Remote Rural Students' Perceptions of their Collegiate Transition Experience

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THE CONJUNCTIVE NOVEL: FORM AND FUNCTION

by

Joanne Ruth Gowey Desotelle

Bachelor of Arts, Moorhead State University, 1964
Master of Arts, Moorhead State University, 1967

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This dissertation submitted by Joanne Ruth Gowey Desotelle in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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This Dissertation meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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To Jim and Joel.
The purpose of this paper is to identify the function of characters who recur in more than one text by the same author.

Chapter One reviews critical opinions regarding repeating characters. These range from Percy Lubbock who believes that the other lives of a character should be ignored or they will distort the truth of the individual novels, to Michel Butor who recognizes that repeating characters serve a unique function within the texts. The term "conjunctive" novel is coined to identify texts which are conjoined by repeating characters.

Applying Mikhail Bakhtin's terminology, Chapter Two argues that conjunctive novels are double-voiced discourses generated by a dialogic interaction between repeating characters and the conjoined texts. Divorced from novel time and causality, repeating characters are drawn together in the interstices between the texts where they interact free from the authority of any one text.

Chapter Three applies the theory to three repeating characters in William Faulkner's *Light in August*, each of whom interacts with one main character: the Armstids (Lena), the elder Burdens (Joanna), and Capt. John McLendon (Joe Christmas). The dialogic confrontation which occurs
creates a new perspective which can ripple across the entire surface of the conjoined texts. The combined character of Martha Armstid forces a re-evaluation of Lena Grove's "luminosity." The combined stories about the shooting of the two Burden men by Colonel Sartoris reveals how the discrimination of memory results in a self-created history. The link Capt. John McLendon creates between Joe Christmas and Will Mayes in "Dry September" reveals that McLendon, Mayes and Christmas are all victims of a racially and sexually dependent code.

Chapter Four utilizes the enhanced perspectives afforded by the intertextual readings to locate the pattern behind the three plots of Light in August. Instead of the temporal and causal resolution which the novel genre anticipates, the various "plots" represent alternative responses to life consistent with the Melvillian "trinity of conscience: knowing nothing, knowing but not caring, knowing and caring" (Faulkner), represented by Lena; Joanna Burden and Hightower; and Joe Christmas, respectively.

Chapter five extends the theory to texts conjoined in a series (by application to James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking tales), as well as texts conjoined by place (by application to Gloria Naylor's novels, The Women of Brewster Place and Linden Hills).

The study concludes that repeating characters animate the conjoined texts, and prevent each of the texts from hardening into a fait accompli.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Contrary critical opinions exist regarding the function of repeating characters in works by the same author. Percy Lubbock in The Craft of Fiction (1921), for example, questions Balzac's "amusing trick . . . of making book after book overlap and encroach and entangle itself with the rest, by the device of setting the hero of one story to figure more or less obscurely in a dozen others" (207-8). Lubbock contends that the only function these characters serve is to support the action in the foreground, and that "whatever more they may bring will lie idle, will contribute nothing, and may even become an embarrassment" (209). If the reader attempts to introduce this other life into subsequent stories, it will obstruct the fictive world of the second story by setting up relationships that have nothing to do with the story at hand. Therefore, Lubbock concludes, these reappearing characters "must for the time being shed their irrelevant life; if they fail to do so, they disturb the unity of the story and confuse its truth" (210).

Meir Sternberg (1974) concurs with Lubbock's position. He attributes the narrator's summary in Barchester Towers of the prior adventures of Mr. Harding in The Warden, and
Huck’s disclaimer at the beginning of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, that "you don’t know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain’t no matter," followed by a summary of the pertinent events in that story, to a positive warning to the reader not to drag into a story any associations that are artistically irrelevant to it. In these opening remarks the author seems to caution the reader somewhat as follows: "This is all you need keep in mind for the purposes of the present narrative. If you are possessed of more information than this, all the better, but, in spite of the recurrence of Mr. Harding, do not drag the whole conflict to which *The Warden* is devoted into *Barchester Towers* or you will throw the latter work out of focus." (Sternberg 30)

Carried-over characters, Sternberg goes on to say, may be relevant when discussing "an author’s figure in the carpet or of his output as a whole," but when a critic is interested only in a single work "in all its uniqueness of norms and structure, he cannot but regard all extraneous information about its characters and setting as external evidence" unless "adequately corroborated by internal evidence" (30-31).

On the other hand, Harry Levin in *The Gates of Horn*
considers the use of reappearing characters, which he refers to as the "retour des personnages" (which he says "is as old as the first writer who hit upon a success and wrote a sequel" [201]) a "brilliant device that integrates Balzac's volumes," a device capable of expanding "the flat, old-fashioned technique of characterization" (201), and of broadening "the usual narrative sequence where the middle is limited by the beginning and the end" by creating works in which the whole is "greater than the sum of its parts" (202 [See Note 1]). In fact, if one considers psychology as adding a third dimension to the novel, says Levin, "Balzac's system of cross reference added a fourth--the dimension of time and change and growth in which Proust was to move" (201).

Michel Butor, who is both a critic and a novelist, locates the clue to Balzac's intentions in the latter's 1842 preface to the Comédie humaine (See Note 2):

[Walter Scott failed] to link his compositions together in such a manner as to coordinate a complete history, each chapter of which would have been a novel, and each novel an epoch. Upon discovering this lack of a link . . . I saw at the same time the system most favorable to the execution of my work and the possibility of executing it. (qtd. in Butor 103)

As Butor points out, Balzac reasoned that if one character
in one small novel has the capability of representing one historical epoch, then "a sequence of characters linked by adventures" could be used to represent a "whole sequence of historical epochs" (103). To do this, one character must be capable of representing an entire class: one lawyer to represent all lawyers, one poet to represent all poets, and also, when once described in one situation (story), each character must be flexible enough to function in others (stories), and to do so without having to be reintroduced and redrawn at each appearance. Therefore, Butor sees Balzac's use of repeating characters as "a sort of novelistic ellipsis," or as "a principle of economy" to keep the individual novels from becoming too long (104). In each narrative, only the facts indispensable "for a superficial understanding of the adventure in question" (104) would be included; however:

by reading the other books in which these same characters appear . . . the structure and the bearing of a particular novel change according to the number of other novels we have read; a story which seemed linear and somewhat simplistic at first reading, when we were ignorant of the Balzacian world, is later revealed as the meeting point of a whole series of themes already explored elsewhere. (104)

The result is a "novelistic mobile" which can be approached
through any of its various entrances.

Framed by real personages indispensable to an historical recreation of a particular period, these recurring characters create "a kind of nearer reality: the relation between what one says about a fictitious character in one novel and what one says about him in the others being the same as that between what is said about a real character in the Comédie humaine and what one has said about him or her elsewhere" (107). Recurring characters, then, according to Butor's interpretation of Balzac, besides any thematic function they may serve, are a narrative device which serve to create historical verisimilitude in the most economical way possible by avoiding excess repetition.

Both Levin and Butor acknowledge that recurring characters create works in which the whole is larger than a sum of its parts. By juxtaposition, each part when joined to the other parts becomes individually larger than when standing alone. John Irwin, in his study of intertextuality generated by the recurring figure of Quentin Compson in Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury and Absalom, Absalom! (Doubling and Incest), goes one step beyond. He sees the repeating elements (not limited to recurring characters) as creating not just a larger whole, but "through the simultaneous multiplication of every element by every other element" (6), and through
"simultaneous interaction the elements mutually create one another, mutually constitute themselves as elements in a holistic structure" (7). But this is not a structure superimposed over the parts, but is instead "a structure that exists in the interstices between" the individual texts (3). In these interstices occur a "suicidal, incestuous struggle between the writer and the other self of his book . . ." (20), which is evoked "as a kind of incestuous doubling in which the writer, through an oblique repetition, seeks revenge against time" (1). This space is synonymous with the "dark room" which is the source of a writer's imaginings, "the womb of art" that a writer is unable to enter, but which, to be a writer, he must enter at least imaginatively (171).

Irwin equates the doubling of Quentin in The Sound and the Fury and Absalom, Absalom! to a reenactment of the act of doubling which occurs between the author and the other self he recreates in language, "as the other, a narcissistic mirroring of the self to which the author's reaction is at once a fascinated self-love and an equally fascinated self-hatred" (158-9). Utilizing Freudian psychology, Irwin describes the "dark self," the doubled image as "an involuntary repetition, an unconscious projection that has returned by means beyond the control of the conscious will" (92). Thus there is an analogue between Quentin's incessant return to an analysis of his
dark side in *The Sound and the Fury*, and his projection of these analyses in his developing narrative about Henry and Bon in *Absalom, Absalom!*; and Faulkner's insistent return to the theme of doubling and incest.

The importance to the discussion of recurring characters is not the issue of doubling and incest, *per se*, but the fact that this theme exists in no single Faulkner novel nor the sum total of these novels; it exists, rather, in that imaginative space that the novels create *in between* themselves by their interaction. The analysis of one novel will not reveal it, nor will it be revealed by an analysis of all the novels in a process of simple addition, for since the structure is created by means of an interplay between texts, it must be approached through a critical process that, like the solving of a simultaneous equation, oscillates between two or more texts at once. (157)

Irwin's study is a 180 degree turn from the critical stance of Percy Lubbock and Meir Sternberg as well as such Faulkner critics as Richard Poirier (who contends that Quentin's personal history is not significant to *Absalom, Absalom!* because it is contained in a different story [cited in Irwin 27]), all of whom maintain that recurring characters must shed their former lives in any subsequent
narrative in which they appear. Instead, Irwin sees their function as instrumental to developing supplemental themes between the novels and between the author and his novels.

Despite such specific studies as Levin’s, Butor’s and Irwin’s, the general function of repeating characters as a narrative technique has been largely ignored. To say that Faulkner used repeating characters to serve the theme of doubling and incest, or that Balzac used repeating characters to catch "the facets of personality, for recording the passage of years, for registering the shifts and compromises and realignments that interrelate a series of careers" (Levin 201), is to put very specific parameters around these characters and their function, but to leave unexplored the possibility that repeating characters work as a narrative device with a more universal purpose and function.

The purpose of this paper is to arrive at a general theory regarding the function of repeating characters in any novel which uses this device, first as a general theory, and then by application to specific novels.

Although it is not possible to assign names to each narrative or diegetic variation, there are some subcategories whose distinct characteristics justify classification as a group. Novels which utilize repeating characters seem to warrant the differentiation which a specific name would afford.
To date, this novelistic technique has been for all practical purposes, unnamed. Alan Warren Friedman in his essay, "The Modern Multivalent Novel: Form and Function," includes this novel group in his discussion of "multivalent" novels, a term he adopted from the chemical term which designates "atoms capable of combining with other atoms in multiple combinations" (122). Although an analogy does exist between this chemical function and the function of repeating characters in the novel, in application Friedman does not limit the use of this term solely to this type of novel, but applies the term to multiple narrative perspectives, both "to multiple ways of viewing and to multiple ways of being seen" (123), a phenomenon which is not exclusive to reappearing characters in multiple volumes, but which can be applied equally to the multiple narrative stances which occur in individual novels such as the double narrative perspective occasioned by a youthful versus a mature Pip in Great Expectations, or the multiple perspectives created by the various narrators in Wuthering Heights.

The term "multivalent" seems to be an appropriate term to describe multiple narrative perspectives whether within a single novel, or between multivolume novels, regardless of whether the latter contains carried-over characters. While novels with repeating characters can be "multivalent" in Friedman's definition of the term, because this term
does not apply exclusively to them, it does not solve the problem of identifying that unique group of novels which utilize repeated characters.

A second term has been proposed by Jean Ricardou in his discussion of the works of Claude Simon, "intertextualite restreinte," which he defines as "des textes par rapport aux textes qu’il a signés" (11). (An alternate term is self-quotation.) However, as Karin Holter points out, the concept implied by these terms "remains so vague that it is relatively difficult to work with" (133), because it is applied equally to textual inferences and to word for word repetitions. Rather than defining a specific category of texts, these terms instead define a process which Holter says is capable of reactivating "a text already written by the text being written, and where the earlier text serves as a comment on the new one" (134).

While both Ricardou and Holter may have in mind a type of intertextuality, this term is not limited enough to designate specifically the category of novels being delimited, because it is not so much a name as an explanation of process.

In place of the above terms which are not exclusive and therefore do not exactly define that category of novels which contain repeated characters, I propose instead the term "conjunctive." From the Latin "conjunctivus" (LL...
"conjunctus"), to conjoin, this word has the advantage of both simplicity and clarity, since its function is similar to the common conjunction (and, but, or, nor), whose purpose is to connect "the sentence or main clause in which it occurs with the preceding one and qualifying the whole sentence or clause in which it occurs rather than any single word or phrase in it" (Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, 1981). It has the added connotation of not implying a hierarchy, since each of the conjoined points is a self-sufficient grammatical unit (in the same way that each of the conjoined novels is a self-contained unit). As a grammatical construct, a conjunction may reverse meaning (this, but not that), but it also implies, if not exactly equality, at least balance. As a construct of logic, the noun, "conjunction," from which the adjective, "conjunctive," is derived, retains this sense of hierarchical neutrality since it denotes statements that are true only if both of their components are true.

As the following discussion will show, both, or all, segments of these novels are dependent on the others for completion, even as they retain their own independent and autonomous status. Consequently, the term "conjunctive" seems to more clearly describe not only how these novels connect, but the terms of their relationship as well. I will henceforth refer to those novels by the same author which contain reappearing characters as "conjunctive
novels" (See Note 3).

There are instances of one writer's utilizing the fictional characters of another within his text, such as Fielding's use of Richardson's Andrews family from *Pamela*, in *Joseph Andrews*. How repeating characters function between texts by different authors may be similar to the way they function between texts by the same author, but since the specific intention involves some degree of irony, satire, or parody, this group of novels forms a distinct subcategory of conjunctive novels and will not be included in this discussion.

In adopting the term conjunctive to define this particular group of novels, it is important to point out that Andrew LeVot in an essay entitled, "Disjunctive and Conjunctive Modes in Contemporary American Fiction," uses the term "conjunctive" in correlation with "disjunctive" to describe two extreme writing methods in modern literature which have developed as a way to establish form in a formless, meaningless world, a condition of modern society described by both Lukacs and Mikhail Bakhtin in their individual studies of the novel. The disjunctive mode describes a paratactic style intended to replicate the human parataxic experience. The conjunctive mode, on the other hand, exhibits a hypotactic style as a correlative to the individual response to the external meaninglessness by attempting to link everything. The hypotactic style
identified by syntactic subordination reflects "the recognition of the strong link binding man and history, man and his natural surroundings, the interdependence between the past and the present, our acts and their consequences" (52). The piling up of details (as opposed to the starkness of the disjunctive mode), and the "torrential language jumbles" (53), attempt "to impose a mad design upon the world" (54). Together these "extreme poles of frigid isolation and delirious involvement, two poles leaving between them an empty space" reveal a tendency in the modern novel to drift "away from that central blank formerly occupied by the traditional novel" (54). Against the flatness of the disjunctive imagination, "the conjunctive imagination is baroque in its insistence on organismism, movement, convergence of initially antagonistic elements" (55); they both break from the "order nucleus of the novel, bear witness to a reluctance to acknowledge 'normality' and 'sanity' as a rule . . . " (55).

While the term conjunctive in LeVot's sense is not limited to novels with recurring characters, the discussion below will show that his definition of conjunctive is surprisingly close to the function of repeating characters in conjunctive novels in the sense that they serve as an additive device, rather than as an estranging device. Therefore, although LeVot uses the term conjunctive to describe a particular style of writing, that style is not
inconsistent with the one I ascribe below to conjunctive novels. The two uses of the term then, are not at cross-purposes with each other.

One of the major problems earlier critics had in identifying the function of repeating characters was the lack of critical terminology with which to describe this function. Twentieth century literary and linguistic theories have spawned new terms which provide the tools for analyzing aspects of narrative which it was not possible to analyze before.

One particular set of terms which is useful to analyze the narrative function of repeating characters, arises out of Mikhail Bakhtin’s identification of polyphonic literature, which has led to the reclassification of fiction into monologic and dialogic texts. In the light of Bakhtin’s studies, conjunctive novels come into focus as more than just sequels, as more than just devices of artistic economy, but as complex narrative strategies.

The following study will analyze how repeating characters function within the novel, and ascertain how they impact upon the various novels in which they appear. For application of the theory, I will use William Faulkner’s Light in August, since the junctures between this novel and other Faulkner novels are sufficiently slight to be treated in detail, thus affording a better opportunity to isolate and examine how repeating characters
function, and James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales in order to show how even stories which appear to be sequels or parts of a series (le roman fleuve), through an analysis of repeated characters reveal unexpected narrative depths.
NOTES

1 The use of the phrase "retour des personnages" to identify repeating characters appears to be original with Levin. There is no comparable term in English to identify this phenomenon. I have chosen to use either "repeating character" or "recurring character" as the English equivalent, although these words are not as exclusively specific as Levin's phrase. I have not chosen to use the latter, however, because of the frequency with which these words will be used and the awkwardness of continuously incorporating a foreign phrase into an English sentence.

2 It is not surprising that Butor can appreciate the plurality in Balzac's texts since Butor is described as one who "continually outdistances his pursuers, who cannot keep pace with his vertiginous flights, much less arrest it," and his creative efforts are described as "perpetually mobile" (Lydon xiv).

3 This category of novel (conjunctive novels) also designates novels which are conjoined by place as well as by character. For example, Thomas Hardy's Essex novels are conjunctive novels even though they include no recurring characters.
CHAPTER II
THE THEORY
A. Defining the Terms

Twentieth century critical literary theory has provided the terms with which to discuss conjunctive novels: intertextuality, textual plurality, polyphony, and monologic vs dialogic texts. For many decades, Henry James's theories dominated novel criticism. According to R. P. Blackmur, James believed that the novel should remove "the waste and muddlement and bewilderment" from life, and give "it a lucid, intelligible form." James detested "[l]oosness of any description, whether of conception or of execution" (xxiii, xxiv). In a letter to Hugh Walpole in 1912, James wrote that he deplored a novel which "leaked:"

Form alone takes, and holds and preserves, substance—saves it from the welter of helpless verbiage that we swim in as in a sea of tasteless tepid pudding, and that makes one ashamed of an art capable of such degradations. Tolstoi and D[ostoevsky] are fluid puddings, though not tasteless, because the amount of their own minds and souls in solution in the broth gives it savour and flavour, thanks to the strong, rank
quality of their genius and their experience. But there are all sorts of things to be said of them, and in particular that we see how great a vice is their lack of composition, their defiance of economy and architecture, directly they are emulated and imitated; then, as subjects of emulation, models, they quite give themselves away. There is nothing so deplorable as a work of art with a leak in its interest. . . .

(Letters 2: 237-38)

To minimize such "leaks," Wayne Booth notes that "authors have generally experienced an irresistible temptation to impose monological unities upon their works" (Introduction xxi). This unity has traditionally been achieved by perceiving of form and content as philosophical statements about life rather than as artistic constructs. In 1958 Alain Robbe-Grillet stated that "in the current view . . . the epithet 'great' is applicable only to the novel whose significance extends beyond the story to embrace a 'profound human truth', an ethical or metaphysical reality . . ." (119). As philosophical statements:

Characters are polemicized with, learned from; attempts are made to develop their views into finished systems. The character is treated as ideologically authoritative and independent; he
is perceived as the author of a fully weighted ideological conception of his own, and not as the object of Dostoevsky's finalizing artistic vision . . . as if the character were not an object of authorial discourse, but rather a fully valid, autonomous carrier of his own individual word. (Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics 5 [See Note 1])

The novel characteristics which James refers to as "fluid pudding" and as creating a "leak" in the novel, the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin attributes to "a fundamentally new novelistic genre," the polyphonic novel, which calls for new evaluative criteria (Problems 7). The failure of critics to recognize and appreciate polyphonic novels can be traced to traditional stylistics. According to Bakhtin in The Dialogic Imagination, literary criticism originated with the monophonic genres, such as poetry, which consists of a single language and a single authorial voice (265). This same criteria was applied to the novel, and led to evaluating that genre also as "a self-sufficient and closed authorial monologue" (274). Because of the focus of traditional stylistics, critics did not have the tools for analyzing a genre which is "multiform in style and variform in speech and voice" (261); as a result, much that relates to the polyphonic novel has "remained almost entirely beyond the realm of
consideration . . ." (275).

Henry James's negative assessment of Dostoevsky in the above passage originates in his failure to recognize that the texts he is criticizing are polyphonic and that the traditional stylistics which forms the background for his critical evaluation does not apply to these novels. What James perceives as a defect in Dostoevsky's works, its fluidity, is a characteristic of the polyphonic novel which Bakhtin contends is a response to the "inconclusive and fluid" condition of contemporary society (The Dialogic Imagination 39 [See Note 2]). Bakhtin defines the polyphonic novel as:

A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices. . . . What unfolds in [Dostoevsky's] works is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event. . . . In no way, then, can a character's discourse be exhausted by the usual functions of characterization and plot development, nor does it serve as a vehicle for the author's own ideological position. . . . (Problems 6-7)
In The Dialogic Imagination Bakhtin explains that contrary to contemporary society, the heroic age was a monolithic age. There was one world view and one language in which to discuss it. There was no separation between the individual man and his world because there was only one ideology. The monolithic ideology of the heroic age was continued by the monolithic ideology of "The Church."

The gradual disintegration of this world, which was hastened by the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation, also led to the decentralization of the verbal-ideological world as well, a breakdown which resulted in both the fragmentation of the societal hierarchy and a fragmentation of language (415). One word no longer had only one referent; one word no longer represented only one ideologue. The language variations which once signaled an individual's place within the centralized ideology came to represent different ideologies, different "truths." As the Great Chain of Being dissolved, so did society, so did "truth," so did the inviolability of the word. From a single voice arose a multitude of voices representing the various ideologies which intersect an individual's life, each represented by a social dialect which was differentiated by one's culture, one's parents, one's family, one's religion, one's education, one's social class, one's geographical residence. Each person, Booth notes, speaks "a chorus of languages" (Introduction xxi).
The recognition of this multiplicity of languages led Bakhtin to define the novel which attempts to reflect this "chorus of languages" as: "a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized" (Dialogic 262).

Bakhtin's definition shifts the traditional perception of the novel from printed words upon the page to perceiving it as an utterance, or a series of utterances, of voices participating in a discourse in which the reader is also a participant. In every text, says Bakhtin, we always arrive "at the human voice" which, regardless of the moment of creative birth, occupies time-space in the present historical world:

In the completely real-life time-space where the work resonates, where we find the inscription or the book, we find as well a real person— one who originates spoken speech as well as the inscription and the book— and real people who are hearing and reading the text. Of course, these real people, the authors and the listeners or readers, may be (and often are) located in different time-spaces, sometimes separated from each other by centuries and by great spatial distances, but nevertheless they are all located in a real, unitary and as yet incomplete
historical world set off by a sharp and
categorical boundary from the represented world
in the text. Therefore we may call this world
the world that *creates* the text, for all its
aspects—the reality reflected in the text, the
authors creating the text, the performers of the
text (if they exist) and finally the listeners or
readers who recreate and in so doing renew the
text—participate equally in the creation of the
represented world in the text. (Dialogic 253)

According to this concept, the text is a speaking
voice always contemporaneous with the person holding the
text, and moves the reader from passive receptor to
participant. Nina Perlina points out that for Bakhtin "the
word is not a free morpheme, and phrase, sentence and
paragraph are not syntactical elements of language; rather
they are all *utterances*: rejoinders, statements and replies
in ongoing discourse" (16).

Perceiving of text as utterance opens up a text to
multiplicity, because each element within the text, the
narrators, the inserted genres, the characters, the
authorial voice, represents a different voice, and when
these different voices come together they collide and
create a dialogue because:

Two directly intentional utterances of equal rank
within a single context cannot occur together
without interacting as a dialogue. . . . Two statements of equal weight on the same subject, once they come together, cannot line up in a row like two objects—they must make an inner contact, that is, they must enter into a conceptual bond. ("The Typology of Discourse" 180 [See Note 3])

This "dialogue" does not refer to the compositional form of speech known as dialogue, nor the social form known as conversation; it is a dialogue which is inherent in the language of a heteroglossic society. It takes place not only between speakers, but within and between the words of an individual speaker which reveal his social and ideological position, the perception of his socio-ideological position in relation to the other, and the anticipated rejoinder or response of the listener or receptor. Whether the speaker feels inferior or superior, wiser or more ignorant, poorer or richer, than the real or imagined listener, whether he anticipates approval or disapproval, and whether he approves or disapproves of the listener, all influence the choice and formation of his words. Bakhtin refers to this multiple intentions within words as polyphony.

Bakhtin contends that contemporary stylistics has ignored this polyphony within the word, because it is based upon Neo-classical poetics which is oriented toward direct
intentional discourse in which "words are common property, objects which go to make up the poetic lexicon, and any item taken from the storehouse of poetic language is transferred directly into the monologic context of a given poetic expression ("Typology" 193). This concept:

ignores those changes which come about in discourse during the process of shifting words from one concrete utterance to another and during the process of the mutual orientation of those utterances . . . [as well as ignoring the inner dialogic relationship that may exist between a word in one context and the same word in the context of another speech act. . . . ("Typology" 193)

The problem of deciphering polyphonia within words is compounded when one attempts to reproduce another’s speech creatively. The narrator, with his own ideologic base and with his own intentions, attempts to reproduce another speech act which can represent a different ideological base as well as another intention. In these instances, one speech act:

serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse there are two
voices, two meanings and two expressions.

(Dialogic 324)

These two voices, meanings and expressions interact, just as two exchanges in dialogue interact, "it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other" (Dialogic 324 [emphasis added]).

Bakhtin uses the terms "dialogic" and "monologic" to identify the relationship among the various voices within a text, whether or not those voices are physically represented in the work as embodied characters or as implied characters, or as embodied ideas or implied ideas. In a monologic context, regardless of the number of speaking characters or the number of ideological positions represented, there is only one intention, and all other intentions are merged with and made a part of that intention, so that only one voice is heard on the surface plane of the text. Monologic discourses, then, are single-voiced utterances.

Double voiced discourse occurs when the other voice(s) penetrates the dominant voice. In "Discourse Typology in Prose," Bakhtin analyzes the various relationships which can exist between these two voices. In stylization, narrator's narration and Ich-Erzählung, the dominant voice makes use of another speech act "as the expression of a special point of view" (181), but the two speech acts do not merge. Instead, the one speech act observes the other
from the outside. Narrator's narration and *Ich-Erzähnung* refracts the other speech act through the speech act of a narrator. In each of these situations, "the author manipulates another speech act in the direction of his own intentions" but "[t]he author's intention, having penetrated the other speech act and having become embedded in it, does not clash with another intention; it follows that intention in the latter's own direction, only making that direction conventional" (185).

A different type of relationship exists between the dominant voice and the second voice in parody. In this case:

the author . . . introduces into that other speech an intention which is directly opposed to the original one. The second voice, having lodged in the other speech, clashes antagonistically with the original, host voice and forces it to serve directly opposite aims. Speech becomes a battlefield for opposing intentions. (185)

Parody can be directed at the other's style, or the other's social or individual manners, ideas, or speech.

As opposed to the uni-directional orientation of intentions in stylization, narrator's narration and *Ich-Erzähnung*, in parody the relationship between the two speech acts is vari-directional because the two speech acts
are at odds with each other, and are thus involved in an unresolved conflict. In all of the above speech relationships, though, the words of the second speaker are utilized for the intentions of the dominant speaker.

The above types of double-voiced discourse occur in compositional dialogue. There is, however, a third type of interspeech relationship in which the other speech act remains physically outside the domain of the dominant speech act, and thus does not come under the control of the latter’s intention. Instead, from its position outside, it exerts an influence on, and is able to dictate the shape of, that dominant voice. This is what happens in what Bakhtin calls, "hidden polemic," in which the dominant discourse brings a polemical attack to bear against another speech act, another assertion, on the same topic. Here one utterance focused on its referential object clashes with another utterance on the grounds of the referent itself. That other utterance is not reproduced; it is understood only in its import; but the whole structure of the author’s speech would be completely different, if it were not for this reaction to another’s unexpressed speech act. ("Typology" 187)

In "hidden polemic" the dominant voice senses the
other's presence and adjusts its own voice to respond to it. In literature, this second voice can be the listener, reader or critic whose criticism, evaluation, or point of view is anticipated within the text; or, more pertinent to this discussion, this second voice can be another literary discourse which the dominant voice senses and responds to within its own discourse. This is a dialogue which takes place beyond words. The reaction of one text to another is similar to, and could be considered an extension of, the reaction within a line of dialogue to the hidden polemic: "In such a line every utterance, while focused on its referential object, at the same time displays an intensive reaction to another utterance, either replying to it or anticipating it" ("Typology" 189).

Of special significance in its application to the study of literature is the characteristic inherent in any dialogic situation of each speaker always reacting to another, either by replying to or by anticipating, the other's reaction or reply. The other speaker, whether present or implied, constantly exerts a force on the speaking voice which is capable of determining the shape (and in application to literature, the intention), of the speaking voice:

Such an utterance appears to be taking in, sucking into itself, the utterances and intentions of the speaker and intensively
reworking them. The . . . dialogue becomes an arena of events within itself and its very topic of discourse is seen in a new light, disclosing new facets inaccessible to monologic discourse. ("Typology" 189)

By analogy the "second voice" within an individual's speech, speaking like a "voice over" to the individual's socio-ideological convictions, and to his sense of relationship to other, is similar to the multi-voiced speech in a creative work. The recognition of this analogy allowed Bakhtin to move from generalized statements about discourse to an application of this discourse to the novel, which he felt was the only genre capable of incorporating this multiplicity.

The result is a re-classification of fiction into monologic or univocal (single voiced), and polyphonic (multi-voiced) or dialogic texts. The term polyphonic refers to the multiple voices heard, while the term dialogic refers to the way in which they interact. These terms do not differentiate narrative levels, since a single omniscient narrator can be polyphonic, while a multi-narrated text can be monologic; instead, they refer to the degree of freedom with which the individual voices are allowed to speak within a text.

In a monologic novel, all elements are merged into the narrator's consciousness. He alone is an ideolo-ist; he
alone sees and understands and knows; he alone carries authority. His speech is not addressed to anyone and does not presume a response; it is both "closed and deaf" (Dialogic 12). This single voice "creates a tremendous authority, an implied truth-uttering presence" (Ross 79). The narrator transforms the represented world into a voiceless object of his own ideology; his hero is nothing more than a representation of that ideology (Bakhtin, Problems 83-84):

The author's field of vision nowhere intersects or collides dialogically with the characters' fields of vision or attitudes, nowhere does the word of the author encounter resistance from the hero's potential word, a word that might illuminate the same object differently, in its own way—that is, from the vantage point of its own truth. (Problems 71)

Wayne Booth agrees with Bakhtin's identification of the European novel as "fundamentally monologic" (Dialogic 8), because the characters do not tell their own story, but serve only as objects of the narrator's intention (Introduction xxii). These novels recognize only one type of individualization: error and it takes only one voice to reveal this error, "someone who knows and possesses the truth" who can instruct those who are "ignorant of it and in error" (Problems 81).
A polyphonic novel, on the other hand, allows the different voices to speak. One voice does not subjugate the other voices to his intention. Rather than being "closed and deaf" like the monologic novel, it is open and dialogic. Polyphonism, however, is more than multileveledness, multivoicedness, plurigenerism or plurilinguism, as M.-Pierrette Malcuzynski emphasizes in "Polyphonic Theory and Contemporary Literary Practices" (85); it is also heterosocial, and to qualify as polyphonic, social diversity must become a subject of the text (See Note 4). The polyphonic novel strives to show the coexistence, interaction and interdependence of several different, relatively autonomous consciousnesses that express simultaneously the various contents of the world, within the unity of a given, single work. . . . [T]here is no effort on the part of the author . . . (or of one of his characters), to reconcile and conflate the several different versions into a single, definitive one. Not one single narrator in the novel holds the absolute 'truth'. . . . (78-79) The intent of a polyphonic novel is to emphasize diversity, not quell it, to be argumentative, not dogmatic: It is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as
objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other; this interaction provides no support for the viewer who would objectify an entire event according to some ordinary monologic category (thematically, lyrically or cognitively)—and this consequently makes the viewer also a participant. Not only does the novel give no firm support outside the rupture-prone world of dialogue for a third, monologically all-encompassing consciousness—but on the contrary, everything in the novel is structured to make dialogic opposition inescapable. (Bakhtin, Problems 18).

Plot and character, according to Bakhtin in The Dialogic Imagination, are subordinated to this dialogue. Plot functions only as a device to represent characters and their ideological worlds, and characters function only as personified representations of this social heteroglossia (365). They are "ideologues" and their "words are always ideologemes" (333). They are "embodied points of view," (349), whose actions serve only "to expose—as well as to test—[the] ideological position, [the] discourse" (334). Minor characters, contrary to their traditional supporting role, may present their own socio-ideological frame.
Polyphonia or heteroglossia can be generated within the novel by means of authorial speech, narrator speech, character's speech or by means of inserted genres, everyday narratives (letters, diaries), or extra-artistic speech (moral, philosophy, oratory) which are unique to the text in which they appear. Heteroglossia can also be drawn into the text from external creative texts, or from other external historic voices. Each of these elements represents a different social voice, and together they create a heteroglossic text. It is, in fact, the sum of these voices that comprises the text. The various voices have the ability to influence each other, to modify each other, but not to claim authority by imposing their own intention on the others, because all voices exist only inside the text.

Polyphony can be incorporated into the author's intention by refracting each image through different viewpoints (Problems 53). To this end, the various voices are simply compositional unities which are incorporated for the purpose of providing a multiplicity of social voices designed to reveal the variety of ways in which they can interrelate (Dialogic 263).

The interaction between the various voices is not static; the sides do not square off against each other in constant and unchangeable opposition. Instead, the voices enter into a dynamic interrelationship which is mutually
influential but not reconciliatory. This interaction reverses the traditional concept of ordering a text, in which the parts are seen as pieces of the whole, and the whole as a composite of these parts, an idea consistent by analogy to a jigsaw puzzle consisting of 500 pieces. Together, the 500 pieces create one whole; at the same time, the one whole consists of 500 pieces. In this sense, \(1 = 500\). Contrary to most mathematical equations, in a polyphonic novel it is the whole which determines the parts. It is as though each individual "puzzle piece" is "chemically" transformed into another shape or another form, larger and different, upon its insertion in the larger frame. It is no longer a simple equation of \(1 = 500\), but together the parts combine into a higher unity, and the equation becomes \(500\) raised to the power of \(500\). Within the text, this whole is not definable because it stands "above the word, above the voice, above the accent" (Bakhtin, Problems 43).

A logical extension of Bakhtin's polyphonic novel theory, is to recognize polyphonic relationships between texts. In such instances, the outside textual material constitutes a second voice, and like the second voice within a text, it can be altered, but it cannot be silenced, no matter how much the reigning consciousness of the new text tries to subvert it for its own purposes. "Intertextuality" is the term applied to polyphonia which
exists between texts. The coinage of this term is usually credited to Julia Kristeva in her study, *Sémiotikē: Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, although she credits Bakhtin for the concept:

"une découverte que Bakhtine est le premier à introduire dans la théorie littéraire: tout texte se construit comme mosaique de citations, tout texte est absorption et transformation d’un autre texte. A la place de la notion d’intersubjectivité s’installe celle d’*intertextualité*, et le langage poétique se lit, au moins, comme double." (146)

In the 20 years since intertextuality was identified (1969), literary, linguistic and cultural theorists have spawned a "mosaique de citations" around this concept which has rendered the term virtually useless without specifically identifying the area of application and redefining the definition in terms of that area. Qualifying terms are needed in order to identify the area of study under discussion. Although the concept of intertextuality impacts on language (linguistic intertextuality) as well as on literature, it is only the latter branch which is pertinent to this study.

Intertextuality impacts on literature in two different ways. In one direction it moves toward cultural anthropology. In this sense, every text is perceived to be
an echo of "another text unto infinity, weaving the fabric of the text of culture itself" (Plottel xv). In this direction, Bakhtin’s concepts merge with Vladimir Propp whose folklore studies pioneered the way to seeing every text as an intertext. This direction also leads to Roland Barthes who isolated five major codes which "create a kind of network, a topos through which the entire text passes (or rather, in passing, becomes text)" (20). Because of their analogous relationship to natural (i.e. practical) language, the studies of intertextuality which seek to uncover the cultural codes embedded within language I will call natural intertextuality.

In another direction, the study of intertextuality moves beyond the cultural coding inherent in the words and the texts, and focuses instead on the previous enunciation of these codes within previous texts. By analogy, it is a move from natural language to literary language. This is not to imply that literary intertextuality is divorced from cultural coding, but instead that it is not concerned with the entire storehouse of culture, but only with previously articulated aspects of that culture already encapsulated within another text. These allusions to previous texts can be either deliberate or unconscious. Some theorists such as Jacques Derrida perceive intertextuality as a fait accompli in all texts, because every text is "a script of another script (l’écriture d’une écriture)" (Plottel xvi).
This view is endorsed by Tzvetan Todorov in "How to Read."

He states that it is not possible to read a text:

in a satisfying and clear manner unless one
places it in relation to other works, prior to it
and contemporary with it. In a certain sense,
all texts can be considered as parts of a single
text which has been in the writing since the
beginning of time. (qtd. in Kestner 142 [See
Note 5])

Within the field of literary intertextuality, a
further refinement of terms is necessary to distinguish
between the unconscious incorporation of previous texts
within another text, natural literary intertextuality, and
the introduction of another text to serve a deliberately
intentional function in the creative design of the host
text, contrived literary intertextuality. It is to the
latter that Claudia Gosselin refers when she defines
intertextuality as "a conscious system of textual
disruption" designed to attack the "privileged status of
literature" and to question "its relationship to reality"
("Voices of the Past" 26). Contrived literary
intertextuality is the area of intertextuality which is of
interest to the narrative theorist, and to this study.

As a result of these new literary concepts, critical
analysis no longer looks for the thread that binds, "but on
the contrary [seeks] to appreciate what plural constitutes
it" (Barthes 5). Contrary to the prevailing ideal text defined by Robbe-Grillet in his 1958 article, "Reflections on Some Aspects of the Traditional Novel," Roland Barthes defines the ideal text as a:

triumphant plural, unimpoeverished by any constraint of representation (or imitation). In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can read, they are interminable. . . . (5-6)

The failure of critics to recognize polyphonic novels as a distinct type of prose fiction has led to mistakenly applying monologic novel criteria which has only succeeded in distorting the polyphonic novel (Dialogic 265). The conjunctive novel is a type of polyphonic novel which has suffered by the monologic emphasis of traditional stylistics. Unable to account for repeating characters within the prevailing critical theory which holds that a novel is a closed, unified system, and that "leaks" are undesirable because they violate that unity, traditional critics have chosen to discredit such devices by telling
the reader to ignore the "other life" of the character. However, as a result of Bakhtin's studies on the polyphonic novel, it is now possible to identify the function of repeating characters and to justify that function as a unique and valid narrative device (See Note 6).
B. The Definition

Utilizing the concepts and terms described above, it is now possible to consider the "retour des personnages" as more than an "amusing trick" which is "artistically irrelevant" to the individual texts. Instead, repeating characters establish a unique type of contrived literary intertextual relationship between the texts in which they appear.

Unlike other types of contrived literary intertextuality which incorporate a foreign text into the intentional design of the host text, with conjunctive novels, the conjoined text is the prior text in which the repeating character appears. In the former case, such as James Joyce’s incorporation of the Odyssey in his novel, Ulysses, the prior text is a finished product and as such is internally closed-off to the host text; the prior text may be reinterpreted, but it cannot be altered because it is solidified not only in form but also in intention. It can be animated by insertion within another text, as the Odyssey is animated by insertion in Ulysses, but the form cannot be changed nor the intention fully silenced. If the two intentions prove to be incompatible, it is the second text, Joyce’s text, which must be modified to accommodate the completed form of the prior text.

In conjunctive novels, however, the conjoined texts
are not foreign texts insofar as they share a common origin and can be perceived as sharing a common intention which supercedes and transcends the intentions of the individual texts. Once one of the texts is closed off (published), its specificity of form and content solidifies, although presumably its intention remains fluid enough to accommodate the expanding intention of the succeeding texts.

I distinguish between the intertextuality found in Joyce, contrived literary intertextuality, from that found in Faulker and Balzac, for example, by designating the latter as intentionally-contrived literary intertextuality. The added term "intentionally" recognizes that the writer deliberately employs intertextuality to serve some intention which could not have been served without it.

Texts conjoined by repeating characters interact similar to the double-voiced discourse that Bakhtin contends is a natural characteristic of "every genuinely creative work" (Problems of the Text" 12). One text with all of its internal voices constitutes one utterance, and each of the other texts joined to it by the repeating character constitutes another utterance, another voice. When confronted with each other these separate voices enter into a dialogue.

In other intertextual situations, there is no dialogue between the conjoined texts. Instead what occurs is
similar to discourse which Bakhtin classifies as stylization, narrator's narration, Ich-Erzählung and parody, in which the second voice (the voice of the foreign text), can be heard within the host text, but the dominant and controlling voice is that of the host text. Although there may be occasion for dialogue to occur within this interaction, or as a result of it, such as a dialogue between contending intentions, or a dialogue between contending appearances of a character or a device or a specific word repetition, or between contending ideologies, as a whole the text is a monologic text because there is only one voice heard even though other voices (intentions) can be heard beneath or within that one voice. The secondary dialogic confrontations do not interfere with the intention of the host text because it claims authority over the other voices, the other intentions. Even though the voice of the "other" cannot be stilled, it is stylized by the intentions of the host text.

In conjunctive novels, while the individual texts may be monologic (single voiced), together they become dialogic, because there is not one dominant voice, but always at least two totally distinct voices speaking, each speaking in his own voice and each totally autonomous. The prior text of the repeated character does not come under the control of the narrative voice of the host text, nor does the prior text influence the voice of the host text.
because the one speech act never becomes the object of the second speech act; it is not dependent upon the syntactical forms of the second speech act, and is therefore never subject to the limitations nor the intentions of the second speech act. This is possible because the interaction, the dialogue, takes place in the interstices between the texts, eliminating the opportunity for one text to manipulate the words of the other, while at the same time affording the opportunity for each text to react to the other conjoined texts.

The effect of the interaction between these texts is similar to the effect of the interaction between the heavenly bodies in one solar system. Each planet or moon exists as a unique entity, complete and distinguishable from the others, while at the same time it is formed by and dependent for its existence on its interaction with the rest of the bodies in its solar system. Similarly, each novel is a self-contained entity, complete and separate and autonomous, while at the same time, as a result of its relationship with other novels conjoined to it, the center of gravity of the individual text is shifted from its own center to a point between the texts, a space which is not inhabited exclusively by the voices of either text. In this gap is heard the narrative voice of one text in equal dialogue with the voices of the other text(s). No longer bound to the authority of the creating voice, these
separate authorities (voices) are able to interact freely and boundlessly in a type of neutral zone which exists outside of novel time and removed from novel causality.

In this space is created a third text. Text A is no longer A once it becomes conjoined with text B, nor is it a matter of simple addition, $A = AB$. Text A, for example *Absalom, Absalom!*, upon joining with *The Sound and the Fury* through the connecting character, Quentin, becomes not just an extension of Quentin's story which should be inserted somewhere in the middle of Quentin's monologue. Nor does the story which Quentin tells about Henry, Bon and Judith simply add resonance to the story which he tells about himself, Caddy and Dalton Ames, although it does do that. But out of the juncture of text A and text B comes a totally new text, text C. Using the terminology of Boris Tomashevsky, the *szuJet* (the created story or plot), becomes larger than the combined *fabula* (the pre-existing story) of the individual texts.

The dialogue which activates this third text takes place on three different levels. On the simplest level, there is a dialogic interaction between the differing appearances of the same character. This dialogue concerns itself with the similarities and differences of characterization. On the second level, dialogue occurs between the function of the character in the prior text and its function in the host text. The dialogic possibilities
on these two levels are also possible in other intertextual relationships.

It is on the third level, which incorporates the other two levels as well, where the important and distinguishing dialogue takes place. Because everything vital to the evaluative reception of one text, as well as everything of ideological value, is fused with the repeating element and brought along with it into the subsequent texts, what can occur when these meet is a highly complex and dynamic interaction between contending ideologic values. The ensuing debate (dialogue) is an animating force which vitalizes and enlarges the horizons of both texts by a simultaneous exchange of referents, at the same time that it creates this third text.

There is no hierarchy of authority within this third text. Each voice has equal authority; each voice is equally autonomous. In other intertextual situations, the host text (the text in hand) is always superior to the invading (foreign) text (the text from which the material is drawn), because the foreign text is under the control of the host text. The flow of intention is only unidirectional because the host text molds the foreign text for its own use, and while the foreign text has the ability to resist this process, it does not have the power to act reciprocally upon the host text except indirectly.

Repeating characters effect a multi-directional impact
on the conjoined texts. At the moment that the second text is read, both texts immediately co-exist and the intertextual relationship is realized. The character in the prior text (first read text; that text which is not now in hand), is immediately impacted by the host text (text now in hand) at the very instant that it impacts on the host text. The spatial dimensions of each are spontaneously and simultaneously enlarged.

Because each text is never subjugated to the authority and hence to the intention of the other, each utterance (text) is able to agree freely with or to contradict freely the conclusions of the other, a freedom which is impossible in standard literary intertextuality in which the foreign text is subjugated to the intention of the host text (unless the other's words are used ironically or satirically, and then the intention of the speaking voice is to contradict itself). This is also an impossibility within the form of the novel "self. While a novel may raise objections, introduce contrary ideologies, or even fail to arrive at any conclusion, nonetheless it is a limiting form, for it cannot both be and not be something at the same time. It cannot both look out and look at itself; if it attempts to do so, then the external view immediately becomes a part of the interior view and the outer frame of the text is extended to incorporate it within itself, and the former "external" view becomes a
part of the interior. Because of the nature of the form itself, the distinction between interior and exterior can never be eliminated.

The shift of the temporal and spatial center from within each individual text to a point between the conjoined text provides a change in perspective which can result in the realignment of the contours of the individual texts. This realignment is consistent with Claudia Gosselin’s observation that intertextuality is "a generative and reconstructive mechanism" (27) brought about through "a conscious system of textual disruption" for the purpose of violating the "preordered and predigested" literary experience (26). The intertextuality brought about through repeated characters in conjunctive novels, however, can be both a reconstructive and a deconstructive narrative device. Text C can validate the authority of the host text, verify the reliability of the narrator, and reaffirm the thematic truth of the individual texts; or it can reverse the authority of texts A and B, question the reliability of their narrators, decentralize and shift the thematic focus of each text, and deny their individual "truths." This degenerative potential differentiates the conjunctive novel from other types of intertextuality.

In order to effect this dialogue it is essential that each text remains autonomous. To merge the texts into one unit would eliminate the "between" the texts, the
interstices, where the intertextual interaction is generated. Each text, therefore, must include within its own frame all information from the prior texts that is specifically relevant to the development of the current text and make it a self-sufficient entity. If one text would require another text to complete its intention or specificity, it would mean that the temporal and causal planes of the two texts are merged, and together they would constitute a single voice. This explains the need for the summary in Barchester Towers of Mr. Harding's adventures in The Warden, as well as Huck's summary in his story of the events which occur in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Rather than being a signal, as Meir Sternberg contends, that "[t]his is all you need keep in mind for the purposes of the present narrative" and that therefore the reader should "not drag the whole conflict" of the prior work into the text at hand or it "will throw the latter out of focus" (30), these summaries create the self-contained entities which are essential to an intertextual interaction.

While the conjoined texts must remain distinct and separate in order to generate any type of intertextuality, the function of the repeating elements vary between standard literary intertextuality and intertextuality generated by repeating characters. In standard literary intertextuality, the repeating element also remains distinct and separate. For example, the shadowy figure of
Leopold Bloom lurks behind subsequent readings of the Odyssey, but Bloom does not merge with Odysseus in the epic, nor does Odysseus merge with Bloom in the novel.

In conjunctive novels, however, although the conjoined texts remain distinct, once the repeating characters appear together, they instantly merge and are no longer separable into their individual roles. Mr. Harding of Barchester Towers becomes inseparable from Mr. Harding of The Warden; Huck is the sum of the character in Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn; and Natty Bumppo is the deerslayer, the pathfinder, the pioneer and a friend of the last of the Mohicans, all at the same time, existing totally and simultaneously.

Repeating characters exist simultaneously in the interstitial space where the characters interact; they do not exist as first or second temporally, regardless of their chronological relationship to each other on the horizontal plane of the individual texts. Therefore, Colonel Sartoris co-exists and interacts simultaneously with his great grandsons, Bayard and John. Simultaneity is possible because everything the reader knows, he knows completely and totally in the present. Just as one does not temporally stratify the different impressions upon which one decides the personality of a friend (unless there is some moment of outstanding reversal, but even then, while the occasion for the reversal may be recalled,
the impact on the judgment is immediate and total), but the friend exists at any one moment as the sum total of these compiled impressions. In like manner, the minute that the reader encounters Quentin Compson for the second time, whether that second encounter occurs as the result of reading *Absalom, Absalom!* or *The Sound and the Fury*, the total image of Quentin in the reader’s mind is immediately influenced, and the Quentin of each text becomes the Quentin of the composite texts. Therefore, John Irwin’s comment in *Doubling and Incest* that *The Sound and the Fury* predates *Absalom, Absalom!* by seven years is totally irrelevant to the discussion of the intertextual relationship between these two novels.

The simultaneous existence of repeating characters can lead to a more complex and extensive impact on the individual texts since it extends their influence beyond the point of juncture to the entire text.

This does not mean that the conjoining novels, and the repeating characters, function as "explication du texte." Instead, the other texts can provide an alternative to the story told, to the choices made. On the day Quentin commits suicide, from *Absalom, Absalom!* we know that Quentin is aware of other alternatives, Henry’s alternative. In reading *Absalom, Absalom!*, Quentin’s need to discover the motive behind Henry’s killing of Bon is juxtaposed against his own need to find explanations in *The
Sound and the Fury. Henry does not commit suicide. He does not take this alternative action which Quentin takes; instead, he kills the transgressor in his world. Thus Quentin of The Sound and the Fury provides an alternative choice for Henry, and Quentin’s story about Henry provides an alternative solution for Quentin. Duplicating the problem with different characters and at different time periods gives credence to the powerlessness each feels to control and handle the situation in which he finds himself. Between these alternative possibilities a dialogue ensues. As a result, the determinism which is a natural consequence of the novel form is overcome and neither text is allowed to harden into a fait accompli.

The effect of this dialogic interaction between conjoining texts is not dissimilar to the effect Victor Shklovsky attributes to defamiliarization as a function of repetition, but it is defamiliarization carried to its ultimate conclusion. By itself, defamiliarization is one-dimensional. It can shock one into awareness, or to attention, but it is incapable of directing that energy. To defamiliarize is to make strange, to force one to resee and reassess. The shock of recognition is useful for underlining the points of juncture, but this is only the first step; the repeating elements must participate in a full-scale dialogue in order to effect a dynamic encounter.

In summary, repeating characters generate a vari-
directional, multi-voiced discourse between the conjoined texts which is capable of dynamically penetrating the boundaries of the individual texts and setting up a confrontation which simultaneously energizes and animates the utterances on both sides of the point of intersection. Freed from the dictates of a controlling voice with its limitations of syntax, consciousness and intention which narrow the dialogic possibilities, conjunctive novels allow for the simultaneous existence of contradictory views. The dialogue which ensues between these contradictory views can lead to a realignment of the authority of the individual texts and the testing of the conclusions of one text by the discourse of the other texts. The interaction between the conjoined texts is limited only by the reader. Because the dialogue is always framed in the words of the reader, it is never dated; it is always in the present.

The following study of Faulkner’s *Light in August* will illustrate how repeating characters effect an intertextual relationship between the conjoined texts; it will also illustrate how the dialogue generated by these repeating characters is capable of sending ripples across the entire surface of each text.
1 Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics will hereafter be identified as Problems.

2 The Dialogic Imagination will hereafter be identified as Dialogic.

3 "Discourse Typology in Prose" will hereafter be identified as "Typology."

4 Bakhtin contends that if a novel is to claim significance it "must represent all the social and ideological voices of its era, that is, all the era’s languages that have any claim to being significant; the novel must be a microcosm of heteroglossia" (Dialogic 411).

5 Juri Lotman in The Structure of the Artistic Text refers to this "single text" as a text’s "extra-textual structures" (285).

6 With regard to Bakhtin’s theory about the novel, Wayne Booth concludes that "If Bakhtin is right, a very great deal of what we western critics have spent our time on is mistaken, or trivial, or both" (Introduction xxv).
CHAPTER III

LIGHT IN AUGUST: A CONJUNCTIVE NOVEL

A. Introduction

It is no great discovery to observe that Faulkner’s works are comprised of a complicated web of intertextuality. It may be a discovery, however, to note that, although he did not have the terminology at his disposal, the terms with which Faulkner discussed his work indicate that he conceived of his texts as intertextually linked. In an interview with Jean Stein early in his career he said: "I found out after [writing Soldier’s Pay] that not only each book had to have a design but the whole output or sum of an artist’s work had to have a design" (Stein 82).

Similarly, Malcolm Cowley in his introduction to The Portable Faulkner in 1946 describes an intertextual relationship among Faulkner’s texts:

All his books in the Yoknapatawpha saga are part of the same living pattern. . . . Its existence helps to explain one feature of his work: that each novel, each long or short story, seems to reveal more than it states explicitly and to have a subject bigger than itself. All the separate works are like blocks
of marble from the same quarry: they show the veins and faults of the mother rock. (8)

Cowley sees each of Faulkner's texts as representing "a chord or segment of a total situation always existing in the author's mind" (7). Because he considers the various segments to be spatially and temporally connected, however, Cowley is prevented from fully realizing the intertextual potential existing among Faulkner's texts.

Intertextuality, in fact, is not limited by temporal or spatial considerations since the interaction occurs in the interstices between the texts which is outside novel time and beyond novel causality, and to so delimit it is to prevent the intertextual webbing from being fully realized. Rather than simply creating a larger and larger edifice, intertextual relationships, especially those created by recurring characters, are capable of metamorphosing the solid shapes of the individual blocks into unstable, amorphous forms, which can result in the deconfiguration of the edifice, rather than in an enhanced configuration.

Cowley's emphasis on "pattern, and not the printed volumes in which part of it is recorded" as being "Faulkner's real achievement" (8), has established the general direction of subsequent Faulkner studies which have excluded consideration of repeating characters in the artistic intention behind the pattern. Emphasis on pattern weakens the specificity of the individual texts
by viewing the texts as one unit, which leads to a silencing of the voices heard only in the dialogue generated among the individual texts.

While current intertextual studies of Faulkner do not imply that his works constitute one text, neither do they fully recognize the intertextual relationships that exist among Faulkner's texts. For example, in a recent collection of essays edited by Michel Gresset and Noel Polk comprised of papers presented at a colloquium in Paris in 1982, entitled *Intertextuality in Faulkner*, only three papers address intertextuality within Faulkner, and only one, Patrick Samway's, discusses a recurring character.

In the introduction to this collection, Michel Gresset defines the scope of intertextuality as extending "all the way from the 'operative repetition' of a single word to the use of a whole book as an 'inter-web' of meaning" (4). He cites Faulkner's employment of Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" in "Pantaloon in Black" and in *Light in August* as an example of intertextuality. Gresset's focus on the intertextual relationship between Faulkner and other writers (foreign texts), rather than on the intertextual relationship which exists among Faulkner's own texts (interior intertextuality) is the focus of the majority of the articles in this collection.

Andre Bleikasten's article, "Cet effreux gout d’encre: Emma Bovary's Ghost in *Sanctuary,*" concentrates on
Faulkner's use of Flaubert's image of the "liquides noirs" which spew from Madama Bovary's mouth upon her death.

Michel Gresset analyzes "external" intertextuality (intertextuality which involves no quotation), in terms of the "dying fall" in Sanctuary and Beckett's Murphy.

Stephen Ross applies Bakhtin's terms, monologic and dialogic, to the southern oratorical style in Absalom, Absalom! Pamela Rhodes and Richard Godden's article on The Wild Palms is generally concerned with the influence of the Hollywood years on this text, while Francois Pitavy and Nancy Blake both discuss the Bible as intertext within The Wild Palms and Absalom, Absalom! respectively. John Matthews poses Faulkner against Hawthorne and Updike, not for the purpose of "distinguishing Faulkner from other writers" but for the purpose of "seeing him as other writers" (144).

On the surface, the lead article by Noel Polk, "The Space between Sanctuary," appears to be an interior intertextual study because it concentrates on the different versions of Sanctuary. However, Polk, like Irwin in Incest and Doubling, does not interpret his findings in terms of narrative technique or story analysis, but instead, he interprets his findings in terms of what is revealed about Faulkner's psychosis during this period. Polk concludes that these revisions may have been instigated by an awareness that the original text "was intolerably close"
Therefore, when Polk describes Faulkner's works between 1927 and 1931 as "form[ing] a veritable spider's web of intimate connections," which create "an entire teeming, fecund, even honeysuckled Faulknerian world" (34), he is speaking of the "matrix" (18) within Faulkner's mind from which these stories sprang.

Only three essays in this collection focus on Faulkner's own texts as intertexts. Kinzaburo Ohashi defines the intertextual elements in Faulkner as old scenes and situations used in new ways, a process he sees as capable of generating a dynamic force within the novel whose function is to replicate the motion of life. Olga Scherer considers Charles's letter to Judith as a polyphonic insert within which one can "distinguish a great number of overlapping voices, each fully endowed with authority, each questioning, and at the same time contaminating the others, all simultaneously active and equally valid" (172).

Patrick Samway is the only critic who uses the words "repeating" and "character" in the same sentence with intertextuality. In his study he questions whether the reader ever meets the real Mr. Compson, or whether he is always, and only, Quentin's creation. Samway concludes that the Compson of Absalom, Absalom! is different from the Compson of The Sound and the Fury, and that "any attempt to
reconcile these differences does harm to that which makes each text so distinctive and rich" (205). In reaching this conclusion he concurs with Michael Millgate who does not endorse an intertextual reading of Faulkner:

It seems to me, then, that each Faulkner text must be considered a unique, independent, and self-sufficient work of art, not only capable of being read and contemplated in isolation but actually demanding such treatment. ("Faulkner's First Trilogy" 105)

It is apparent from Samway's conclusion and Millgate's statement that they have overlooked an important qualification essential to intertextual relationships: to conjoin two or more texts as intertexts is not to make them into one text. Although both Samway and Millgate recognize the importance of maintaining the specificity of the individual texts, they do not seem to realize that an intertextual study is not intended to "reconcile these differences," but to force the differences into the open and to make them a part of each text. To do this it is absolutely essential that each text remain "a unique, independent, and self-sufficient work of art." Therefore, what they believe to be an argument against the consideration of Faulkner's texts as intertexts is actually an argument in support of such a study.

Because of his failure to recognize the intent of an
intertextual study, Samway's study stops short of realizing the full potential of an intertextual analysis of Mr. Compson as a recurring character. He does not ask the next question: Why is Mr. Compson a different character in each of these novels? This question would allow a dialogic interaction to take place between these two texts. If Mr. Compson is different, then answering the question why should throw added illumination not only on the two texts as a whole, but also on the characters of Mr. Compson and on his son, Quentin, who creates the image of his father in *The Sound and the Fury*.

Each of the above studies examines some aspect of intertextuality in Faulkner, but they do not begin to address the intricate web of intertextuality in operation within Faulkner's work. Repeating characters not only open the text to heteroglossia, they also signal the direction in which an interstitial dialogue is generated by creating linking bridges to the relevant texts whose episodes and / or other characters are capable of forcing this dialogue.

Recurring characters differ from repeating imagery such as "liquides noirs" or concepts such as the "dying fall," insofar as the latter are voiceless. They assume the voice of the narrator who brings them to the surface, and retain an echo of that voice and intention regardless of the subsequent texts in which they may appear. In the
case of the phrase, "liquides noirs," Flaubert's voice is not stilled, but has become stylized by the intentions of the narrator and of the text, *Sanctuary*. It is not possible for these words to be freed of these intentions, and thus the dialogue which is generated by the interaction between the various appearances of this phrase is actually a dialogue between narrators and narrating intentions.

Characters, however, have a voice of their own regardless of whether they speak, because their voices are heard in the clothes they wear, in the jobs they hold, in the roles they play in the individual texts. The words they speak may have been heard only within the context of a narrator's voice and intention; yet they are able to develop an individual existence which is not dependent upon the context in which they appear. The character of Martha Armstid, for example, has validity outside the plot of *Light in August* or any other text in which she appears. She is able to speak directly, and is thus able to fulfill the potential of the novel as "a diversity of social speech types." While literary or cultural illusions may arise out of a particular social ideology, there is always the possibility that the words or the imagery are being used ironically. With regard to a character, however, although his or her function within a narrative may be parodic, the character itself has a validity which supercedes that parody, and is always, therefore, capable of speaking
directly to the reader in his own voice and as a representative of a particular social ideology. Repeating characters, therefore, have the potential of opening a text to heteroglossia in ways which the literary and cultural illusions cannot. By looking at the recurring characters in one novel, *Light in August*, the potential impact of these additional voices will become more evident.

The extensiveness of the intertextual web in Faulkner’s texts created by recurring characters is apparent when it is noted that of the 1,234 named characters identified by Walter K. Everett, excluding the non-collected stories, approximately 350 characters appear in more than one story. However, since many of these characters recur in more than two stories or novels, the number of intertextual links cannot be found by a simple multiplication of 350 x 2, as a survey of the intertextual links created by the recurring characters in *Light in August* will attest.

There are thirteen recurring characters in *Light in August*. Ten of these represent the identical character (Armstid, Martha Armstid, Winterbottom, Jody Varner, Mr. Maxey, Captain John McLendon, Mrs. Beard, Gavin Stevens, Buck Conner and Joanna Burden), and two represent characters linked through family name (Percy Grimm with Eustace Grimm, probably not related, and Gail Hightower with Hiram Hightower, perhaps related). The last set of
characters, Joanna Burden’s grandfather and brother, never appear as characters in their own right in any text, but appear in several texts within a metanarrative about two carpetbaggers killed by John Sartoris over voting rights. The major characters do not appear in any other novel, with the exception of a brief reference to Joanna Burden’s mailbox and the fact that she lives one mile west of the courthouse (Mansion 185). However, all of the major characters in Light in August are drawn into an intertextual relationship with other novels and stories either through family relationships (Joanna Burden, Gail Hightower), or through their interaction with other characters who are repeating characters (Lena Grove, Joe Christmas, Byron Bunch).

Through these recurring thirteen characters, Light in August is directly connected with ten other novels (As I Lay Dying, The Hamlet, The Town, The Mansion, Flags in the Dust / Sartoris, Go Down Moses, Intruder in the Dust, Requiem for a Nun, The Unvanquished, The Reivers), the collection of mystery stories, Knight’s Gambit, and eighteen short stories. In addition, Gavin Stevens forms a bridge to Sanctuary through his nephew, Gowan Stevens, and the latter’s wife, Temple Drake, whose servant, Nancy Mannigoe, he defends for the murder of his grandniece in Requiem for a Nun. There is also a link between Henry Armstid and Sanctuary, since, like Temple, he is "raped" at
the Old Frenchman's place. In addition to a link to *Flags/Sartoris*, a link is also made to *The Sound and the Fury* through the family name, Beard, identified as a property owner in Jefferson (234), and Mrs. Beard, owner of the boarding house in *Light in August* where Byron Bunch lives and where he takes Lena upon her arrival in Jefferson. Of the fourteen Yoknapatawpha County novels, *Light in August* does not appear to be linked to only one novel, *Absalom, Absalom!*

It is impossible in any one study to identify, much less to trace, all the intertextual links within Faulkner which are activated by recurring characters. It is, in fact, impossible to identify and trace all the intertextual links within the novel, *Light in August*, since different characters set up links with the same novel but with different characters in that novel, or they have a different function in the novel. Each character and each interaction could, in fact, justify an independent study. The possibilities are awesome. I have identified over 65 conjunctions between *Light in August* and other texts, excluding such ancillary conjunctions which I describe below between Eula Varner and Lena Grove who become intertextually linked through Eula's brother, Will, despite the fact that Eula and Lena do not meet (See Appendix A).

Since the purpose is not to identify recurring characters, *per se*, but to illustrate the function of
repeating characters, this study will concentrate on those characters whose intertextual relationship with other texts appears to have the most impact on the reading of this novel as a whole. Also, although the impact of repeating characters is multi-directional, this analysis will, of necessity, be limited to the impact of recurring characters only on the novel, *Light in August*. Examples of the multi-directional impact between texts will be pointed out, but the multi-directional impact of the 65 conjunctions noted above will result in a minimum of 130 points of impact. To attempt such a complete study would lead the critic and the reader into such a maze that it is likely neither would be heard from again. Therefore, this discussion will keep its focus on *Light in August*, and frame the function of repeating characters primarily in terms of their appearance within this text.

Repeating characters in *Light in August* fall into three exclusive groups: one group interacts with Lena, another group frames Joe Christmas (not interacts with, because few characters interact with Joe, and in a very real sense of interaction, none do), and the third group frames Joanna Burden. None of the repeating characters interact with more than one main character. Each of the repeating characters is either a minor or an insignificant character within *Light in August*, serving only to comment on the main character (Jody Varner, Mr. Maxey, Capt. John
McLendon and Gavin Stevens), or to provide an instance of interaction in which a main character can be revealed (the Armstids, Mrs. Beard). In each case, the repeating character is a non-determinant actor in the sequence of events being portrayed. The Armstids on the farm, as with Mr. Maxey and Capt. McLendon, appear to be nothing more than part of a painted backdrop in a diorama featuring one of the main characters.

However, these minor and insignificant characters become energized through their conjunctive interrelationship with other novels and stories, and once empowered exert a force on the characters and actions within Light in August, even to the extent of challenging the main characters' positions within the story, which belie their passivity on the monologic plane. The dialogues generated by these recurring characters result in the monologic plane of the novel being opened to heteroglossia by the addition of voices which refuse to accept complacently and unchallenged the voices (and intentions) of the narrators and characters within the individual text.
B. "I refuse to accept it."

Five of the recurring characters in Light in August appear within the context of Lena Grove's story: Armstid; his wife, Martha; Jody Varner; Mrs. Beard and Winterbottom.

Winterbottom is a minor character in each story in which he appears. In The Hamlet he runs the boarding house in Frenchman's Bend where Eustace Grimm stays during his involvement in Flem Snopes's Old Frenchman's place scam of Armstid, Bookwright and Ratliff (Armstid, Vernon Tull and Suratt in "Lizards in Jamshyd's Courtyard" stay at Mrs. Littlejohn's.) In "Spotted Horses," Winterbottom is one of the rural farmers and neighbors of Armstid who carries him to Mrs. Littlejohn's boarding house after he is run over by the Texas ponies. He is also present when Mrs. Armstid asks Flem for the $5.00 which her husband paid for one of the ponies, and which the Texan had promised would be returned to her. This latter role is consistent with his role in Light in August where Armstid is negotiating with him for a cultivator when Lena passes. In each of these stories, Winterbottom's role is limited to interaction with Armstid. His appearance in Light in August draws attention to this relationship and serves to validate the relationship between the Armstid who appears in Light in August and the Armstid who appears in the other stories.
A full intertextual study of Winterbottom would address such questions as why the role of the boarding house owner vacillates between Winterbottom and Mrs. Littlejohn. It would also explore the relationship between Winterbottom in the texts mentioned above and the Mrs. Winterbottom who runs the boarding house in which Colonel John Sartoris kills the two Burdens over voting rights following the Civil War. Since these discussions are more germane to the Snopes trilogy and the Sartoris texts than they are to *Light in August*, the intertextual impact of this character will not be explored here.

Neither will the recurring character of Mrs. Beard, who runs the boarding house where Byron stays and where he takes Lena before he moves her into the Negro shack on Joanna Burden’s property formerly occupied by Christmas and Brown. Will Beard and his wife are also identified as boarding house owners in the story *Flags in the Dust / Sartoris*. Their son writes the obscene letters which Byron Snopes sends to Narcissa Benbow Sartoris, who commits adultery with a Yankee agent to recover thirteen years later as related in "There was a Queen." There is also a brief mention in *The Sound and the Fury* of a man named Beard owning property in Jefferson. Although there are interesting intertextual ramifications here which could lead to a dialogue being generated between Lena and Narcissa Benbow, and through Lena to Eula Varner as well,
this study too will not be included here (See Note 3).

Two recurring characters who greatly impact on Light in August are Armstid and his wife, Martha. It is Armstid who picks up Lena on the road, takes her home to spend the night with him and his wife, Martha, and then takes her on to Frenchman’s Bend the next morning so that she can catch a ride into Jefferson. In Light in August, Armstid is not identified by first name, although his wife, Martha, is. Armstid (last name only) appears also in As I Lay Dying and "Shingles for the Lord." Henry Armstid appears in The Hamlet, "Spotted Horses" and "Lizards in Jamshyd’s Courtyard." His wife, called Martha in Light in August, appears in these other texts as well, but unnamed except in As I Lay Dying, where she is identified as Lula (See Note 4).

Within the monologic context of Light in August, much is left unsaid about the Armstids. Mr. Armstid meets Lena on the road five miles from his own farm where he has just made his third trip and has been "squatting and spitting for three hours beneath the shady wall of Winterbottom’s barn with the timeless unhaste and indirection of his kind" (7), to make an offer for a cultivator Winterbottom has for sale. He is described as "humped, bleached-eye" in a "shirt of sweatfaded blue" (13), unwilling, or unable, to pay the price Winterbottom is asking for his plow, yet he takes Lena, a stranger, home with him to spend the night. He is
sympathetic to her plight, and attempts to warn her not to "set so much store by...store in..." (21) expecting Lucas Burch to be waiting for her (See Note 5).

Armstid's wife in this text is described as "the gray woman with a cold, harsh, irascible face, who bore five children in six years and raised them to man- and woman- hood" (13). And again as the gray woman not plump and not thin, manhard, workhard, in a serviceable gray garment worn savage and brusque, her hands on her hips, her face like those of generals who have been defeated in battle . . . with a savage screw of gray hair at the base of her skull and a face that might have been carved in sandstone."

(14-15)

In answer to Armstid's apologies about Lena, she answers, "'You men,' she says. 'You durn men'" (14). Although she orders her husband "sunup you hitch up the team and take her away from here" (19), it is Martha who "savagely, harshly" and "violently" smashes the china rooster bank in which she has been saving her egg money, to give it to Lena, although she does not do so personally nor does she appear the next morning to say goodbye to her.

The portrayal of the Armstids is one-dimensional within *Light in August*. There is no explanation for the "abrupt savageness" with which Martha kindles the fire
(14), nor the "savage finality" (14-15) with which she builds the fire, nor the "serviceable gray garment worn savage and brusque," with her hair twisted into a "savage screw of gray hair" (15), and her "savagely, harshly" manner of speaking (18), nor why, after she breaks the rooster bank she ties the money "into the sack and knot[s] and reknotted it three or four times with savage finality" (19).

Against this unexplained savageness, Lena appears fresh and clean. Her confidence that "I reckon the Lord will see to" the family being together "when a chap comes" (18), makes Martha appear, by comparison, a woman of little faith. But Martha is given no opportunity within this text to defend herself. She is constrained by the specificity of this narrative from replying. She is not prevented, however, from confronting Lena in the interstices between the texts where the two qualities that Martha exhibits, savageness and a kindness that balances it, can challenge Lena's naivete and blind faith.

Martha and her husband take on an independent existence in the space between Light in August, The Hamlet, As I Lay Dying, "Spotted Horses," "Shingles for the Lord," and "Lizards in Jamshyd's Courtyard." Each of these stories isolates one of the characteristics which appear in Light in August. Although there are minor variations in the retelling of different parts of their history, such as
the amount paid for the old Frenchman's place, and the
details of Armstid's breaking his leg, these
inconsistencies are more relevant to the other conjoined
texts than they are to Light in August. As recurring
characters, however, these inconsistencies simultaneously
exist and form part of one whole.

The history of the Armstid's settlement in Jefferson
is traced in The Hamlet, where they are described as one of
the "inheritors" of the nameless man who wrested the land
around Frenchman's Bend from the wilderness, and whose dream
is now reduced to "small shiftless mortgaged farms for the
directors of Jefferson banks to squabble over before
selling finally to Will Varner" (3). Some of the people
who work the land came from England, Scotland and Wales
(McCallums and Littlejohns), while "other names like Riddup
and Armstid and Doshey . . . could have come from nowhere
since certainly no man would deliberately select one of
them for his own" (4). They brought with them only what
they could carry:

They took up land and built one- and two-room
cabins and never painted them, and married one
another and produced children and added other
rooms one by one to the original cabins and did
not paint them either, but that was all. Their
descendants still planted cotton in the bottom
land and corn along the edge of the hills and in
the secret caves in the hills made whiskey of the corn and sold what they did not drink. Federal officers went into the country and vanished. Some garment which the missing man had worn might be seen . . . on a child or an old man or woman. . . . They supported their own churches and schools, they married and committed infrequent adulteries and more frequent homicides among themselves and were their own courts, judges and executioners. They were Protestants and Democrats and prolific. . . . Strange Negroes would absolutely refuse to pass through it after dark. (Hamlet 4-5)

Another side of the Armstids emerges in As I Lay Dying in which Armstid offers the Bundrens his team after their own span of mules is drowned attempting to cross the flooded river taking Addie's body to Jefferson for burial. And when Anse refuses saying, "She'll want to go in ourn" (175), despite the fact that Armstid knows that the shiftless Anse:

"couldn't buy no team from nobody, let alone Snopes, withouten he had something to mortgage he didn't know would mortgage yet. And so when I went back to the field I looked at my mules and same as told them goodbye for a spell." (179)

When he discovers that it is Jewel's horse which Anse has
traded to Flem for the span of mules, Armstid admits, "'And if it hadn't a been Jewel, I reckon it'd a been me; I owe him that much, myself'" (184).

Armstid's wife, named Lula in this novel, is horrified at the Bundren spectacle: Addie dead now five days in the stifling summer heat, her casket surrounded by buzzards which the young boy, Vardaman, hopelessly and frantically attempts to keep away, while Anse insists on going to Jefferson despite the flooded river and the loss of his team. "'It's a outrage,' Lula said, 'a outrage'" (179). Still, like Martha in Light in August, she feeds them for two days while Anse searches for a new team.

The depiction of Armstid and his wife as helpful neighbors is continued in "Shingles for the Lord." It is Armstid's crowbar which Pap Grier borrows to remove the shingles from the church (which was used "to be born and marry and die from--us [Griers] and the Armstids and Tulls, and Bookwright and Quick and Snopes" [41]), and who saves Grier from the fire which destroys the church.

In The Hamlet, however, (which includes, with minor variations, stories related in "Spotter's Horses" and "Lizards in Jamshyd's Courtyard"), the Armstids, the man identified as Henry, the wife unnamed, show the personal cost of their hand to mouth existence. The Armstids "lived on a small mortgaged farm, which he and his wife worked like two men. . . . The land was either poor land or they
were poor managers. It made for them less than a bare living . . ." ("Lizards" 142). But one of his neighbors

defends Armstid: "'He aint lazy,' the third said. 'When

their mule died three or four years ago, him and her broke

their land working time about in the traces with the other mule. They aint lazy'" (Hamlet 318). But for all this

hard work, they have nothing. Their life is reflected in

the wagon with which they arrive at the spotted pony auction:

[The wagon] was battered and paintless. One wheel had been repaired by crossed planks bound to the spokes with baling wire and the two underfed mules wore a battered harness patched with bits of cotton rope; the reins were ordinary cotton plow-lines, not new. (Hamlet 294)

In an economy where only the well-to-do can afford a horse, the idea of owning a horse, any horse, even an obviously unbreakable horse, takes possession of Henry. With the $5.00 "in nickels and quarters, and one dollar bill that looked like a cow's cud" ("Spotted Horses" 171), Armstid buys one of the ponies, threatening his neighbors when the bid reaches $5.00 that "the man that raises it will have to beat my head off or I'll beat hisn." Later Henry boasts, "I bought a horse and I paid cash for it" (Hamlet 297,298 / "Spotted Horses" 171, 172).

Amsstid, of course, never gets his horse. When he
enters the pen to catch it (alone in "Spotted Horses" [174] or ahead of the others in The Hamlet [306]), he is trampled by the horses and his leg badly broken. He is in bed about a month, and then rebreaks his leg again the very day he gets up, but "nobody ever knew how, what he had been doing, trying to do, because he never talked about it" (Hamlet 342).

With the same mad intensity, still showing the ravages of his illness but "thinner, as though it had not been the sickness . . . but impotence and fury which had wasted him" (Hamlet 342), Armstid, along with Ratliff and Bookwright (Suratt and Tull in "Lizards in Jamshyd’s Courtyard"), buys the Old Frenchman’s place from Flem Snopes after Flem salted the ground with silver dollars, and refuses to quit digging, his "gaunt unshaven face which was now completely that of a madman" (Hamlet 373), even after Ratliff and Bookwright tell him that they have been scammed, his wife continuing to bring him his food in a tin pail before hurrying back to do the feeding and milking and getting the children’s supper, until finally he is taken away and "locked up for life in a Jackson asylum . . ." (Town 292 [See Note 6]).

From these same stories, Mrs. Armstid emerges as a long-suffering, hard-working, dedicated and responsible woman, persevering and enduring against all odds. Her physical description is consistent with Martha’s in Light
in August: "gaunt in the gray shapeless garment and the sunbonnet, wearing stained canvas shoes," with "her hands rolled before her into the gray dress" (Hamlet 295). The $5.00 Henry spends on the wild horse she has earned weaving:

fancy objects of colored string saved from packages and bits of cloth given her by the women in Jefferson, where, in a faded gingham wrapper and sunbonnet and tennis shoes, she peddled the objects from door to door on the market days.

They had four children, all under six years of age, the youngest an infant in arms. ("Lizards in Jamshyd’s Courtyard" 142)

She earned this money so her "chaps" could have shoes for the coming winter, and at the horse auction she pleads with Henry not to spend it. But she is overpowered, and after his purchase, she obediently and passively brings him the plow line with which to catch his horse when he asks for it, answering the Texan’s objections that it is dangerous to enter the corral by saying, "I reckon I better" (Hamlet 299). When she is unsuccessful in cornering the wild horse, Henry "turned and struck her with the coiled rope... He struck her again; she did not move, not even to fend the rope with a raised arm" (Hamlet 300). Yet when Henry breaks his leg, she pays off his room and board by working all day for Mrs. Littlejohn, after
which she would go "out home and milk and cook up enough vittles to last the children until tomorrow and feed them and get the littlest ones to sleep and wait outside the door until that biggest gets the bar up and gets into bed herself with the axe--" (Hamlet 319).

It is the "new stove which his wife had bought with her weaving money" ("Lizards" 150), plus "them five or six dollars whatever that was wherever Henry's wife tried to keep them buried from him behind the outhouse . . . ." (Mansion 138), that Armstid pledges along with a mortgage on his farm, buildings, tools, livestock and two miles of three-strand wire fence (Hamlet 361), to cover his share of the $3000 purchase price for the Old Frenchman's place, which Mrs. Armstid loses when Henry goes mad in his search for gold and defaults on the promissory note signed to cover the unpaid balance.

These characters co-exist simultaneously in the Armstid that carries Lena home to spend the night. He is both a descendent of, and a composite of, the man who is willing to lend or collateralize a team for the shiftless Anse Bundren; he is the first man to help put out the fire at the church, and the man who enters the traces with his remaining mule in order to plow his land; he is the dirt farmer who aches for some measurement of his worth, which he sees embodied in the only horse he would ever be able to afford, but could never own, and who mortgages everything
for 1/3 of a salted buried treasure which causes him to go mad attempting to find.

Incorporated in Martha’s savageness is the wife who weaves pieces of thread to buy shoes for her chaps, and whose nickles, dimes and one crumpled dollar bill buy a useless horse from Flem Snopes, who enters the traces with their remaining mule, turn about with her husband, to plow their land; the wife who weaves string for a new stove which she also loses to that same Flem Snopes.

This metanarrative of hope and despair, of kindness and bitterness, of struggling and enduring, pulls Lena into a dialogue that forces the lines of this novel into new contours. Seen simply against the foreground of Lena’s innocence, Martha’s savageness appears to be a loss of faith; however, when viewed against a panoramic view of her own life, Martha’s savageness generates not only sympathy but respect for her endurance and her unwillingness to concede to life’s tragedies, and admiration for her ability to continue to be sympathetic of others despite her own hardships. Against this larger background, Lena’s blind faith assumes no heroic stature because it has not been tried. She has been sheltered from the cruel realities of life by people like the Armstids. It is not because of anything that Lena has done that her faith is still intact; it is because people like Martha have preserved it for her.

The defensibility of Lena’s faith and innocence as an
ideal is also challenged in another interstitial metanarrative which develops between Lena and the repeating character, Jody Varner, whom Lena meets when Armstid drops her off in Frenchman’s Bend.

Jody is the son of Will Varner, Frenchman Bend’s major landowner to whom most of the share-cropping dirt farmers are enfiefed, owner of the businesses which service this community, and major stockholder of the still-designated Sartoris Bank in Jefferson. In addition to his role in Light in August, Jody has a minor role in The Town and The Mansion, and an insignificant role in "Fool About a Horse," "Spotted Horses," and As I Lay Dying. However it is in The Hamlet, in his dealings with Flem Snopes and with his sister, Eula, that Jody’s character is revealed. It is Jody’s fear of losing one barn to the rumored barn-burning Snopeses that gives Flem the toe-hold that eventually leads to the presidency of the Sartoris Bank, and which ultimately leads to his sister’s death, since Flem’s presence in the Varner household makes him an obvious choice for a marriage of convenience with the pregnant Eula. (Since this marriage is bought with the Old Frenchman’s place, which Flem then sells to Armstid, Jody’s actions indirectly lead to Armstid’s downfall).

Within the context of Light in August, Jody’s role is limited to a few passing comments with regard to Lena, and as store clerk he sells her the fifteen cent "sourdeens"
which she buys with Martha Armstid's money. However, through the intertextual link with *The Hamlet* created by Jody, his sister, Eula, is drawn into a confrontation with Lena in the conjunctive space between *Light in August* and the first two books of the Snopes trilogy. Here develops the story of two women, both pregnant outside of marriage, and their separate responses to this situation.

This link is effected by Jody's reaction to Lena, in much the same way that Winterbottom directs—insists on—the link between the Armstids in *Light in August* and the other Armstids, especially those in *The Hamlet*. In words fraught with irony since his own sister will share Lena's predicament, Jody looks at Lena sitting on the steps of Varner's store and thinks:

"I reckon that even a fool gal don't have to come as far as Mississippi to find out that whatever place you run from ain't going to be a whole lot different or worse than the place she is at. Even if it has got a brother in it that objects to his sister's nightprowling,' thinking I would have done the same as the brother; the father would have done the same."

(23)

Earlier Jody had noted: "Lucas aint the first young buck that's threwed over what he was bred to do and them that depended on him doing it, for money and excitement" (22).
Jody, "the jealous seething eunuch priest" (Hamlet 115), presides "with raging impotence" (101), over his sister, Eula, whose "kaleidoscopic convolution of mammalian ellipses" (Hamlet 100) "emanate[s] that outrageous quality of being, existing, actually on the outside of the garments she wore" (102), "the supreme primal uterus" (114). And when her bulging thighs and buttocks and breast make her look "not like a girl of sixteen dressed like twenty, but a woman of thirty dressed in the garments of her sixteen-year-old sister" (133), Jody tries to encase that too-much female into a corset. He is not so much a guardian of his sister’s virginity, as he is defender of his own name, a name he is ready to revenge with the blood of Eula’s three suitors, but which his father prevents, saying, "Hell and damnation, all this hullabaloo and uproar because one confounded running bitch finally foxed herself" (145). The following Saturday for a considerable amount of cash (variously $150 to $300), the deed to the Old Frenchman’s place, and the price of the license, Eula is married to Flem Snopes.

Despite the cavalier way her family railroaded her into marriage to a social-climbing son of barn-burning poor white trash, Eula rises above the value placed on her as an individual by her father and her brother, and stays with Flem despite the fact that he is impotent, in order to ensure a name for her daughter. And despite the fact that
she carries on an affair with Major de Spain for eighteen years, she manages to keep her daughter, Linda, from learning that Flem Snopes is not her father, a secret which Eula is willing to sell the one thing she has, herself, to Gavin Stevens, in order to protect.

Yet, despite eighteen years of a loveless, forced marriage, Eula is able to recognize Flem's good points, and to pity him for his failings:

"Oh, that," she said. "You mean that. That doesn't matter. That's never been any trouble. He...can't. He's--what's the word?--impotent. He's always been. Maybe that's why, one of the reasons. You see? You've got to be careful or you'll have to pity him. You'll have to. He couldn't bear that, and it's no use to hurt people, if you don't get anything for it. Because he couldn't bear being pitied. (Town 331)

She is also able to see and understand the predicament in which Major de Spain has been placed:

"If I don't go with him, he'll have to fight. He may go down fighting and wreck everything and everybody else, but he'll have to fight. Because he's a man. I mean, he's a man first. He can swap Flem Snopes his bank for Flem Snopes's wife, but he can't just stand there and
let Flem Snopes take the bank away from him."

(Town 331)

But to save de Spain and Flem, by going off with de Spain and leaving Flem with the bank would leave her daughter vulnerable, as Gavin points out:

"Dont you see? Either way, she is lost? Either to go with you, if that were possible, while you desert her father for another man; or stay here in all the stink without you to protect her from it and learn at last that he is not her father at all and so she has nobody, nobody?"

(Town 330)

Eula can see only one way to prevent Flem from extracting more interest from her father, herself, and especially from her daughter, Linda; to prevent backing de Spain into a corner; and to prevent exposing her daughter to the town’s gossip and possible rejection. After extracting a promise from Gavin to marry Linda if necessary to protect her, and inquiring about the little Riddell boy who had been taken ill with polio, at 11:00 at night, Eula put a gun to her head and shot herself to death because she decided that it was better "to leave her child a mere suicide for a mother instead of a whore" (Town 340).

In the interstices between these conjoined texts, a metanarrative evolves out of the dialogic confrontation among Lena, the poor white dirt farmers, and Eula Varner,
who is also pregnant and unmarried. If seen only against
the world of Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden, Lena's world
looks desirable. It is a life of peace and tranquility,
and even ease. When her life is filtered through the world
of the Armstids and the world of Eula Varner Snopes it
takes on a new perspective.

In this confrontation, Lena must defend herself. She
has been on the road for a month; starting out with only 35
cents, she has been living off the largesse of such people
as the Armstids. It is evident in Lena's calm assurance
that Armstid will stop and pick her up ("she thinks of
herself as already moving, riding again . . ." [6]); in
her easy acquiescence of his offer of hospitality; in the
almost ritualistic tone of her polite reluctance, "I
wouldn't be beholden . . . I wouldn't trouble" (12); in her
thanks the next morning with "her face already fixed in an
expression immanent with smiling, with speech, prepared
speech" (19); and in her easy acceptance of the sack of
money, "pleased, warm, though not very much surprised"
(20), that this scene has been repeated with other Armstids
and other egg money over the past four weeks.

In her prepared speeches and easy, casual acceptance
of the goodwill of others, there is no recognition of the
sacrifices that their largesse represents, no
acknowledgment of the hard work and the tireless frugality
with which each coin has been collected that Martha has
given her, and all the other Marthas have given her, nor of the purpose for which it had originally been put aside (shoes, a new stove, a horse, a cultivator?). Lena does not translate the scars reflected in the "savage screw of gray hair at the base of her skull and a face that might have been carved in sandstone," nor the savage clash of the stove and the refusal of Lena's polite offer to help by saying, "I been doing this three times a day for thirty years now" with the hardship and deprivation and sacrifice contained in these acts of kindness.

After Armstid drops her off at Varner's store, Lena sits on the steps, "not listening apparently," while the men around her surmise that after four weeks on the road "she is thinking of a scoundrel who deserted her in trouble" (22), or about Doane's Mill, which by now they feel she has concluded is no worse than any other place she has seen since, a conclusion it would be fair to assume she had reached after four weeks on the road. But Lena is not thinking about these things at all. "She is thinking about the coins knotted in the bundle beneath her hands. She is remembering breakfast, thinking how she can enter the store this moment and buy cheese and crackers and even sardines if she likes" (22), with Mrs. Armstid's egg money. Which is exactly what she does, including the purchase of a fifteen cent can of sardines. These she eats "slowly, steadily, sucking the rich sardine oil from her fingers"
with slow and complete relish" (26). "Will we get there before dinner time?" she asks the man who is giving her a lift from Frenchman's Bend to Jefferson (24).

Lena is described as being suspended "like something moving forever and without progress across an urn" (5). When Armstid stops his wagon before her, "She does not move yet. Beneath the faded garment of that same weathered blue her body is shapeless and immobile. . . . Her bare feet rest side by side in the shallow ditch. The pair of dusty, heavy, manlooking shoes beside them are not more inert" (9). In the kitchen, talking to Martha, again she is described "with her neat hair and her inert hands upon her lap" with a face that is "calm as stone, but not hard. Its doggedness has a soft quality, an inwardlighted quality of tranquil and calm unreason and detachment" (15). "[S]he has traveled for four weeks with the untroubled unhaste of a change of season" (47). Later, as she prepares to pass out of Mississippi and into Tennessee on the back of a furniture dealer's wagon, she is still "sitting there on the log, holding the chap and listening quiet as a stone and pleasant as a stone and just about as nigh to being moved or persuaded" (474). When it appears that Byron has run off on her, she is "as quiet and calm" (478) as always, simply packing up Byron's things, and going on, as she had for eight weeks, untroubled "with folks taking good care of her" as she goes along (480 [emphases added]).
"Inert", "stone" faced, Lena is the antithesis of Eula who "was alive and not ashamed of it . . . was what she was and looked the way she looked and wasn't ashamed of it and not afraid or ashamed of being glad of it . . . that splendor, that splendid unshame" (Town 75). Even a twelve-year old boy, Chick Mallison, knows that men can't handle a woman like Eula more than once every 100 years (Town 74): She wasn't too big, heroic, what they call Junoesque. It was that there was just too much of what she was for any one human female package to contain, and hold: too much of white, too much of female, too much of maybe just glory, I don't know: so that at first sight of her you felt a kind of shock of gratitude just for being alive and being male at the same instant with her in space and time, and then in the next second and forever after a kind of despair because you knew that there never would be enough of any one male to match and hold and deserve her; grief forever after because forever after nothing less would ever do. (Town 6)

Against what Gavin Stevens calls "that damned incredible woman, that Frenchman's Bend Helen, Semiramis—no: not Helen nor Semiramis: Lilith: the one before Eve herself . . . (Town 44), Lena is portrayed as Eve, as earth mother (See Note 7). In the interstitial dialogue between
Lena and Eula, however, it is difficult to perceive of Eula as Lilith the destroyer and Lena as Eve, earth mother and nurturer. Whom does Eula destroy, and whom does Lena nurture? Against Eula's sexual aliveness, Lena is sexless. Against Eula the homemaker, Lena is the wanderer. Against Eula's selflessness, Lena stands the epitome of selfishness, not weighing Martha's sacrifice against the fifteen cent sardines for herself. Against Eula's humanity, Lena stands disassociated from life, uninterested in the burning house and the hullabaloo following until she thinks it may have something to do with herself or Lucas. Eula weighs her actions against their effect on Flem, de Spain and Linda; Lena accepts the assistance of the Armstids, Byron, and Hightower, with no regard for their personal cost. Eula inquires after the sick Riddell boy; Lena becomes frantic when she feels in danger of being pulled into the world around her by Mrs. Hines who calls her baby Joey, and refers to his father as Joe Christmas: "I don't like to get mixed up. And I am afraid she might get me mixed up, like they say how you might cross your eyes and then you can't uncross..." (388)[.] What Lena refers to as getting "mixed up" is fear of involvement, fear of knowing who Mrs. Hines is and why she persists in calling her baby Joey. Eula takes responsibility for her actions; Lena lets others take responsibility for her.

Seen from the perspective acquired through this
interaction with Eula, it is difficult to concur with the
prevailing critical opinion of Lena. Francois Pitavy, for
example, defines Lena as a "truly eponymous character, with
her 'luminosity older than our Christian civilization,' her
'quality of being able to assume everything'—thus to
include all the meanings of the novel, similar and
antithetical" (Critical Casebook xvi, quoting Faulkner in
the University 199). Michael Millgate associates Lena's
"irrepressible life force" with the "Virgin Mary" ("A
Novel: Not an Anecdote" 36, 40), and describes Joe's search
in terms of "the peace and tranquility of mind that are
represented by Lena" (38). Andre Bleikasten ("Light in
August: The Closed Society") calls her "Luminous Lena"
whose "bright circle" encloses Christmas's story (89).
Hirshleifer sees Lena being sustained by a faith which
"gives her the strength to endure injury and, in a way, to
transmute evil to good" ("As Whirlwinds in the South" 9).
And even though Benson ("Thematic Design in Light in
August") concludes that Lena cannot be the moral center of
Light in August because her morality is never challenged,
evertheless he sees Byron's move "toward union with Lena"
as being a move toward "life itself" (29). Abel in "Frozen
Movement in Light in August" describes Lena's passage
through Jefferson as "her enchanted inelectable progress
from Alabama into Mississippi" (111), and he excuses her
subjective, limited reality on the grounds that "[s]he
represents ordinary naive mankind, inviolably innocent because it cannot enter the realm of ideas" (114).

The dialogic interaction among Lena, the Armstids and Eula, reveals that Lena is no more an actor in life than Hightower, and therefore does not deserve the idealistic designations applied to her. While Hightower sits in present time, but sees only past time, Lena sits only in present space, and looks to future space:

She thinks of herself as already moving, riding again, thinking then it will be as if I were riding for a half mile before I even got into the wagon, before the wagon even got to where I was waiting, and that when the wagon is empty of me again it will go on for a half mile with me still in it [...] ... I will be riding within the hearing of Lucas Burch before his seeing. He will hear the wagon, but he wont know. So there will be one within his hearing before his seeing.

(6)

Lena is of no time and of no place. Time is measured in duration, place is measured by boundaries, but only space is measured in distance: "I have come from Alabama: a fur piece. All the way from Alabama a-walking. A fur piece"

(1).

Lena passes through Jefferson unscathed. Her lack of involvement is seen in the closing scenes of chapter one:
The wagon crests the final hill and they see smoke.

"Jefferson," the driver says.

"Well, I'll declare," she says. "We are almost there aint we?"

It is the man now who does not hear. He is looking ahead, across the valley toward the town on the opposite ridge. Following his pointing whip, she sees two columns of smoke: the one the heavy density of burning coal above a tall stack, the other a tall yellow column standing apparently from among a clump of trees some distance beyond the town. "That's a house burning," the driver says. "See?"

But she in turn again does not seem to be listening, to hear. "My, my," she says; "here I aints been on the road but four weeks, and now I am in Jefferson already. My, my. A body does get around." (26)

Lena buys her serenity at the expense of personal involvement in the life that goes on around her. Was she ever really in search of Lucas, or was she simply running away from the responsibility which her brother and sister-in-law and the Armstids represent? In this confrontation, it is difficult to maintain the image of Lena as the modern day Virgin Mary. She neither touches, nor is touched, by
what goes on around her, and unscathed she moves out of
town. During her passage, Lena has learned nothing about
life. Her last words are virtually identical with her
opening words:

'I have come from Alabama: a fur piece. All the
way from Alabama a-walking. A fur piece.'

Thinking although I have not been quite a month
on the road I am already in Mississippi....

Thinking although I have not been quite a month
on the road I am already in Mississippi....

"'My, my. A body does get around. Here we aint
been coming from Alabama but two months, and now
it's already Tennessee.'" (480)

In between these two statements a woman has been
murdered, her murderer mutilated and killed, a woman finds
her grandson, only to lose him, one man is forced to face
the responsibility for his wife's death, a town must live
with the conscience of having killed a man without benefit
of trial, one man must learn to live with the memory of
mutilating another man, one man has given up his job and
life to become a wanderer and father to another man's
child, and a son has been born. And all Lena can say is,
"My, my. A body does get around."

Without the intertextual evidence provided by the
repeating characters, the Armstids, or the intertextual
link provided by Jody Varner to Eula Varner Snopes, it is
difficult to challenge the critical view of Lena as earth mother. When viewed against the world of Armstid and his broken leg, against him and his wife taking turns in the traces opposite the surviving mule, against Armstid’s wife weaving scraps into colorful pieces to buy her chaps shoes, and especially against Eula’s suicide to protect her daughter, Lena’s purity pales, and her squandering fifteen cents of Martha Armstid’s money on sardines becomes a selfish act, since her own impending chap may have some needs of his own. But Lena is unwilling to postpone immediate gratification out of consideration for her child. Would she be willing, like Eula, to sacrifice herself for this child?

In this interstitial metanarrative there is no authority, there is no one truth. There are different voices challenging, calling into question, the diorama which constitutes Lena. One person’s voice is no more invested with authority than another’s voice in this dialogue. Each is afforded complete freedom of speech, because each has been divested of the conforming intention of the individual texts. Therefore, within this dialogue, Lena can offer her own defense. For example, she can counter that it is unlikely that her son will be placed in the predicament of Eula’s daughter. It is also unlikely that Lena herself will ever be placed in a position to die for her child’s honor. By keeping her son isolated from
the ideologies of the passing towns, she may be able to preserve him from the strangulating traditions and beliefs which have destroyed Joe Christmas and Joanna Burden, and even, for that matter, Eula Varner Snopes, who kills herself to prevent the backlash of the ideology of one town from destroying her daughter. Lena can also argue that she is unwilling to accept the harshness and cruelty which is all it appears that life has had to offer Martha Armstid and Eula Varner. But "I refuse to accept it" is considered an inadequate response by the Jewish pilot in A Fable (Stein Interview 75). Should it be adequate for Lena?
C. "We can weep and bear it."

An intertextual relationship is established between *Light in August*, *The Unvanquished*, and *Flags in the Dust / Sartoris* through Joanna Burden who identifies the two carpetbaggers killed by Colonel Sartoris over Negro voting rights following the Civil War as her grandfather and brother. Although the elder Burdens never appear as characters per se in any of Faulkner's stories, besides Joanna's story, they also appear within the context of two other narratives: in the account of the Sartoris family during the Civil War told by the Colonel's young son, Bayard, related in *The Unvanquished*, and in the 90 year old Will Falls's reminiscences to Bayard about the latter's father in *Flags in the Dust / Sartoris*.

The Burden narrative provides a double intertextual moment: once as recurring characters and once as recurring text, since unlike other recurring characters who appear as actors in different stories, the Burdens appear only as actors within the same story. Therefore, dialogic interaction occurs not only among the various portrayals of the Burdens by the different narrators, but also among the details of the incident in which they are involved. This in turn generates a dialogic interaction among the narrators and their intentions, and among the intentions of the various texts within which the narratives occur.
Because of the intricate web of intertextuality which links Faulkner's texts like the handiwork of a mad tatter, it is always necessary to set arbitrary boundaries around intertextual studies involving his works. The thread of intertextuality generated by the narratives about the Burdens, therefore, will be followed only in those directions which impact on *Light in August*.

The contemporary account of the Burden-Sartoris incident is narrated by Colonel John Sartoris's young son, Bayard, in "Skirmish at Sartoris" (*The Unvanquished*). This story focuses on the Burdens, outsiders from Missouri, who attempt to have the Negro known as Uncle Cash, who had "druv the Benbow carriage twill he run off with the Yankees two years ago" (229), elected marshal of Jefferson. To this end, the Burdens attempt to stuff the ballot box by rounding up all the blacks they can find and issuing them voting tickets: ":[W]hen we came into the square we saw the crowd of niggers kind of huddled beyond the hotel door with six or eight strange white men herding them . . . " (236).

Bayard also notes that his father warned the Burdens that the white men of Jefferson would not allow Uncle Cash to be elected, and that they responded by daring the Colonel to stop the election:

[The Colonel] told the two Burdens before all the men in town that the election would never be held with Cash Benbow or any other
nigger in it and how the Burdens had dared him to stop it. (Unvanquished 232)

Will Falls's account does not contradict young Bayard's account, but his emphasis is very different from Bayard's. He mentions nothing about Uncle Cash running for marshal nor about the Burdens' challenge, but concentrates instead on Sartoris himself:

"Your paw . . . [s]tood in the do' of that sto' the day them two cyarpet-baggers brung them niggers in to vote that day in '72. Stood thar . . . when ever'body else had left, and watched them two Missouri fellers herdin' them niggers up the road to'ds the sto'; stood right in the middle of the do' while them two cyarpet-baggers begun backin' away with their hands in their pockets until they was clar of the niggers, and cussed him." (Flags 263 / Sartoris 193-4)

Because he does not mention the election of Uncle Cash for marshal, Falls's account makes the issue of Negro franchise more central:

". . . Cunnel reached around inside the do' and lifted [taken] out the ballot box and sot hit between his feet.

"'You niggers come hyer to vote, did you?' he says. 'All right, come up hyer and vote.'

"When they had broke and scattered he let
off that 'ere [dang] dern'ger over their haids a couple of times. . . ." (Flags 263 / Sartoris 194)

Although Joanna Burden's narrative goes into details on the history of the Burden family, she does not flesh out the details of the episode in which her grandfather and brother were killed. She briefly explains that her grandfather and father "got a commission from the government to come down here, to help with the freed negroes" (238), and that the confrontation with Colonel Sartoris was over "a question of negro voting rights" (235), but in her explanation this issue appears to be only the catalyst which ignited a general hatred toward them:

"They hated us here. We were Yankees. Foreigners. Worse than foreigners: enemies. Carpetbaggers. And it--the War--still too close for even the ones that got whipped to be very sensible. Stirring up the negroes to murder and rape, they called it. Threatening white supremacy." (235)

The three accounts of the shooting scene itself retain the various postures described above. Bayard's account concentrates on the facts with none of the idealization of Will Falls, although he does include details which emphasize that his father assumed legal responsibility for his actions. According to his account, the killing of the
two Burdens was more an act of self-defense or justifiable homicide, than first degree murder:

"And then we heard the three shots and we all turned and looked at the door. . . . "The last two was that derringer," George said. . . . Then Drusilla came out, carrying the ballot box . . . and then Father came out behind her, brushing his new beaver hat on his sleeve.

"We heard a pistol too," George said. "Did they touch you?"

"No," Father said. "I let them fire first. You all heard. You boys can swear to my derringer."

"Yes," George said. "We all heard." Now father looked at all of them, at all the faces in sight, slow.

"Does any man here want a word with me about this?" he said. But you could not hear anything, not even moving. . . . He turned to Drusilla. "Go home, I will go to the sheriff, and then I will follow you."

"Like hell you will," George Wyatt said. "Some of the boys will ride out with Drusilla. The rest of us will come with you."

But Father would not let them. "Don't you see we are working for peace through law and
order?" he said. "I will make bond and then follow you." (Unvanquished 237-9)

Again Will Fall's reminiscence centers on John Sartoris:

"[T]hen he loaded [the derringer] again and marched down the road to Miz Winterbottom's, whar them two fellers boa'ded.

"'Madam,' he says, liftin' his beaver, 'I have a small matter of business to discuss with yo' lodgers. Permit me,' he says, and he put his hat back on and marched up the stairs steady as a parade. . . . He walked right into the room whar they was a-settin' behind a table facin' the do', with their pistols layin' on the table.

"When us boys outside heard the three shots we run in. . . . [A]nd in a minute hyer comes Cunnel with his hat cocked over his eye, marchin' down the stairs steady as a co't jury, breshin' the front of his coat with his hank'cher. . . . He stopped in front of Miz Winterbottom and lifted his hat again.

"'Madam,' he says, 'I was fo'ced to muss up yo' guest room considerable. Pray accept my apologies, and have yo' nigger clean it up and send the bill to me. . . . Gentlemen,'
he says to us, 'good mawnin'.' And he cocked that 'ere beaver on his head and walked out.

*(Flags 263-4 / Sartoris 194).*

Joanna's account of the murder is more succinct, and couched in defensive language. She shows her relative position to the south by describing Sartoris as "an ex-slaveholder and Confederate soldier" (235), and by these terms condemning him as completely as the southern charge of carpetbagger condemns her family:

"So I suppose that Colonel Sartoris was a town hero because he killed with two shots from the same pistol an old onearmed man and a boy who had never even cast his first vote." (235)

Notably absent in Joanna's account is any mention of her grandfather, or brother, having a weapon, despite the fact that earlier in her narrative to Joe Christmas she describes her grandfather as being "known to carry a pistol" (229) which he wore even on Sundays, "his broadcloth frockcoat bulging over the pistol in his hip pocket" (230). Although neither Bayard nor Will Falls mentions the fact that the elder Burden has only one arm, by Joanna's own account, even after her grandfather lost his arm "while a member of a troop of partisan guerilla horse in the Kansas fighting . . . he was still vigorous, and his frockcoat still bulged behind over the butt of the heavy pistol" (230). The boy whom she describes as not
having cast his first vote, is earlier described by Joanna as being twenty, and already having a man's build at 12, when he was projected "to be as big a man as his grandpappy" (234-5).

In order to understand how these texts interact, it is necessary to refine the parameters within which an intertextual interaction can take place between conjoining texts. First of all, an intertextual interaction does not penetrate the temporal or spatial dimensions of the individual texts, nor does it interfere with its causality. Intertexts bisect vertically rather than horizontally, thus establishing a synchronic rather than a diachronic relationship between the conjoined texts. This prevents the invading text from merging into the horizontal plane of the host text. If an intertext does enter the horizontal plane of the conjoined text, that is, into its temporal and spatial dimensions, the specificity of both texts would be violated, and the texts would merge. This merger may extend the horizontal plane of the individual texts but would invalidate the intertextuality which depends upon the "otherness" of the conjoined texts to generate the dialogue. The more comprehensive or extensive the points of contact are between the conjoined texts the greater the danger is of the texts merging. This is a real danger with regard to the Burden-Sartoris metanarratives since each text relates the same story, although a complete
merging of texts is not possible because of the dissimilarity between the larger texts.

Although the text most at risk of losing its specificity through being swallowed up by the intention of the conjoined text appears to be the invading text, in fact, any of the conjoined texts, including the host text, will be deformed if its specificity is invaded. For example, if Joanna’s description of the two men as "one-armed" and "a boy" were inserted into Will Falls’s narrative it would confuse the heroic image which is the intention behind Will’s story, and which is necessary to the intention of the larger text, Flags in the Dust / Sartoris, to develop an image of Colonel Sartoris which the Sartoris twins feel compelled to emulate. Even though it would be deformed by the intrusion of foreign material, the prevailing narrative would attempt, nonetheless, to accommodate these details to fit its own intention, even to the extent of assuming an ironic stance with regard to it. In any event, Joanna’s intention will be submerged beneath the voice of the prevailing text. The same distortion would be effected in the intention of Bayard’s narrative, for example, if the image of Calvin Burden with "his broadcloth frockcoat bulging over the pistol in his hip pocket" from Joanna’s narrative is drawn into its horizontal plane. Although this information could be absorbed by the intention of that narrative to reinforce
Bayard’s claim that Calvin dared Sartoris to stop him, and meant it, at the same time it would distort the intention of Bayard’s narrative by confirming that Colonel Sartoris’s shooting of the Burden men was not an act of violence, but an act of self-defense. Although Bayard’s forming of the Burden-Sartoris incident, as noted above, appears to be based on an attempt to vindicate his father, there is a difference between deliberately launching a defense and subconsciously being defensive.

The consequences of completely merging the three narratives become apparent when all the known details of the Burden-Sartoris incident are joined together into one composite story:

Calvin Burden, a one-armed, pistol-toting, whiskey-drinking, fanatical abolitionist, dares Colonel Sartoris to prevent him from running Uncle Cash, a Negro, for Marshal of Jefferson, and when Calvin, with the assistance of his grandson, a young man of 20, who is also named Calvin, attempts to carry out this plan, Sartoris marches alone into Mrs. Winterbottom’s boarding house where the two Burdens are sitting behind a table in their room with a gun in front of them, allows them to fire the first shot, then kills them both with two shots from his derringer. The Colonel descends the stairs, brushing his beaver
hat, apologizes to Mrs. Winterbottom and requests that she send him the bill for cleaning up the mess. He tips his hat to the crowd, bids them, "Good morning," and then goes to the sheriff's office to post bond.

This composite story not only obliterates the uniqueness of each narrative, but also obliterates the intention that originally informed each story. Will Falls's heroic memories are indecipherable from Joanna's bitter ones, and Joanna and Bayard's opposing defensive versions cancel each other out. Intertextuality requires that there be a "between" texts; there is no between texts when the text is singular. It is apparent above why the specificity of the conjoined texts must remain inviolable. If the conjoined texts are allowed to meet on one horizontal plane the dialogue will cease. It is, therefore, essential to the dialogic confrontation between texts that the individual texts, both narrators and intentions, remain separate and distinct even as they interact.

To arrive at the above appraisals of the texts requires a vantage point exterior to the narratives. To say that both Bayard's and Joanna's accounts are defensive, and that Will Falls's account is romantic are conclusions that can only be reached by considering the details that are included and those that are omitted. But
"included" and "omitted" requires both a second and an external perspective. Critics provide outside evaluations of texts, but their voices are always exterior to the texts and thus they are unable to impact upon their interiority. Intertextuality generated by recurring characters provides an exterior perspective, and because the characters are a part of the interiority of the texts, they are able to carry the dialogue generated by the intertextual interaction back into the interiority of their respective texts. It is this process which transforms a monologic text into a polyphonic text.

Although there are no contradictions among the three narratives, when the accounts are isolated, it becomes evident that through a combination of omissions and underlined commissions, each of these narratives is able to effect a different intention. Will Falls's account is designed to enhance the heroic stature of Colonel Sartoris. Bayard's account, by emphasizing the Burdens' dare, the witnesses, and the adherence to legal form, seems framed to minimize his father's guilt. Similarly, Joanna's narrative, by failing to include that her grandfather probably had a gun and that her brother really wasn't a "boy," also is designed to minimize the culpability of her forebears and to maximize their innocence. In addition, Joanna's narrative reveals that even though Joanna lived her entire life in the south and was homesick to return
after a short trip north, she separates herself emotionally from the south. Her lack of sympathy is evident in the choice of words with which she describes the southern situation after the war: they were "whipped" and not "very sensible." She also paints the southern interpretation of her grandfather's motivation in the broadest terms, suggesting that the charges were exaggerated: they were accused of "stirring up the negroes to murder and rape," and of being anti-white supremacists. By focusing on the Jeffersonians she avoids addressing the validity of the charges against her grandfather.

This dialogic confrontation confirms that different intentions, even opposing intentions, can be served by the same facts (events). Facts in themselves are neutral; they are voiceless; they are inherently void of meaning. Meaning is a value superimposed on the facts from the outside after the event (facts) is more or less closed off and finished. This is apparent in the confrontation between these three narratives, all of which rely upon the same event, and without altering a letter of the facts, are able to impress them into different forms to serve different intentions.

Value or meaning predates the facts in the sense that what is to be preserved depends upon the values one considers worth preserving, and therefore only those events which fit some pre-existing sense of meaning and value are
retained in words beyond the event. That is, made into story. Those "facts" are selected and incorporated within the story which illustrate the value placed on the event itself. Hence Will Falls's account which is designed to portray the heroic stature of Colonel Sartoris avoids the issues and concentrates on the color. And Bayard retains the details necessary to vindicate his family despite the fact that he disagrees with his father's actions. After the Colonel's death a few years later, Bayard, then 20, talks about his father with his stepmother, Drusilla:

(Bayard) "But how can they get any good from what he wants to do for them ["all the people, black and white, the women and children back in the hills who don't even own shoes"] if they are--after he has--"

(Drusilla) "Killed some of them? I suppose you include those two carpet baggers he had to kill to hold that first election, don't you?"

"They were men. Human beings."

"They were Northerners, foreigners who had no business here." (Unvanquished 256-7)

It is also apparent in the dialogic interaction between these stories that the various tellers assume different stances in relation to their tale. Both Will Falls and Bayard are empowered by the stories they tell while Joanna Burden is de-powered by hers. If the line is
drawn further, to other stories and other storytellers, Hightower also is de-powered by these stories, as is the Colonel’s great grandson, Bayard. However, Joanna’s father, Nathaniel Burden, who is the original storyteller of the story which Joanna re-tells, if not actually empowered, is at least not de-powered by it in the same sense that Joanna is. The line of demarcation between the empowered and the de-powered does not depend upon which side of the gun the narrator was on, but on whether they were actors within the story that they tell.

The story makers were Colonel Sartoris and Calvin Burden. They were members of a generation raised on violence. Their beliefs were strong and they were willing to defend them with the sword. Out of this violence and with strong wills, the land was drawn out of the wilderness and the present was dreamed and created. Their wills, sometimes in agreement and sometimes in conflict, forged the mold from which the present is shaped. The storytellers come from the next generation, the generation of their sons, Bayard and Nathaniel, who are tired of the violence and the bloodshed it spawned, and chose to lay aside the sword. When he comes to his moment to kill, to avenge the Colonel’s murder by his former partner, Redmond, following a political election, Bayard confronts Redmond alone and without a weapon. His father’s friend, George Wyatt, tells what happened:
"You walked in here without even a pocket knife and let him miss you twice. My God in heaven. . . . Well by God," he said again. "Maybe you're right, maybe there has been enough killing in this family. . . ." (Unvanquished 288-89)

Joanna's father, who is the one who formed and passed on the story of her grandfather and brother, does not avenge the deaths of his father and son either, and the words she uses to explain why are almost identical to those Wyatt uses to explain Bayard's actions:

"I had thought of that. Why father didn't shoot Colonel Sartoris. . . . It was all over then. The killing in uniform and with flags, and the killing without uniforms and flags. And none of it doing or did any good. None of it." (241)

An essential difference between Joanna as storyteller and Bayard and Nathaniel as storytellers, is that the latter are actors in the stories that they tell. Nathaniel Burden wrote the closing scene to his father's life. He chose to let the incident end in the upper room at Mrs. Winterbottom's boarding house. And Bayard, although his father's death came at a different time and by a different hand, also wrote the ending to his father's story. Both of these were participants, decision makers, in the events which they relate. They are also determinants in a second
sense as well, for they are the ones who determined the facts that should be retained, and how, and thus impressed a value on them by shaping the details into stories. The story each of them tells is a story of his own making, invested with his own values.

To appreciate the value which Bayard places on the story about the Burden-Sartoris affair it is necessary to place this story within the intention of the entire text, The Unvanquished, which deals with the disintegration of the glory which was the South and which had been Sartoris’s as well, to that point which Will Falls describes:

"That 'us when hit changed. When he had to start killin' folks. . . . When a feller has to start killin' folks, he 'most always has to keep on killin' 'em. And when he does, he's already dead hisself." (Flags 6 / Sartoris 35)

Their grandfathers had done the fighting and the dying, their fathers had done the forgiving, and all that is left for the grandchildren and great grand children is the long and awful job of living with what the others had bequeathed them. Succeeding generations, such as those represented by Joanna Burden, the Sartoris twins and Gail Hightower, are not story framers, but only story repeaters. The stories they tell are those they have received from others already fully invested with meaning and value. They are not of their own making. They did not witness the
events being related, nor have they added the value to these events. Unlike Bayard and Nathaniel, Joanna and Hightower are not determinants in their stories. And because they are powerless to change the course of events from which these stories arise, they feel equally powerless to change the stories. Therefore they accept the stories, both the facts and the value which has been placed on them by others. They fail to widen their perspective so that they can perceive of the facts as neutral and voiceless details, and of meaning as being individual valuation superimposed by others. Unable to separate the meaning from the facts, they feel compelled to accept the meaning as being equally valid. Thus Joanna retains the story told her by her father, including the value he had superimposed on those facts, a value which led him to conclude that the black man was:

"... the curse which God put on a whole race before your grandfather or your brother or me or you were even thought of. A race doomed and cursed to be forever and ever a part of the white race's doom and curse for its sins. ... His doom and his curse. Forever and ever. Mine. Your mother's. Yours, even though you are a child. The curse of every white child that ever was born and that ever will be born. None can escape it."

(239)
Because Joanna knows that the basic facts of the story are true, that her grandfather and brother were killed by John Sartoris, she accepts as well the conclusion which her father felt was to be drawn from their deaths.

The grandchildren of both the murderer and the murdered are impaled on the same stake. Both are victims of a past which they carry forward into the present by retaining and forming the facts in such a way as to perpetuate their roles as victims. The Colonel's great grandson is as impaled as Joanna; he is the victim of a past which he cannot duplicate nor emulate. Unfortunately, his grandfather's rejection of the Colonel's actions does not ameliorate the heroic and glamorous stature with which other family members, especially the Colonel's younger sister, Jenny DuPre, invest the memory of the Sartoris men despite a pretense of condemning their foolhardiness, thus forcing succeeding generations of Sartoris men to be measured against the heroic standards set in the old stories:

It was she who told them of the manner of Bayard Sartoris' death prior to the second battle of Manassas. She had told the story many times since . . . and as she grew older the tale itself grew richer and richer, taking on a mellow splendor like wine; until what had been a hair-brained prank of two heedless and reckless boys
wild with their own youth, was become a gallant and finely tragical focal-point to which the history of the race had been raised from out the old miasmic swamps of spiritual sloth by two angels valiantly and glamorously fallen and strayed, altering the course of human events and purging the souls of men." (Flags 13-14 / Sartoris 25)

If Joanna, the young Bayard and Hightower had been able to perceive the facts alone, disengaged from the value assigned by others, they might have been able to assign a new value to them. For example, by tearing the film away and perceiving of her grandfather as an intruder, as a carpetbagger, Joanna might have been able to free herself from the past, and from feeling victimized by that past. By the twin great grandson, Bayard, ripping the film away from the heroic deeds of his ancestor, he might have been able to free himself from the family legacy that Sartoris men must live hard and die young. Because they have not done so, and because they have chosen to accept the past with the value placed on it by others, Bayard and Joanna have allowed themselves to be crucified on the cross of the past. Joanna’s cross is described in terms of a black shadow already falling upon them before they drew breath. And I seemed to see the black shadow in the shape of a cross. And it seemed
like the white babies were struggling, even before they drew breath, to escape from the shadow that was not only upon them but beneath them too, flung out like their arms were flung out, as if they were nailed to the cross." (239)

Bayard’s cross is named Sartoris. Hightower’s cross is a henhouse raid.

Individually each of these narratives perfectly describes a monologic text: each has one voice and one intention which informs the available facts. With no contesting voice to question any of the narrators, each voice is, by default, invested with full authority. The danger of the monologic text is ironically revealed when these three texts enter into conjunction with each other. Joanna’s narrative to Joe Christmas is not only a monologic text, but both she and the story she relates are caught inside of another monologic text which includes the narrative, invested with the authority of the single voice, which her father related to her, and which has led her to be imprisoned by the authority of that story.

The distance which is necessary in order to see Joanna within the context of a larger monologic narrative which both frames her own text and creates it, can only be achieved from a position exterior not only to her story, but exterior to herself. To reach the apex of this ever widening spiral beginning with the story of Joanna Burden
telling about her family to Joe Christmas while sitting on a cot in his cabin, requires travelling a complex road of intertextuality in which three narratives from different texts are conjoined, interact, and then flow back to enlarge and animate the individual text. The animated and enlarged text can re-conjoin and form a second intertext with the other re-animated and enlarged texts.

The specificity of the individual texts is not deformed by this animation, because the horizontal plane of the text is not violated. The animation is the result of a perspective which Robert Burns describes as: "O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us / To see oursels as others see us!"

That is, it can only be accomplished by being "seen" or refracted through the intention of other texts. This "double vision" refines the intention of the individual texts by placing it in relief against the intentions of the other texts. In the case of the Burden-Sartoris narratives, it becomes apparent that no text records "The Truth." One records Bayard's "truth," another records Joanna's "truth," and the third records Will Falls's "truth." While appearing to narrow the focus of the narrative, this refinement in fact broadens each text in the sense that the individual texts assume more sharply defined contours when seen in relief against the other narratives.

This intertextual interaction helps to clarify
Joanna’s function within the larger intention of *Light in August*. On a monologic plane Joanna can appear as an innocent victim of the past, but as a result of the interstitial dialogue generated between the narrative related by Bayard Sartoris and the narrative related by Will Falls, which refines the intention behind Joanna’s story, Joanna is seen to be a victim of her own choosing, just as Hightower is a "victim of the past" of his own choosing. Both Joanna and Hightower accept the facts of the past with the value of others; they use this value not only as justification for the present, but as an excuse for their own inaction in the present. Hightower is as much crucified on this cross as Joanna. He looks to the past as an ideal which cannot be reached again, and Joanna looks to the past as a curse which cannot be broken. They are equally crucified by old words about dead people. Each concludes that the power of the past renders them powerless in the present. Each refuses, therefore, to accept the responsibility of the present by accepting the verdict of the past as being inviolable. They therefore conclude, like the old French Quartermaster General in *A Fable*, that their only recourse is to say: "This is terrible, but we can weep and bear it" (Stein Interview 75).
D. "I’m going to do something about it."

The impact of a recurring character is not necessarily proportionate to its function within the monologic text. The repeating character who most impacts upon Joe Christmas’s story is Captain John McLendon who appears by name only on one page of *Light in August* within the context of a narrative by Byron to Hightower (See Note 8):

"Like that night in the barbershop and him drunk and talking loud until Christmas kind of run in and dragged him out. And Mr. Maxey said, ‘What do you reckon that was he pretty near told on himself and that other one?’ and Captain McLendon said, ‘I dont reckon about it at all,’ and Mr Maxey said, ‘Do you reckon they was actually holding up somebody else’s liquor truck?’ and McLendon said, ‘Would it surprise you to hear that that fellow Christmas hadn’t done no worse than that in his life?’" (81)

This insignificant mention of McLendon is sufficient to actualize an intertextual link between *Light in August* and the short story, "Dry September."

The dialogic interaction between "Dry September" and Christmas’s narrative in *Light in August*, which is detailed below, does not provide a profoundly new reading of either narrative. What it does effect as a result of the subtle
working back and forth from interaction to text to interaction is a more informed reading of both stories, providing a clearer picture of the elements which empower and energize each narrative. The more fully colored landscape surrounding Joe Christmas colors in the starkness of the "Dry September" landscape, while the stark raw lines of triangulation within "Dry September" formed by the interrelationship between the white male, the black male and the white female make visible the lines of this triangle beneath the complexity of Joe Christmas's story where it is obscured beneath the overlay of other issues such as the racial issue, the religious issue raised by McEachern, the issue of male-female relationships, and the issue of Joe Christmas himself.

The triangulation underlying "Dry September" both informs and justifies white supremacy by shrouding it beneath a mantle of religion: the white race is goodness personified; the black race is evil personified. The white female is the personification of virtue; the black male is the personification of sin. The division between the races is a division between good and evil, and the battle between them is therefore a moral battle, with the white male "Crusader" defending the virtue of the world from the "Infidels."

The similarities that emerge between these two texts, one relating the story of a white man who kills a Negro for
(presumably) violating a white woman, and the other relating the story of a (presumed) Negro who "violates" and kills a white woman and is killed by a white man, where one would expect contradiction, can be attributed to this triangulation which informs both texts.

Reduced to a simple outline, the similarity between these two stories becomes apparent. In "Dry September," a white woman, Minnie Cooper, a spinster, claims to have been "[a]ttacked, insulted, frightened: none of them . . . knew exactly what happened" (169). This accusation leads to an honest, hard-working, local Negro, Will Mayes, being accused of rape. In the barber shop that evening "the rumor, the story, whatever it was" (169) was fanned into an accomplished deed by Captain McLendon:

"Well," he said, "are you going to sit there and let a black son rape a white woman on the streets of Jefferson?" . . . .

"Did it really happen?" . . . .

"Happen? What the hell difference does it make? Are you going to let the black sons get away with it until one really does it?"

(171-172)

At McLendon's instigation kangaroo court justice is promptly dispensed, thus ensuring that at least one of the "black sons" does not "get away with it."

In general outline this is Joe Christmas's story, too.
A white woman has been killed and there is no known motivation nor suspect until it is discovered that a Negro has been living on her property. This "evidence" is provided by a fast-talking young drifter using the alias of Joe Brown who does not come forward until a reward is offered, and whose story is so fraught with inconsistencies and obvious lies that no one believes him until he plays his trump card:

"'Go on. Accuse me. Accuse the white man that's trying to help you with what he knows. Accuse the white man and let the nigger go free. Accuse the white and let the nigger run. . . .'"

"'Well,' the sheriff says, 'I believe you are telling the truth at last.'" (91-92)

As in the case of Will Mayes, the only hard "evidence" against Joe Christmas is the one noun, "nigger." Although he is ostensibly hunted down for the murder of Joanna Burden, in fact, he is executed, not for her murder, but for having slept with her for three years: "Then Grimm too sprang back, flinging behind him the bloody butcher knife. 'Now you'll let white women alone, even in hell,' he said" (439).

The triad is represented in "Dry September" by John McLendon, Will Mayes and Minnie Cooper, and appears to be repeated in Light in August by Percy Grimm as the defender of the white female's honor, Joe Christmas as the evil from
whom the white woman must be protected, and Joanna Burden as the white woman defiled. Closer examination, though, reveals that this triangulation does not empower this story. Percy Grimm, like the gambler in Crane's "The Blue Hotel," "isn't even a noun. He is kind of an adverb" (See Note 9). The triad which does empower this story consists of Joe Christmas as both the defender of the white female's honor ("He was sick after that. He did not know until then that there were white women who would take a man with a black skin. He stayed sick for two years" [212]), and the black defiler of white women ("[B]eneath the dark and equivocal and symbolical archways of midnight he bedded with the women and paid them when he had the money, and when he did not have it he bedded anyway and then told them that he was a negro" [211]). Joe Christmas's Janus-like role in this triangulation increases the tension and endangers its finely balanced equilibrium. This triangulation can be seen as informing the structure of Joe Christmas's narrative as well as defining the source of conflict within Joe himself.

Another similarity between these two stories is the repressed anger seething beneath the surface of both McLendon and Joe Christmas. This anger is not evident in the McLendon who barges into the barber shop with a heavy automatic pistol in his hip pocket and demands, "Well . . . are you going to sit there and let a black son rape a
white woman on the streets of Jefferson?" (171), but it is evident in the McLendon who returns home that night after he has done his "duty" avenging the honor of Minnie Cooper:

"Look at that clock," he said [to his wife]. . . . "Haven’t I told you about sitting up like this, waiting to see when I come in?"

"John," she said. She laid the magazine down. Poised on the balls of his feet, he glared at her with his hot eyes, his sweating face.

"Didn’t I tell you?" He went toward her. . . . He caught her shoulder.

"Don’t John. I couldn’t sleep... The heat; something. Please, John. You’re hurting me."

"Didn’t I tell you? He released her and half struck, half flung her across the chair. . . .

He went on through the house, ripping off his shirt, and on the dark, screened porch at the rear he stood and mopped his head and shoulders with the shirt and flung it away. He took the pistol from his hip and laid it on the table. . . . He was sweating again already, and he stopped and hunted furiously for the shirt. At last he found it and wiped his body again, and, with his body pressed against the dusty
screen, he stood panting. (182-83 [emphases added])

McLendon's anger reflects Joe Christmas's anger: "At the mill he stood jabbing his shovel into the sawdust slowly and steadily and hard, as though he were chopping up a buried snake ('or a man,' Mooney said)" (35). And McLendon's brutality is reflected in Joe's brutality:

[Joe began] to strike [Brown] with his flat hand, short, vicious, and hard, until Brown ceased laughing.... [He] put his hand flat upon Brown's mouth and nose, shutting his jaw with his left hand while with the right he struck Brown again with those hard, slow, measured blows, as if he were meting them out by count." (96)

Beneath the violent and passionate moments of Christmas's relationships with women and the vivid memory of Joanna Burden's severed head there is a gentleness to him which surfaces when Joe receives a letter from Joanna which he hopes signals that she wants to resume their relationship on its old terms:

'All that foolishness,' he thought.... 'all that damn foolishness. She is still she and I am still I. And now, after all this damn foolishness'; thinking how they would both laugh over it tonight, later, afterward, when the time for quiet talking and quiet laughing came; at the
whole thing, at one another, at themselves.

(257-58)

Despite the years of accumulated anger and passion it
appears that Joe has been able to retain that gentle part
of him which he had shown lying beside Bobbie:

She told him about the sickness of the first
night. . . . So he told her in turn what he knew
to tell. . . . He told her quietly and
peacefully, lying beside her, touching her. . . .
His hand was slow and quiet on her invisible
flank. (184)

Through the addition of a third intertext, The
Mansion, another side of McLendon is revealed. In this
text McLendon is portrayed as a sympathetic "humanitarian"
(186) who defends a slow-witted companion, Tug Nightingale,
against the ridicule of his peers:

But by that time Captain McLendon would be there;
probably somebody had gone to fetch him. . . .
[H]e held his company together . . . by simple
instinctive humanity. . . .

"What the hell’s going on here?" he said.
"What the hell do you think Tug is? a damn ant
running around a damn orange or something? He
aint going around anything: he’s going straight
across it, across the water to France to fight
for his country, and when they dont need him in
France any longer he's coming back across the same water, back here to Jefferson the same way he went out of it, like we'll all be damn glad to get back to it. So don't let me hear any more of this" (excrement: my word) "any more." (185-86 [Faulkner's parenthesis])

The source of Joe Christmas's anger is easily explained. He is caught in a no-man's land between two sides of a rigid and inflexible social system which gives no quarter, and which he would not accept anyway, because of his refusal to compromise. And yet he is the embodiment of compromise. Raised as the white son of McEachern, he is told that he is "Will Mayes." He is, therefore, both the personification of good and the personification of evil; he is both the defender of southern virtue, and the defiler of that virtue; he is the crusader against sin, and the sinner himself. However, the source of McLendon's anger is not as apparent. He is the Crusader saving the world from defilement. Where is the source of his anger? Joe Christmas's narrative reveals certain fallacies in the southern code by which McLendon is operating that help to explain McLendon's anger.

Joe Christmas's ambivalence about his racial background is manifested primarily in his sexual relations with women. His fixation on women is not a psychological aberration. When the equilibrium of the triad is thrown
off balance by the tension which Christmas's duality creates, it is revealed that the triad comprised of white males, black males and white females, which is clothed in terms of morality, actually has sexual underpinnings.

This sexual aspect is apparent in Light in August, but not immediately explicable; this sexual aspect is less apparent in "Dry September," but once identified can be easily explained in terms of the triangulation. Together the texts reveal more clearly than either of the texts can individually, that although the white and black triangulation is couched in theological terms and ratified by southern secular law, it is the white man's sexual libido which perpetuates it. And it is the white woman's awareness of this that can activate it. The white male's fear may stem from a fundamental belief in the attractiveness of sin; that the "forbidden fruits" offered by the sons of Satan will be found more delectable than the fruits of virtue and goodness.

It is this fear which is used as a weapon in the barbershop against those who do not want to participate in the vigilante action being initiated, and which ultimately forces the reluctant males to override their moral objections. When Hawkshaw questions whether anything has really happened to Minnie Cooper, he is accused of being "a hell of a white man" (170). When another man in the barbershop suggests that they should get the facts first
before they act, a travelling drummer accuses him, too, of being "a fine white man," and offers to avenge the outrage himself: "If there aint any white men in this town, you can count on me, even if I aint only a drummer and a stranger" (170). To another man who suggests they wait to find out the real story, the drummer asks, "Do you mean to tell me you are a white man and you'll stand for it? You better go North where you came from. The south don't want your kind here" (171 [emphases added]).

The objectors' attempt to squelch these taunts by introducing reason: "I dont believe--. . . ." "We'll get the facts. . . ." "Find out the truth first." "We got plenty of time." "Did it really happen?" "Let's get the sheriff and do this thing right." "Let's figure this out." But reason cannot prevail when the pressure to act is directed at their masculinity. Although only four men initially respond to McLendon's call to action, in the end they all succumb to doing the "white man" thing: "not looking at one another, then one by one they rose and joined him" (172).

The racial divisiveness which divides Joe internally but also constitutes his oneness informs the sexual implications behind the white man's role in the triad by drawing attention to the fact that if a white man's sexual identity depends upon his playing the Crusader to the black man's defiler, then the black male can be perceived of as
completing the white male by validating his existence as a Christian and as a man. Just as Joe Christmas would cease to exist as a unique individual if either his blackness or his whiteness were removed, so McLendon and Percy Grimm would lose their *raison d'être* without the black man. This interdependence is not a yin / yang relationship of complimentary parts creating a whole, but the informing element without which the other would disappear as an entity, not to be reduced to 1/2, but to cease to exist at all as a distinguishable entity, as the "left hand" would lose its distinction if man had only one hand.

If this is true then John McLendon is locked into an inviolable pattern of a black-white dichotomy as tightly and inescapably as Joe Christmas is locked into his own personal black / white prison. Once an interdependence is established between McLendon and Will Mayes, between Percy Grimm and Joe Christmas, and between Joe Christmas and himself, an interesting reconfiguration of the earlier triangulation takes place. Once the white male and the black male join together to form a complementary and co-dependent existence, the triangle assumes a new shape. Either the triangulation is invalidated totally because all three poles are in alignment or the adversarial tension between these three must develop along the lines of gender, rather than along the lines of race.

This reconfiguration of the southern triad from
racial / gender configuration to a gender configuration is not immediately obvious within either text. The source of antagonism which is apparent in the male / female relations of Joe Christmas is not easily traceable to this racial / gender triad until the conjunction with "Dry September" reveals the triangulation underlying the conflict. But once identified as a force in Christmas's narrative, it not only helps to inform his story, but it also reanimates "Dry September" by exposing subtleties beneath and within that plot.

This reconfiguration does not just place males and females in an adversarial position, but what is emphasized in *Light in August* and becomes apparent in "Dry September" as well, is the female complicity in the white male / black male tensions, which originates in their power to activate the triad (See Note 10). Against this power, the white male is defenseless, as the men in the barber shop are defenseless, and as John McLendon is defenseless, as long as to be a "white man" calls for the avenging of the honor of every white woman, even an old spinster who has already had a "man scare . . . something about a man on the kitchen roof, watching her undress . . ." (171), which forces them to execute a man for a crime he probably didn't commit, to a woman against whom no crime was probably committed, and whose virtue, anyway, is a lie: "It was twelve years now since she had been relegated into adultery by public
opinion" (174-5). Almost none of the men and even few of her female friends believe that anything "happened" at all: "Do you suppose anything really happened?" (108) they ask one another, and by their question, betray their doubts. Nevertheless to be a white man dictates that because of this vague "something," otherwise humanitarian men are forced to commit acts which Charles Mallison says "that I anyway am glad that I dont have to lie down with in the dark every time I go to sleep" (Mansion 185).

This white female complicity lurks in the background of "Dry September." It lurks in Hawkshaw’s suggestion that Minnie’s accusations are unfounded:

"I dont believe anybody did anything. I dont believe anything happened. I leave it to you fellows if them ladies that get old without getting married dont have notions that a man cant--"[.] (170)

It also lurks behind McLendon’s abuse of his wife and underlies the anger which he displays following the killing of Mayes. Joe Christmas sees this complicity in women as deceit. It is deceit that Hawkshaw intimates lies behind Minnie Cooper yelling "nigger." It is deceit which Joe Christmas sees as being a white woman’s tool to gain power. Christmas defines this deceit as "womanshenegro." This force both counterpoises and activates the force called "malehewhite" which controls McLendon’s life as well as
that of the other men in the barbershop. Christmas's term, "womanshenegro," originates in the conjunction of guilt / punishment, white / black, woman / female which becomes inextricably intertwined in his mind when he is five years old. The incident which precipitates this began as childish mischief: Joe sneaks into the dietician's room at the orphanage and eats her toothpaste. Once he is discovered, he expects, and wants, punishment; he wants to "get his whipping and strike the balance and write it off" (115).

But instead of the punishment he knows he deserves, he is offered a dollar reward, and when he refuses this, the dietician's anger is translated into a racial slur, "You little nigger bastard! You nigger bastard" (117). When "knowing remembers" he will know what those "other sounds, rustlings, whisperings" were which took place at that "strange hour to be going to bed" (113), while he hid among the clothes with the half eaten tube of toothpaste. At this moment, guilt, female, punishment, sex and Negro become linked in his mind, with Negro becoming both the reason for the punishment as well as the terms of the punishment.

This pattern of female behavior is repeated in nearly every other female Joe encounters. It is a pattern of moral dishonesty which becomes associated in his mind with the female. It is a pattern which is repeated with Mrs.
McEachern. Although his stepfather is "cold and intent," he is "not deliberately harsh" (133); although he is "a ruthless man who had never known either pity or doubt" (143), yet he is a man whom Joe "could always count upon . . . depend upon" (149) to be consistent in his beliefs. With McEachern, right and wrong did not have different faces at different times or for different people. They did not depend on the week or the hour of the day; punishment and reward were not capricious nor arbitrary, and McEachern demanded no more of others than he demanded of himself.

Standing on the other side of the feminist movement, one can perhaps defend Mrs. McEachern on the grounds that she is powerless, but in the eyes of an eight year old boy who already had a "rigid abnegation of all compromise" (139), her behavior portrays weakness and dishonesty, not a lack of power. She does nothing to intercede between Joe and McEachern that Sunday on which Joe is hourly beaten ten strokes for failing to learn his Bible verse, but that evening when McEachern goes to church "to serve the expiation which he had set himself for the morning" (144), she brings Joe the food which she had "waited until he was gone and then I fixed it myself" (145). But because McEachern would not have forbidden her to do the acts of kindness she tenders to Joe, her secretness and furtiveness make these acts of kindness into acts of dishonesty:
[T]he dishes she would prepare for him in secret and then insist on his accepting and eating them in secret, when he did not want them and he knew that McEachern would not care anyway; the times when . . . she would try to get herself between him and the punishment which, deserved or not, just or unjust, was impersonal, both the man and the boy accepting it as a natural and inescapable fact until she . . . must give it an odor, an attenuation, and [sic] aftertaste. (157)

She also accumulated for him a small hoard of money, the "fruit of what small chicanery and deceptions with none anywhere under the sun to say her nay," in fact "a secret to no one but her husband, and the boy believed that he would not have cared" (158), she succeeded in "casting a faint taint of evil about the most trivial and innocent actions" (157).

Christmas views the food, the lies, the money, as variations of the dietician's dollar, the reward extended instead of punishment. But while Joe knows the terms of capitulation to McEachern, he is not as certain what is being bought with the food, the lies and the money Mrs. McEachern holds out to him. He only knows that these are bribes, like the dietician's bribe, and that they carry the "taint of evil," a taint which he associates only with women, and which carries the memory of the "other sounds,
rustlings, whisperings" (113).

The only punishment Joe ever receives for secretly consuming the toothpaste are the angry words, "nigger bastard." As a boy he learns that he, too, can use these words as punishment. He considers telling Mrs. McEachern that he is black to torment her as she torments him with her secret kindnesses. He knows that she will be rendered helpless by this information because she "could neither alter it nor ignore it, know it and need to hide it" from her husband, although Joe knows that it would be irrelevant to McEachern who "would so obliterate it as a factor in their relations that it would never appear again" (157).

The men do not complicate Christmas's life. He can accept the hatred and fear of the unknown man sitting in the chair in the furnace room door because he makes no attempt to hide his fear and hatred. Nor does McEachern hide what he believes beneath other names. Neither of these men reserve their actions for the dark of night. It is the women who are forever needing "to hide it" and thus who appear to have something to hide, who complicate Joe's life.

The two visible specters of Christmas's life, woman and Negro, unconsciously come together with the young Negro girl in the shed when his awakening sexual drive makes the connection between toothpaste and sex, the dollar reward and the outraged, "You little nigger bastard! You nigger
"bastard!" combining them once and forever into "womanshenegro," with the darkness, the covertness and the deceit which defines all three, the woman, the Negro, and now the sex. Christmas reacts instinctively, kicking the female voice and smell coming out of the darkness.

It is not until his affair with Bobbie, a prostitute and his first love, that these three make a conscious connection in his mind. Again there is the secrecy. First there is menstruation, that covert sickness. And then there is the secrecy concerning the other men:

"I thought you knew," she said.
"No," he said. "I reckon I didn't."
"I thought you did."
"No," he said. "I dont reckon I did." (187)

Once he believes that these "lies" have been brought out into the open, Joe is able to reconcile himself to them. But the scene which occurs at the schoolhouse, and then at Max and Mame's house, shows him his error. What Bobbie was willing to be and do at night, she is not willing to be in the open. In private it is all right for Christmas to be a Negro, but it is not all right in the daylight. Like the dietician who apparently knew, and didn't care, about the Negro element until she needed a weapon against him, Bobbie does not activate the word "nigger" until she needs to gain power over Christmas. It is the same power which Minnie Cooper wields over McLendon.
Christmas learned "the rigid abnegation of all compromise" from both his stepfather and his grandfather. McEachern taught him the inflexibility of right and wrong, good and bad; Hines also taught him the inflexibility of right and wrong, and good and bad, only he translated these terms into black and white. In neither case, though, is rightness a relative quality. But this is not true of the women that Joe meets. "Nigger bastard" is not important until Christmas refuses the dollar reward in place of the punishment which he deserves and expects. Mrs. McEachern makes a secret, and hence dishonesty, out of food and money which she could have openly given Joe. And Bobbie accepts Joe's blackness until publicity threatens to expose, not their relationship, but the nature of her business.

Joanna Burden is no more honest than the other women in Joe's life. At night she passionately wallows in Joe's blackness, but in the daylight she ignores him. He shares her bed, but he is not allowed to share her parlor. He shares her body, but he cannot share her table. It is the secretness and furtiveness of Mrs. McEachern continued. While Joanna knows that Joe can pass for white, and that she could openly accept him as a husband, or even outright as a lover, she does not allow him to be white; she only allows him to be black. Her actions are only a continuation of Mrs. McEachern's, making a secret and a deception "with none anywhere under the sun to say her nay"
The ultimate hypocrisy comes when she begins to pray, not for forgiveness for the sin of fornication, but for forgiveness for having slept with a black man.

To the end, women remain a symbol of deceit, for Christmas is brought down by the one woman whom after all these years he believes that he can trust, his grandmother, who convinces him that Hightower will save him. And in the end, even his death is a deceit. He is not punished for the crime he commits, for murdering a woman, but instead for having slept with her for three years: "Now you'll let white women alone, even in hell" (439), Grimm says as he mutilates the still living body of Joe Christmas.

Women exacerbate Joe's schizophrenic position. On the one hand society demands of him two opposing sets of behavior. To remain honest to either side, is to be dishonest to the other. His white side wants, expects, demands that a white woman be outraged at discovering that she has slept with a Negro; his black side insists on sleeping with that white woman. On the other hand, women relish his blackness (his badness) in private, but refuse to accept it in public, as Mrs. McEachern makes her kind offerings acts of stealth. In a similar way John McLendon is forced into a schizophrenic position: his private side commits acts of humanity; his public side is forced to commit acts of inhumanity. To counter the public acts of
outrage, he then commits acts of private outrage. The source of Joe's schizophrenia is women, for without the white woman, his blackness would be irrelevant. McLendon's schizophrenia also originates with women, for without the white woman he would not be forced to kill. Women and negro, therefore, become the terms of both McLendon's and Joe Christmas's curse, a curse which forces them to violate their gentleness and override their sense of humanity.

The dialogic confrontation with "Dry September" impacts on Joe Christmas's narrative as well by emphasizing the danger Joe exposes himself to by living as a white man and then revealing himself to be a Negro. While anyone familiar with the racial situation in the South during the period of time in which Light in August is set would not be ignorant of the fact that it is almost assuredly instant death for a black man to sleep with a white woman, the conjunction with "Dry September" brings this to the foreground where it enters into the terms of Christmas's life, not just the terms of his death.

The specter of Will Mayes starkly emphasizes that Joe is battering against the fabric of society with his own life, because he is the only one at risk; he is the only person who stands to suffer the final and ultimate fate of Will Mayes. A white man or a white woman could have fought against society without fatal consequences. For a black man, it is fatal. What is most important is that Joe does
not have to take on this fight. He can pass for white. And he is the only one who can, and does, identify himself as a Negro.

The importance of this with regard to a reading of *Light in August* is that of all the characters, Joe alone is an actor. He, alone, demands truth and honesty and consistency. If something is wrong, then it should be wrong for everybody and in all cases. It should be wrong in the daylight as well as in the dark. He demands that people be honest about what they believe, regardless of what that may be. He does not accept complacency. He forces questions; he forces challenges. None of the other characters, some more capable than Joe of understanding and dealing with the situation, attempt to change anything.

Hawkshaw attempts to stop McLendon, but when Mayes makes a desperate thrust with his manacled hands and hits him in the face, Hawkshaw strikes him back. McLendon publicly buys into the system, but then he goes home and abuses his wife. Hightower prefers to hide his head like an ostrich in the sands of the past, and when he does finally offer to help it is too little and too late: "'Men!' he cried. 'Listen to me. He was here that night. He was with me the night of the murder. I swear to God--'" (439). But he is so far removed from reality that he doesn’t realize that even if his alibi were believed, it would not vindicate Joe Christmas, because Christmas is not being sought for the
murder of a woman, but for the violation of one. Lena exempts herself from involvement, and Joanna actually perpetuates the system by assuring that the separation between the two races is continued, herself a substitute for the plantation owner, still forming the hub of the Negro life around her, as illustrated by the various paths leading like wagon spokes to her house.

Phyllis Hirshleifer sees the choices a man must make as being "between perpetuating the curse of the past by further violence or enduring evil and holding on to what has been good in the tradition, to human dignity, kindliness, and fidelity, which to some extent mitigate the evil" (9). In her opinion, Lena mitigates that evil by enduring it, while Joe continues it by being destructive, which she interprets as a continuation of the evil. But Joe's destruction is not for the purpose of perpetuating evil. It is true that Joe is an angry, brutal man, but his brutality and bloodshed serve to underscore the bloodshed and brutality that men like McLendon, Hines and Percy Grimm must commit to preserve that society.

It also serves to underscore the destructiveness which ensues when everyone within a society is victimized by it: John McLendon, an intractable, bigoted white supremacist is impaled on his "malehewhite"-ness by every "womanshenegro" who whispers "[s]omething about . . . a Negro. Attacked, insulted, frightened: none of them . . . knew exactly
what . . . " (169), out of anger, frustration, or revenge. And Percy Grimm, with "the selfconscious pride of a boy" was determined that law and order must prevail: "The law, the nation. It is the right of no civilian to sentence a man to death" (427), and yet at the ultimate moment of trial, he commits the very deed that he had pledged himself to prevent others from committing. And Joe Christmas is a victim, too: "hanging motionless and without physical weight he seemed to watch the slow flowing of time beneath him, thinking All I wanted was peace" (104), a peace which would mean that he would not have to "carry my life like it was a basket of eggs" (319).

But society will not be changed by simply enduring the evil. Only action will generate change. And Joe alone is moved to action. He marries a mulatto and forces his white blood to accept her blackness:

He now lived as man and wife with a woman who resembled an ebony carving. At night he would lie in bed beside her, sleepless, beginning to breathe deep and hard. He would do it deliberately, feeling, even watching, his white chest arch deeper and deeper within his ribcage, trying to breathe into himself the dark odor, the dark and inscrutable thinking and being of negroes, with each suspiration trying to expel from himself the white blood and the white
thinking and being. And all the while his nostrils at the odor which he was trying to make his own would whiten and tauten, his whole being writhe and strain with physical outrage and spiritual denial. (212)

Joe did not have to make it his fight. Like the rest, he could have "settled" for more, by settling for "less," since he could have "passed." I disagree with Michael Millgate who says that Joe is looking for "the peace and tranquility of mind that are represented by Lena" ("A Novel: Not an Anecdote" 38), because he could have had that. I also disagree with Carl Benson in "Thematic Design in Light in August," that "Joe is never truly an agent; he is always played upon; despite his frenzied efforts to attain selfhood, his is a fate he never made" (28). And I disagree with Hirshleifer who sees Joe as perpetuating evil. Joe is not perpetuating evil, he is the only one doing anything about the evil. Joe, who has everything to lose and actually nothing to gain, since the conflict between white and black is indelibly and irrevocably impressed within his own body, is the only one who refuses to take the easy way out. He is the only one who wants more, who expects more, who demands more, and is willing to stake his life on getting it. Only Joe, therefore, comes close to assuming the role of the English battalion runner
in *A Fable* who says, "This is terrible. I'm going to do something about it" (Stein Interview 75).
NOTES

1 While Walter K. Everett's index was used to obtain a total count of the number of characters appearing in Faulkner's works, to arrive at the number of recurring characters I used the "Master Character Index" from Thomas E. Dasher's work, William Faulkner's Characters: An Index to the Published and Unpublished Fiction. Not only does Dasher include the unpublished fiction, which Everett does not, he also includes the unnamed characters as well. This is especially important with regard to Joanna Burden's grandfather and brother because they are frequently identified simply as "the carpetbaggers." In addition, Everett identifies only the text in which the character appears, and not the page(s) within that text.

2 To appreciate the intricacy of Faulkner's intertextual web, this reference to Joanna's mailbox is made within the context of an incident in The Mansion involving John McLendon, the vigilante leader in "Dry September." Some men are trying to confuse a slow-witted young man by telling him that he will go east to the war but will come back from the west, right by Joanna's mailbox. John McLendon steps in and stops the harrassment.

3 The conjunction of Eula Varner and Lena through the recurring character Will Varner, and the conjunction of Narcissa and Lena through Mrs Beard, would lead to a confrontation between Eula, Lena and Narcissa which could
generate an interesting dialogue about female options, power, sexuality and motherhood.

4 Malcolm Cowley in *The Portable Faulkner* perceived Mrs. Armstid to be a consistent character despite the name differences (8).

5 Faulkner frequently uses a series of periods, most often three, but sometimes only two, for various effects within sentences. To avoid the repeated use of "sic" to identify between marks within the text and an ellipsis, the former will remain single spaced periods, while the ellipsis will be indicated by double spaced periods.

6 What is perhaps most ironic is that the money and restaurant Flem receives on the sale of the old Frenchman's Place, which leads to Henry Armstid's downfall, enables Flem to begin his ascent up the social and economic ladder by financing his move to Jefferson, which eventually leads to the presidency of the Sartoris Bank. It appears that the Old Frenchman left buried gold after all, but only Flem knew how to mine it.

7 Faulkner did not perceive Lena as an earthmother in the sense of being a nurturer and homemaker. In *Faulkner in the University*, he makes this comment about Lena: "But as far as she was concerned, she didn't especially need any father for [her child], any more than the women that--on whom Jupiter begot children were anxious for a home and a father" (199).
8 When "Dry September" was originally published in Scribner’s Magazine in January, 1931, the leader of the vigilantes was named John Plunkett. However, when the story was republished later in 1931 in the collection, These Thirteen, his name had been changed to Captain John McLendon. Since this was during the time when Faulkner was working on Light in August, the change could represent a deliberate effort to bring the two stories in line with one another. In the other stories which refer to this incident, The Town and The Mansion, the leader of this vigilante group is identified as McLendon.

Mr. Maxey is also a recurring character, and although he is not mentioned by name in "Dry September," the barber who attempts to stave off the vigilante efforts of McLendon, Hawkshaw, is identified as working in Maxey’s barbershop in Jefferson in another short story, "Hair."

9 Ironically, Crane’s narrative almost seems to anticipate Faulkner’s text: "Every sin is the result of a collaboration. We, five of us, have collaborated in the murder of this Swede. Usually there are from a dozen to forty women really involved in every murder, but in this case it seems to be only five men. . . ."

10 Although not discussed here, since the focus is on Joe Christmas, the women, whom Joe sees as representing dishonesty in society, are also victims because they are forced to resort to such tactics as Minnie Cooper’s to
attain visibility in a society which renders them virtually invisible and without social power.
Chapter IV
A[nother] FABLE

The intertextual dialogue generated by repeating characters does not necessarily impact on the entire structure of the individual texts. But while the specificity of the individual texts is inviolable, it is possible that the dialogue may introduce a focus previously overlooked which will impact upon the text as a whole. I have chosen Light in August to illustrate the function of repeating characters because it has generally been considered problematic both thematically and structurally, and much critical effort has been exerted on attempts to reconcile its seemingly disparate plots. The intertextual analysis completed above, I feel, provides the focus whereby the thematic and formal structure of this text merge into a cohesive unit.

Michael Millgate summarizes the problem. Light in August, he says, "remain[s] technically difficult because of the jaggedness of its structure and the refusal of its parallel plot lines to merge into moments of final, comprehensive resolution" (New Essays 23). To resolve this problem, critics have been led "to search for unity in the rich and complex themes of the novel, to emphasize one of them and make it into the ordering principle of the
work . . ." (Pitavy, Casebook ix). Unity has been variously located in a dichotomy between good and evil, private and public, and individual versus community interests. Reconciliation is also attempted by identifying one or the other of the three main characters (Lena, Joe Christmas, or Gail Hightower), as the protagonist, with the other characters assuming antithetical roles. For example, Carl Benson posits that Hightower is "the chief character, the moral protagonist" who "alone can serve as an ethic sliderule by means of which we can compute the relative failures and successes of the other characters . . ." ("Thematic Design" 21). Franklin G. Burroughs, Jr. contends that the women are "the protagonists of the central thematic conflict of the novel" ("God the Father" 36), and Donald Kartiganer in The Fragile Thread places Joe Christmas at the "impenetrable center" of this novel (37). For others, "Luminous Lena," identified variously as the Virgin Mary (Millgate, "Not an Anecdote" 40), and as the "bright circle" (Bleikasten, "Closed Society" 89) which encloses Joe Christmas's story, is the centrifugal force.

The repeated failure to locate a singular design in Light in August has led recent critics to conclude that no unifying factor exists which can effect a reconciliation between the three plot. Michael Millgate reaches this conclusion. He reasons that because Faulkner made "so little attempt to smooth off the roughness of its narrative
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edges" that this is "a clear indication that there existed no single key capable of closing the lock upon its always outward-thrusting openness" (New Essays 23). Francois Pitavy reaches a similar conclusion in William Faulkner: A Critical Casebook: "[The history of past criticism suggests that] one should stop the search for unity and perfection..." (x), because although such searches have "certainly been of use in illuminating the novel from all sides" they are unable to effect a resolution of the disparate parts, because this novel "is about disunity and division" (xiv).

There is a similarity between the critical evaluations of Faulkner's first Yoknapatawpha novel, Flags in the Dust, and Light in August. When Faulkner attempted to publish Flags in the Dust it was criticized for being "too diffuse, too lacking in plot and structure," because, according to Ben Wasson, Faulkner's New York agent, it was "not one novel, but six, all struggling along simultaneously" (Day vii-viii). Harrison Smith, editor at Harcourt, Brace, agreed to publish it only if it were extensively cut. Ben Wasson excised 25 percent of Faulkner's text, and this truncated novel was published as Sartoris. The change in the title reveals how little the original editors understood the structure of this novel.

Faulkner did not participate in the cutting because he felt that if the novel were cut, it would die. Nor did he
forget about the original novel, and over the years often spoke about restoring it. Perhaps to this end he retained the original holographic manuscript, plus 596 pages of typescript, all neatly bound together with thin wire, from which, posthumously, the original novel was published in 1973 under its original title, *Flags in the Dust*.

Douglas Day gives this description of the structure of Faulkner's original text in his Introduction to *Flags in the Dust*: "Faulkner clearly wished to make of his novel an anatomy of the entire Yoknapatawpha social structure, excluding only the Indians" (xi). Despite this observation, in his critical discussion of this text Day retains the focus of the truncated novel, *Sartoris*: Horace Benbow is a foil "to the doomed and hawklike Bayard Sartoris," and the hillman, Buddy MacCallum represents "all the steady virtues Bayard lacks," while Harry Mitchell and Byron Snopes represent "a new class threatening to overthrow the old aristocratic order of the area," of which the Sartoris family is a charter member. Day does conclude, though, that each of these characters provides "a commentary not only upon Bayard Sartoris, but also upon the Deep South in the years after the First World War" (xi).

But the function of the characters in Faulkner's original text is not to provide "a commentary . . . upon Bayard Sartoris," and so long as the Sartoris family is made the focus of this novel, the structure and theme will
not cohere, just as the structure and theme will not cohere in *Light in August* so long as any one character is considered the protagonist. Since the critical appraisal of these two texts are similar, establishing the structure which informs *Flags in the Dust* will be useful in establishing the structure which informs *Light in August*.

The charges of disunity leveled against *Flags in the Dust* originate in a failure to perceive the text as an embryonic polyphonic novel. Although it does not speak with "many voices," that is, the narrating voice is not plural, the novel has the same ends as a polyphonic novel which, according to Bakhtin, is to reveal the various social ideologies which comprise the woof and warp of society. Ben Wasson attempted to create a monologic text by blending the various "voices" into the Sartoris "voice." But the Sartoris family is not the focus of this novel. The focus is on the grandchildren and the great grandchildren who have inherited the land called Yoknapatawpha County along with the heritage and traditions with which that land is impregnated. Each family group represents a different social level, and the structure of *Flags in the Dust* arises out of their alternative responses to that past and to the present which that past has shaped. Therefore, although *Flags in the Dust* exhibits many of the weaknesses of a young writer it is structurally a sounder novel than *Sartoris* which distorts the contours of this
novel by unnaturally forcing these alternative responses to converge along a single plane.

The structure which informs this novel is the structure of Jefferson itself, a design which was envisioned and planned and laid out while the land beneath it was still wilderness. This design consists of a square with a courthouse at its center, surrounded by offices and stores, church and school, serviced by:

- four broad diverging avenues straight as plumb-lines in the four directions, becoming the network of roads and by-roads until the whole county would be covered with it... the veins, arteries, life-and pulse-stream along which would flow the aggrandisement of harvest: the gold: the cotton and the grain; [sic]

(Requiem for a Nun 34-35)

A corollary metaphor for this structure is the radiating energy produced when a rock is thrown into the water causing repercussions along an ever expanding radius:

- Maybe nothing ever happens once and is finished. Maybe happens is never once but like ripples maybe on water after the pebble sinks, the ripples moving on, spreading, the pool attached by a narrow umbilical water-cord to the next pool... Let this second pool contain a different temperature of water, a different
molecularity of having seen, felt, remembered... it doesn't matter: that pebble's watery echo whose fall it did not even see moves across its surface too at the original ripple-space... (Absalom 261)

These radiating ripples (spokes) not only generate energy outward to affect the people along the lines of the radiating force, but at the same time it ties them to the center (the hub), drawing them back by a kind of retroforce to the source of that energy. Thus the hub and the original force which emanate from it are constantly and ceaselessly renewed. The people are powerless to escape its effects:

[Y]ou are born at the same time with a lot of other people, all mixed up with them, like trying to, having to, move your arms and legs with strings only the same strings are hitched to all the other arms and legs and the others all trying and they dont know why either except that the strings are all in one another's way... (Absalom 127)

Flags in the Dust records the effects of "pebbles" thrown generations earlier and the responses of different people to the still actively radiating energy. The technique of recording different responses to those "pebbles" is similar to Hawthorne's technique of
alternative explanations for events, such as the cross-shaped light in the sky in The Scarlet Letter, a technique which F. O. Matthiessen refers to as "the device of multiple choice" (276). This structure which builds upon multiple responses defies a traditional plot because "a plot-dependent dialogue strives for a conclusion" (Bakhtin, Problems 252), and there is no conclusion nor resolution possible in a polyphonic structure.

Graphically, the structure of Flags in the Dust can be depicted as six spokes radiating from a single hub. The hub is Jefferson, post World War I. Each of the six spokes represents a different social voice: the Sartoris twins, remnants of the old aristocracy, who wrested the land from the wilderness and set the rules by which people were to be governed; the MacCallums, self-sufficient hillsmen; the Benbows, old, educated, family; the Mitchells, nouveau riche; the Snopeses, carpetbagger descendents or socially advanced poor white trash; the Blacks.

That some spokes are "longer" or more "dense" is not because the social response of certain individuals is more important, but because their involvement with the past is more intricate and complicated. The Sartoris twins, for example, are doubly entangled because the ideology upon which Jefferson was founded is merged with their own family blood. To refute or to deny one, is to refute and deny the other; to deny the town and its values, is to deny their
father, and his father, and his father; it is to deny their own existence. It is easier for Harry Mitchell, a newcomer, to move within this society, because he is not bound by the traditions nor by public expectations. The Benbows, on the other hand, have roots which go deep within the fabric of Jefferson. Joanna Burden's grandfather and brother were murdered attempting to have their driver, Cassius Q. Benbow elected marshal. And for the blacks over whom the past has had a stranglehold, the war has given them new confidence to shake off their shackles: "'I dont take nothin' f'um no white folks no mo'," said Caspey. "'War done changed all dat. If us colored folks is good enough to save France f'um de Germans, den us is good enough to have de same rights de Germans has'" (Flags 63 / Sartoris 65).

Seen from this perspective, it is understandable why Faulkner believed that his novel, Flags in the Dust, would die if parts were removed or bent and shaped to meet on a single plane, because to tell only one or two stories would be to distort the truth, for the story of Jefferson is not just the story of the Sartorises or the Benbows or the blacks, or the newcomers to Jefferson. It is the story of the way the different groups of people in the present are accommodating their past to their present. The story is deliberately diffuse, but it can be called "lacking in plot and structure" only if one attempts to evaluate it as a
monologic text, rather than as a polyphonic text. To merge
the multiple voices into one voice, or to refract the
different stories through one story, the Sartoris story, in
order to effect a resolution or conclusion, is to destroy
both the structure and the theme of this novel.

With little variation, Faulkner retells this same
story over and over again, utilizing variations of the same
theme and the same structure, changing only the names of
the characters and the focus on his lens. In The Hamlet
the camera moves from Jefferson to a panoramic view of the
rural sections of Yoknapatawpha County around Frenchman’s
Bend, and the radiating spokes are represented both by the
different people who inhabit this area and by the different
types of narratives in which their stories are told
(pastoral, romance, etc.). In The Sound and the Fury,
instead of a panoramic view of society, the camera eye
moves in for a closer view of the alternative responses
within another of the old aristocratic families, the
Compsons. A different narrative technique is used in this
novel, but the story structure is the same with the various
characters forming a series of alternative responses
radiating like spokes around the thematic hub refined to
the various responses of living with the faded glory of the
Compsons as seen through the eyes of Benjy, Quentin, Jason,
Dilsey, and then Faulkner himself. As I Lay Dying focuses
on the poor, white, dirt farmers who scratch out a living,
and dying, from the ground around Jefferson. The death of the mother, Addie Bundren, provides the occasion for revealing the alternative responses of those who shared her life: her children, Dewey Dell, Darl, Cash, Jewell and Vardaman; her husband, Anse; Addie herself; her friends and neighbors. *Absalom, Absalom!* presents alternative interpretations of the past which reveal the various attitudes of different generations in the present represented by Rosa Coldfield, Quentin Compson, his roommate, Shreve, and his father, Mr. Compson. Gavin Stevens, Ratliff, the itinerant sewing machine salesman and Chick Mallison, Gavin’s nephew, variously explore the making of the present by attempting to explain Flem Snopes’s rise from the son of a barn burner to the president of Sartoris Bank in *The Town* and *The Mansion*.

While Faulkner never changed his basic structure, he experimented with various narrative techniques for presenting it. In *The Unvanquished* and *Go Down Moses* he uses a variation of this structure which he modifies again for *The Wild Palms*: that of isolating the various story segments (the spokes), not by character, but by incident. The most radical variation of this structure appears in the latter, where the alternative responses are not to the same incident, but to different incidents which occur at a different time and place.

In each of these stories, the graphic depiction of the
structure is identical: one hub, representing a particular narrating moment or theme, with a varying number of radiating spokes emanating from it, each representing an alternative response to that moment or theme.

*Light in August* is informed by this same structure which has been obscured by critics who have insisted on reducing this novel to a monologic text by positing one or the other character(s) as the protagonist, and who interpret the symbolic movements of the individual characters as representing the movement of the individual plots. Thus Lena is perceived as moving in a straight line, Joe as running in circles, and Joanna as the hub of a series of radiating spokes which lead from the various Negro cabins to her house in microcosmic replication of Jefferson, and Hightower as moving outward and back along a single plane. However, these patterns are not patterns transcribed across the landscape of possibility; they are only transcribed along the axis of each character. Since no one of these characters is the protagonist, it is not necessary to reconcile their individual movements into one configuration.

The structure of *Light in August* consists of a hub representing the theme of moral responsibility, and rotating spokes representing the alternative responses configured along the lines of the Melvillian triad, which Faulkner defined as "the trinity of consciousness: knowing
nothing, knowing but not caring, knowing and caring." This triad underlies the structure of *A Fable*. The first attitude is expressed by the young Jewish pilot who feels that: "This is terrible. I refuse to accept it, even if I must refuse life to do so." The second attitude is expressed by the old French Quartermaster General who feels: "This is terrible, but we can weep and bear it." Only the English battalion runner exhibits true moral consciousness by concluding: "This is terrible, I’m going to do something about it" (Stein Interview 75 [See Note 1]).

Alfred Kazin in "The Stillness of *Light in August*" contends that *Light in August* never arrives at this final stage of moral consciousness, because he feels that in this novel:

[m]an never thinks of changing the world; it is all he can do to get a grip on it, to understand some part of what has happened to him and to endure all of it. . . . Man’s highest aim in this book is to meet his destiny without everlasting self-concern. (104)

Kazin’s opinion notwithstanding, this moral triad not only operates in this novel, it is the formative principle which structures it.

Critical interpretation of Lena Grove which equates her with the Virgin Mary, and which perceives her naive
noninvolvement and blind belief that "the Lord will see to that" (18) as an ideal, has obstructed the search for cohesion in Light in August. Alexander Welsh is one critic who refutes those (perhaps referring to Kazin who identifies the final scene of Lena, Byron and the baby as "Faulkner's version of the Holy Family" [96]) who accept "the limited and passionless Grove at higher than her face value," when in fact she doesn't have "the wit to do more than biologically reproduce herself" (142, 140-41). But Welsh is a voice alone among many. Even critics such as Kartiganer who admit that Lena's "relevance to Faulkner's world continues to escape us" (61), still conclude that she is a figure of affirmation.

As a result of the dialogic confrontation between Lena and Martha Armstid and between Lena and Eula Varner, a new perspective is gained which reveals flaws in this depiction of Lena. Unlike Joe and Joanna and Hightower, Lena is not encumbered with any crosses. She does not bear any scars against which her clothes rub every time she takes a step. She has not suffered; she has not overcome; she has not endured. In fact, Lena represents those who know nothing and do nothing. She is white, young, and with child. This combination accords her a certain degree of status. It is not much, but it is enough for her. She takes advantage of her position to take from the world what she needs, but she does not give anything back. Nor does she concern herself
with the cost to those who help her. She is impervious to what is going on around her, and moves unscathed through the human physical and emotional carnage in Jefferson. She assumes no moral responsibility for creating a better future because she resides only in the present, her present. For her there is no past time; there is no future time; there is only present and future space, which is unencumbered and emotionally neutral.

It is difficult to understand how critics can see Lena as different from Joe Brown / Lucas Burch, whom Byron describes as a man "just living on the country, like a locust" (33). When she is confronted in the dialogic interaction with Eula who is willing to die for her daughter in order to change the course of her history, and with Martha Armstid who worked and saved to provide the money for Lena’s sardines, Lena cannot offer a very convincing defense. It is true that Lena may avoid the "savageness" in which Martha Armstid moves, but the world she leaves behind her, the world for the many children which Hightower predicts she will have, for her own daughter, will be no different from the one she is passing through.

Carl Benson sees Lena as being responsible for causing Byron to be "morally awakened," and that joining with her "he undergoes a transformation and tries to become a part of the living community, not just a clock-punching
machine." In the end, Benson says, Byron "is making progress toward union with Lena, and, through Lena, with life itself" (29). Although Byron may not have led an exciting life before he fell in love with Lena, he did have a full life: he worked; he paid his own way; he looked for the best within people. And he was making a contribution to the present: every Saturday night he would ride thirty miles into the country to lead the choir on Sunday in a country church even though it would take the entire Sunday night to return. And Lena is not the only person he has reached out to: he befriended the former minister, Hightower, and he offered his lunch to Joe Christmas as soon as he realized that Joe had nothing to eat when he started working at the mill. It is difficult to equate moral awakening and moving into the mainstream of life with sitting on the back of someone else's wagon, going nowhere in particular, and being indebted to strangers for getting there, or with assuming the responsibilities of husband and father, but being refused the rights which those responsibilities should afford him.

I disagree, therefore, with Carl Benson's appraisal of Lena's role. I see her attitude toward life as being similar to that of the Jewish pilot in A Fable who feels, "This is terrible. I refuse to accept it, even if I must refuse life to do so." It is not her physical life that Lena refuses; it is the moral and social responsibility for
life that she refuses to accept.

A second response to the issue of moral responsibility is recorded by Joanna Burden. She deliberately carries the events of the past into the present in order to revenge that past on the present. With hatred and fear of those whom she feels condemned to love, Joanna continues to act out the drama acted out by her grandfather and written by her father sixty years earlier:

"'A race doomed and cursed to be forever and ever a part of the white race's doom and curse for its sins. Remember that. His doom and his curse. Forever and ever... The curse of every white child that ever was born and that ever will be born. None can escape it.' And I said, 'Not even me?' And he said, 'Not even you. Least of all, you.' I had seen and known negroes since I could remember... But after that I seemed to see them for the first time not as people, but as a thing, a shadow in which I lived, we lived, all white people, all other people." (239 [emphasis added])

Joanna allows an arm from the past to reach into the present and hold her. By the stories she retains, and the form in which she retains them, she allows herself to be a victim of that past, and her life is as tragic and as self-destructive as that of John Sartoris who flies his Camel
into a nest of German fighter planes, and of his twin brother, Bayard, who deliberately seeks the family tradition of an early, even if not heroic, death, by being killed in an experimental plane.

While Joanna allows the hoary hand of the past to reach into the present and hold her in its death-like grasp, Gail Hightower reaches his hand into the past in order to keep that past alive in the present. While Joanna sees the past as an ugly beast rearing its head in the present, Hightower sees it as a beautiful moment which must be immortalized. But in the end they are both victims of a past which enchains them. Each perceives that it is an imperfect world, but neither does anything to change it, preferring instead to hold the past over their own heads as an excuse for inaction. Like the old French Quartermaster General in A Fable who sees the injustices of the world but who stands by and says nothing, both Joanna and Hightower say, "This is terrible, but we can weep and bear it."

Melville’s triad of moral consciousness is completed in Light in August by Joe Christmas who, like the English battalion runner, concludes, "This is terrible, I’m going to do something about it." The insight into this reading of Joe Christmas is provided by the intertextual link created by the repeating character, Captain John McLendon, to the short story, "Dry September." This story emphasizes what a dangerous "game" Joe is playing by living as a white man
and then revealing that he is black. It also emphasizes that a life of peace and tranquility, which critics say Joe is striving for, is available to him, but that he refuses to accept it because the terms of acceptance are based upon compromise.

It is Joe Christmas, therefore, a flawed individual, who sells liquor and abuses women, who is the only character who insists on confronting living in the present tense. He refuses to pass through life with blinders on, like Lena; he also refuses to "weep and bear it" by sacrificing the present to the past like Joanna and Hightower. He refuses to allow old chains to bind him, either the chains of racial prejudice forged and passed on by his grandfather Hines, or the chains of religion forged and passed on by his stepfather McEachern. He demands of life honesty and consistency. If he does something wrong, he expects to be punished, but neither the wrong nor the punishment should be predicated on the color of his skin. This is why Christmas tells the white women that he is a negro, and the black women that he is white, because he wants them to accept him as a man, not as an adjective. This is also why it is irrelevant whether he does or does not have black skin, because it should make no difference, although it does:

"Like he had knowed that if it come to a pinch, this would save him, even if it was almost worse
for a white man to admit what he would have to admit than to be accused of the murder itself. 'That's right,' [Brown] says. 'Go on. Accuse me. Accuse the white man that's trying to help you with what he knows. Accuse the white man and let the nigger go free. Accuse the white and let the nigger run.'

"'Nigger?' the sheriff said. 'Nigger?' . . .

"'You better be careful what you are saying, if it is a white man you are talking about,' the marshal says. 'I dont care if he is a murderer or not. [']" (91)

But the problems of the present are not easily resolved. As the story "Dry September" illustrates, the racial issue over the years has been translated into other terms, many of which are deeply ingrained within the individual psyche. To be a "white man" is only an alternative term for being a "man." The white and black blood within Joe is symbolic of the warring factions within society which pit one side of a man, McLendon's kindness and charity toward Tug, against the other side which demands that to be a man he must kill another man.

It is imperative that this conflict not be stilled within Joe, for that would minimize and understate and simplify the complexity of the problem. Joe has been twisted and torn by the pull of these traditions; if Joe
had been a Byron-like character it would mean that it was possible to pass through life untouched, and if this were true, there would be no justification for him to attack the fabric of society. Therefore, Joe is not above beating a white woman for not caring that she has just slept with a black man.

Because of this type of behavior, the general critical appraisal of Joe Christmas is that he is a tortured, even an evil individual, who is caught within a destructive world created by that evil. Hirshleifer sees Joe as "perpetuating the curse of the past by further violence" ("Whirlwinds" 9), while Abel sees Joe as having "been embued with all the sin and corruption of humanity; he was a scapegoat burdened with the accumulated evils of his generation" ("Frozen Movement" 117). Michael Millgate describes Joe as trying to escape the destructive world in which he lives, searching for "the peace and tranquility of mind that are represented by Lena" ("A Novel: Not an Anecdote" 38), a view expressed earlier by Alfred Kazin in "The Stillness of Light in August" that "Lena's world, Lena's patience" is what Christmas has been searching for (96-7); while Pitavy sees Joe as "sterile and deadly" (qtd. in Welsh 140).

But it is only Joe Christmas, of unknown parentage, who works hard, minds his own business, has an affair with the local spinster, and who sells liquor illegally for a
few extra bucks, who alone attempts to work against the past to change the present. He is not willing to settle for less than it all, although he could have. He wants to be Joe Christmas, and he wants to be accepted for who Joe Christmas is. He does not want an arbitrary factor such as the color of his skin to determine whether he should eat standing in the kitchen, or if he should eat sitting in the parlor. But he is not God made flesh. He is a man flawed and bent by society, who is attempting to rise above that in order to halt the continuation of the crimes of the past which have created the man that he has become.

Joe Christmas’s racial dualism can be seen as a metaphor for "a fundamental dualism in the nature of man which produces continuing conflict and tension" (Volpe 282), which Faulkner referred to in his Nobel prize speech as the "problems of the human heart in conflict with itself." This dualism describes both the conflict of A Fable and Joe Christmas’s conflict in Light in August. It is the eternal conflict between the spirit and the flesh manifested in different terms within the two novels. In A Fable this conflict is represented by the Generalissimo and the Corporal who are divided by the conflict but united by the same flesh, as father and son, just as the dual nature of Joe Christmas is united in the same flesh.

But it is the battalion runner whom Joe most closely resembles. Joe’s refuge in the home of the former
minister, Hightower, is not unlike the runner seeking refuge with Reverend Sutterfield (Tooleyman) to restore his faith in man. And the runner's ditty which he repeats to close out the reality of life ironically could apply to Joe Christmas as he transcribes circles around Jefferson following Joanna's death:

lo, I have committed fornication.
But that was another country; and besides, the wench is dead (70)

The runner overcomes his cynicism, and joins Sutterfield in leading the battalion in a futile attempt to thwart the German and Allied powers who are trying to diffuse the soldiers' mutiny. The runner is the only one who escapes with his life in the artillery barrage which is turned on their efforts to join with the enemy forces. The duality of man's nature is made visible, as it is symbolically drawn in black and white lines within Joe Christmas, by the flames which seer the runner "neatly from heel through navel through chin" (322) along one side of his body. Although "[t]he mundane power is triumphant; the spirit has been scarred and maimed, but it is alive because it is immortal" (Volpe 295).

In a similar way Joe attains immortality in death by being preserved within the memory of those who killed him. He is the only one who leaves behind a trace of his passage through Jefferson. Lena passes through but leaves no trace
behind her except for the story which the furniture salesman tells to his wife; Joanna’s house burns and her name is barely appended to the woman whom Joe Christmas kills; Hightower is back at his window shrouded in anonymity; only Joe Christmas has made an impact on the present for the future:

[F]rom out the slashed garments about his hips and loins the pent black blood seemed to rush like a released breath. . . . [U]pon that black blast the man seemed to rise soaring into their memories forever and ever. They are not to lose it, in whatever peaceful valleys, besides whatever placid and reassuring streams of old age, in the mirroring faces of whatever children they will contemplate old disasters and newer hopes. It will be there, musing, quiet, steadfast, not fading and not particularly threatful, but of itself alone serene, of itself alone triumphant. (440)

Joe also lives on joined with the flesh of Percy Grimm in Hightower’s memory, symbolically continuing and ironically uniting the sprit and the flesh, the black and the white, the good and the evil, the past and the present, in a continuing duality:

In the lambent suspension of August into which night is about to fully come, it seems to
engender and surround itself with a faint glow like a halo. The halo is full of faces. . . . In fact, they all look a little alike, composite of all the faces which he has ever seen. But he can distinguish them one from another . . . [except for] that of the man called Christmas. This face alone is not clear. It is confused more than any other, as though in the now peaceful throes of a more recent, a more inextricable compositeness. Then he can see that it is two faces which seem to strive (but not of themselves striving or desiring it: he knows that, but because of the motion and desire of the wheel itself) in turn to free themselves one from the other, then fade and blend again. But he has seen now, the other face, the one that is not Christmas. "Why it's..." he thinks. "I have seen it, recently...Why, it's that...boy. With that black pistol, automatic they call them. The one who... into the kitchen where ..killed, who fired the..." then it seems to him that some ultimate damned flood within him breaks and rushes away. (465-66 [See Note 2])

The "three plots" in Light in August illustrate the different levels of moral conscience with regard to social responsibility, with each response, each "plot," not
meeting like three roads converging into one, but as three roads (spokes) extending outward from a common hub, with the first spoke representing those, like Lena, who know nothing and do nothing; the second spoke representing those, like Joanna and Hightower, who know but do nothing; and the third spoke representing those, like Joe Christmas, who both know and do something.

The insight to perceive this structure beneath the complexity of this text is afforded by the dialogic confrontation initiated by the recurring characters within *Light in August* which create a new perspective similar to that created by a helicopter flying over a city street versus the perspective of a person walking along that street. This perspective does not alter the configuration of the streets, but it allows patterns to emerge which it would be difficult to perceive at close range. This "new perspective" allows the pattern behind the three seemingly disparate plots to become visible.
NOTES

1 The source of this quote is an interview Faulkner held with Jean Stein in 1956. These statements evolve out of a discussion of Christianity prompted by Stein's question: "Does that mean an artist can use Christianity simply as just another tool, as a carpenter would borrow a hammer?" The statements quoted in the text are part of Faulkner's answer to this question:

Christianity, if we agree on what we mean by the word . . . cannot teach man to be good as the textbook teaches him mathematics. It shows him how to discover himself, evolve for himself a moral code and standard within his capacities and aspirations, by giving him a matchless example of suffering and sacrifice and the promise of hope. Writers have always drawn, and always will draw, upon the allegories of moral consciousness, for the reason that the allegories are matchless—the three men in Moby Dick, who represent the trinity of conscience: knowing nothing, knowing but not caring, knowing and caring. The same trinity is represented in A Fable by the young Jewish pilot officer, who said, 'This is terrible. I refuse to accept it, even if I must refuse life to do so'; the old French Quartermaster General, who said, 'This is terrible, but we can weep and bear
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'it'; and the English battalion runner, who said, 'This is terrible, I'm going to do something about it.'" (Stein Interview 75)

2 This cryptic image of Percy Grimm and Joe Christmas merging into one face is similar to one which Will Falls conjures up by this comment in Flags in the Dust / Sartoris:

"And, Bayard," old man Falls said, "I sort of envied them two nawthuners, be damned ef I didn't. A feller kin take a wife and live with her [fer] a long time, but after all they aint no kin. But the feller that brings you into the world or sends you outen hit. . . ." (264 / 195)
Can one conclude from the above discussion that all recurring characters, regardless of the nature of the relationship between the conjoined texts, create an intertextual link between the texts? What about a character who serves as the protagonist of several novels within a series, such as Trollope's Barchester Tower series, Dreiser's Cowperwood series, and Cooper's Leatherstocking series or his Littlepage Manuscripts? Or what about a character who reappears in a sequel, such as Defoe's Robinson Crusoe who reappears beyond the original text, The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, in The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe and Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. Or what about novels which extend across several volumes, such as Samuel Richardson's Clarissa? Do the characters who re-appear in each of these conjoined texts generate an intertextual dialogue similar to that generated between Faulkner's texts?

To answer this question it is necessary to identify the conditions necessary to effect an intertextual
interaction. First, each of the conjoined texts must have a separate and identifiable "otherness." Second, the horizontal plane of the conjoined texts must not merge since this would eliminate the space "between" the texts. To violate either of these conditions will nullify the intertextual interaction which takes place in the space "between" the texts and which depends upon the "otherness" of the conjoined texts.

These two requirements seem to exclude as intertexts the three types of multiple texts described above since each additional text extends the prior text into additional time and / or space. In the discussion above, an intertextual relationship may be said to exist between The Unvanquished, a narrative about the Civil War experiences of Colonel John Sartoris's son, Bayard, and Flags in the Dust / Sartoris, a narrative in which Bayard appears as an old man, even though the latter text is a temporal extension of the first. The important consideration is not whether a temporal relationship exists between the texts, but whether that temporal extension is essential to complete the specificity of one novel (regardless of the number of volumes), or whether the extension represents another specificity which is incidentally related temporally or spatially to the prior text.

This crucial distinction reveals that the relationship between the various volumes in a series, in a sequel or in
a prequel (referred to hereafter jointly as a series), and in a multi-volume text are different. A multi-volume text relates a single story which incidentally extends over several volumes because it is too large or too cumbersome to be bound into one volume. The various volumes together comprise one beginning and one closure. Regardless of the number of volumes it takes to effect this closure, these volumes comprise a single unit and share a mutual and single specificity. Because there is no "otherness," there can be no "between" the texts. The characters which appear in each volume are "still appearing" or "continuing to appear" characters, rather than reappearing characters since the latter requires each appearance to be within a different specifically defined text. As long as one character remains within the specificity of one text, regardless of the number of volumes involved, that character is a continuing character and cannot generate intertextual interaction.

Characters which reappear in multiple volumes which share a common protagonist, group of protagonists, or the same family of protagonists, but within which each transcribes a new beginning, assumes its own geometric form, and reaches its own closure, qualify as reappearing characters because the unique specificity of each text creates an "otherness" which allows a "between" the text to exist. Therefore, multiple texts conjoined in a series are
intertexts and dialogic interaction is possible between them.

James Fenimore Cooper's five Leatherstocking novels are an example of a series of novels which feature the same protagonist, Natty Bumppo, and which have a temporal relationship between the conjoined texts. Chronologically the novels present Natty Bumppo as a young man in his early twenties (*The Deerslayer*), as a mature man of about 35 (*The Last of the Mohicans*), a few years later (*The Pathfinder*), as an old man of about 70 (*The Pioneer*), and about ten years later during the time just preceding, and including, his death (*The Prairie*). These five texts are also frequently aligned chronologically according to the date of publication: *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841).

To effect an intertextual relationship it is essential that these five texts do not merge into one text, but retain their specificity. The danger of merging texts is more real among texts that share a common protagonist than among other types of intertexts, because of the impulse to join the texts chronologically (See Note 1). This danger is minimized among conjoined texts which have the same protagonist but which have no chronological relationship to each other, such as the works of Agatha Christie and Ian Fleming. It is the pull of chronology that exerts a
magnetic force on the individual texts to merge into one multi-volume text.

Texts which are chronologically related appear to be intertextually conjoined at the point where the horizontal planes connect between the last page of one text to page one of the next text with the various texts linked in a manner resembling a series of sausages. In fact, the relationship which exists between the horizontal plane of the individual texts is irrelevant to the intertextual interaction which does not depend upon temporality or causality. The space in which recurring characters meet, as the space in which all intertextuality takes place, is in the interstices between the points of juncture where they can interact freely without the restraints of time, of place, and of causality.

This interstitial space is developed along the point of intersection which is vertical to the point of recurrence. In the case of repeating characters who figure prominently in conjoined texts, vertical intersection occurs along the entire extension of the horizontal plane, not from page 415 to page 1, but from page 1 to page 415. For example, Natty Bumppo of The Deerslayer intersects along the entire extension of Natty Bumppo of The Last of the Mohicans, and so on through the succeeding texts, thus generating a dialogue not at one page, which is the extent of the juncture created by John McLendon between "Dry
September" and Light in August, or along the 13 pages which is the extent of the intersection between The Unvanquished, Flags in the Dust / Sartoris, and Light in August, but along the entire 400+ pages which comprise each of the individual texts. The complexity of this interaction, while impossible to calculate, may be relatively conceived in terms of the relationship between the formula $(1x2x3x4x5)^5$, as opposed to the simple addition of texts proceeding along a chronological plane $(1+1+1+1+1)$.

While the impact of an intertextual dialogue is not necessarily proportionate to the extent of the dialogue, the narrower the point of intersection the easier it is to define the contending voices and to set the parameters of the confrontation. For example, the various Burden narratives deal with a single incident which is easily defined and whose contradictions can be easily identified. Even though the dialogue generated may have immense ramifications on the conjoined texts, at least the boundaries of the intertext are easily defined. The complexity of the interaction between serial texts can be equated to the complexity which would arise out of adding a second point of juncture between Joanna, Bayard and Will Falls created by a second narrative, such as Henry Sutpen’s murder of Charles Bon, which contradicts the dialogue generated at the first point of conjunction.

In another sense serially related intertexts are less
complicated than other types of intertexts because the compatibility of context creates a friendly reception for the dialogue, unlike the intertextual dialogue between such radically different texts as *The Unvanquished* and *Light in August*.

To visualize how serial texts interact consider each text as charted with a unique color on a transparency. When the transparencies are overlaid, the points of divergence as well as the points of emergence and agreement are readily discernable. Intertextual interaction takes place between these points. This example illustrates why horizontally conjoined texts cannot effect an intertextual interaction. If the transparencies are laid end to end there are no points of juncture beyond the last page of one text and the first page of the next. It also illustrates why the individual texts must retain their specificity. The distinctive "colors" of each text would blur together like different Easter egg dyes mixed in one container, and the charting of the individual texts would no longer be distinguishable. Without these distinctions between the texts no interaction can take place.

Serially conjoined texts are capable of a more extensive intertextual interaction than those that are conjoined at only one or two points. A complete intertextual study of Cooper’s tales would require an analysis of each incident, each detail of characterization,
each theme and intention which informs each text. In fact, each element which can be singled out as an identifiable entity within any one of the texts can enter into a dialogue with a similar entity within one, or some, or all of the other texts. Or it can confront the intention of the individual texts in which this element does not appear.

The principle function of the dialogue which occurs between these recurring characters is to isolate both the relevant contradictions and the relevant similarities and to make them a part of each text. Critics over the years have perhaps isolated most of the contradictions, similarities and patterns among Cooper's tales. For example, Allan Nevins points out that Cooper was remarkably successful "in harmonizing the early and the later appearances of his hero" (Afterword, The Deerslayer 537), and John William Ward states that: "Schematically . . . all the novels of the Leatherstocking series [are] about the inevitable conflict between two species of good" (Afterword, The Prairie 410), the one good represented by civilization as the order of reason, and the other represented by Natty as the natural order of intuition. Regardless of how valid these critical observations are, this information remains exterior to the texts. It has the power to influence the reader, but it cannot enter the interiority of the texts themselves in the way that the speaking voices of Natty, both in agreement and in
disagreement, citing the consistencies and the inconsistencies, can enter into the interiority of the Leatherstocking texts.

For example, if an intertextual study would reveal no discrepancies between Natty's character across the entire extension of the various texts, as Allan Nevins contends, then this fact would enter into the interiority of the novel and the dialogic confrontation would seek to identify the intention of the various texts which would preclude a change in Natty's character. To conclude that all portrayals of Natty are consistent could imply that he does not grow as an individual over the course of the series; or that he is able to maintain his innocence; or that he was born with an innate wisdom that transcends or predates experience; or that he is an eighteenth century manifestation of prelapsarian man. Any one of these conclusions leads to a reduction in Natty's heroic stature, for it would imply that he did not have to endure the scars and regrets and guilt which accompany the average man's path to wisdom.

Dialogic interaction between these texts can take place either along the entire intersecting extension as one unit, which would be necessary in a dialogic confrontation between the various portrayals of Natty, or at different points along that extension. One such point of confrontation occurs between several scenes in different
novels in which Natty does not prevent others from doing what he knows is morally wrong. In *The Deerslayer*, Natty transports Hurry Harry and Tom Hutter to an Indian encampment to collect scalps for the bounty payment even though he knows the camp contains women and children. Natty protests, but he does nothing to prevent the two men from acting on their intentions. He probably could not have stopped them, but he could have refused to take them:

"If my wishes could be followed, this matter would not be undertaken, Hurry--"

"Quite true--nobody denies it, boy; but your wishes can't be followed; that ends the matter. so just canoe yourself off into the middle of the lake, and by the time you get back there'll be movements in that camp!"

The young man set about complying with great reluctance and a heavy heart. (96)

A similar scene occurs in *The Prairie* when Natty observes the sons of Ishmael Bush wastefully cutting down some of the few trees in order to use the top leafy branches for shelter:

[Natty] had been a silent but attentive observer of their progress. As tree after tree came whistling down, he cast his eyes upwards at the vacancies they left in the heavens, with a melancholy gaze, and finally turned away
muttering to himself with a bitter smile, like one who disdained giving a more audible utterance to his discontent. (19)

Natty’s lack of a sense of social responsibility is consistent in the various texts. In *The Last of the Mohicans* he does not prevent the ruthless and unnecessary killing of the young sentry outside the garrison, and in *The Pioneers* he does nothing to halt the slaughter of the pigeons or the wasteful netting of the fish. Natty’s unwillingness to fight for what he perceives to be right becomes an operative principle in these texts. Although Natty’s behavior in *The Deerslayer* could be dismissed as the hesitancy of youth to confront or contradict his elders, but when this same scene recurs in another context in which the reverence of age could justify his speaking, then Natty’s behavior moves from instances of particular behavior to a behavior pattern. The failure of Natty to interfere in situations which violate his moral conscience indicates that his own sense of moral consciousness does not extend to social responsibility.

Inconsistent behavior which is only observable by the interaction among the various texts also impacts upon the individual texts. In *The Deerslayer*, Natty and his Indian friend, Chingachgook, test the relative merits of the gun, Killdeer, by shooting at various birds, including an eagle. As they look at the body of the dead eagle lying on the
deck of the ark, Natty realizes what they have done, and says remorsefully:

"We've done an unthoughtful thing, Sarpent—yes, Judith, we've done an unthoughtful thing in taking life with an object no better than vanity!" exclaimed Deerslayer, when the Delaware held up the enormous bird, by its wings, and exhibited the dying eyes riveted on its enemies with the gaze that the helpless ever fasten on their destroyers. "'Twas more becomin' two boys to gratify their feelin's in this onthoughtful manner than two warriors on a warpath.

Well, as a punishment I'll quit you at once, and when I find myself alone with them bloody-minded Mingos, it's more than like I'll have occasion to remember that life is sweet, even to the beasts of the woods and the fowls of the air. Here, Judith; there's Killdeer; take him back ag'in and keep him for some hand that's more deservin' to own such a piece." (432)

In a similar manner, Natty personally condemns the slaughter of the pigeons over Lake Glimmerglass in The Pioneers (although again he does nothing to stop it):

"It's much better to kill only such as you want, without wasting your powder and lead, than to be firing into God's creatures in this wicked
manner. But I came out for a bird . . . and now I have got one I will go home, for I don’t relish to see these wasty ways that you are all practysing, as if the least thing wasn’t made for use, and not to destroy . . . Use but don’t waste. Wasn’t the woods made for the beasts and birds to harbor in? And when men wanted their flesh, their skins, or their feathers there’s the place to seek them. But I’ll go to the hut with my own game, for I wouldn’t touch one of the harmless things that cover the ground here, looking up with their eyes on me, as if they only wanted tongues to say their thoughts." (237)

In The Pathfinder, however, after Natty deliberately loses a shooting contest to Jasper Western who wants to win the prize for Mabel Dunham, Natty’s pride forces him to prove to Mabel that he could have beaten Jasper:

"[T]here is no reason I should deny my gifts which come from Providence--yes, yes; no one did as much there, but you shall know what can be done here. Do you observe the gulls that are flying over our heads?"

"Certainly, Pathfinder--there are too many to escape notice."

"Here, where they cross each other, in sailing about," he added, cocking and raising his
rifle—"the two--the two--now look!"

The piece was presented quick as thought as two of the birds came in a line, though distant from each other many yards--the report followed, and the bullet passed through the bodies of both the victims. No sooner had the gulls fallen into the lake than Pathfinder dropped the breech of the rifle and laughed in his own peculiar manner, every shade of dissatisfaction and mortified pride having left his honest face." (157-8)

On the monologic plane of this text, Natty's actions could appear as merely an inexperienced suitor trying to woo his love. And although Natty is not above being straightforward, and often boastful, about his "gifts," he does not exploit his own talents at the expense of others, as he does here by discrediting Jasper's triumph in the eyes of Mabel Dunham. It is when this action enters into a dialogic confrontation with Natty's behavior under similar circumstances, such as those noted above, that it becomes obvious that Natty's love for Mabel has not just drawn him into exhibiting overweening pride at the expense of his friend, but it has drawn him into violating his own moral conscience. Since this is the only text in which this type of behavior occurs, it could imply that natural man is in moral danger when he attempts to link up with civilization. This would suggest that Mabel represents: wife > children >
schools > churches > doctors > stores > clearings =
destruction of the wilderness > loss of nature >
compromising of moral conscience. This intertextual link
elevates the issue of Natty’s behavior with regard to Mabel
from a social issue (showing off, neglecting
responsibility, etc.) to a moral issue which raises
important questions regarding the effects of civilization
on natural man.

I am not going to attempt a complete intertextual
study of Cooper’s Leatherstocking tales. It is sufficient
for my purpose to prove that characters which recur in
texts which have a horizontal relationship are recurring
characters as long as each volume in the series retains its
own specificity and intention, and that the common factor
which conjoins these texts as a series is relevant only on
the horizontal plane of the text and does not effect the
relationship which exists between the texts on a vertical
plane. The function of repeating characters within
serially conjoined texts is no different from that of
recurring characters between singular texts. However, the
repercussions of the intertextual interaction can be more
extensive between conjoined texts in a series, since the
effects can ripple across the entire series, which in this
case includes 2200 pages of text.

The above discussion of conjunctive novels has been
limited to the discussion of repeating characters, but
recurring place can also effect an intertextual relationship between two texts. Although recurring place often coexists with repeating characters, its function as an intertext is not dependent upon the function of repeating characters. For example, place creates an intertextual link among the Essex novels of Thomas Hardy although these texts do not include recurring characters. Recurring place as intertextuality has been unexplored to date and warrants further study to probe its function within conjoined texts. The following discussion is included simply to verify that such a study is warranted.

An instance of recurring place occurs between Gloria Naylor’s novels, The Women of Brewster Place and Linden Hills (See Note 2). The Women of Brewster Place presents cameo portraits of seven black women whom life has gradually pushed down the ladder to a block of tenement houses whose egress has been bricked up in order to regulate traffic beyond its perimeter. The wall actually prevents exit, but also symbolically implies that there is no exit from Brewster Place. As a monologic text, the reader’s sympathies are with these women who have been pushed literally "to the wall" with no exit (See Note 3). It is casually noted, however, in the story entitled "Kiswana Browne" that:

"At least you have a halfway decent view from here. I was wondering what lay beyond that
dreadful wall--it's the boulevard. Honey, did you know that you can see the trees in Linden Hills from here?" (79)

Linden Hills is the setting of another novel which bears that title. The interjection of this place name within the context of *The Women of Brewster Place* instantly reshapes the contours of this text and reverses the sympathies of the reader. The process which Claudia Gosselin describes as occurring within an intertextual interaction also applies to the recurrence of place:

the textual fragments that are introduced and integrated into the central text never exist as fragments; they are pieces of a whole and it is consequently the entire world from which they are culled that enter the text along with the fragments. (29)

The mention of Linden Hills functions ironically by pointing out that what is on the other side of the brick wall which the women desperately wish to tear down, and which Mattie Michael does tear down, brick by brick, in her dream--is another wall! Linden Hills is an affluent black suburban area circumscribed by a marble wall and individually demarcated by wide expanses of lawn and elegant facades behind which people are destroyed by their isolation and loneliness.

The women who live in Brewster Place live on hope that
one day they will be able to pull that wall down, figuratively or literally. This hope is entertained by Etta Mae Johnson who makes abortive attempts to exit Brewster Place. The possibility that she will one day make it, or that one day one of the others will make it, prevents this novel from lapsing into futility and despair. But beyond the wall is Linden Hills! The houses are larger and the configuration of the cages is different, but the people who live there are more "bricked" in than the women of Brewster Place because they have no "better" world to hope for beyond their marble wall.

The intertextual link created by this recurring place, while it adds to the despair of the women who live in Brewster Place, also softens the despair by emphasizing the ways in which life in Brewster Place is better than life in Linden Hills. While the women who live here may be financially at the end of the line, they are not isolated behind green and marble moats. The women in Brewster Place are walled in from the rest of the world, but they are not walled in from each other. They do not form "one happy family;" life is real and brutal: a baby is electrocuted, a woman gets raped, an innocent old man is killed by the raped woman, yet opportunities for companionship exist which do not exist in Linden Hills:

Etta came out on the stoop and looked up at Mattie in the window.
"Woman, you still in bed? Don’t you know what day it is? We’re gonna have a party."

(189)

In a similar way Brewster Place is mentioned in the novel, Linden Hills, as an undesirable location housing the riffraff that the marble wall is intended to keep out. Recurring place, therefore, adds an ironic commentary on both of these texts.

In Faulkner’s texts place is not just the magic carpet upon which other people and other episodes enter another text. Place functions as a fully realized character. It is not only equated with the people who live there, but place has an identity of its own and a voice which is frequently heard. In Light in August "the town wondered" (419), "the town had suddenly accepted" (432), "the town did not believe" (60), "the town believed," (61), and then, "they told" (62), the pronoun "they" replacing the singular noun, "town." A full intertextual study of place in Faulkner’s works would require taking the voice of place in this novel and confronting it with the voice of place in the other novels. Such a study would also analyze the relationship between the voice of the town and the area of land called Yoknapatawpha county to ascertain whether it has a similar voice.

A variation on the conjunctive novel are texts which are conjoined within the text rather than between texts,
such as Faulkner's *Go Down Moses*, Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men*, and Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*. These novels are composed of a series of temporally and/or thematically related "short stories." The same conditions cited above must be met in order for these multi-story texts to effect an intertextual interaction: each story must have a unique specificity ("otherness"), and each must have a separate horizontal plane which allows for a "between" the stories to exist. If these two requirements are met, the characters and place which appear in the individual stories are repeating and capable of generating the same type of dialogic interaction which can occur between separate texts.

To summarize, both recurring characters and recurring place are capable of generating an intertextual dialogue. A single word, an insignificant character, or a slender thread of intertextuality is sufficient to generate this interaction. Although their function is consistent, recurring characters can employ different means to activate the intertextuality: they can act as bridges to bring two characters together, such as Jody Varner who creates a link between two characters who do not otherwise meet, Lena Grove and Eula Varner; they can act as bridges to bring two different texts together, such as John McLendon does by creating a link between "Dry September" and *Light in August*; they can act as threads to shirr several stories
together, such as the Burden narratives do; they can establish a link between the different appearances of the repeating characters themselves, such as Natty Bumppo does; they can link two different events in the life of the same character, such as illustrated above between two or more incidents in the life of Natty Bumppo; they can also be used ironically, although this is more likely to occur when the repeating characters come from foreign texts, such as Henry Fielding's incorporation of Samuel Richardson's Andrews family from Pamela in his text, Joseph Andrews.

Intertextuality, by definition, (literally, between texts), does not limit the types of connections which a recurring character can generate between two texts, nor the function which the intertextual dialogue generated by the recurring characters serves within the individual texts. What is consistent is the general function of repeating characters: they generate an intertextual dialogic interaction which animates and energizes the conjoined texts by opening up monologic texts to polyphonia. "A single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing," according to Bakhtin. "Two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence" (Problems 252).
And Beyond: "Words are no good."

The history of the twentieth century novel has been a history of attempts to inform a formless world through words. Addie Bundren identifies the problem which novelists face:

"That was when I learned that words are no good; that words don't ever fit even what they are trying to say. . . . I would think how words go straight up in a thin line, quick and harmless, and how terribly doing goes along the earth, clinging to it, so that after a while the two lines are too far apart for the same person to straddle from one to the other. . . . (As I Lay Dying 163, 165)

In addition to the difficulty of making words say what one means is the problem recognized by Northrup Frye in The Secular Scripture: "And in a life that is a pure continuum, beginning with a birth that is a random beginning, ending with a death that is a random ending, nothing is more absurd than telling stories that do begin and end" (125). Interacting with that one life whose duration alone is difficult to accurately describe are other lives with equally random beginnings and endings, as Judith Sutpen describes:

"You are born at the same time with a lot of
other people, all mixed up with them, like trying to, having to, move your arms and legs with strings only the same strings are hitched to all the other arms and legs and the others are all trying and they dont know why either except that the strings are all in one anothers way like five or six people all trying to make a run on the same loom only each one wants to weave his own pattern into the rug; and it cant matter, you know that, or the Ones that set up the loom would have arranged things a little better, and yet it must matter because you keep on trying or having to keep on trying. . . . (Absalom, Absalom! 127)

The demographics of the novel complicate the problem. As a series of pages bound together and numbered in a sequence commencing with 1, a novel demands to be read in sequence from page one to the largest numbered page, with events and incidents acquiring in this process a sense of before and after based upon the page number it bears, and simultaneously acquiring a sense of causality and priority which may not have been intended. Another limitation of the novel is that the narrator’s voice assumes authority because there is no conflicting voice. Even if the voices within the text engage in conflict, the conflict assumes an authority and a priority over all other possible conflicts. Likewise it is difficult to perceive
of an ending, or closure, without considering it a type of resolution which states a particular truth. It is
difficult to disengage the sense of "moral truth" with which the novel was originally invested:

As soon as the novel established itself as a respectable literary medium, critics promptly assimilated it to the old Platonic-Christian framework. . . . The serious literary artists who tell stories in prose, according to this view, also tell us something about the life of their times, and about human nature as it appears in that context, while doing so. . . .

This means that what gives a novelist moral dignity is not the story he tells, but a wisdom and insight brought to bear on the world outside literature, and which he has managed to capture within literature. (Frye 41-42)

The perception of the novel as moral prose complicates the task of a writer who is trying to be truthful, not in the sense that his story illustrates a moral truth, but in the sense of not being "false" by presenting a distorted picture of reality. Writers are forced into distorting their novels to fit these expectations, according to Wayne Booth, not only because the form of the novel itself seems to dictate it, but because it simplifies their task: "[I]n order to keep things simple and to dominate the world,
authors have generally experienced an irresistible temptation to impose monological unities upon their works" (Introduction, Problems xxi).

Repeating characters as an intertextual device are one means of overcoming the problems of form and authority because they are able to bring other voices into the texts, voices which may question or contradict or modify or agree with the voices speaking within the host text. Within the text, Light in August, there is no challenge to Lena. The perspective which surfaces from the dialogic confrontation between the Armstids and Eula Varner is not necessarily more accurate than the traditional critical appraisal of Lena. But this confrontation forces the reader to walk 360 degrees around the subject; it forces him into active participation and does not allow him to be content with a one-dimensional view.

Freed from the constraints imposed by the intentions of the respective narratives, Joanna Burden's narrative, Bayard's narrative and Will Falls's narrative are able to interact freely. The three stories they tell are able to lie side by side, which allows the emphasis, the omissions and inclusions of each story to become visible. There is no fourth voice to weigh or interpret, to defend or to accuse. What the reader perceives is what is not visible in the telling of any one of the stories: how selective the memory is, and how incomplete, without being
inaccurate, any one truth is.

The intertextual link between *Light in August* and "Dry September" adds resonance to these stories by bringing to the foreground factors involved in each story which are not plainly visible in either one. This intertext draws parallels between the stories and enables the reader to see both Joe Christmas and John McLendon as victims of the same system. To say this outwardly in either text would destroy the stories because it would require the individual narrators to assume a role larger than storyteller by requiring of them an expertise and knowledge which would transform these stories into psychological case studies. By developing this "second" story between the texts, this problem is eliminated.

It is possible that the dialogic interaction will lead to perspectives which were not clearly visible before, but it is not necessary to its intention to reverse prior readings. The major contribution of the dialogic interaction generated by repeating characters is to prevent the novelistic form from hardening into rigid contours by vertically appending other texts to that neat succession of pages to create a text which resembles the picture drawn by the young boy in Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *Le petit prince* of "un serpent boa qui digerait un elephant" (1).

Unlike the structuralist critics who see a text as an
extended unit of language, Bakhtin considers a text an utterance, which is a unit of communication (Booth, Introduction xxxiv), and the characters, the text and the reader as participants in this utterance or communication. Accepting this premise it is not difficult to perceive now the interaction between the characters and the conjoined texts can be called a dialogue, as well as what is meant when one says that each speaker is allowed to speak in his or her own voice in the space between the texts.

This theory is not incompatible with Faulkner's perception of his texts as utterances. His novels consist of people talking to other people, not simply in the sense that a narrator can be said to be "talking," but actually talking to each other, with the text arising from and comprised of that talking. Absalom, Absalom! is, of course, the classic example of this. Light in August is constructed around "talking" and telling "stories." There are the "old" stories which Joanna and Hightower retell, and the "new" stories being created by Gavin Stevens and the furniture salesman. The Reivers opens with: "Grandfather said," instantly translating this text into a speaking voice. Requiem for a Nun consists of conventionally formatted dialogue interspersed with text. These are only a few obvious examples, but in fact, all of Faulkner's texts consist of voices speaking.

Modern writers have used numerous devices to open up
their texts to additional voices and additional perspectives, for example Leslie Silko’s incorporation of Laguna poetry and art within her novel, *Ceremony*; and Maxine Hong Kingston’s use of a montage format in *China Men*; and Margaret Atwood’s dispensing with a named protagonist and substituting an all inclusive "I" in *Surfacing*; and Josef Skvorecky’s insertions of letters from friends and lectures on American Literature within the text, *The Engineer of Human Souls*. These are all devices designed to overcome the limitations of the novel form and to accomplish in different ways what repeating characters and repeating place accomplish: creating texts which are not only utterances, but dialogues and polylogues, in which many voices can be heard, the voices of contradiction as well as the voices of agreement.

Recurring characters emphasize that the world is not monologic; that it consists of many lives and many stories, which intertwine and interact like intertexts, to form one gigantic conjunctive story:

[T]he stories fit together—the old stories, the war stories, their stories—to become the story that was still being told. He was not crazy, he had never been crazy. He had only seen and heard the world as it always was: no boundaries, only transitions through all distance and time.

(Silko, *Ceremony* 258)
NOTES

1 Thomas Berger, for example, refers to The Last of the Mohicans as "the next installment" of the Leatherstocking Tales (Afterword 428).

2 All of Gloria Naylor's novels are linked by both place and by character. The protagonist of the third novel, Mama Day, appears in both of the other texts. Also, the "wall" conjunction established in the short discussion above is repeated here in the form of a bridge. The proposed fourth novel, Bailey's Cafe, is mentioned in the novel about Mama Day as a place near which her grandson-in-law was born. This would suggest that this novel will be linked both by recurring place and recurring character to the preceding novels.

3 The intertextual reference to Sartre's 1946 one-act play, "No Exit" ("Huis Clos"), is deliberate.
APPENDIX
# APPENDIX A

**TEXTS CONJOINED TO **LIGHT IN AUGUST **THROUGH REPEATING CHARACTERS**

Following is a list of characters who appear in *Light in August* and who reappear in at least one other text. In those cases where a portion of a novel was published separately, both the short story and the novel are listed. The character indices of Thomas Dasher and Walter Everett were consulted in the compiling of this list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repeating Characters</th>
<th>Conjoined Texts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Armstid (unnamed):</td>
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<td>&quot;Shingles for the Lord&quot;</td>
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<td><em>Light in August</em></td>
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<td>(Henry)</td>
<td><em>The Hamlet</em></td>
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<td>&quot;Lizards in Jamshyd’s Courtyard&quot;</td>
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<td><em>The Mansion</em></td>
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<td>&quot;Spotted Horses&quot;</td>
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<td><em>The Town</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Armstead)</td>
<td><em>Intruder in the Dust</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armstid, Martha:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Mrs.)</td>
<td>&quot;Shingles for the Lord&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Mrs. Henry):</td>
<td><em>The Hamlet</em></td>
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<td><em>The Mansion</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Spotted Horses&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lula)</td>
<td><em>As I Lay Dying</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Beard, Mrs. Will:  
(Property Owner) :  
Burden, Joanna :  
Burden Carpetbaggers:  
(Unnamed) :  
Conner, Buck :  
(Connors, Buck) :  
(Buck) :  
Percy Grimm :  
(Eustace) :  
Hightower, Gail :  
(Hiram) :  
Maxey, Mr. :  
McLendon, Capt. John :  
(Plunkett, John) :  

Flags in the Dust  
Light in August  
Sartoris  
The Sound and the Fury  
Light in August  
The Mansiion  
Light in August  
"Skirmish at Sartoris"  
The Unvanquished  
Flags in the Dust  
Sartoris  
"Centaur in Brass:  
Light in August  
The Town  
Flags in the Dust  
Sartoris  
Light in August  
As I Lay Dying  
The Hamlet  
"Lizards in Jamshyd’s Courtyard"  
Light in August  
The Reivers  
"Hair"  
Light in August  
"Dry September" (These Thirteen  
Sept. 1931)  
Light in August  
The Mansiion  
The Town  
"Dry September" (Scribner’s  
Jan. 1931)
Stevens, Gavin  :  "By the People"
        "Error in Chemistry"
        "Go Down Moses"
        Go Down Moses
        "Hair"
        "Hand Upon the Waters"
        Intruder in the Dust
        "Knight’s Gambit"
        Light in August
        The Mansion
        "Monk"
        Requiem for a Nun
        "Smoke"
        "Tall Men"
        "Tomorrow"
        The Town

(Uncle Gavin)  :  "Hog Pawn"
        "Name for the City"

Varner, Jody  :  As I Lay Dying
        "Fool about a Horse"
        The Hamlet
        Light in August
        The Mansion
        "Spotted Horses"
        The Town

Winterbottom  :  The Hamlet
        Light in August
        "Spotted Horses"

(Mrs.)  :  Flags in the Dust
        Sartoris
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