

## BOURGEOIS BLUES: CLASS, WHITENESS, AND SOUTHERN GOTHIC IN EARLY FAULKNER AND CALDWELL

The class struggle, which is always present to a historian influenced by Marx, is a fight for the crude and material things without which no refined and spiritual things could exist. Nevertheless, it is not in the form of the spoils which fall to the victor that the latter make their presence known in the class struggle. They manifest themselves in this struggle as courage, humor, cunning, and fortitude. They have retroactive force and will constantly call in question every victory, past and present, of the rulers. As flowers turn toward the sun, by dint of a secret heliotropism the past strives to turn toward that sun which is rising in the sky of history. A historical materialist must be aware of this most inconspicuous of all transformations.

Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (254)

William Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell may seem like an odd pairing to us today, but in the early 1930s, these two Southern authors were equated as members of a modern school of horror and violence, a school to which novelist Ellen Glasgow gave the name "Southern Gothic." In this essay, I assert that the emergence of Southern Gothic reflects a cultural shift to a positive, pejorative whiteness—positive in the sense of visible and obvious rather than invisible, and pejorative in the sense of taking on some of the negative characteristics of the raced Other. Such a view assumes that class and race often intertwine in structures of oppression, and that white privilege can be problematic and is not equally granted to all.

In a 1935 *Saturday Review* article, Glasgow criticizes the writings of Faulkner and Caldwell as irresponsible, crude, childishly morbid, and akin to fairy tales. For her, such writing blurs boundaries and is a betrayal of both the realist tradition and the traditional Gothic. "The Gothic as Gothic, not as pseudo-realism, has an important place in our tradition" (4). Here Glasgow seems to be interested in preserving the purity of a realist/progressive project with its principles of reform:

all I ask [the Southern Gothic novelist] to do is to deal as honestly with living tissue as he now deals with decay, to remind himself that the colors of putrescence have no greater validity for our age, for any age, than have—let us say, to be very daring—the cardinal virtues. (4)

Behind this apparently aesthetic critique lurks a political agenda with its roots in the nineteenth century. For Glasgow, "Gothic as Gothic" has a place in the tradition, as do fairy tales, but not on realism's turf.

In hindsight, the two examples that Ellen Glasgow used are a winner and a loser in the contest for the accumulation of cultural capital in the postwar period. This process did not simply involve "selling-out" to popular taste, nor "buying-in" to modernist principles of high literary value. Faulkner, who often depicted himself as ready, willing, and working hard to sell out, whether to sensationalism, to the movies, or to the magazine market, became established as a Nobel laureate and a preeminent American novelist. In contrast, Caldwell would see his reputation decline with time and hear his work denounced as "hot and shoddy" (Bode 247). By the status-conscious 1950s, Caldwell was being condemned for being popular.

Faulkner, working as a modernist, used the South to represent the modern in its complexity and contradictions. In this context, we can discern ways in which Faulkner deliberately appropriated the Gothic tradition. In contrast, Caldwell, as a reformer, produced work that would demonstrate and criticize specific forms of oppression, such as farm tenancy and institutionalized lynching. This placed him in the tradition of realism and naturalism, which claimed a journalistic objectivity in depicting social wrongs, and tended to focus on the poor without a middle class narrator as mediator. Neither writer sought to present the South as either a land of freaks and monsters or as the sentimental victim of crude Northern oppression, but both were often read in such ways. Southern Gothic as a literary genre grew not only out of such texts but also out of such misreadings.

From its inception, the Gothic has been associated with performance, physical and emotional sensation, and with a morbid or negative version of the sublime. Such associations help to account for both its recognizability and its difficulty of definition. Vijay Mishra's theoretical study *The Gothic Sublime* (1994) demonstrates that one way that early British Gothic writing has been distinguished from its romantic counterparts is in its refusal to reconcile discordant oppositions (8). The Gothic sublime, according to Mishra, fails to do the ideological work of the Romantic sublime, which, through the idea of "organic unity," produces a "triumphant subject" reinscribed into a seamless ideological structure. In the Gothic, "the subject inscribes itself as an absence, a lack in the structure itself" (17). Presented in such terms, the Gothic becomes not a way of seeing or a type of representation, but a demonstration or performance of the inadequacy of representation. Such a change in focus brings into question not what it is, but what it does, how it embodies ideological positions. Although Glasgow calls for reform, she imagines change within the context of the "triumphant subject" that a realist ideological perspective produces, a subject with agency. She finds that Faulkner's and Caldwell's novels resist such a subject, substituting instead flawed and partial subjects who demonstrate their own inadequacy in the face of the impersonal forces of history.

Faulkner's most Gothic novels were written in the period between *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *The Hamlet* (1940), during the time when he was working with the dilemmas that would sort themselves out in the larger Yoknapatawpha social dynamic. During the writer's early period, we can see Faulkner playing variations on the Gothic, from the traditional "family romance" Gothic of "A Rose for Emily," broadened somewhat to include issues of class in *The Sound and the Fury*, *Sanctuary*, and *As I Lay Dying*, to the "race romance" Gothic of *Light in August* and *Absalom, Absalom!* By making a distinction between family and race, I do not mean to imply that *Light in August* and *Absalom, Absalom!* are not concerned with family, but that they combine the family problematics developed in the earlier works with the question of race through the practice, or perhaps custom would be a better word, of black/white miscegenation. "A Rose for Emily" is a family romance Gothic straight out of the British tradition. Although written after *The Sound and the Fury* and *Sanctuary*, it offers a less complicated portrayal, possibly because of the generic limitations of the short story form. *The Sound and the Fury*, *Sanctuary*, and *As I Lay Dying* occupy an intermediate space, in which we can see a change in emphasis from the decadent aristocracy theme (again straight out of the British tradition) to a more original and more Southern emphasis which I will designate "white trash" Gothic. The middle point in this Gothic spectrum from family romance through the intermediate white-trash romances to the later race romance is Faulkner's problem novel *Sanctuary*, written before and substantially revised after *As I Lay Dying*. He referred to it as "the most horrific tale I could imagine" (S 323). In touch with the concerns of the 1930s, this novel also represents a change in perspective from an earlier focus on the individual to a more emphatic foregrounding of issues of class, which are then further developed in *As I Lay Dying*. My treatment will follow this spectrum from "A Rose for Emily," a direct appropriation of the British Gothic, to examine the ways that class and race issues interact in the early novels.

By appropriating the Gothic, Faulkner attempted to write about the American South by way of an exotic genre. It is in the spirit of modernist experimentation that the young writer produced his first Gothic tale, "A Rose for Emily" (1930), a not particularly original story of revenge and betrayal made unique by its collective narrator and its Mississippi setting. The traditional Gothic hero as a Romantic transgressor against the norms of society fits well in the person of Emily, who breaks both social and gender norms, pushing outside her given roles as Southern lady, as bride, even as taxpayer. Her triumph is in her ability to preserve an exterior facade that conceals a corrupt interior. "A Rose for Emily," one of Faulkner's most anthologized short stories, is an indication that early in his career Faulkner was working within the structures and conventions of the traditional "explained" Gothic story.<sup>1</sup> In a story spanning some 60 years, Emily Grierson, a spinster heiress to a decaying mansion in

<sup>1</sup>Montague Summers, who wrote *The Gothic Quest*, a study of the English Gothic novel published in 1928, distinguished between the explained Gothic, where the horrors have specifically human origins, and the supernatural Gothic, which works by way of the occult.

Jefferson, Mississippi, alternately resists and conforms to the various behaviors expected of a Southern lady. Isolated because of her father's jealous belligerence toward would-be suitors, she waits until after his death to form a scandalous connection, then engagement, to a Yankee construction foreman, who apparently abandons her just before the wedding. For the rest of a long life, she continues in isolated, genteel poverty, refusing to pay taxes because of an alleged agreement between her father and a long-dead mayor. After she dies, a locked bedroom has to be broken into, to reveal the desiccated corpse of her erstwhile Yankee lover. This story about a decaying aristocratic system, signified by the decaying house and the conflict over adherence to bygone codes of "noblesse oblige" (125) fits well into the conventions of British Gothic as exemplified by Horace Walpole, Anne Radcliffe, and their literary heirs.

The standard definition of the traditional Gothic novel tends to refer to three elements: a setting in an ancestral house, real or perceived occult events, and a woman at risk. Often the "house" can signify another meaning of the word, ancestral lineage as well as a physical structure, as in the title and subject of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher." The occult mechanisms can be explained rationally or accepted as supernatural. The woman is generally threatened by a degenerate offspring of the house. In connection with these standard characteristics I want to stress two recurring motifs: the body and the line. Both of these elements help to define medieval Gothic art, where, often by way of linear pattern and distortion, images of the body are made grotesque. In the traditional Gothic novel, a threat to the female protagonist is usually a physical one, of death or loss of virginity, and the symptoms of fear and terror are described in the bodily terms of the sentimental romance: tears, fainting, the heart jumping in the breast, and so on. The line as border functions in these texts as well. They are often arranged according to an economy based on an inside/outside opposition, with the house serving as "container" or second skin, which becomes a labyrinth or a prison in which threats are obsessively replicated. The commonplace assertion that the house takes on the status of a character in the Gothic novel, or, in Robert Kiely's words, that "the essence of individual identity has been dislodged from its human centers and diffused in an architectural construct" (40), can also be reversed to suggest that the house becomes metonymic for the character's body. In "A Rose for Emily" it is not until after her death that the ladies of Jefferson finally fulfill their desire "to see the inside of her house" (119). Apart from the black servant, the one man who enters the inner sanctum never leaves.

Faulkner's breakthrough novel *The Sound and the Fury*, which presents the fall of the house of Compson, allows for further elaboration of the traditional Gothic plot structure, as well as a more radical modernist experimentation with points of view. The text presents four siblings, Quentin, Jason, Caddy, and Benjy, all of whom fit into roles from a traditional Gothic novel. Quentin fits the mold of a Romantic protagonist, a lonely, sensitive young man who becomes obsessed with the preservation of his sister's virginity. Jason is a villain suited for melodrama, bitterly and vainly trying to preserve the last of the

family's fortune for himself. Caddy, the threatened maiden, is as indifferent to her honor as her brother is obsessed with it. The firstborn son Benjy is an idiot—a type of the degenerate heir—whose grieving and temporal displacement provide the novel's structural foundation as well as its modernist stylistic defamiliarization. Other Gothic elements that fit into the theme of a decaying aristocracy are Dilsey's family, as faithful peasant retainers, and the decadent parents, the mother an unstable hypochondriac and the father an embittered intellectual. The sense of coherence and historical continuity suggested by the collective narration in "A Rose for Emily" has completely broken down here, and the result is a sort of family apocalypse that implies not only that nothing worthwhile is saved, but that nothing is left worth saving.

*The Sound and the Fury* moves away from the Gothic mansion *per se* to the idea of the diminishing estate, the last of which is finally sold to finance Quentin's education at Harvard and Caddy's marriage. Each of the children must escape out of this contracting boundary or be contained within it: Caddy runs off with a man, Quentin commits suicide, and Jason accepts a diminished role as a betrayer of the Compson's aristocratic traditions. The final act of encroachment is performed on the metonymic body of Benjy. As the family's property is cut up and parceled off, the figurative castration of tradition parallels Benjy's literal castration, which Jason arranges. The appendix Faulkner wrote for Cowley's *Portable Faulkner* (1946) reinforces the Gothic theme of the loss of a "house" in the broader sense of a family dynasty. It ends with the subheading "Dilsey," which consists of one sentence: "They endured" (SF 427). This cogent summary describes what the black retainers of the Compsons do, as it ironically and precisely points out what the Compsons themselves fail to do.

By the time he wrote the appendix, Faulkner's original conception of the decline of a family had been broadened to include the decline of the whole region. The virtue of Dilsey's endurance, expressed in the plural and by that means generalized to include her family and by implication her race, will become the virtue of all of Faulkner's Others—Indians, women, and blacks—in contrast to the furious anger of his white heroes and the deliberate encroachment of heartless New South mercantile interests, represented in *The Sound and the Fury* by Jason, and in *The Hamlet* and its sequels by "Snopesism," a term that identifies its agents as both a class and a race apart from such noble and impotent aristocrats as the Compsons and the Sartoris. Against this deliberate, rational, modernizing force, a number of white male protagonists respond with anger and a futile Lost Cause-based quixotic heroism, while the idealized Others triumph (or get by) only through dogged endurance.

Both the coherence of the final Dilsey section and the appendix's focus on the endurance of the black characters serve to establish them as normal, which serves to bring out the Compson's whiteness and to associate it with their general dysfunction. In contrast to Dilsey's kindness and pragmatism, a pathological whiteness seems to infuse these crazy white folks, producing either the impractical obsessions of the male characters (including Benjy), or the

indiscriminate promiscuity of Caddy and Miss Quentin. Sexual promiscuity in white women effectively foregrounds and at the same time short-circuits the whole rape complex used to justify lynching as the protection of idealized white womanhood in the face of black male sexual aggression. The uncontrolled desires of Caddy, Miss Quentin, and, later, Temple Drake, are destabilizing, not only to their families, but to the entire structure of Southern racial mythology.

Having established a type of aberrant whiteness with the Compsons, in the next two novels Faulkner transfers his focus from decadent aristocrats to target another group, poor whites or white trash, and so creates the peculiar conditions of Southern Gothic. The “cheap idea”(321) that Faulkner developed in *Sanctuary* was to be his transition into this new type of Gothic. Having followed the aristocratic romance of degeneration into the crux of obsessive narrative overdetermination that we see in *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner chose a new focus when he revised *Sanctuary*. This transitional novel represents both a continuation of Faulkner’s exploration of sexual obsession and a change in class emphasis away from the aristocratic to the “lower” orders—gangsters and bootleggers in *Sanctuary* and tenant farmers in *As I Lay Dying*—from a traditional family Gothic to a transitional white-trash variant. The famous preface to the 1932 edition of *Sanctuary* describes this shift in terms that show not only the author’s compulsion to change but also a certain discomfort with that change. This discomfort becomes a powerful ideological tension that prevails in Faulkner’s work throughout the 1930s, until it is resolved by his appropriation of another literary tradition, that of Southwestern humor, in *The Hamlet*.

The shift from the early family romance Gothic to white-trash Southern Gothic not only reflects a new emphasis on class conflict, but one in which class becomes explicitly entangled with issues of race. I think that recent critical interest in whiteness can be used to supplement Eric Sundquist’s claims that race forms the backbone of Faulkner’s *oeuvre*, which, coupled with the assumption that black and white relations define race, causes him to see *As I Lay Dying* in terms of *The Sound and the Fury*’s obsession with family (28). I contend that a raced whiteness, in the form of *Sanctuary*’s and *As I Lay Dying*’s focus on poor-white characters, can help us to see these novels as a break with the earlier family romances and help us define, not only this period in Faulkner’s work, but the beginnings of a tradition in Southern writing that continues to this day.

In the preface to *Sanctuary*, Faulkner dramatizes his emergence as a modernist writer by providing a metanarrative of the composition of *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* and a justification of the *Sanctuary* revisions. I find his claims less interesting as fact or as insight into the creative process than as an assertion that he has found a genuine and original style or voice. According to the preface, Faulkner wrote the first version of *Sanctuary* in “about three weeks” and *As I Lay Dying* in six (323). Each novel, in other words, was written in a creative frenzy. This suggests that writing about the lower classes opened up a discursive space that allowed Faulkner to write about the South from a

new perspective, one in which the race/class complex played an increased role. Faulkner's struggle to find a way to write about his own class, suggested by his problems with the *Flags in the Dust/Sartoris* manuscript, found a partial resolution in *The Sound and the Fury's* initial idiot narrator Benjy, who provided both an outside perspective and, if we are to believe Faulkner, the burst of creative energy that allowed him to write *The Sound and the Fury* "for pleasure" (322). In this way, Benjy, a Compson but an idiot, as well as Jason, a sort of white trash/Compson hybrid, provides a chronological reading of Faulkner with transitional figures that lead towards the white-trash characters in the next novels. *The Sound and the Fury* can be seen as the beginning of a transitional shift to the more class-centered but race-obscured Southern Gothic of *Sanctuary* and *As I Lay Dying*.

But if class is an issue in these two novels, they are also two of the whitest in Faulkner's *oeuvre*. What do they have to do with race? Sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant, in their *Racial Formation in the United States*, assert that the 1920s and 1930s saw a shift in the dominant understanding of "race" from a biologically determined category to one that is driven by an "ethnic" model, defined by twin currents, cultural pluralism and assimilationism, and based on the social patterns associated with immigration (15). This shift in models necessarily destabilized the existing hierarchies posited by the earlier biological or eugenicist models whereby white skin guaranteed superior treatment, and contributed to the increasing disappearance of whiteness as an acknowledged category of privilege, especially for lower-class whites. But we should be aware that this shift in models may have arrived later in the South, if indeed it ever has, than in the urban centers of the North. I want to suggest that along with the potential for evening-out perceived differences between oppressed groups, the ethnicity model could also serve to transfer traits from formerly raced groups to groups no longer protected by their now somewhat discounted whiteness, groups like Southern poor whites. What distinguishes Southern Gothic is that it starts out as a resistant discourse, a "voice" for the white-trash party if you will, but then becomes a mechanism for this racial transference, a way of "racing," marking and pathologizing the Southern poor white.

The two versions of *Sanctuary*, written before and after *As I Lay Dying*, show the ways Faulkner is rewriting the Gothic, not necessarily in a conscious fashion. His conscious reasons for revision, the claims he makes in the *Sanctuary* preface, have more to do with a vague notion of quality, of not shaming his new work. In much the same way, we can see that the original purpose of writing *Sanctuary* was not necessarily only the exploitation of a "cheap idea" designed only to make money.<sup>2</sup> Seen in this light, the changes between the two versions reinforce the shift in class emphasis. The second version moves away from the controlling central consciousness of another failed aristocrat, the Quentin-like Horace Benbow, to a free indirect discourse that includes Ben-

<sup>2</sup>These claims had the benefit of hindsight. *Sanctuary* had made money. It had sold out of its first printing when Faulkner composed the story of its composition.

bow, Temple Drake, the Snopes cousins, even the mysterious Popeye himself, in a fractured narrative focus that zooms in and out like a movie camera gone berserk.<sup>3</sup>

The novel still retains the mechanical details of the Gothic plot—a decaying mansion, a damsel in distress, an evil villain—but they are skewed and modernized. The mansion, abandoned by its owners, is used as a temporary gangster's hideout. The damsel is an irresponsible flapper who, instead of being rescued, undergoes a grotesque rape and becomes a nymphomaniac. The villain is a "hereditary defective" (to use the eugenic term) who compensates for his congenital impotence by substituting, in proper popular-Freudian manner, a corn cob, a gun, and a surrogate lover for his manhood. Presented in these terms, *Sanctuary's* modernization of the Gothic tradition borders on parody. But the most important change is the emphasis on class. From the opening tableau, where the temporarily homeless Benbow faces Popeye across the pool of a spring, the class barrier is presented as absolute. Benbow, drinking at the spring, "leaned his face to the broken and myriad reflection of his own drinking. When he rose up he saw among them the shattered reflection of Popeye's straw hat" (S4). The spring reflects them differently: Popeye emerges into Benbow's sight as the "shattered" reflection of his hat, in contrast with the "broken and myriad" qualities of Benbow's own reflection. Where "broken and myriad" suggests an aesthetically appealing fragmentation like a mosaic, "shattered" suggests violence, and Benbow immediately realizes that Popeye is carrying a gun, while Popeye is both puzzled and amused by the object Benbow carries, a book. Soon we learn that these emblems are appropriate. A vicious, disinterested violence is Popeye's stock-in-trade and the source of his tenuous power. Benbow, in contrast, is contemplative and bookish, and has run away from home in the course of a sort of identity crisis, and so his apprehension of his image as "broken and myriad" is appropriate for a detached and aesthetic personality. Book and gun are also professional emblems, for Benbow is a lawyer and Popeye a gangster, and as such they serve to mark each character's class position. Descriptive terms in the opening narrative, which is third-person and limited in the direction of Benbow's perspective, reinforce this contrast, which places Popeye in the artificial world of vulgarity and popular culture and Benbow in the "natural" world of middle class complacency. Popeye is described as pale "as though seen by electric light," as having "that vicious deathless quality of stamped tin" (4), a major medium of commercial advertising in rural 1920s Mississippi. His face is like a mask, his eyes "like rubber knobs, like they'd give to the touch and then recover with the whorled smudge of the thumb on them" (6). Even though he knows that his life is at risk, Benbow taunts Popeye with this contrast, saying, "I don't suppose you'd know a bird at all, without it was singing in a cage in a hotel lounge, or cost four dollars on a plate" (6). In their walk back to the house in the dusk, Popeye displays his fear of birds and of

<sup>3</sup>Much recent Faulkner criticism has looked at "modern" as opposed to "modernist" elements. These include the industrial/commodity-based modern economy, as well as the influence of modern popular forms like movies, radio, and comic strips. See Matthews and Willis.

nature in general—so terrified by the appearance of an owl that he practically jumps into Benbow's arms. He insists on going the long way around to avoid having to walk "[t]hrough all them trees" (7). Even in the revised version, in which Faulkner moved away from Benbow's limited point of view, such contrasts structure the novel, serving to reify the world of Benbow and of Temple Drake and Gowan Stevens as normal and natural, and to present the world of the underclass characters such as Popeye, Miss Reba, and the Snopes boys as distorted and exotic, yet also fascinating.

The line that the upper class characters Benbow, Drake and Stevens cross when they enter the domain of the bootleggers brings them into an exotic realm of danger, but it also changes them in relation to their own class members. Drake and Benbow both become contaminated, so that eventually she becomes a willing and he an unwilling accomplice to the violent murder of an innocent man. Stevens seems to get off the easiest because he plays by the rules—he keeps the relations between the classes in the realm of the socially sanctioned, albeit illegal, commerce of bootlegging. He is motivated by pure fear, and abandons Drake with no second thought—an inverted white knight. The message is clear: no trespassing, and if you do cross the line, get away as soon as you can, and don't try to make things better. As the actions of Judge Drake (Temple's father) demonstrate, justice doesn't work across class boundaries. Lee Goodwin's fate, as well as that of Ruby and the sickly baby, are determined by their class position, which is as absolute as if it were inscribed in the color of their skin. The status of class as an absolute determinant is reinforced by what happens to Popeye—he gets away with the crimes he does commit, but is picked up and hanged for one he does not. As the custom of lynching demonstrates, the purpose of such rituals is not to punish specific crimes, but to terrify targeted groups into obedience. Within such a legal arena, white-trash gangsters, like African Americans, are interchangeable—one is as good as another. Within the social system Faulkner delineates, Popeye's class is inscribed on his body in much the same way that race is. He is "[t]hat black man" (49) not just because he dresses in black, but also because his lower-class whiteness does not offer him sufficient protection. Neither does Lee Goodwin's, despite his stubborn confidence that he won't be convicted without evidence against him. He thought that they had arrested a white man; instead, they had arrested a poor man.

The novel's racing of class is reinforced by an ideological emphasis on women's bodies as elements of exchange. Ruby offers to pay Horace by having sex with him. Popeye's corn-cob rape of Temple is a class boundary violation and it results in violent retaliation, not on the individual responsible, but on his class as a whole, in the same way that lynchings were acts of terrorism aimed at all blacks, not just the one killed. The lynching of Goodwin reinforces his status as a designated Other. Lynching in the South—according to its mythology a vigilante punishment for black rapists of white women—traditionally served the hegemonic purpose of creating an atmosphere of legally sanctioned terror that reinforced the boundary of race and, as such, obviated the need for

individual justice. In a congruent fashion, designated lower-class whites are punished and warned *as a class* by the burning of Goodwin and the hanging of Popeye. The guilt or innocence of individuals—what Horace Benbow thinks that the law is about—is irrelevant in a system designed to keep both blacks and the white poor “in their place,” a system that became increasingly for white trash what it has been since the failure of Reconstruction for blacks. Inferior class position is reinforced by racial ideology.

*As I Lay Dying* has often been read as a sort of white-trash mirror for *The Sound and the Fury*, and there is an appropriate symmetry in the contrast between the ruling-class family whose mother is absent while alive and the lower-class family whose mother maintains a central presence after death. Sundquist has pointed out the structural parallel between Addie who, already dead before the narrative opens, makes a spectral reappearance to narrate one of the sections, and the absent author (40). Both control the actions of the family members through an “invisible hand”—the author shapes the narrative by selecting who speaks and when, and Addie gives shape to the plot by her dying wish to be buried in Jefferson. Susan Willis sees the working of a third “invisible hand” in the novel, one closer to Adam Smith’s original use of the term—the encroaching, destabilizing influence of commodity capitalism on the agrarian economy that has hitherto dominated the lives of the Bundrens, so that the journey away from the farm into town is also a shift from the barter economy of sharecropping to the money economy of capitalism, represented by false teeth, graphophones, toy trains, and bananas (598).

The elements of the traditional Gothic story—the house, the persecuted maiden, occult events—are downplayed or parodied outright in this novel. The focus of the story is on the body of the mother, decomposing in Cash’s carefully constructed coffin. The narrative centers around the problem of getting Addie’s body past a series of obstacles, primarily a flooded river, into town before it decomposes completely. Addie’s lingering presence, signified by the increasing odor of decaying flesh during the seven-day trip into Jefferson, as well as by the power of her will to control her family even after she is dead, provides the motive force in the plot, determining Vardaman’s confusion, Jewel’s heroism, Darl’s madness, Anse’s stubbornness, Cash’s obsessive craftsmanship, even Dewey Dell’s wish to be rid of her pregnancy. The mother’s body, encased in its container, the “cubistic bug” of the coffin (*AILD* 219), preserves the function of the Gothic house, providing both character and setting. Furthermore, the family, the “house of Bundren,” albeit after sacrificing one of its own, survives to gain a new mother, the duck-like new Mrs. Bundren, and to gorge on bananas in a twisted comic resolution.

The lazy, single-minded Anse and the dull, credulous Dewey Dell don’t even work as parodies of the villain and the persecuted maiden, especially when contrasted with the savage characterizations of Temple and Popeye. They are just not interesting enough. The hard-boiled objectivity of *Sanctuary* and the often farcical humor of *As I Lay Dying* are two sides of the same perspective, and the determining locus of that perspective is an absolute class position. In

*Sanctuary*, although less so in the revised version, Horace Benbow still serves as a mediating presence between the genteel reader (and author) and the silly, violent, idiotic, or venal members of the lower classes. In much the same way, Addie, the former middle-class schoolteacher who has hated her life, her body, language itself (a persistent class marker) since marrying beneath her, serves as mediator in *As I Lay Dying*. She gives these “no count” people—people who literally don’t count—the will and motivation they need to return her to her class position, her place in the town graveyard. Once that is accomplished they can go back to their idiotic and irrelevant concerns. Location serves as a class marker here, distinguishing Addie’s townfolk kin in the Jefferson graveyard from Anse’s country kin in their graves near the farmhouse.

Addie’s lack, which she associates with Anse and with his word “love” (172), is presented in terms of class. For the poor, especially women, entry into the middle class, “getting ahead,” is often finally frustrated by numbers of children. Addie realizes this, and so feels betrayed when she realizes she is pregnant with Darl, her second son:

Then I found that I had Darl. At first I would not believe it. Then I believed I would kill Anse. It was as though he had tricked me, hidden within a word like a paper screen and struck me in the back through it. But then I realized that I had been tricked by words older than Anse or love, and that the same word had tricked Anse too, and that my revenge would be that he would never know that I was taking revenge. And when Darl was born I asked Anse to promise to take me back to Jefferson when I died because I knew my father had been right, even when he couldn’t have known he was right anymore than I could have known he was wrong. (172-73)

It is after this disillusionment that she has her affair with Whitfield and has the next three children. She has given up on being able to be free of the burden of poverty in this life and settles for a symbolic triumph in death, not by way of Cora Tull’s pie-in-the-sky religion, but in a very material sense. She insists on the literal placement of her body away from those of her family, insists that everyone will know that she has refused to be buried with the Bundrens. In this way she gives her words meaning, by making Anse act on them.

The perspectives of their country neighbors can help us to see the Bundren’s class position, which is practically emblematic of “no-countness.” We find that the neighbors are all in the habit of helping Anse, who, despite his constant claim that “[w]e wouldn’t be beholden” (117) is convinced, as a result of a childhood disease, that he will die if he breaks a sweat. It is through Anse’s apparently constitutional laziness that he manages to stay clean, never sweating, so that he avoids the accusation of dirtiness that the middle class uses to distinguish itself from the poor. One of the things he admires about Addie is that “[s]he was ever one to clean up after herself” (19). His laziness would label him as white trash if those in a parallel situation were seen as similarly lazy, but he is apparently unique in the community, a charity case amongst the hard-working poor whites. It is ironic that he should have married a middle-class schoolteacher who is convinced of her own superiority to him and his class. He

doesn't realize that her "cleaning up" continues after her death, using him as an unwitting agent. Addie's anger as well as her infidelity with Whitfield can be seen as products of her feelings of having "married down."

Although it is not clear how high Addie's original class position was, it is clear she believed she has come down. Here we can see the vertical hierarchy of class, a metaphoric barrier, blending into the horizontal, but supposedly absolute, metonymic barrier of race. The horror in this story, as in *Sanctuary*, is that one of "us," the educated middle class, has to live like one of "them," the poor, and the implication is that it is a kind of miscegenation. Cora Tull describes Addie as a "lonely woman, lonely with her pride" (22), and it is apparent that Jewel, her son from her affair with the preacher Whitfield, is the one she is "partial to" (22). If we see white trash as a race apart, Jewel is the only child of unmixed blood. As a schoolteacher, Addie looked forward to the end of the school day so that she could "be quiet and hate" her students, described in terms of their "little dirty snuffling nose[s]" (169). These snot-nosed kids are further defined by their contamination through language:

I knew that it had been, not that they had dirty noses, but that we had had to use one another by words like spiders dangling by their mouths from a beam, swinging and twisting and never touching, and that only through the blows of the switch could my blood and their blood flow as one stream. (172)

Blood is a consistent signifier of class and of race. Addie values both kinds of blood—that of her family heritage which she affirms and reclaims by being hauled to Jefferson for burial and that of the "communion" that unites her with her students by way of the lash, through the shedding of blood, its honest physical contact and pain transcending the duplicitous realm of language. Like many teachers who feel that their job is a missionary duty to unappreciative and inferior students, she doubts the efficacy of her words, the medium through which teaching occurs. The medium of language bears with it the possibility for communication and hence of equality, which Addie sees as a lie. She prefers the honest relation of the lash, in the context of the South a potent signifier of white supremacy that she conflates with class supremacy.<sup>4</sup> Her obsession to be buried with her family, tied to her father's pronouncement that "the reason for living is to stay dead" (175) is connected in her mind to "cleaning up the house afterwards" (176), which she claims to have done after Jewel's birth. This housecleaning is gendered, something "a man cannot know anything about" (175-76), but it is also a class distinction—cleanliness being the distinguishing mark between the middle class and the poor as well as between the honest poor and white trash.

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<sup>4</sup>There is a widespread belief that "cracker," another term for the Southern poor white, refers to an African American perception of whites as whip crackers. However, according to Irwin Lewis Allen's *Unkind Words: Ethnic Labeling from Redskin to Wasp* (1990), this is an etymological misconception that found credence in Clarence Major's *Dictionary of Afro-American Slang* (1970). Others trace the term to corn cracking or cattle driving. Like other epithets, it has been deployed by the people it designates as a term of pride. Thanks to Jonathan Glover for this information.

It is telling that in both *As I Lay Dying* and *Sanctuary* it is women who “fall” across class boundaries, and in each case they develop a pathology—Temple’s nymphomania, Addie’s obsession to escape, even in death. In each case the cause of the fall is what could be called class miscegenation—having sex, consensual or not, with *one of them*. The patterns of class representation in these early works foreshadow the patterns of race representation that will inform Faulkner’s subsequent novels, the race romances *Light in August* and *Absalom, Absalom!*

Erskine Caldwell, Glasgow’s alternate example of Southern Gothic, does not share Faulkner’s appropriation of the traditional Gothic formula. His fiction is Gothic only in an extended sense of the term. Faulkner and Caldwell, Southern contemporaries, were categorized together because of their violent and disturbing subject matter, especially to an audience accustomed to fiction that reinforced bourgeois ideologies of class and race. In the case of Caldwell, it is more difficult to see a connection to British Gothic antecedents because of the direct and colloquial prose style. But certain narrative patterns are the same. To read *Tobacco Road* as the fall of the house of Lester may seem to be a stretch, but the story does end with the destruction of the house along with the parents and with the escape of the persecuted maiden.<sup>5</sup> It differs from Faulkner’s narratives in that the sources for the destruction, rather than emerging from within the characters, are abstract and removed from the scene, present only in their cumulative effects. Caldwell’s intervention into the narrative to explain these systemic economic problems and their solutions has been the subject of debate, and is considered by some of his readers to be the novel’s major flaw.

Caldwell’s work has always presented its readers with interpretive quandaries: is he a good-hearted social reformer, whose middle class revulsion at poor whites bleeds through his avowed zeal to change the conditions that led to their lives, or is he such an accurate “realist” that he defeats his own reformist purposes by demonstrating that the poor are incorrigible? Or is he an heir to the Southwestern humor tradition, mocking rural types from a bourgeois, urban perspective? I want to suggest an alternative interpretation. Although Caldwell’s work does derive in part from a conservative, “blame the victim” tradition coming out of the eugenics movement, his “incoherence,” the opacity of his fiction to interpretation and his refusal to “clean up” or gentrify his characters, derives from a more radical Marxist tradition, one that seeks to show the contradictions inherent in the economic structures that bourgeois capitalism produces.

As one of the writers searching for new audiences and fresh expressive forms, along with many others in the 1930s, Caldwell participated in the journalistic frenzy that flourished among liberal social reformers and New Deal-funded social engineers to produce the generic outflow of “documentary realism” in film, in folklore, in scholarship, on the newsreels, in the newspapers, and in magazines. A similar foundation informs Caldwell’s version of South-

<sup>5</sup>Pearl, Lov’s twelve-year-old wife, escapes to go to the city.

ern Gothic, and is responsible for its resemblances both to documentary realism (a genre that he worked extensively in) and to the eugenic family studies that influenced him. In an early interview (1940), he claimed, "I represent the people. I'm just like a congressman asking for a WPA appropriation. I am citing facts, telling what there is, what exists, what these people are facing" (Arnold 20). In Caldwell's early fiction, close descriptions of the long-term effects of poverty, starvation, disease and illiteracy, and behaviors consistent with such conditions alternate with polemical passages offering solutions such as government aid and "co-operative and corporate farming" (*Tobacco Road* 83). Caldwell's white-trash characters exhibit a myopic egotism—obsessed with the primitive needs and desires of the body, or monomaniacally pursuing a single idea. They make it too easy for the reader to separate himself (or herself—gender is another vexed issue in Caldwell studies) from the determining social and economic context and to separate out the situation in a way parallel to the way that Caldwell individualizes his characters. It is difficult to think about "reforming" a pathologized character like Jeeter Lester. Despite Jeeter's protests that "God has got it in good and heavy for the poor" (13), and the narrator's insistence that cooperative farming could improve the conditions of the abandoned sharecroppers' lives, such conditions can just as easily seem to result from individual, family, and ultimately regional peculiarities, not systemic flaws.

Even against its author's avowed politics, then, *Tobacco Road* can be deployed in a process of ideological divide-and-conquer: first individualizing the characters and situations, then blaming the victims for their peculiar "problems," then generalizing against them, treating their situation as the result of individual choices or pathologies—a discursive strategy that has been consistently used in American historical studies to explain contradictions within the culture of white privilege.<sup>6</sup> Caldwell's later work tends to fit better into this pattern, emphasizing both his individual agency as an author and the individual peculiarities of his characters. But the early work is more consistent with the calls for reform that his nonfiction expresses, his "brand of communism," as he called it in 1931 in a letter to his friend Alfred Morang (Klevar 107).

If we look at the infamous opening episode of *Tobacco Road*, we can see the way that Caldwell's politics are represented as well as the ways in which his peculiarly documentary style estranges his audience so that the text can be ideologically misread. This passage introduces the Lesters at their shack on the Tobacco Road. Jeeter, the father, is attempting somewhat optimistically to fix a rotten tire so that he can take a load of poor quality scrub oak into Augusta to sell for cash. His son Dude slams a tattered baseball into the side of the house. Lester's wife Ada, his elderly mother, and his harelipped daughter Ellie May watch listlessly. Jeeter keeps up a running commentary on his situation, which, despite his optimism, is grim:

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<sup>6</sup>An example is Charles Murray, coauthor of *The Bell Curve*. In his "White Welfare, White Families, and 'White Trash,'" he argues that welfare creates "large numbers of people who behave in the same ways as the people our grandparents called trash" and that there are two kinds of poor, "the people who can cope and the people who don't or can't" (33). Poverty becomes personal dysfunction.

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Some of these days He'll bust loose with a heap of bounty and all us poor folks will have all we want to eat and plenty to clothe us with. It cant always keep getting worse and worse every year like it has got since the big war. God, He'll put a stop to it some of these days and make the rich give back to us all they've took from us poor folks. God is going to treat us right. He ain't going to let it keep on like it is now. But we got to stop cussing him when we got nothing to eat. (13)

This passage demonstrates that Jeeter has an acute awareness of the Southern agricultural economy and its basis in class inequality. It also demonstrates the "pie in the sky" syndrome—how evangelical Protestantism, with its emphasis on a personal God, serves to reinforce a passive, wait-and-see attitude even amongst the very poorest. It is significant that Jeeter's pie is not to be found in heaven but on earth, though the agent of change is still God. Jeeter does not prove to be passive, however, but quite capable of turning a situation to his own advantage. He waits eagerly while Ellie May scoots across the sandy yard, causing her dress to rise up over her waist, and seduces Lov, her sister's husband. After they become engrossed in "horsing," Jeeter steals Lov's sack of turnips and runs off into the woods to eat them by himself, while Ada and grandmother Lester stand by to beat Lov with sticks if he doesn't continue having sex with Ellie May. By this time several negroes have come by and are standing and watching from the other side of the fence.

The problems with interpretation that Caldwell's writings produce in his audiences are evident in this long episode. Although the reader learns about the Lesters' situation and the problems with the local economy, class relations, and environmental conditions, such learning takes place around the periphery of a circle of people, black and white and of a variety of ages, watching a couple have sex in a dirt yard. The reader is included in this group act of voyeurism, witness to a bizarre circus. The reader is implicated in the action, but the text does not provide a framework for her to interpret such implication. It is this conflicted position, being figuratively pulled in and then abandoned, that creates an interpretive quandary. Should one respond to the work's appeal as low comedy, as sex-farce, or respond to the terrible conditions that it describes?

The disorientation caused by this contradictory choice produces the "two Erskine Caldwells" (198) that Malcolm Cowley described. The reader/spectator is interpellated in such a way as to cause him to examine his place in the scene, and instead of the triumphant subject, the omniscient spectator of realism and naturalism, he finds himself a prurient witness to a public sex act in a situation where people are starving. According to the theory of documentary reform, this conflict in perspective should cause the reader to examine her class position and its complicity in creating such conditions. But perhaps because the situation is so strange, is so far removed from a middle class audience's everyday experience, she also has the option of using humor to detach herself from the context, reinscribing the triumphant subject as a detached and amused observer. The whiteness of Caldwell's characters, like that of Faulkner's poor whites, does not provide them with protection, nor does it provide a characteristic of shared identity for the reader. It is another bizarre characteristic in a long list that

tends to set them apart. Each character's obsession, each individual monomania—Jeeter's need to farm, Ada's desire for a dress to be buried in, Dude's fascination with loud noises, and so on—contributes to the possibility of seeing these characters as freaks in a land of freaks.

Sylvia Jenkins Cook has suggested that Caldwell's nonfiction is integral to an understanding of his fiction.<sup>7</sup> Cook's point is especially valid if we wish to see Caldwell as a Southern Gothic writer, because of the gap between what he claimed to be the purpose of his work and the ways in which he has been read (or misread) by others. A useful illustration of the documentary origins of Caldwell's work is a document that Mixon mentions in relation to the influence of Caldwell's father Ira, a Presbyterian minister who shared his son's concerns for the poor. In 1930 the elder Caldwell published an essay in the journal *Eugenics* that can shed some light on the way that Caldwell portrayed the white-trash figures he is best known for. "The Bunglers" occupies a position between the eugenic family studies of the first two decades of the century and the documentary realism of the 1930s, and demonstrates an unacknowledged kinship between the emerging documentary forms and eugenic scientific fieldwork. The essay focuses on an extremely poor family he labels "Bungler," whose members he traces to an early-nineteenth-century origin in central Georgia. His conclusions are standard eugenic fare, comparing the declining birthrate of the college-educated population with the prolific Bunglers (381) and calling for mandatory population control (383). What is significant about the essay in relation to Erskine Caldwell's writings and different from the standard family study is that the elder Caldwell consistently argues against many poor-white stereotypes and against a hereditarian explanation for the state of the Bunglers. He stresses that environmental factors, especially lack of education and lack of economic opportunity, are the determining ones. The Bunglers he describes are courteous, hard-working, family-oriented, and devoutly religious, if unhygienic, gullible and (mainly) illiterate. They tend to keep to themselves in isolated communities and do not provide a threat of rebellious or violent behavior (335). The essay stresses that, to the extent that poverty, filth, and illiteracy are passed on from generation to generation, it is environment, not biology, that determines the reproduction of such conditions. Thus, the Bungler situation calls for large scale reform and education: "If the powers that be in this country are wise, a period of social and economic reconstruction such as the world has never seen will be undertaken at once" (336).

Ira Caldwell obviously belongs to a progressive tradition within eugenics, a branch of the movement that focused on birth control, modern medicine for all, and the positive aspects of "hygiene" rather than on "cacogenic" (negative eugenic) reforms, such as mandatory sterilization and/or institutionalization for "defectives" and elimination of social programs for the poor so that their numbers would decline in response to "natural" selection. Like Erskine Caldwell's suggested solutions in *Tobacco Road*, Ira Caldwell's reform sugges-

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<sup>7</sup>Caldwell's documentary nonfiction ranged from newspaper journalism to pamphlets to his famous photojournalistic collaborations with the photographer Margaret Bourke-White to serving as editor for a series of regional guides on American folkways.

tions are institutional, and they blame the system rather than its victims. In this he differs from most eugenicists, who would eliminate the "problem" by eliminating the carriers of defective germ-plasm through the enforcement of race-betterment principles by law. Both Caldwell's stress the power of economic and environmental conditions to determine the conditions of the Bunglers/Lesters. The problem with Erskine Caldwell's fictional presentation has been with its reception; the utter depravity of the people portrayed and the hopelessness of the conditions described tend to create doubt in a reader's mind about the effectiveness of Caldwell's suggested reforms or of any reforms. The opening episode from *Tobacco Road* illustrates this.

Caldwell's second novel, *God's Little Acre*, looks at a slightly higher class of poor whites, a land-owning family who have enough income from their property to keep a couple of black sharecroppers. Instead of exemplifying the white, middle-class values of hard work and thrift in their management of this small property, Ty Ty Walden and his family spend most of their time and energy digging huge holes in search for gold, and thus render increasing acreage unfit for farming. Like the Lesters and the Bundrens, this is a peculiar group of obsessed individuals that behave in alien ways completely outside social norms. Perhaps the most puzzling of Ty Ty's schemes to strike gold is his kidnapping of an albino, an "all-white man" (14), to aid in his search for gold. The albino's whiteness is supposed to allow him to "divine a lode" (27), giving him power as a "conjure man" (32). The white body of the albino is whiter than ordinary white people, and therefore serves as a magically powerful signifier in the magical quest for gold. Ironically, the all-white man is treated as a slave, grabbed and tied up at his home and brought by force to the Waldens'. Ty Ty insists on a distinction between his "scientific" methods of divination and those of the blacks, which rely on superstition, but we recognize that this is an empty contrast based on a belief in magical whiteness, a telling metaphor for Jim Crow segregation. The Waldens' whiteness doesn't protect them any more than the albino's exaggerated whiteness helps him. Caldwell demonstrates that race is a barrier used to justify ignorance and superstition.

Perhaps in service to his social agenda, Caldwell added a second story line to that of Ty Ty Walden's search for a magical solution to his poverty. Ty Ty's son-in-law Will Thompson is a millworker involved in a lockout in a nearby textile town. His twin obsessions are to take over and restart the mill, and to seduce his brother-in-law's wife Griselda, whom Ty Ty always praises in explicitly sexual terms. Will manages to achieve both of his desires, but is shot by a guard after he leads the mill takeover. Both the Lesters and the Waldens represent Caldwell's poor whites as sexually uninhibited, one of several peculiarities that distinguishes them from their audience of educated bourgeois readers, whether Northern or Southern. In the context of a changing understanding of race from biological to ethnic, the poor white-trash figures in both Caldwell's and Faulkner's work become a third category, characterized by an ethnic or tainted whiteness that becomes a type of raced Other by way of their peculiar beliefs and behaviors. Caldwell's hypersexualized characters are part of a long racist

tradition that tends to place such desires onto the Other, a gender-based move that also works for class and racial distinctions, and was invoked as a justification for aberrant behavior in white people ("the desire of the Other made me do it"), behavior that included the institutionalized terror of lynching.

I have suggested that we see the form of Southern Gothic that emerges in the 1930s as a liminal discourse, one that occupies a space between solidly defined locations of class and race. Furthermore, it is a discourse that, like its medieval counterpart, the original Gothic art, uses the body as a grotesque signifier for material conditions. Such a perspective allows the reader to hold in her mind at the same time the truth of Caldwell's materialist presentation of Southern conditions and the injustice of his observations as a detached, humorous, producer of fiction. It is easy to see Caldwell's fall from the canon as a result of changing ideological and stylistic concerns, as early experimental modernism tightened into its more rigid formalist Cold War configuration. The New Critical aesthetic of detachment just didn't fit with the explicit reformist agenda of a novel like *Tobacco Road*. In contrast, we can see Faulkner's *The Hamlet* as much more obedient to this emerging ideological aesthetic, and therefore as outside the category of early Southern Gothic as I am developing here.<sup>8</sup>

In his 1939 study of "poor-white" characters in Southern fiction, *The Southern Poor-White from Lubberland to Tobacco Road*, Shields McIlwaine describes Faulkner and Caldwell's Southern Gothic as both the "culmination" of the Southwestern humor tradition, and as naturalist fiction by Vernon Parrington's definition.<sup>9</sup> McIlwaine lists "five culminations in the history of fiction about the poor-white" that can be seen in Faulkner's and Caldwell's new styles: "(1) the full and frank representation of sordid elements in these people, (2) the emphasis upon sex, especially in comedy, (3) the exploration of stupid poor-white minds, (4) the tragic concept of the poor-white, and (5) the complete studies of poor-white men" (219), which supplement earlier studies of woman.<sup>10</sup> It is obvious from the words he uses—"sordid," "these people," and "stupid poor-white minds"—that McIlwaine has a low opinion of the class of people he is describing here. Also, he presents Southern Gothic as the end-product of a two hundred-year-old tradition, and he sees all of the literature as reflecting or describing a "real" subject, a static social type, the poor white, out there and available for literary appropriation. Although styles in literature change, from Southwestern humor to local color to Southern Gothic, the subjects of this literature, whom

<sup>8</sup>A clarification: I suggest that the term Southern Gothic broadens after approximately 1940, so that *The Hamlet* does fit in with later writings that correspond with the second stage of the Southern Gothic, one that I would associate with the writings of Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor, and Truman Capote. This late Southern Gothic is produced from a more mainstream ideological position, accepting the poor and other "freaks" as types that, as O'Connor suggests, can still be recognized in the South, but represent universal human types. The resistances in the later Southern Gothic tend to represent (in the political sense) religious and gender or sexual-preference minority voices over and above class and racial concerns.

<sup>9</sup>According to Parrington, naturalism includes "scientific objectivity; frankness about the whole man [sic], hence the emphasis on three strong instincts, hunger, fear and sex; amorality; deterministic philosophy; pessimism and preference for three types of characters: physical brutes of strong desire, neurotics, and strong characters of broken will" (218).

<sup>10</sup>McIlwaine identifies Elizabeth Madox Roberts and Edith Summers Kelley as the chroniclers of poor-white women.

McIlwaine consistently and disparagingly refers to as “po’ buckra,” “cracker,” and a series of other epithets, remain the same. His study presents itself as an historical study of an ahistorical phenomenon, one impervious to change—much like skin color. The barriers between the classes, which Faulkner portrays as absolute but historically contingent, like race, and which Caldwell suggests are permeable through reform, are given, permanent, and natural to McIlwaine. He condemns Caldwell’s “cooperative farming” editorializing as “bald” propaganda (219).

McIlwaine’s assumption is that the poor will always be with us, and will always provide a source of amusement to educated readers. This essentially conservative perspective, one that universalizes class in the same way that eugenics universalizes race, became the consensus by the early 1940s, so that characters who were peculiar by way of region and economics in earlier treatments, become tainted whites, racialized Others in the sense that race is a characteristic that can’t be changed. This hardening of definition can be discerned in popular fiction and in non-fiction, and it forms the basis for later Southern Gothic literary representations.

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