

# TEACHING FAULKNER



published by the Center for Faulkner Studies  
Southeast Missouri State University

## Introduction

With this issue of the *Teaching Faulkner* newsletter we begin what will be a regular feature involving the *Digital Yoknapatawpha* project. In progress since 2011, the project is a collaboration of several dozen Faulkner scholars from the U.S. and abroad and a team of technologists at the University of Virginia. Intended as both a scholarly and a pedagogical resource, it is freely available online:

<http://faulkner.iath.virginia.edu>

A 12-minute video by Stephen Railton, the project's director, demonstrating how you can use

*Digital Yoknapatawpha* to give your students additional ways to conceptualize and understand "A Rose for Emily" is also available. For a link to the lesson plan, please see the digital edition of our newsletter a link to which is provided on the Center for Faulkner Studies website:

[www.semo.edu/cfs](http://www.semo.edu/cfs)

*DY* is still very much a work in progress. To improve it and its usefulness to classroom teachers, we would love to hear from you about your own and your students' experience with it. You can contact Railton at [sfr@virginia.edu](mailto:sfr@virginia.edu)

## Announcements

As printing costs continue to rise we will move to a digital edition of the newsletter.

### THIS WILL BE THE LAST PRINT ISSUE

So that we can be sure our subscribers get the newsletter, please send your email address to us at [cfs@semo.edu](mailto:cfs@semo.edu) or message us through our Facebook page. We believe this move will allow us to support the teaching and scholarship of Faulkner in more diverse ways. Additionally, the new format will allow for more dynamic use of multimedia tools within the newsletter itself.

The Center for Faulkner Studies at Southeast Missouri State University would like to thank you for the continued support and interest in our publications, conferences, and collections over the years. If you have any questions about this change feel free to email us your concerns or even your suggestions.

Number 33,  
Fall 2015

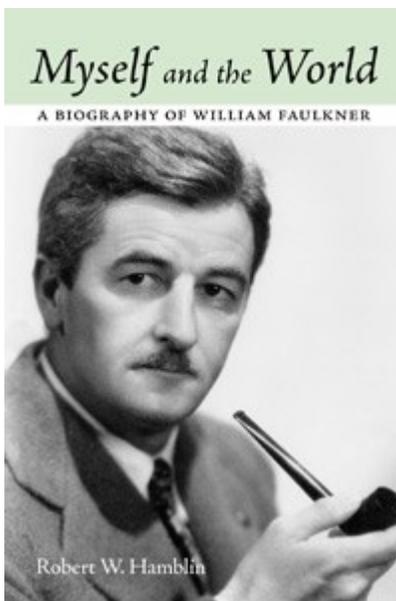


**Releasing June 3, 2016**

***Myself and the World***  
***A Biography of William Faulkner***

By Robert W. Hamblin

**A concise, readable biography of the Nobel laureate who defined southern literature**



William Faulkner (1897-1962) once said of his novels and stories, “I am telling the same story over and over, which is myself and the world.” This biography provides an overview of the life and career of the famous author, demonstrating the interrelationships of that life, centered in Oxford, Mississippi, with the characters and events of his fictional world. The book begins with a chapter on Faulkner's most famous ancestor, W. C. Falkner, “the Old Colonel,” who greatly influenced both the content and the form of Faulkner's fiction. Robert W. Hamblin then proceeds to examine the highlights of Faulkner's biography, from his childhood to his youthful days as a fledgling poet, through his time in New Orleans, the creation of Yoknapatawpha, the years of struggle and his season of prolific genius, and through his time in Hollywood and his winning of the Nobel Prize. The book concludes with a description of his last years as a revered author, cultural ambassador, and university writer-in-residence.

In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Faulkner spoke of “the agony and sweat of the human spirit” that goes into artistic creation. For Faulkner, that struggle was especially acute. Poor and neglected for much of his life, suffering from chronic depression and alcoholism, and unhappy in his personal life, Faulkner overcame tremendous obstacles to achieve literary success. One of the major themes of his novels and stories remains endurance, and his biography exhibits that quality in abundance.

Robert W. Hamblin, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, is professor emeritus of English and the founding director of the Center for Faulkner Studies at Southeast Missouri State University. A native of northeast Mississippi, he completed advanced degrees at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Faulkner's hometown. He has directed Faulkner seminars for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Missouri Humanities Council and has lectured on Faulkner in Europe and Asia, as well as throughout the United States. He has coedited seventeen books on William Faulkner, including a *William Faulkner Encyclopedia* and *A Companion to Faulkner Studies*.

**\$20.00 Hardcover**

**University Press  
of Mississippi**

**Also available on  
Amazon**



## A Chapter Sample from *Myself and the World*

### "Creation of Yoknapatawpha"

Robert W. Hamblin

In late 1926 and early 1927, heeding Sherwood Anderson's advice to write about "that little patch up there in Mississippi," Faulkner began the series of stories and novels that would become his Yoknapatawpha chronicle. Almost simultaneously two narratives from opposite ends of the socioeconomic spectrum grabbed hold of his imagination.

The first, born of the tall tales he had heard from Phil Stone about the rise of the rednecks, was the story of the Snopeses, an amoral, poor-white clan that was displacing the old aristocratic order. In the first of his numerous ironical reversals of biblical narratives, this one the story of the Old Testament Hebrews' quest for the Promised Land, these rapacious descendants of a "Father Abraham" were multiplying and swarming across the entire county, devouring everything and everyone in their path. The principal member of the bunch, Flem Snopes, used all manner of unscrupulous means to rise to the presidency of a bank in Jefferson.

The other narrative, originally conceived as *Flags in the Dust*, focused on the decline of one of those aristocratic families, the Sartoris, modeled in large measure on Faulkner's own family. Its patriarch, John Sartoris, had, like W. C. Falkner, served as a colonel in the Civil War, built a railroad, and died at the hand of a former business partner. His son was the president of another bank in Jefferson, and his twin grandsons were both airplane pilots in World War I. Interwoven into the Sartoris narrative are numerous poor whites, yeoman farmers, and African Americans of the type Faulkner daily saw in Oxford and the surrounding countryside.

Years later, looking back and reflecting on the genesis of his fictional Yoknapatawpha, Faulkner observed: "I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and that I would never live long enough to exhaust it, and that by sublimating the actual into the apocryphal I would have complete liberty to

use whatever talent I might have to its absolute top. It opened up a gold mine of other peoples." Sherwood Anderson had been right, and Faulkner was wise to follow the older writer's advice.

Faulkner came home for Christmas 1926 and decided to stay on in Oxford, moving back into the attic room in his parents' house on the university campus. Perhaps New Orleans was not as appealing to him, now that Helen Baird was married. Or perhaps it was because another woman of his close acquaintance had also returned to Oxford. With her two children—Victoria ("Cho-Cho") and Malcolm—Estelle Oldham Franklin, separated from her husband and awaiting their divorce decree, was living in her parents' home. Immediately, she and Faulkner started seeing each other again.

Dissatisfied with the amorphous structure of "Father Abraham," Faulkner laid that manuscript aside for the time being and devoted his full attention to *Flags in the Dust*. He peopled the novel with characters he knew well. In addition to reprising the career of his great-grandfather, he drew upon Grandfather J. W. T. Falkner for his portrayal of Bayard Sartoris and upon Auntee Holland for the characterization of Aunt Jenny Du Pre. A Faulkner family retainer, Ned Barnett, provided character traits for Simon Strother; and both Phil Stone and Ben Wasson saw something of themselves in the characterization of Horace Benbow. The reckless driving habits of Faulkner's brother Jack paralleled those of young Bayard Sartoris. Faulkner's self-characterization may have found its way into the novel in the aesthetic tastes of Benbow, the Sartoris brothers' love of airplanes, and the fatalism of young Bayard.

Ultimately *Flags in the Dust* is a story of decline, loss, and grief. Spanning four generations of the Sartoris family, the novel moves from the heroic exploits of Colonel John Sartoris during the Civil War and Reconstruction, through the life and career of his son Bayard in the late nineteenth and



early twentieth century, on through the self-destructive actions of the twin brothers John and young Bayard during World War I and afterward, to the birth of young Bayard's son, Benbow. The overarching theme of the book is expressed by the omniscient narrator, in the observation that the Sartoris represent "a game outmoded and played with pawns shaped too late and to an old dead pattern. . . . For there is death in the sound of it, and a glamorous fatality, like silver pennons downrushing at sunset, or a dying fall of horns along the road to Ronceveaux."

Living again in his parents' home gave Faulkner the opportunity to bond with his younger brother Dean. An outdoorsman like his father, an outstanding athlete, and a friendly, charismatic person, Dean was the most popular and engaging of all the Falkner boys. Like his oldest brother, Dean was interested in drawing and writing, and William provided him instructions in both. Faulkner seemed to relish his paternal role with Dean, perhaps motivated in part by a keen reminder of the absence of a close relationship he had experienced with his father.

Faulkner resumed his courtship of Estelle. He wrote a children's story, "The Wishing Tree," and produced a hand-made copy that he presented to Cho-Cho on her eighth birthday. The book was a gift of courtship to Cho-Cho's mother as much as a present to the young child. In fact, Faulkner was spending so much time at the Oldhams' that he was being referred to around town as "Major Oldham's yard boy."

Faulkner's writing of *Flags in the Dust* advanced rapidly; he had clearly found his subject and focus in the rich materials of his native locale. Just as importantly, he had discovered what would become a signature trademark of his later fiction: the interrelationship of the present with the past. When he finished the manuscript he rushed it off to the publisher, with a letter that reflected the pride he had in the work: "At last and certainly . . . I have written THE book, of which those other things were but foals. I believe it is the damdest best book you'll look at this year, and any other publisher."

But the news that came back from the publisher was devastating. Boni and Liveright

rejected the book, concluding that the plot was too disorganized and the character development too weak. "The story really doesn't get anywhere and has a thousand loose ends," Liveright wrote, adding that even heavy revision would not likely make the book any better.

Faulkner responded in disbelief and anger, feeling "like a parent who is told that its child is a thief or an idiot or a leper." He expressed his frustration in a letter to Liveright: "I have a belly full of writing, now, since you folks in the publishing business claim that a book like that last one I sent you is blah. I think now that I'll sell my typewriter and go to work—though God knows, it's sacrilege to waste that talent for idleness which I possess." Faulkner asked Liveright to return the manuscript so he could perhaps place it with another publisher.

Even as he was deciding what to do with *Flags in the Dust*, Faulkner had already started his next novel. This one he would write for himself, not for the unpredictable whim of publishers. As he remembered years later, "One day I seemed to shut a door between me and all publishers' addresses and book lists. I said to myself, Now I can write. Now I can make myself a vase like that which the old Roman kept at his bedside and wore the rim slowly away with kissing it." Like many of his novels and stories, Faulkner said, this one began with a single image: that of a little girl climbing a tree and of her brothers looking up at the muddy seat of her panties. The little girl was Caddy Compson, whom Faulkner ever after would call his "heart's darling."

*The Sound and the Fury*, as the novel came to be titled, was like nothing that had previously appeared in American, or even world, literature. It tells the story of the Compson family's disintegration from four different perspectives—the viewpoints of three brothers and a final omnisciently-narrated chapter ("the Dilsey section") that counterbalances the subjectivity of the previous chapters. The main character is the sister, Caddy, and although she is not assigned her own first-person narrative, it is she who controls the entire novel.

The first three sections of the novel are presented, successively, by the three Compson



brothers: Benjy, the thirty-three-year-old man with the mind of a child; Quentin, the troubled college student who commits suicide; and Jason, the selfish and ruthless materialist. All of these sections employ stream-of-consciousness technique, but each one is brilliantly adapted to the intelligence, outlook, and emotional state of the respective narrator. The fourth section discards the private and personal viewpoint to relate the story in an objective, third-person narration. Thus the movement of the novel is from the inner to the outer, from the personal to the objective, from the self to the world.

The overall structure of the novel is symphonic in nature. Just as a symphony moves from section to section, presenting varying moods and impressions, alternating speeds and rhythms, at times introducing *leitmotifs* and themes that will be developed more fully later on, at other times looping backward to recapitulate earlier themes, but always advancing toward a final resolution, so too does *The*

*Sound and the Fury* employ shifting tones and impressions, hints and foreshadowings, repetitions and recapitulations, and time shifts looping backward and forward, all consciously designed to shape the story not so much on the pages of the book but in the reader's mind and imagination. There has been nothing quite like this book, before or since, especially the Benjy section in which Faulkner convincingly portrays the mental processes of a mentally challenged individual.

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### Faulkner in the Classroom

The theme of the 2015 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, held July 19-23 on the University of Mississippi campus in Oxford, was "Faulkner and Print Culture." Two sessions were devoted to Teaching Faulkner: "Print Comes Easy, Culture Comes Hard: Faulkner In, On, and About Print" on Monday, July 20, and "Choosing the Texts" on July 21.

As always, these sessions were designed for audience participation and followed more of a group discussion format than a traditional presentation. Charles Peek and Terrell Tebbetts led the first session, and they guided the discussion to recurring themes and motifs throughout Faulkner's work. Tebbetts focused mainly on passages that directly engage with books, writing, and textuality throughout Faulkner's oeuvre, as well as drawing attention to the author's blending of the oral and written voice. Peek's emphasis was on the recurring idea of "dispossession," and the brief essay that he shared to kick off the session and get the discussion started is reprinted with his permission here.

The second Teaching Faulkner session was led by Theresa Towner, James Carothers, and Brian McDonald. They engaged the audience with questions of how and why we select the Faulkner texts that we do for the classroom. Many audience members shared stories of reading Faulkner for the first time as students, reflecting on difficulties and how they were overcome (if they were). McDonald shared a specific lesson that he has used with his class, and he has shared the details of it for *Teaching Faulkner* readers.



## Faulkner in Print on Print

Chuck Peek

Several Faulkner images are widely discussed—twilight, the dark house, and dust among them. To me, however, the most struck chord is summed up in the drama of the word “dispossessed.”

What a range of meanings and what a resonance with our own times!

Psychological perspectives and biblical stories alike raise the specter of being possessed and dispossessed. My grandmother would describe some people as “unprepossessing.” Individuals and families and tribes and nations get dispossessed. Speaking here [at the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha conference] many years ago, Shelby Foote described a three-generation time-span of rather continuously shifting from having possessions to being dispossessed. “Rent Parties” speak to the specter of dispossession. We often hear people speak of being possessed by their possessions, of possessing a good sense of humor, of asking someone, “Whatever possessed you to do that?”

I first came upon the drama of that word in Faulkner in the Appendix to *The Sound and the Fury*, where it describes variously the Scottish followers of Prince Charlie who were dispossessed of their clan lands and identities, the way in which the immigrant Scots dispossessed the Chickasaw and Choctaw of their ancient grounds, the way changing fortunes dispossess the Compson family of their property, and how in the wake of that they in turn dispossess first Caddy and then Quentin, Quentin closing the chronology the way it began, by fleeing what she can no longer fight.

“Dispossessed” becomes an indispensable rubric for reading Faulkner. (“The only thing I did of genius was name those folks Snopes.”)

In trauma studies, dispossession ranks high among the factors that can “unsettle” a person emotionally or geographically, and studies of the dispossessed show the ensuing struggle to get one’s bearings. On what can the dispossessed draw to

come to grips with their world, their chances, themselves? To where can they turn?

It seems to me two alternatives, perhaps more complementary than they might at first seem, present themselves. One alternative is presented by what we might mean by the terms education or “re-educating” oneself. Some dispossessed folks—from survivors of holocausts to people less violently transplanted to new environments—take recourse to “the classics”—indeed one might think of the classics as the place the marginalized find the home the world denies them. (Perhaps more generations have found new ways to read Homer’s *Odyssey* than can be counted.)

For example, in Willa Cather’s “Old Mrs. Harris,” Mr. Rosen, described as “the only unsuccessful member of a large, rich Jewish family” finds himself transplanted from the east to “keeping a clothing store in a little Western town.” We’re told “he didn’t mind . . . so long as he had a great deal of time to read philosophy” (103). Such reading sustained him: “He carried a country of his own in his mind, and was able to unfold it like a tent in any wilderness” (121). (Merrill Skaggs makes a good case that Faulkner read Cather assiduously.)

Or, similarly, Albert Murray, again speaking here some years ago, claimed that reading Faulkner helped him get his bearings in a world dominated by people who lived in places he was never allowed to frequent . . . that is, until he had a mind of his own, books and “book learning” gave him his understanding of the world he was denied. Faulkner claimed he re-read *Moby Dick* every year.

The other alternative, at first seeming just the opposite of classical learning, is comprised of the sort of “folk lore” as can often be found in such untoward sources as dime novels, grandmother’s quilts, children’s imitative games, religious rituals, foods and recipes, and languages that cultural distance renders as codes.

By extension, most all generations find



themselves at odds with previous generations (and will eventually be surprised when that pattern repeats itself and a new generation finds itself at odds with them), and to the extent the distance (the gap as it is often called) between them becomes significant, people of an age take recourse to new ways of finding things out (think “www”), new ways of speaking (think tweets), new markings of identity (think piercing, ink, etc.), and all of these begin to change the way the world looks (think library shelving).

A recent competition asked for the shortest headline that would describe real (or imagined) events . . . one of the champions, this headline for the death of Jerry Garcia: Head Deadhead Dead!

Put that beside the Gettysburg Address, put Lincoln’s address beside the typical oratory of his times, put that next to the typical well-furnished 19<sup>th</sup> Century novel. From *War and Peace* to Head Deadhead Dead—a radical change in code, in ways of knowing and expressing, in getting one’s bearings, in outlets and answers to the nearly universal experience of dispossession. The codes found variously in the graffiti on the passing coal train car and in *Lord of the Rings* and in the “chansons d’amour” of the troubadours and in the elongated neck of the eland painted on a cave wall in the Kalihari and in the behavior witnessed in a Raymond Chandler detective . . . in the thousand ways the dispossessed lay hold to some claim of possession. Records of the human race trying to say, as Faulkner put it, “Kilroy was here.”

What is the distance between Gavin going off to Heidelberg and the convict having recourse to cheap novels, from disparate characters visiting an art gallery in New York and Charlotte Rittenmeyer setting up a studio-on-the-run? From establishing the rhythm of words in *Sanctuary* by listening to Gershwin on the phonograph to prohibiting your family from listening to popular radio programs? From spelling to spell-check to spell-less media? What kinds of complaints did the modernist experiments in style provoke? How similar are those complaints to those heard today about what texting is doing to grammar and

spelling? Which would Shakespeare have been most familiar with? Or is that Shaksapur?

Or, more pointedly for our immediate concerns, which is the greater distance, from oral to literate culture? Or from high to low culture? Or from print to electronic culture? Or is there always much to discover precisely in the distance between whatever is our X and our Y, much that from an even greater distance seems uncannily the same. “Plus ça, meme ça”?

And think: from whatever angle or perspective, whichever distance we try to measure, is there any piece of it Faulkner missed? Didn’t he see it all? Didn’t he see it whole? See the whole history of the race from laying down our harps by the rivers of Babylon to picking up a gut bucket in the Mississippi Delta? All of it “fit to print”!

Dr. Charles A. Peek is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Nebraska, Kearney. He is the coeditor of *A William Faulkner Encyclopedia* (Greenwood, 1999), and is the author of numerous articles.



## Putting Together the Faulkner Puzzle in *The Sound and the Fury*

Brian McDonald

Teaching the texts of William Faulkner in a high school English classroom is certainly up for debate—particularly in an urban setting. Some believe that the Faulkner classics are not applicable to the youth of America; some people assert that students of color, especially with the conflicts surrounding communities in Ferguson, Missouri, and the murder of Trayvon Martin, take offense to how the South engages in conversations of race and power.

In neighboring districts, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been banned from their Advanced Placement (AP) reading list. Faulkner's classics have not reached this eradication stage; many people are of the assumption that Faulkner's works exacerbate some of the negative themes associated with race and the American South. It seems, however, Oprah Winfrey's promotion of Faulkner's works in her national Book Club Campaign some years ago has encouraged renewed interest in Faulkner.

This popularity, now sustained for more than a decade, raises the questions: Why, in spite of the possible backlash, should English teachers consider adding Faulkner's works to their curricula? Is having the endorsement of one of television's most popular personalities enough? Is there more? To better explain why I chose to teach Faulkner, I have outlined an activity that I used to teach *The Sound and the Fury* and the responses from students on how reading Faulkner takes, "time and lots of discussion."

From a personal perspective, I entered uncharted waters with my International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher Level English students; I entered these choppy waves and currents with extreme caution and hesitancy—but I did it. Teaching the IB curriculum requires that I teach from the recommended texts. Some might ask if IB really offers teachers a choice. The answer is yes, however, with some limitations. Then, I hear this all time from folks, "Well, then if you have other choices, why in the world would you choose to

teach William Faulkner? Faulkner is so difficult and he does not seem to have a 'place' in our current curriculum." While my follow-up comments have to be precise and relevant, I typically make reference to my former students who have shared Facebook messages or my students who have just finished their first year as college students; their messages are often filled with thanks and gratitude for exposing them to this style and difficulty of literature. The following scenario, which occurred in the Little Rock Airport, is typical of the responses that I receive when I say that I am teaching Faulkner to high school students.

**Lady in the airport:** "Sir, what book are you reading?"

**Me:** "I'm reading William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*."

**Lady in the airport:** "I hate to be rude, but is this the only book you could find to take with you on a flight? Faulkner's books are really difficult to understand and . . . I mean . . . it can't be enjoyable reading his books. Can it?"

**Me:** "Yes, I find them enjoyable. I am a high school English teacher and my students are going to read *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!* this year. I am really trying to expose my students to various works of literature as many of my students are college bound; I think they will benefit from these challenging texts . . ."

**Lady in the airport:** "I will certainly add your students to my prayer list . . . Good luck, sir."

After conversations with colleagues and with comments like these from the opinionated lady at the Little Rock Airport, I certainly had my doubts about teaching Faulkner. Was this lady right? Were his works going to be too difficult for my high school seniors? Regardless of my doubts, I was



determined to teach Faulkner. Thus, I started the brainstorming process of how I would get started and what activities / strategies I would use.

During the brainstorming process, I discovered that since *The Sound the Fury* was printed in four distinct sections, I would need to discuss how each section provides relevancy and connections to the others. I also realized that tackling this beast of a text would have to involve full class participation. How would I make that happen? What would that look like? Finally, I needed to consider how well my students could use the text to respond to questions on the IB and AP examinations. Then I started on this adventure of “putting together the *The Sound and the Fury* puzzle.”

First, I gathered all the materials needed to complete this group project: 11x16 construction paper, copies of the first page of each section of the text, and tape. Next, I placed the copies of the first page of each section: Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and Dilsey in the corners of the construction paper. Maybe more of a visual might help: Benjy was in the top left corner; Quentin was placed in the top right corner; Jason was placed in the lower left, and Dilsey was placed in the lower right corner. Since the paper was so large (I did this intentionally), there was considerable amount of space in the middle. I completed five of these visuals for each class as I planned to divide the class into five groups of five students. Of course, like all teachers, I had to devise a ‘plan B’ if this activity failed. So, I thought, and I thought, and I thought. . . . And there I was—nothing for a “plan B.” I thought, “Well, if this does not work, then I will just begin discussing the important aspects of ‘Benjy’s’ section and chalk this up as a failed activity.”

First, I asked the class to complete a T-chart. On the chart was “This is What I Know about the South” and the other side was “I Really Do Not Have Any Knowledge of the American South.” I gave them about three to five minutes to complete. After they completed this activity, I asked them to place the T-chart in their binders as we would revisit this later. Then, I started to get nervous. Would this work? How will my students react?

I asked each group to read the passage in the

top left corner first (Benjy’s Section), and as they read, to annotate the passage and try to figure out what was going on. They had two to three minutes to complete this activity. I then asked one student per table to share out loud the group’s findings. Well, of course, I heard the groans and the complaints, “Dr. McDonald. . . this makes no sense,” “Dr. McDonald, why would you have us read only the first page of the section . . .” My anxiety level was raised to another notch! After hearing all of the complaints, I asked them to simply report their findings, and they did. Here is what some of the groups said:

- It takes place in the South
- People are chasing a ball or playing a game
- Choppy sentences
- Difficult to follow

We repeated this annotating and reporting process for the other three sections. After reading Quentin’s section, the complaining lessened, and students continued with great discussions. When we finished reading and discussing Dilsey’s section, the time came for my students to meet their first real challenge: they had to make connections among characters that I had talked about earlier; they had to put the puzzle together.

With time remaining in our fifty minute class period, I asked the groups to record in the blank space of the construction paper the common elements of each first page. In just a few minutes of concentrated reading, thinking, and sharing, they saw the following essential elements and themes:

- People are oppressed
- Race is an issue
- Role of women—not good
- Conflict and lots of it
- Differences in social class
- Compassion
- Challenges: mentally, socially, and physically

The list my students created was phenomenal. After



our class discussions, I shared some points they missed, e.g., that Benjy and Luster are looking at a golf course. Lightbulbs began to go off with students. Throughout my classroom, I heard comments like, “Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhh that was the ball and that was why the flag was mentioned.” I just let them go because their excited and enriched conversations told me they were engaged and ready to begin their journey with Benjy and others in *The Sound and the Fury*.

For the last few minutes of the class period, I asked my students to take out the T-chart they completed earlier. I asked them to evaluate their level of knowledge of the American South and perhaps think about how Faulkner might change or enhance their views. Many students had their initial thoughts, positive and negative, validated; others were ready to give the South a “chance to redeem itself.” Prior to the final bell, I asked them to have the first twenty-five pages read for our next day’s discussion.

While this was only a 1 day activity, my students would return to their “puzzle” after reading each section in its entirety, and each day the conversations became more fruitful as the puzzle came together. Needless to say, I was quite pleased that my “leap of faith” had worked and that I did not have to resort to my plan B.

Even though I used this activity for *The Sound and the Fury*, I am confident that it can work for other texts. The key for my success was based on student engagement and my willingness to be the facilitator—not the teacher with all of the expert ideas and comments. Empowering high school students to own their thoughts both on and off paper is crucial to preparing them for their next chapter in life. If you are a teacher of literature, I strongly encourage you to engage your students in this activity; I challenge you to be that teacher who allows his/her students to think openly and to put together a literature puzzle.

Dr. McDonald taught all grades and levels of English at J.P. McCaskey High School in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Currently, Dr. McDonald is the Coordinator of International Baccalaureate Program and Advanced Studies in The School District of Lancaster. [btmcdonald@lancaster.k12.pa.us](mailto:btmcdonald@lancaster.k12.pa.us)

## FAULKNER & HURSTON

Edited by Dr. Christopher Rieger and Dr. Andrew Leiter



*Essays*

Not final cover

Releasing next year  
*Faulkner & Hurston*

A collection of  
essays from the  
2014 Faulkner and  
Hurston  
Conference.



**Call for Papers**  
**Faulkner and Hemingway**  
**A Conference Sponsored by the Center for Faulkner Studies**  
**Southeast Missouri State University**  
**Cape Girardeau, Missouri**  
**October 20-22, 2016**

This “Faulkner and Hemingway” conference invites proposals for twenty-minute papers on any topic related to William Faulkner and/or Ernest Hemingway. All critical approaches, including theoretical and pedagogical, are welcomed. We are particularly interested in intertextual approaches that treat both authors. Proposals for organized panels are also encouraged.

Possible topics could include: race, gender, class, biography, history, World War I, the Great Depression, the Global South, religion, the natural environment, hunting, myth, humor, language, trauma, disability, and modernism.

In addition to the paper sessions, the conference will include a keynote address by Joseph Fruscione, author of *Faulkner and Hemingway: Biography of a Literary Rivalry*, a tour of the University’s renowned L. D. Brodsky Collection of Faulkner materials, and a literary-themed art exhibition.

Expanded versions of the papers will be considered for possible publication in a collection of essays to be published by Southeast Missouri State University Press.

E-mail a 200-300-word abstract by May 15, 2016, to: [cfs@semo.edu](mailto:cfs@semo.edu) Inquiries can be directed to Christopher Rieger at [crieger@semo.edu](mailto:crieger@semo.edu) or (573) 651-2620.

**FAULKNER AND HEMINGWAY UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CONTEST:**

Undergraduate students from any institution are encouraged to submit papers for this conference. These papers (7-10 pages) may be on Faulkner, Hemingway, or both. The authors of the top two undergraduate submissions will receive cash prizes respectively of \$150 and \$100; a waiver of the conference registration and banquet fees; and an invitation to present the winning entries at the conference (winners must participate in the conference to qualify for the cash award). Contest submissions may be submitted by e-mail attachment to [cfs@semo.edu](mailto:cfs@semo.edu) and must be received by May 15, 2016. Undergraduate submissions not awarded cash prizes will be considered for inclusion among the presentations at the conference. NOTE: To be eligible for this contest, a student must be enrolled as an undergraduate during all or part of the 2016 calendar year.

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