and then imagines that she has become a middle- aged schoolteacher and that Popeye is a powerless black boy who must obey her. These are all images of repressed or faded sexuality, but they are of no use to Temple as she is assaulted and scarred. Even Reba, hardly someone who has gone out of her way to help Temple, sees that there is something wrong with the girl: “She’ll be dead, or in the asylum in a year. . . She wasn’t born for this kind of life” (*Sanct.* 220).

Even if Reba is right and Temple was not born to be a prostitute, she has no trouble

learning to enjoy her forced sexuality. Popeye has bought her anything she wants; her room is full of fancy dresses and French perfumes. She destroys them all in anger at her imprisonment. She manages to sneak out to arrange her rendezvous with Red, but Popeye is there to intercept her. Temple is now confident enough to mock Popeye for his impotence and to tell him that “[Red]’s a better man than you are” (*Sanct.* 231). She baits him, calling him a runt and less than a man. She knows that Popeye is waiting to kill Red for his affair with Temple, but it does not stop her from coming on to him strongly. All the images of repressed sexuality are long forgotten, and now Temple is begging Red “Please. Please. Please. Please. Don’t make me wait. I’m burning up” (*Sanct.* 239). Temple has not only acclimated herself to life as a prostitute, she seems to enjoy it. There is nothing beautiful about her newly sexual nature, though; she throws herself against Red with “her mouth gaped and ugly like that of a dying fish” (*Sanct.* 238). After Red’s funeral, Reba tells the other ladies the kinds of unnatural acts that Temple has had to suffer through. She says that they fought constantly over Popeye’s refusal to let Temple leave the house and hints that Temple is somehow different from her earlier self. Before Reba goes into any details about Temple’s change the scene shifts back to Narcissa.

As part of the town’s conspiracy against Ruby, Narcissa has gone to the District Attorney to sabotage the case. She wants Horace to lose and to be shamed into returning to his wife. On the day of the trial we realize that the only information that Narcissa has to offer the D. A. is that the Goodwins were never actually married but instead lived in a common-law relationship. In the meantime Ruby and her child have moved even further from the center of Jefferson society. They no longer live at the jail but at the house of a reputed witch who sells snake oil to the blacks of the county. Ruby is now on the very fringe of society; the only way for her to become more of an outsider would be to move in with a black family. Bringing up the supposed immorality of the Goodwins’ living arrangement is the only way for the D. A. to cast doubt on Ruby’s testimony, but in the eyes of the townspeople it is enough to make her story

suspect. After the day in court, she tells Horace that she wants to start paying him that night. When he arrives at the jail to meet her, he realizes that she means to pay him by sex. Unlike Temple with Red, Ruby is very downcast at this prospect. She tries to salvage her pride by saying that “It wouldn’t have done you any good if you hadn’t waited” (*Sanct.* 275) until after the trial to collect payment. Since she was earlier taken by a lawyer who did nothing to help her case, she wanted this time to at least make sure that Horace was going to help Lee. She tells him the story in detail, and it is clear that she regrets the choices she made. It is only her loyalty to Lee, even after he betrayed her and beat her, which compels her to offer to sell her body again. Horace’s refusal to accept her payment, saying that “my soul has served an apprenticeship that has lasted for forty-three years” (*Sanct.* 280), gives Ruby hope that Lee will be freed and that she will be integrated into society.

The entire dynamics of the novel change when Temple arrives in court. Instead of moving towards a happy ending, the narrator bombards the reader with lurid details and cruel injustice. Temple is almost artificial in this description, “her mouth painted. . . like something both symbolic and cryptic cut carefully from purple paper and pasted there” (*Sanct.* 284). The jury and the townspeople are ready to believe her when she blames Goodwin for the crimes which Popeye committed, and Goodwin is brought to jail and eventually lynched. Temple’s father appears to claim her and to symbolically accept her back into the fold of upper-class society.

The pessimism surrounding *Sanctuary* comes to a head in the final two chapters as each of the surviving major characters resigns him or herself to an unhappy fate. Ruby, who tried to reform herself and became a prostitute out of dire need, is rejected by society and left to fend for herself and her dying child. Horace returns to his former life as Belle’s shrimp carrier as his earlier optimism gives way to despair. When he returns home, all that awaits him is the mind-numbing routine he had tried to flee. Belle’s first comment upon his entrance is “Did you lock the back door?” (*Sanct.* 299) as if he had never gone away, or, more precisely,

as if his presence or absence did not matter to her one way or another. Temple, who, as is suggested in *Sanctuary* and made clear in *Requiem for a Nun*, grew to enjoy her time as a prostitute, is welcomed back with open arms due to her family background and wealth. Although it may seem that for her at least there is a happy ending, her actions in the courtroom and her lack of emotion in the Luxembourg Gardens show that she, too, has changed and become bitter and detached. As we see in *Requiem for a Nun*, Temple is no longer the confident and satisfied woman she was before the rape; she cannot stop thinking about her times in the whorehouse. The unpleasant and realistic look at life that *Sanctuary* provides is then echoed with only minor differences in *Requiem for a Nun*.

Requiem focuses on how people change over time. The prose sections of the book outline the history of Mississippi and Yoknapatawpha County from the beginning of time to the present day. Act Two starts with "In the beginning" (*Req.* 99), and, as far as the narrator is concerned, Jackson and the state capitol already exist, waiting for someone to come along and give them concrete form. We see Mississippi in pioneer times in Act One, and Act Three centers on the windowpane graffiti which connects the Civil War with the present day. According to Polk's concordance, the two most frequently used words in the book (except for common words and Temple's name) are "time" and "old" (Polk 516). There is an implicit philosophy that things don't really change, but simply fulfill their potential. The state capitol is predestined, and its actual construction is something of a formality. In the same way, nothing is destroyed. Cecilia Farmer is an almost unnoticeable figure even while alive, but the record of her life survives. It survives as more than a fading memory; through the ages Cecilia cries out from her window scratching that "*this was myself; this was I*" (*Req.* 262). There is a strong statement for timelessness and stability, a stability not from year to year but from era to era. This theme appears in many of Faulkner's other novels, but nowhere else is it asserted on as grand of a scale as it is here.

At the same time that the entire history of Mississippi (and, by extension, humanity) unfolds in the prose section of the book, the play takes place over a pair of 48 hour periods on November thirteenth and March twelfth of an unnamed year. Temple Drake is the central character here, even more so than in *Sanctuary*. Faulkner expects that his readers are familiar with the earlier work, and Temple's character development does not quite make sense without the background of *Sanctuary*.

The closing image of *Sanctuary* shows Temple relaxing in Luxembourg Gardens. She is accompanied by her father and seems to be reintegrated into upper class society. It seems as though her wealth and her father's connections have allowed her to escape her history as a prostitute. Her experiences have changed her, though, and she is not as vivacious as she was when she first appears. Instead she is bored and tired, seemingly unaffected by the art and beauty which surround her. Music is only "Berlioz like a thin coating of tortured Tschaikovsky on a slice of stale bread" (*Sanct.* 316). Temple, having been raped and treated as Popeye's property, cannot appreciate life with the same liveliness she showed before. She has become like the marble queens, aloof and uncaring.

In *Requiem* Temple tries to suppress her past, first by marrying Gowan, then by engaging in all of the trappings of the stereotypical yuppie life. The two own a "bungalow on the right street. . . a pew in the right church" (*Req.* 157). Temple even tries to change her name, insisting that she is now Mrs. Gowan Stevens, not Temple Drake as Gavin calls her. Mrs. Gowan Stevens was never a prostitute in a Memphis brothel, and Temple attempts to rewrite her past by taking on a new identity to go along with her new life. Nancy herself is one of the status symbols of the progressive young couple, and "all the other country- club set applauded when they took an ex-dopefiend nigger whore out of the gutter" (*Req.* 158). At least, this is how Temple originally rationalizes her decision to hire Nancy instead of a stereotypical matronly old nanny. Her explanation falls apart since within the overarching philosophy of *Requiem*, there is no such thing as an "ex", either for Nancy or Temple.

Temple hires Nancy not because she believes that Nancy is reformed or that she hopes to reform her, but because she knows that neither of them can ever completely reform. Temple attempts to fit into the country-club set, but she knows she will never find someone belonging to that group who will understand her past. Even when she was in the whorehouse in Memphis, she was shut in and not allowed contact with the other girls. The only women she saw during that time were Minnie and Reba, women who were not her peers and who she could not freely talk to. With Nancy, Temple hopes that she has finally found her “sister in sin” (*Req.* 158) to confide in.

Although Temple tells Gavin that she considers Nancy a sister in sin, suggesting a need to confess or expiate her past, there is no evidence elsewhere in the novel that Temple is ashamed of that past. She is willing to admit all of the details of her rape and confinement to Gavin and the Governor, and she admits that during her affair with Red she wrote sexually charged letters using words which no respectable debutante would even know. Unlike Narcissa in “There Was a Queen,” she does not even seem concerned that her letters may become public. She even compares the brothel to a dormitory, albeit “a little stronger, a little calmer, less excited” (*Req.* 143). This metaphor refers back to Temple’s first appearance in *Sanctuary*, breaking the rules as no respectable Southern belle should and sneaking out of her dormitory. Later, while waiting for Popeye in her whorehouse room and watching the broken clock, she imagines that she is still in the dorm preparing for a dance. Her thoughts about her life at college are an attempt to “methodically [join] the two mismatched halves of her experience” (Toles 128), and she is at least partially successful in synthesizing the two seemingly disparate roles. Perhaps the change from one milieu to another was not as drastic an adjustment for her as one might expect. In *Sanctuary* Temple went through such a hard time when she first arrived at the brothel that Miss Reba said of her, “she wasn’t born for this kind of life” (*Sanct.* 220). *Requiem* shows a Temple Drake who seems more naturally fit to be a prostitute and who refuses to relinquish that title. Just as the capitol dome in Jackson

existed since the beginning of time and only needed people to arrive and build it, the Temple of *Requiem* was predisposed to prostitution and simply needed Popeye to force her into it.

During the flashback scene where Temple talks with Pete, Red's brother, it is clear that she has become promiscuous enough that she not only welcomes sexual advances but acts as the aggressor herself. She claims that she only knows him because he blackmails her with the letters she has written to Red, but when he tries to give them back to her she tells him, "I told you two days ago I didn't want them" (*Requiem* 176). She continues to see him even though he has given her at least two chances to end their liaison with her reputation intact. She welcomes his advances even though she has two young children who depend on her and who she will have to leave behind in order to continue her affair. Ironically, it is Nancy, the most hardened whore in any of these novels, who must turn to Temple and make her think of her children in stead of her own lusts.

Prostitution is an important facet of Temple's personality, but for Nancy it is practically the whole of her identity. She is introduced in the stage directions of Act I as "a tramp-a drunkard, a casual prostitute" (*Req.* 50). Even though "she has probably done many things else. . . any sort of manual labor" (*Req.* 50), there is no doubt that prostitute, or "nigger dopefiend whore" as Temple callously calls her, is her primary social identifier. Unlike Temple, Nancy has never worked in a brothel or made much money; the town's first memory of Nancy is an encounter in which a white banker beats her over two dollars that she claims he owes her (*Req.* 121), while Temple owned the finest furs and perfumes thanks to Popeye's riches. Nancy is unique among Faulkner's four major prostitutes because she is a street walker, not a higher class brothel prostitute or kept woman—even Ruby Lamar, the other downtrodden woman, has owned furs in her day.

Nancy is also the only black woman other than Minnie, a minor character who performs the stereotypical black role of maid. *Sanctuary* and *The Reivers* are unusual considering how little they deal with race, and, in the case of *The Reivers*, how dismissively the subject is

treated. Race is an inescapable element of *Requiem*; notice how Nancy's tagline places "nigger" before either "dopefiend" or "whore", suggesting its relative importance, at least in Temple's mind. Temple claims that she hired Nancy to have someone to talk to on equal footing, but the two women are never treated as equals. Whether the determining factor is race, affluence, or social standing, Temple is superior to Nancy and knows it. When Nancy begins to show independence, Temple becomes upset that she is not acting in the way Temple believes she should. It is this focus on race, an issue that does not appear in *Sanctuary*, that shows the most important way that Faulkner's conception of society has changed in the intervening years. For the characters in *Sanctuary*, it is as if black people do not even exist. Faulkner's conception of Mississippi in 1930 is undeniably centered on white people and white society. By 1951, after having written several novels where racial concerns are the primary themes, Faulkner presents us with a Temple Drake who is much more aware of the racial underpinning of her societal status.

Temple believes that blacks are more naturally inclined to imprisonment and jail than whites are. She thinks that if "some white person you know is in a jail or a hospital, and right off you say, How ghastly. . . But not Negroes" (*Requiem* 197). She thinks of the black prisoners in terms of their hands—quiet and restful on the bars of the prison, as if happy that they do not have to do the manual labor they are accustomed to. Temple is familiar with the story of Rider, the main character of "Pantaloons in Black." It is difficult to believe that she would know the circumstances of a poor black laborer who was lynched for murder, and she even says that his story transpired before she even lived in Jefferson. In this passage it is not Temple but the narratorial voice who relays Rider's story. Compared to Rider's grief over his wife's death, Temple seems callous and unfeeling when she speaks of her baby. "Look like I just cant quit thinking. Look like I just cant quit" (*Requiem* 199), Rider says when the sheriffs finally subdue him. Temple seems all too willing to quit thinking until Gavin prods her into self-reflection. Temple wants to believe that both her fate and Nancy's are sealed and that they

have been from the day she left the train (*Requiem* 209). In this way she hopes to dodge responsibility for making any choices.

It is convenient for Temple to pretend that her fate was sealed from the moment she stepped off of the train. She has had many chances to reform herself and has willingly chosen a life of sexual irresponsibility and selfishness. She ignores every opportunity to cast her past aside and to take on a socially acceptable role, but she is willing to forego those opportunities because she did “what us sporting girls call fall in love” (*Requiem* 144). From then on she is more interested in her own sexual craving and affairs than she is in her children and family. In *The Reivers* we meet another prostitute who falls in love, but for her it does not lead to ostracism as in Temple’s case. The idea of love in Faulkner’s novels has changed so that, by the time of *The Reivers*, love leads a prostitute away from her profession and towards a family.

According to Cleanth Brook’s chronology, *Sanctuary* takes place in 1929, the same year it was written (Brooks 389). Although much of *Requiem for a Nun* takes place years in the past, the dramatic scenes revolving around Temple and Nancy are unmistakably in the present tense. *The Reivers*, however, begins by immediately removing the narration from the present. “Grandfather said:” (*Reivers* 3), the first phrase in the novel, is the only part which takes place in the present. Although Grandfather is talking to his grandson in 1960, there is little doubt that in his mind it is still 1905. This first sentence is vital to understanding *The Reivers* and placing it within Faulkner’s canon. If it is not the “Golden Book” that Faulkner spoke of, it is at least his sepia book, the novel most steeped in personal recollection and nostalgia. Memory in *The Reivers* does not serve the same purpose as memory in *Absalom, Absalom*, a novel about the uncertain reconstruction of the past. Grandfather (Lucius) knows this story by heart, and the reader gets the impression that he has told it before. *The Reivers* is, as its original title proclaimed, a reminiscence, a look back in time with the sharp edges of memory dulled and replaced by more pleasant nostalgia. *The Reivers* and *Sanctuary* stand

about thirty years apart chronologically, and the two novels stand even further apart in terms of the way they treat similar situations and people.

The Reivers is a comedy, and therefore often regarded as something less than a serious work of Faulknerian literature. If *Sanctuary* is the bleakest novel he ever wrote, than *The Reivers* must be the brightest. This difference in itself does not ensure that *Sanctuary* is somehow more important or worthy of critical consideration. Faulkner explained away the incongruities in his works by saying in the preface to *The Mansion* that he simply knew his characters better than he did when he first met them. With this in mind, it is astounding how much he must have learned between his earliest works and *The Reivers*. As it is, *The Reivers* is not only a reminiscence but a reconsideration, and in almost all cases it shows a gentler side of life or human nature than the earlier novels do.

Like *Sanctuary*, which appropriates the forms of a detective story and courtroom drama and adopts them to a literary style, *The Reivers* takes on the form of a childhood adventure story. It incorporates many of the basic elements of that straightforward genre—the protagonist runs away from home, finds himself in a new and exotic locale, and faces a contest in the climactic horse race which marks his passage into adulthood. Some critics are content to consider *The Reivers* on that level and nothing more. Even if it were an adventure story for children, it would be worth studying if only to understand how or why Faulkner switched to such a simple genre at that late period of his career. If *The Reivers* is nothing more than a simple adventure story with an obvious moral, it is written that way not out of any failure of Faulkner's art but because his philosophy changed greatly over the years. *The Reivers* makes more sense when taken in context of the rest of Faulkner's canon. As a comparison between *The Reivers* and his earlier novels, especially *Sanctuary*, shows, the Faulkner of 1960 is not the same man, or at least not the same author, as the Faulkner of 1930.

The Reivers begins with a reconsideration of Boon Hogganbeck, a character who Faulkner readers will remember from *Go Down, Moses* as the man-child unable to care for

himself and unable to adapt to the modern world. The final scene of *The Bear* shows Boon desperately trying to load his gun in an attempt to shoot squirrels. At the same time he viciously yells at Ike McCaslin to leave him alone, that the squirrels are all his. This moment is fixed in the minds of readers as the kind of man Boon Hogganbeck was, but the narrator of *The Reivers* would have us replace it with a new image, couched in terms of a photograph. Memory often appears as something tangible in *The Reivers*; here, it can be “Hung on the wall. . . like a Bertillon chart or a police poster” (*Reivers* 3). Boon’s inability to properly aim a gun, a flaw which proves tragic in *Go Down, Moses*, is recast here in a comedic light. Boon literally bursts into the novel, “jumping. . . reaching, lunging. . . hollering. . . stomping” (*Reivers* 4,5) in a fit of energy aimed at getting revenge on Ludus, a black stable boy. Everyone in the stable seems to take this in stride. Nobody seems particularly concerned for Ludus’s safety; as one of the men says, “I seen Boon Hogganbeck. . . shoot before” (*Reivers* 10). Just as everyone expects, Boon takes five shots at Ludus and does not hit anything. (Actually, he nicks a young black woman. In 1905 Mississippi, the narrator suggests, her well-being is unimportant, and they buy her off with a new dress and a bag of candy.) Ike McCaslin runs out furiously, mad at Boon not because he destroyed Ike’s shop window but because he is unable to hit a target only twenty feet away. It was not until the twenty-first chapter of *Sanctuary* that there was any kind of comic relief; in *The Reivers* it comes in the first scene.

Unlike Boon, Lucius Priest does not appear in any of Faulkner’s other works, so it seems as though he could not be a reconsideration of an earlier work. Much has been made of the similarities between Lucius and Faulkner himself: they are about the same age, both are the grandsons of bankers, and both have nannies named Callie. There is even a series of photographs from Faulkner’s youth which portray the family car stuck in mud on a trip to Memphis (Blotner 692). It would be easy to claim that *The Reivers* is an autobiographical work, a slightly spruced up retelling of one of Faulkner’s own childhood adventures with Lucius Priest as little more than a pseudonym for Faulkner himself. It is possible that Lucius is

loosely based on Faulkner's own youth; after all, he was never shy about appropriating people or places from Oxford to use in his fictional county. If true, Lucius must be a sanitized version, the perfect eleven-year-old gentleman who simply does not exist. If *Sanctuary* is based on the author's experiences during trips he took to Memphis during his twenties, *The Reivers* is more likely a reflection of the kind of trip he wished he could have taken as a boy.

The main plot of *The Reivers* begins, curiously enough, with a death. Boon once again bursts in on Lucius at the office, this time to tactlessly inform him that his grandfather is dead. When Lucius discovers that it was not Boss Priest but his other grandfather who had died, he thinks "it was all right now. This was different" (*Reivers* 43). The mere passing on of an old and sick man means little to Lucius; as far as he is concerned as a young boy, the old and sick are already dead. Callous as this attitude may seem, it is an accurate representation of how many children view the elderly, especially those not close to them. More importantly, it is Faulkner's way of putting death out of the way; *The Reivers* is a novel of youth, not death. In *Sanctuary* and *Requiem* those who died were either young babies, like Temple's murdered daughter and Ruby's dying son, or healthy adults in the prime of life like Nancy, Lee, and Red. No one dies in those novels because of old age or sickness; death is always unwelcome and surprising. In *the Reivers* there is only the one death, a death of natural causes and one which the family had time to prepare for. Death is put in its natural place, and here there are social structures of grief to allow people to deal with death in a way that they cannot in *Sanctuary* or *Requiem*. After this appearance, Lucius's grandfather's death is never again mentioned in the novel.

As far as Boon is concerned, the funeral is important only because it allows him the opportunity to escape the supervision of Boss and take a trip. Lucius shows a surprising ambivalence to this trip, even at the very beginning. He knows, through Boon's exuberance and the subtle appearance of the words "New Orleans" in an otherwise innocuous comment, that Boon plans some kind of illicit journey. He does not seem concerned at all; there is no

indignant objection on Lucius's part as we might expect. Boon does not need to corrupt Lucius since he is already corrupt, if not actively so then at least passively. The narrator does not put much faith in the inherent goodness of childhood: "There is no crime which a boy of eleven had not envisaged long ago. . . he may not yet be old enough to desire the fruits of it, which is not innocence but appetite" (*Reivers* 46). This paragraph forestalls any reading of *The Reivers* as a tale of moral corruption. There is little moralizing in this novel regarding Lucius's youth—his experiences are portrayed in terms of learning and gaining experience, not as examples of the ruination of youth or the premature loss of innocence.

Even though Lucius is only eleven years old, he immediately takes part in the uniquely twentieth-century rite of passage as he drives the automobile for the first time. Once he has driven it, even for a short time, there is no turning back for him. He has already surrendered his claim on the personified Virtue. The narrator talks about Virtue often during this novel, and he clearly states that his story is not one of good versus evil but one of Virtue versus Non-virtue. *Sanctuary* describes a world or a people full of evil, but Lucius says that "people talk about evil times or an evil generation. There are no such things" (*Reivers* 52). Instead there is Non-virtue, which is not the active wishing of harm on another but simply the selfish desire to have fun instead of acting responsibly. According to this hierarchy of vice, Popeye followed the path of evil instead of the more socially acceptable Non-virtue. He is unable to enjoy the crimes he commits—he rapes Temple without gaining any sexual satisfaction, he bootlegs whiskey but cannot have a drink for fear of death. The darkness of *Sanctuary* comes as much from the pointlessness of the evil as it does from the acts themselves. Lucius, on the other hand, follows Non-virtue not out of spite or some perverse pleasure in breaking the rules but because he prefers "the bright rewards of sin and pleasure" to the "cold and odorless and tasteless virtue" (*Reivers* 52-3). If everything else was equal, Lucius would choose the path of Virtue, but even at eleven he realizes that there are certain kinds of adventures that are impossible unless you ignore Virtue for a while.

Lucius comes to another important realization after his first driving lesson. Boon's trusting of Lucius to drive the car that was "his [Boon's] soul's lily maid" (*Reivers* 28) is a signal to Lucius that they are equals; in fact, Lucius thinks to himself that "I was smarter than Boon. . . I was the leader, I was the boss" (*Reivers* 53). Once again Lucius does not try to shun responsibility for his actions or blame Boon for leading into sin a young boy who could not protest. Lucius takes pride in his role in the deception of his caretakers and even gets mad at Boon when it seems that Boon has ruined their trip.

As Boon and Lucius (and later Ned) begin their trip to Memphis, the story begins to take on the tone of a mock epic. It is worth noting that theirs is the only journey to take place in any of these novels. In *Sanctuary* and *Requiem for a Nun*, people just arrive places without any description of how they get there. Horace has walked a long way from his home in Kinston to the Old Frenchmen Place, but the first the reader sees of him is when he appears at the creek bed next to Popeye. Likewise, Popeye and Temple's journey to Memphis is passed over. There is a short section when they stop for gas, but then they simply arrive in Memphis. In *Requiem* Temple goes to California and back without difficulty, and then she and Gavin go from her living room in Jefferson to the governor's mansion with nothing more than a curtain fall as transition. Here, however, the trip is just as important as the destination.

When they get to Hell Creek bottom, they face the first real obstacle of their journey. This passage about a man who plows up dirt for his living is a simple comic episode that highlights Boon's stubbornness and makes a subtle comment on modernity. Here the narrator seems to relish the idea of a car, the symbol of technology and power, depending on a pair of mules to get out of a simple mudhole. Faulkner also gives us a chance to laugh at Boon's cheapness. The mudhole farmer does not give in to Boon's negotiations, and when Boon tries to avoid paying for Ned's fee since "he aint even white" and therefore not even a person, the man replies that "both these mules is color-blind" (*Reivers* 91). This is a direct quote from *Sanctuary*, when Clarence Snopes, the other comic cheapskate, brings his cousins to the

black brothel and waves money in their faces, telling them “This stuff is color-blind” (*Sanct.* 199). Put in the context of *Sanctuary*, this comment has a dehumanizing effect. Clarence reduces the women and their sexuality to an equation of dollars and cents. In *The Reivers* it works in the opposite direction. This is the point where Boon must admit that Ned is an equal partner in the trip, and it also marks the point of no return for the travelers.

In *Sanctuary* Memphis had appeared out of nowhere, towering over Temple as a symbol of urban decay and corruption. Lucius is able to watch the physical reminders of civilization appear in order. First a paved highway, then farmhouses, then suburbs appear on the main road to the city. Instead of a vision of a grim industrial town with “smoke-grimed frame houses. . . interspersed with the rear ends of garages” (*Sanct.* 142), the image of Memphis here is of “a wide tree-bordered and ordered boulevard with [street]car tracks in the middle” (*Reivers* 95). Memphis is the center of both of these novels. In *Sanctuary* it is a locus of evil and foulness, a place where Temple turns from a debutante to a hardened prostitute and where even a funeral becomes a scene of drunken disorder. Nothing of that sort happens in Memphis in *The Reivers*; the prostitution and crime which seemed so terrible to Faulkner in 1930 has by 1960 become just a little harmless fun. The main characters of *The Reivers* see Memphis in the same way that Virgil and Fonzo do in the comic interlude of *Sanctuary*. For them, it is a place of opportunity where the possibilities are far greater than in provincial Jefferson. The similarities between the experiences of the boarders in *Sanctuary* and Lucius’s own experience are striking. Upon arriving in Memphis, both Lucius and Virgil immediately assume that they will stay at the prestigious Gayoso Hotel, and both end up boarding at Miss Reba’s. Neither understands at first exactly how the women of the house make their living, and in each case someone else has to clue them in. If there is a section in *Sanctuary* which prefigures *The Reivers* either in tone or in subject matter, it is the story of Virgil and Fonzo Snopes.

At the brothel Lucius meets Miss Reba for the first time. In this novel she has a more central role than in *Sanctuary*, and the inconsistencies which plague her character development in the earlier work are nowhere to be found. Lucius first sees her not as the fat asthmatic with yapping dogs but as a “young woman. . . with a kind hard handsome face” (*Reivers* 98). Lucius is a keen observer of people and is immediately able to perceive both facets of Miss Reba’s personality—she has to act tough in her role as madam so that she can keep order in her house, but she is willing to help Boon and Corrie when they need her. In the years between *The Reivers* and *Sanctuary* (remember that the later novel comes first in the Yoknapatawpha chronology) Reba becomes bitter and even cruel. The death of Mr. Binford is the main impetus for this change. She is so devoted to him that she drunkenly grieves even years after his death: “clutching her breast. . . ‘We was happy as two doves,’ . . . she roared in a harsh, choking voice “ (*Sanct.* 157).

The one trait that characterizes Reba in both novels is the sense that she is somehow overdone, larger than life. In *Sanctuary* she is consistently described as a large woman with generous breasts and overstated fashion, “ample, commanding, humorous, loquacious. . . Miss Reba is. . . an indestructible natural force” (Gureard 69). The first things Lucius notices about her are the earrings studded with what he calls “the biggest yellowish- colored diamonds I ever saw” (*Reivers* 99). He sees them simply as symbols of her status as the madam and leader of the prostitutes. In *Sanctuary* she is more corrupt and decadent—her asthma, her perpetual state of drunkenness, and the constant reminders of her poor physical condition all describe a woman who is about to break down both mentally and physically. She is like the house she inhabits, grand in a decadent way but at the same time timeworn and past its prime.

The perverted tea party in *Sanctuary*, a gathering of Miss Reba and her friends right after Red’s funeral, best displays the decadent and uncaring nature that Reba shows in *Sanctuary*. She sits in her living room with two women and Uncle Bud, a boy of about five or six who prefigures Otis in *The Reivers*. Like Otis, he comes from an Arkansas farm. When

one of the women shows surprise at the cruelty he shows despite his youth and rural upbringing, Miss Reba replies that “they’ll learn meanness anywhere” (*Sanct.* 251). Wherever the meanness in the world comes from, and Miss Reba seems to consider it inescapable even for such a young boy, Reba’s whorehouse seems to draw the meanness towards it. Miss Reba, too fat to even unlace her own shoes, orders Uncle Bud around and is unsurprised at his nasty attitude. As soon becomes clear, she is responsible for at least some of his corruption, and she does not seem ashamed.

Reba and her friends drink heavily during this scene, switching from beer to gin as the evening progresses. One of the women keeps crying over Red’s funeral, but no real emotion seems to come out. She does not cry because she is sad for his death or because he meant anything to her personally; she weeps only because “He looked so sweet” (*Sanct.* 251 et al.) in his coffin. The crying quickly stops, though, as the women become more interested in gossip. Miss Reba, who should as a madam know how to keep her mouth shut for the good of the business and who should be accustomed to dealing with sexual perversions, freely talks about the way that Popeye used Red as an intermediary with Temple. The conversation switches from moral indignation over turning Reba’s “respectable house. . .into a peep show” (*Sanct.* 255) to the pragmatic philosophy of “He ought to’ve had sense enough to got a old ugly man [instead of Red]. . . Tempting us poor girls like that” (*Sanct.* 258). Each time Uncle Bud appears he is drunker than the last, until the final paragraph of the chapter when he drinks a whole bottle of beer and vomits. Just as Reba corrupts the young women who come into her house, she has corrupted even a six year old boy until he cannot take it anymore. Like Horace earlier in the novel, he tries to vomit out the evil from his system, a response that is completely opposite of Lucius’s experience with Reba.

The simplest explanation for the apparent change in demeanor between the two novels is that *The Reivers* shows us a Miss Reba in her prime, a woman who has not been broken down by years of dealing with the stresses of running a brothel and who has not gone into

depression by her lover's death. A more critical explanation is that Faulkner is resorting to hackneyed stereotypes in his old age. Reba has become the prostitute with a heart of gold like those in the cheesiest spaghetti westerns. This reasoning suggests that Faulkner has lost control of his art as a result of, if not senility, then laziness. To the contrary, *The Reivers* shows a control over the novel form which, while not approaching the levels of artistic skill reached in *Light in August* or *Sanctuary*, certainly surpasses the uneven writing of *Requiem for a Nun*. If anything, Faulkner's authorial skills underwent something of a rebirth with his last three novels—Miss Reba's new and more sympathetic personality is not a result of a good writer gone bad but a reflection of Faulkner's nostalgia for his childhood and his belief that people were nicer and the world more easily understood.

Even the new Miss Reba, as friendly and non-threatening as she has become, is nowhere near the softie that Miss Corrie is. Even with her more toned-down personality Reba is a still willful woman who is prone to cursing and unafraid to stand up to anyone who crosses her. Corrie is almost overly sweet and unassuming. Her personality is so unselfish and even matronly that it seems impossible that she would be a prostitute. Just like Reba, Corrie is young, and Lucius's appraisal of Corrie's character is even more glowing than his opinion of Reba. He shows a sensitivity that one would not expect from an eleven year old when he says that "at first I thought her face was plain. But she came into the room already looking at me, and I knew it didn't matter what her face was" (*Reivers* 102). Lucius appreciates Corrie's generous and unselfish qualities long before Boon does. The emphasis on Temple's venality and the ease with which she is able to adjust to the life of a whore are methods through which Faulkner attempts to debunk the myth of the virtuous Southern belle. Corrie serves as a kind of reversal or retraction to this cynical (if realistic) point of view—through her Faulkner reinforces the myth of the kind-hearted prostitute. Miss Reba remains a realistic figure even in *The Reivers*; she retains some, though not all, of her quirks and bad habits from *Sanctuary*. Corrie does not have any bad habits to speak of. Her nearest parallel in *Sanctuary* is Ruby

Lamar. Both women try to escape the stigma of prostitution and both want to settle into the socially acceptable feminine roles of wife and mother. Corrie's successful transition from one role to another is, along with Lucius's passage into maturity, one of the two major movements of the novel.

The kind of lifestyle change that Corrie hopes to effect would be ruled out in *Requiem for a Nun*. That novel's central idea, that humans and humanity are unable to erase or even ignore the past, keeps Temple from rejoining reputable society despite all of her connections and wealth. A similar theme exists in *The Reivers*, but there is an important difference. Boon tells Lucius that he has learned an important skill when he learns how to get the car out of a mudhole. When Lucius protests that the roads will soon be paved and that skill will be useless, Boon tells him that "at least you'll still know how to. Because why? Because you aint give the knowing how away to nobody" (*Reivers* 104). Lucius has taken this particular lesson to heart since he has obviously forgotten nothing about his trip. Lucius's close recollection, even in 1960, of the events of 1905 would seem to suggest that, like Temple, he is unable to escape his past and feels compelled to relive it. Unlike Temple, Lucius is able to keep the past alive through memory while continuing to mature. He is able to learn his lessons and move on from them instead of trying to live in the past.

Not every character who is reworked from *Sanctuary* to *The Reivers* undergoes a positive transformation. Otis, Corrie's nephew and Lucius's nemesis, is the Popeye of the novel. Like the gangster, Otis is unusually small for his age. Lucius is able to tell that there is "something wrong about him" (*Reivers* 106) as soon as he meets him, but even he does not realize that Otis is actually fifteen years old instead of ten as he claims. For Otis, just as for Popeye, diminutive physical size reflects a stunted morality. Even though Otis is fifteen, he tells Boon he is twelve and Lucius he is ten, and he is small enough that both believe him (*Reivers* 158). In the same way, Popeye's doctor tells his mother that "he will never be any older than he is now" (*Sanct.* 308). Both Otis and Popeye commit their crimes without

seeming to gain any pleasure; they are both motivated by simply making money for its own sake. They both talk in a crass urban slang rare in Faulkner's works; they use words like "jack" and "pugknuckling" that Lucius does not even understand. Otis proudly tells Lucius about using a peephole to spy on Corrie while she is with customers and charging men a dime to watch. Just as Popeye raped Temple without any sexual pleasure, Otis takes advantage of his aunt for money.

In some ways, Boon is just as guilty of taking advantage of Corrie as Otis is. His whole reason for taking the trip to Memphis was not to reform her and bring her home to marry; as Miss Reba says, he is interested not in "buy[ing] her outright" but is satisfied by "renting her once every six months" (*Reivers* 126). But at least Boon is able to appreciate Corrie sexually, an attitude which, while not exactly an acceptable attitude in the eyes of the town Baptist ladies, is at least morally superior to Otis's concept of Corrie as a money-making machine. He goes so far as to complain that women, especially prostitutes, have it easy; they are able to "make money pugknuckling while all a man can do is just try to snatch onto a little of it while it's passing by" (*Reivers* 154).

Otis's conception of making money off of pugknuckling is limited to nickels and dimes. Mr. Binford, the landlord and pimp, is a character who has managed to turn the exploitation of the prostitutes into a far more lucrative business. He is the only male who exists in the whorehouse setting. Temple remembers the whorehouse as if it were a women's dormitory; the only men who come in are the customers. Although Virgil and Fonzo board in the house, they have no conception of what is going on in the other rooms. Mr. Binford acts as the leader of the household, and by all accounts he is very strict and authoritarian. When the girls hear the dinner bell, they all rush downstairs since Binford does not look kindly upon tardiness. At the table, while everyone else eats cold leftovers, Binford gets a hot steak smothered in onions. The women all defer to him, and he enforces rules that seem incongruous for a brothel, such as no music or parties on Sunday. He constantly belittles the women, referring

to them only as bitches or whores, and Reba curses him for his disparaging remarks toward the girls.

At the same time, the house could not keep running without him. After he dies Miss Reba falls apart and the house becomes dingy and run- down. For all of his apparent cruelty, he is the “unthanked and thankless catalyst” (*Reivers* 113) who deals with authority and keeps up enough of a pretense of respectability to allow the house to function. In a place so inherently disreputable, Mr. Binford makes a concerted effort to be more proper than necessary, to be, as Lucius says, not simply conservative but a Conservative (*Reivers* 109). He deals in contradictions, allowing the women to see customers on a Sunday while insisting that they be more decorous on that day so as not to offend churchgoers, strictly enforcing laws of etiquette and manners while openly breaking criminal law, and staying totally faithful to Reba while surrounded by prostitutes. Like many other characters in *The Reivers*, though, he has a weakness for a horse race. This weakness leads him to leave the house in order to earn back the forty dollars he has lost at the park. Binford is the kind of figure that is missing in *Sanctuary*; he is not the kind of man who would have allowed Popeye to kidnap Temple and then use her as the centerpiece of his sexual deviances. Binford’s presence in the later novel transforms the brothel into a place with at least a veneer of decency. It is only after Binford leaves the house that things begin to fall apart and lawlessness takes hold.

Ned’s arrival with the stolen race horse ushers in a change in the tone of the novel. Instead of merely coming along for a ride with Boon, Lucius now must use his wits to solve problems and deal with the situations which arise. That Lucius now belongs to the company of adults becomes clear when they first discuss what to do with the stolen race horse. When Reba and Corrie order Otis to leave the stable so that the adults can talk, he agrees and tells Lucius to come with him. Reba stops Lucius and tells Otis to go on alone. From here on out they will not attempt to hide anything from Lucius; he is as involved in the conspiracy as everyone else.

Reba immediately begins to take charge of the group—she begins making plans with Ned while Boon is still fuming over the idea that Corrie’s customers will come looking for her. Reba is clever enough to realize that Ned is the person to deal with if anything is to get done. Boon may think that his skin color gives him precedence over Ned, but Reba knows that it is not race but intelligence that will determine who can take charge. As Ned puts it, Reba is in the “connections” business, and he hopes that she knows men who can help him get his horse to the racetrack. Although Reba brags in *Sanctuary* that she has had judges and district attorneys patronize her house, in *The Reivers* it is Sam, a humble flagman on a train, who proves to be the most help.

In order to get Sam, who is not only a flagman but the nephew of a top rail company executive, to use his influence to transport the horse to Parsham, Corrie must exhibit her feminine and sexual side. Although it is obviously part of her job description to flaunt her sexual nature to get what she wants, Corrie has not yet shown that part of her personality. She never really does, at least not for the reader to see. The times she does use her sexuality are all indirectly narrated. Lucius says, “She was much too big a girl. . . for smugness or coyness. But she was exactly right for serenity” (*Reivers* 131). Even though it may not seem to him that she is capable of the kinds of whorish behavior that is necessary to persuade Sam to allow the horse on the train, she is successful. This only increases Boon’s rage and jealousy as he thinks of Sam as his biggest rival for Corrie’s affection. From here on one of the major tensions in the novel will be Corrie’s matronly nature against her occupation as a prostitute. Boon tries to assert his ownership of Corrie before she goes to call Sam by groping her in public. She reacts not as a prostitute, but as a lady. She kisses him on the head but refuses to allow him to do anything else; she still has enough self respect to reprimand Boon for his public affection. There is nothing more ironic than a prostitute not asking but telling her john “Aint you ashamed of yourself” (*Reivers* 132), but in this context it does not seem

contradictory. Corrie's true turning away from the life of the prostitute, however, does not take place until after Lucius fights for her.

Lucius takes an immediate dislike to Otis because of the way he talks about the women and his reference to Ned as nigger, something that Lucius, despite his high standing and the many black servants which his family employs, would never do. For Lucius, the most important quality is gentility, and Otis is the furthest thing from a gentleman. Otis attempts to corrupt Lucius into joining his circle and taking advantage of Corrie the way he does. Unlike Lucius, Otis has no sympathy for Corrie or anyone else, and he sits in bed thinking of ways to exploit her for his own purposes. He blackmails Corrie for five cents a day or he will tell everyone that her real name is Everbe Corinthia, a name which Otis thinks is "a hell of a name. . . to work under" (*Reivers* 155). Lucius, who was sexually ignorant before meeting Otis, slowly gleans exactly what kind of work Corrie does and how she has been coerced into that life. In *The Reivers* it is not Miss Reba but a woman called Aunt Fittie who corrupts Corrie; the Reba of this novel is not in the business of ensnaring young women against their will. Lucius sees Otis not as a victim of circumstance but as an active agent of evil. He can handle Non-Virtue, but this is the first time he has been exposed to active evil. He responds by attacking Otis, to "not just hurt him but destroy him" (*Reivers* 157) as if by destroying Otis he could destroy all of the men and even women who have taken advantage of Corrie over the years, "those who had participated in her debasement. . . the brutal and shameless men who paid their pennies to watch her defenseless and undefended and unavenged degradation" (*Reivers* 157).

This scene, and even this line, marks the single most important difference between the situation of the prostitutes in *Sanctuary* and that of Corrie—here, she has someone to stick up for her. Horace tried to defend both Ruby and Temple, but he was inactive and ineffective. While Horace watches and simply says, "Someone should make a law," Lucius actively defends Corrie as best he can. Horace allows the townspeople to kick Ruby out of house after house without making a stand and taking her in. Even in court he seems curiously reluctant to

make an objection in Lee's defense. The judge seems puzzled by Horace's passivity, saying to the D. A. that "I have been on the point of warning you for some time. . . but defendant would not take exception, for some reason" (*Sanct.* 286). When Horace visits Temple in the whorehouse and hears her story, he leaves her there even though he knows the nightmare she has suffered through. He sympathetically becomes a woman in his own mind and even becomes "she" in the words of the narrator. Like Uncle Bud, Horace tries to vomit the evil out of himself, but he still does not act. Horace is "All thought, sensitivity, and perception but without the ability to act effectively" (Vickery 20). Lucius lacks Horace's maturity and education, but he still displays a surprisingly clear perception for an eleven year old boy. More importantly, he tries to strike back and act in his own limited way. Corrie realizes and appreciates what he does for her, and his actions serve as a sort of catalyst for her transformation.

When the fight is over, Lucius is left with a cut on his hand and no real victory over the evil he sees in Otis. He cannot erase years of abuse and neglect simply by punching one fifteen year old boy. He is successful in awakening Miss Corrie's maternal instinct as she attempts to doctor his wound. This is the beginning of the journey which will end with Corrie, after having shed the label of prostitute and taken on the more socially acceptable role of wife and mother, showing her new baby to Lucius. More important than the simple act of nursing Lucius's hand is Corrie's realization that someone is willing to fight for her. She says that "I've had people—drunks—fighting over me, but you're the first one ever fought for me" (*Reivers* 159), and in return she promises to quit whoring. Moreover, she tells him her real name even before she is ready to tell Boon. In the chivalric world of *The Reivers*, a woman needs a champion to defend her, but after Corrie knows she is worth fighting for she begins to fight for herself.

The central scene of *Sanctuary* is the time Temple spends in the barn and waits to be raped. There are sixteen pages of tense waiting and internal struggle, but Temple never has a

real chance of defending herself or changing the inevitable outcome—the only question is which of the men will get to her first. In *The Reivers* there is also a rape scene, but it is short, encompassing about sixteen lines. As Corrie sits in the loft watching over Lucius as he sleeps, Boon comes in and urges her, “Come on now. We aint got but a hour left” (*Reivers* 160). Instead of simply crying out with the passive “Something is happening to me!” (*Sanct.* 102) as Temple does, Corrie resists actively, telling him “I wont. . . I cant. . . Let me alone!” (*Reivers* 161). Boon does leave her alone, and there is no rape or unwelcome sex. Corrie has a choice that neither Ruby nor the eighteen year old Temple had in *Sanctuary*. Temple does have a choice in *Requiem*, but by this time she is corrupted and her immoral choices lead to the death of her child. Since Corrie has made the right choice, this novel ends not with a death but with a birth.

The day after Lucius cuts his hand, Corrie and the sheriff Butch Lovemaiden take him to a doctor’s office in Parsham. The doctor is an old, tobacco stained man with a weakness for ether. He asks Corrie what she had put on the wound, and Corrie tells him what it is, probably an antibiotic used for treatment of venereal disease. The narrator is apparently unwilling to share this information with his grandson, and there is only the cryptic remark that “I know what it is now” (*Reivers* 190). The doctor realizes from the substance that Corrie is a prostitute; he leans back and says “Well, well. . . I aint been to Memphis in thirty-five years” (*Reivers* 190). When Corrie offers to pay him for his services, all he asks for is a memento, and Corrie hands him a garter. In Temple’s first scene in *Sanctuary* a town boy, appropriately enough named Doc, brandishes a garter he claims to have taken from Temple as proof of having slept with her. These scenes are unique because they come from the point of view of the john, not the prostitute. When Faulkner wrote *Sanctuary* in 1929 he was not far removed from his own days of visiting brothels in Memphis, and the memories of the prostitutes were no doubt fresh in his mind. Even though Blotner generously states that “Apparently [Faulkner] never went upstairs himself” (Blotner 100), he at least “was a familiar visitor on good terms with the madams and

their girls” (Blotner 101). By the time of *The Reivers*, however, that life is far behind him. When the doctor in Parsham thinks of his youth in Memphis, his eyes become “unfocusable, as irreparable as eggs, until you would think they couldn’t possibly grasp and hold anything as recent as me and Everbe” (*Reivers* 191). He is not sexually attracted to Corrie, nor does he act predatory towards her like Doc does in *Sanctuary*. Here, she is simply a reminder of the past. Between *Sanctuary* and *The Reivers* the conception not only of the prostitute but of the customer undergoes a dramatic revision.

Boon, however, is reluctant to accept Corrie’s newfound conversion. Even though Boon can have Corrie for the rest of his life, he is so short-sighted that he would prefer her to remain a whore rather than wait for her to become a wife. It is clear how little he understands what is happening when he asks Lucius angrily, “Why the hell has she got to pick me out to reform on? God damn it, she’s a whore. . . She’s in the paid business of belonging to me exclusive the minute she sets her foot where I’m at” (*Reivers* 197). Boon’s understanding of his and Corrie’s relationship revolves around control and possession. He acts jealously and violently towards Sam, Butch, and even Lucius when he suspects that Corrie prefers their company to his own. Lucius understands this as part of Boon’s nature—it is no different than Boon shooting at Ludus simply for calling him narrow headed (or narrow assed, depending on who tells the story).

Even though Corrie has resisted Boon’s advances, she reverts to prostitution one last time when she submits to Butch in order to get Ned and Boon out of jail. Once they do get out of jail, Boon immediately punches Butch and is led back into the jail. He also beats Corrie as a revenge for doing what he considers cheating on him. Lucius refuses to believe either end of the story, telling Ned “No! It wasn’t her! She’s not even here! . . . I don’t believe it. . . She quit” (*Reivers* 256-7), and similarly claiming that Boon would never hit a woman. At first Lucius feels betrayed by Corrie for breaking her promise to him. When he sees Boon, though, he finds a new target for his rage. Even though he has to jump to even reach the much taller

Boon, Lucius attacks him then starts bawling in anger. The code of the gentleman is so ingrained in Lucius's mind that he cannot even fathom the kind of man who would strike a woman for any reason. Ned, who occasionally leaves behind what Lucius calls his Uncle Remus personality to speak with the voice of experience, tells Lucius not to take it so hard. In Ned's practical world, there is no "better sign than a black eye or a cut mouf [for Corrie to know that] he got her on his mind?" (*Reivers* 263). When Lucius meets Corrie he is similarly upset at her. Reba, like Ned, has a more practical outlook on matters. Even though Reba had earlier complained that Lucius was a bad influence since he is "driving my damn girls into poverty and respectability" (*Reivers* 209), here she seems more sympathetic to Corrie's choice and defends her to Lucius. In response to his refusal to speak with Corrie she says "aint she been proving ever since Sunday she's quit? If you'd been sawing logs as long as she has, what the hell does one more log matter when you've already cancelled the lease" (*Reivers* 280).

Corrie's journey from prostitute to mother begins relatively early in the book. Her first attempts at mothering revolve around Lucius, a boy young enough to still need a mother. She washes his clothes (*Reivers* 211), watches over him as he sleeps (160), and confides her secrets to him (218). It is not until the end of the novel that she has a child of her own. After Lucius has won the horse race and then been scolded by his grandfather for sneaking off to Memphis, there is a temporal shift several months or even years into the future introduced simply by "Then the day came at last" (*Reivers* 304). "The day" refers to the birth of Boon and Corrie's son, and Corrie wants Lucius to be one of the first to see him. In these final few paragraphs we see that Corrie's hopes have come to fruition—she and Boon have a small home, and she has become a mother. The child, named Lucius Priest Hogganbeck after the boy who helped Corrie change her life, is physical proof of the success of Corrie's transformation. Unlike Ruby, whose dying child is a constant reminder of her sin and her

rejection by the town, this child is a sign that Corrie, who now goes by her real name of Everbe, is accepted as a wife and mother and has joined legitimate society.

It is on this almost implausibly optimistic note that Faulkner's published career ends. Whether or not wife and mother is necessarily the most liberating or fulfilling occupation for women is not the burning question of this novel. Corrie is able to effect the self-transformation as she had hoped. Lucius approves of this change from his upper class white male point of view, a point of view which not incidentally coincided with Faulkner's own at this point in his life. A combination of the mellowing effects of age and the natural conservatism which almost inevitably accompanies the high social and economic standing Faulkner enjoyed at the end of his life almost certainly informed this new philosophy. Whatever the cause, it is undeniable that the narrative style and tone of *The Reivers* differ markedly from those of *Sanctuary*. The positive and hopeful attitudes which permeate the "Golden Book" extend even to the prostitutes. Even if *The Reivers* strays too closely to the oversimplified myth of the prostitute with a heart of gold, it nonetheless represents just as honest a portrayal of the attitudes and values of William Faulkner in 1960 as *Sanctuary* had in 1929.

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