

HEGEMONY AND ITS DISCONTENTS IN
WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE UNVANQUISHED*

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*“Tell about the South. What’s it like there. What do they do there.
Why do they live there. Why do they live at all”
~from Absalom, Absalom!*

by William Faulkner

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This thesis is dedicated to Ameer Schmidt
for all her patience and painstaking assistance
throughout the long drafting and revision processes.

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ABSTRACT

HEGEMONY AND ITS DISCONTENTS IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE UNVANQUISHED*

by Jonathan Barefield

This thesis explores William Faulkner's novel *The Unvanquished* utilizing the Marxist concept of hegemony, as elaborated by Raymond Williams. In the novel, which is set in fictional Yoknapatawpha County during the American Civil War, characters of different races, classes, and genders experience varying degrees of autonomy within the confines of the rigid and hierarchical paternalistic hegemony of Faulkner's South. Williams's concept of hegemony is more complex than a mere account of how the dominant social and economic class imposes its rule upon the rest of society; hegemony explains how individuals accept and identify with cultural views counter to their own interests, and also how their counter-hegemonic ideas and practices place them at odds with the dominant cultural hegemony that inevitably reinscribes them into culturally-acceptable roles.

Chapter One introduces the primary text and Raymond Williams's concept of hegemony, surveys existing scholarship about Faulkner and hegemony, and details the contents of each successive chapter of the thesis. Chapter Two establishes a theoretical basis for understanding cultural hegemony, and then it contextualizes the way in which hegemony operates in Faulkner's South. Chapters Three through Seven discuss the main characters John Sartoris, Rosa Millard, Drusilla Hawk, Ringo, and Bayard Sartoris; these chapters investigate the intricate manner in which the characters subscribe to the dominant hegemony (at least in part) and simultaneously oppose that same hegemony through their beliefs and actions. Chapter Eight examines the actual production of the novel in relation to the dominant white paternalistic hegemony of Faulkner's

time, which promoted romanticized portrayals of the Old South by way of the Civil War romance genre of literature. To some extent, Faulkner conforms to this genre; however, *The Unvanquished* also subverts the genre in significant ways, delivering a counter-hegemonic opposition to the dominant hegemony of the 1930s.

According to Raymond Williams, cultural hegemony is never totalizing; it is always opposed by counter-hegemonies. The dominant hegemony, however, limits the scope and nature of the possible kinds of counter-hegemonies. Ultimately, there is a dialectical process at work as the existing hegemony and counter-hegemonies support, oppose, integrate, and interpenetrate one another. Hegemony, therefore, is a continuous process of cultural transformation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

William Faulkner's *The Unvanquished* (1938) began as a series of short stories submitted to *The Saturday Evening Post*. The first five of the seven total stories appeared in that publication. Faulkner later edited the original five stories, published the sixth story in *Scribner's*, and composed a seventh story to complete the series. The product, *The Unvanquished*, is a novelized collection of short stories set in fictional Yoknapatawpha County during the American Civil War and Reconstruction. Despite the setting, the narration is limited mostly to the periphery of the war. There are no great battles narrated, although some minor wartime conflicts do arise. All the actual fighting occurs off the pages, leaving characters to either describe the events after the fact or to speculate about what must be happening. Instead of the war itself, the narrative primarily focuses on the wartime stories of Colonel John Sartoris, Rosa Millard, Bayard Sartoris, and Bayard's playmate (and family slave) Ringo. Bayard's cousin Drusilla Hawk also plays a significant role in the final two stories.

As is typical in Faulkner's works, rather than focusing on the greater conflict of the war, the real drama in *The Unvanquished* manifests through complex and evolving social relationships. For the purposes of this thesis, the Marxist concept of hegemony, as elaborated by Raymond Williams, aptly explains the workings of the social world of *The Unvanquished*. Through the oppositional actions between characters of different classes, genders, and races, the narrative dramatizes how counter-hegemonies emerge in opposition to the dominant cultural hegemony due to the cultural rupture caused by the war. In any society, the dominant hegemony and counter-hegemonies work with and against one another to reshape culture, as Faulkner demonstrates by having characters come to accept, internalize, and identify with cultural views

counter to their own interests. For the most part, each of the main characters in the book consciously subscribes to the dominant hegemony; however, by virtue of their culture's restrictive and paternalistic tendencies, each character eventually finds her or himself at odds with that dominant cultural hegemony (except for John Sartoris, although Faulkner utilizes even this character to subtly subvert hegemonic expectations). Consequently, to varying degrees, the characters enact cultural forms that may only be described as counter-hegemonic. Ultimately, some elements of the counter-hegemonic are subsumed into the hegemonic in a dialectical fashion, whereas other elements of the counter-hegemonic remain inassimilable and are quashed. In *The Unvanquished*, for example, the dominant hegemony, even at the narrative's close, remains paternalistic in nature despite all opposition. Upper-class white males are the only individuals who truly receive a voice, and they are able to continue dominating other classes, races, and genders. However, the collection does deliver a successful form of the counter-hegemonic in the character of Bayard Sartoris who grows up during the war and emerges as a synthesis of the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces he experiences in his youth. Of all the characters, he alone is able to oppose the dominant culture of honor and violence in Yoknapatawpha, and, consequently, his story challenges and subverts the hegemonic. Through Bayard, Faulkner presents a character that subverts the expectations of his own conservative readership of the 1930s that was locked in the Great Depression.¹

The word *hegemony* is certainly not foreign to Faulkner scholarship; however, it typically lacks the nuance of cultural hegemony. Instead, the term is often employed in a sense limited to the hierarchical imposition of the dominant class upon the rest of society. While this definition

¹ *The Saturday Evening Post*, the magazine in which most of these stories were originally published, promoted intentionally conservative literature that hearkened back to traditional American values and social arrangements. This viewpoint was typical of both the 1930s South and the culture industry that promoted romanticized depictions of the Old South in films such as *Gone with the Wind*.

does describe the effects of hegemony, it fails to account for the dialectical synthesis that transpires between the dominant hegemony and counter-hegemonies and the manner in which this allows culture to evolve. There are some notable exceptions. Jason DuPuy, in his doctoral dissertation, explores Gramscian ideas of hegemony and counter-hegemony in Faulkner's and other authors' relationships with the culture industry, as represented by Hollywood. In particular, Dupuy analyzes representations of the culture industry that are narrated in the authors' works (examples include characters reading genre fiction, watching movies, etc.). Also, in a master's thesis, Feng Zhao discusses Gramsci's hegemony and Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity in relation to the works of William Faulkner. Zhao analyzes how Faulkner utilizes "southern dialect and polyphonic technique" "to deconstruct northern discourse hegemony" (ii).

Cheryl Lester, discussing *As I Lay Dying* in a journal article, uses Raymond Williams's concept of hegemony to interpret Faulkner's writings, particularly focusing on Faulkner's work as it "capture[s] the lived experience of modernization in the South" (29). Lester utilizes Williams's concept of structures of feeling to analyze "the lived experience of migration, social and spatial dislocation, and rural depopulation, on one hand, and social identities, subjectivities, social relationships, and interdependency on the other" (29). Her work captures the manner in which hegemony describes the fluid experience of culture as an evolving system.

Evelyn Jaffe Schreiber, in a journal article, provides an analysis of Faulkner's work that is nearer in character to the current thesis. In the *Snopes* trilogy, she investigates how women in the novels are able to alter the culture while bound and limited by the force of Southern patriarchy. Schreiber explains that as women move into more of a subject position throughout the narrative, they challenge the dominant culture and represent what Raymond Williams defines as an emergent culture (Schreiber 84).

Similarly, Karen M. Andrews, in a journal article, employs Bakhtin's dialogism and Gramsci's cultural hegemony to examine "social processes and the social dimension of 'discourse' while avoiding claims of a reductive causal relationship" (17). Andrews suggests ways in which to view Faulkner's work as enmeshed in cultural hegemony, and thereby, avoid either valorizing or demonizing Faulkner's texts as (anti)racist or (anti)sexist. In particular, Andrews applies this approach to a discussion of the character Caspey in *Flags in the Dust* and utilizes it to demonstrate Caspey's threat to the caste system of the South's dominant hegemony.

In *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams describes hegemony as "a lived system of meanings and values" (110). Appropriately, *The Unvanquished* opens with the line: "Behind the smokehouse that summer, Ringo and I had a living map" (Faulkner 3). The boys recreate a miniature battlefield on which they stage their enactments of the war; they establish a living system populated by "a handful of chips from the woodpile" that serves as a rendition of the city of Vicksburg (Faulkner 3). Vicksburg is an important site of defeat for the Confederate Army, and Faulkner reinforces the foreordained sense of defeat by having Loosh, one of the family slaves, knock the chips over and insist that Vicksburg has already fallen—a fact of which the boys were previously unaware (Faulkner 5). This scene of destruction pushes the boys into reasserting that which they know as familiar and comfortable: assured Southern victory and sustained Southern hegemony. Bayard realizes that words are simply not enough to reassert the old, familiar, and hegemonic state of affairs and moves to action, flinging dust at Ringo until his playmate joins in, both of them "yelling 'Kill the bastards! Kill them! Kill them!'" in reference to the Union Army (Faulkner 7). They do the best they can to reaffirm the hegemonic, even if all that amounts to is them flinging dust at one another in a child's game.

At the very beginning of this first story, however, the boys are already initiated into a wartime environment that radically destabilizes Southern hegemonic forms. Before their call to arms, Bayard relates the rules of a role-playing game that he and Ringo enact. This presages the shifting identities that Bayard, Ringo, and other characters will later assume and emphasizes the manner by which Faulkner portrays counter-hegemonic subversions of social hierarchies throughout the narrative. In this game, Bayard and Ringo alternately take turns playing the parts of Confederate General Pemberton and General Grant. In this arrangement, at least part of the time Ringo is permitted to play the role of the virtuous Southern general who fights valiantly against the evil Yankees, and of course, at this point in the war, Pemberton (and, consequently, Ringo—a slave) must emerge victorious over Grant (and Bayard—the son of Ringo’s master). Although this role-playing game, along with Bayard’s insistence that race does not matter between the two boys, initiates the first in a long series of counter-hegemonic social arrangements, even in this instance, Bayard plays the part of Pemberton twice as often as Ringo, indicating ways in which the imbalance in their social stations persists. While this game, like the novelized collection itself, does not portray a complete overthrow of the hegemonic system, it indicates the manner in which Faulkner plays with and manipulates the pressures and limits that define the complex social roles characters are permitted to inhabit in the culturally-restrictive environment of Faulkner’s South.

The purpose of this thesis will be to scrutinize how the concept of cultural hegemony operates within Faulkner’s American Southern context while the dominant hegemony is threatened by the counter-hegemonic practices of multiple characters of different classes, races, and genders during the Civil War and Reconstruction. Much role-playing and shifting of

identities occurs in the text, and as the characters assume these roles, they create fissures in the culture. The characters' actions manifest as counter-hegemonic instances of resistance.

Faulkner's narrative portrays a society in a transitional state as its dominant hegemony comes under more sustained pressures from counter-hegemonies that present alternative modes of being for individuals within the society. These counter-hegemonies enact the possibility for women and African Americans to participate in a more active and autonomous role. They create the conditions of possibility for these groups to help determine the course of their own futures and the future of the culture they inhabit. The counter-hegemonic forces in the narrative pressure the dominant hegemony, testing and altering its characteristics. This synthesis is Faulkner's representation of the cultural reshaping process at work; it places hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces in close proximity and allows them to work with, through, and against one another, developing as a constantly growing and organic whole.

Ultimately, as Raymond Williams explains, hegemony is a lived experience—constitutive and constituting. The outcome of *The Unvanquished* is not as simple as one hegemony emerging victorious over others. The dominant hegemony remains basically entrenched in the culture. The narrative, however, does open a space for the emergence and influence of counter-hegemonies. While the entire society and generations of oppressive and paternalistic patterns are not overturned wholesale, the culture does develop. The people do change, and it becomes increasingly more acceptable to not subscribe to old forms and tenets. As the culture and dominant hegemony continue to adapt and change, they necessarily incorporate aspects of the counter-hegemonic and shed some of their old forms. This process places the individuals in a more viable position to successfully push the limits of prescribed hegemonic practices and social and economic roles. It allows more individuals at any social level to critique

the culture. As Dupuy argues, if we read the often tragic endings of Faulkner's characters as conclusive, then we fail to fully appreciate the complexity of the author's works. He contends that "we should see the moments of resistance as starting points for ways in which we can begin to approach the world more complexly" (Dupuy 24). Simply because Faulkner's aberrant characters are often silenced by their culture does not negate the counter-hegemonic forces they represent. They always have an impact, and although the dominant hegemony typically attempts to ignore any opposition, it is inevitably and irrevocably changed by those oppositional forces. Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, like any society, cannot remain stagnant; it is always evolving.

This thesis is composed of an introduction and seven chapters that develop the nature of hegemony and the ways in which it operates in *The Unvanquished*. The chapters establish the character of the dominant hegemony and then further examine the ways in which characters present challenges to the rigidly conservative, racist, sexist, paternalistic, and violent dominant hegemony that persists in Faulkner's South.

Chapter Two is divided into two main sections that describe hegemony. The first section provides a definition and discussion of Raymond Williams's concept of hegemony. This discussion explains the nature of hegemony, its distinction from the Marxist concept of ideology, the nature and purpose of counter-hegemonies, and the ways in which hegemonies and counter-hegemonies interpenetrate and influence one another. The second section contextualizes hegemony in Faulkner's South. The discussion characterizes the restrictive environment that is Yoknapatawpha and surrounding locales. Andre Bleikasten accurately describes Yoknapatawpha's culture as a "closed society" in which "[i]dentities are defined and distributed according to the prevalent codes" (97). The individual's possible identity is extremely limited, narrowly-defined, and prescribed by the hegemonic. Additionally, the dominant hegemony is

characterized by a strong paternalistic current, which continuously places upper-class white males in a superior social and economic position to the rest of society (Railey 7). This is the dominant culture that pre- and proscriptively defines individuals' identities in Faulkner's South based upon race, class, and gender.

Chapter Three is the first in the thesis that analyzes individual characters, demonstrating the ways in which Colonel John Sartoris epitomizes the dominant hegemony of Faulkner's South. John Sartoris is a Mississippian upper-class white male. Faulkner's representations of this upper-class are certainly more rugged and less refined than a typically-portrayed Southern plantocrat; however, that does not diminish the power, influence, and authority that members of this class wield in Yoknapatawpha. The purpose of this chapter is to both characterize the nature of the dominant hegemony as it is presented in *The Unvanquished* and to indicate ways in which Faulkner subtly undermines the hegemonic force that John Sartoris represents.

Chapter Four focuses on the elderly Rosa Millard, who represents the Southern matriarchal ideal. She is a unique character in the book because at the opening of the story she is a stereotypical type, but she undergoes a significant transformation throughout the tale as she gains increasingly more autonomy, authority, and influence by edging her way into masculine social and economic worlds. Prior to the outbreak of, and even several years into the war, Rosa Millard maintains the domestic space, attends church regularly, raises the children, and enforces adherence to traditional moral values in the home. For these and other reasons, she garners the respect of the community. It is only during the Civil War that she begins to more actively run the household in Colonel Sartoris's absence and that she engages in less than scrupulous economic arrangements with her grandson Bayard, Bayard's playmate Ringo, and the poor white male Abner Snopes. Rosa Millard, during the war, challenges traditional gender roles and

problematizes existing gender norms, presenting a potential counter-hegemonic practice that empowers women in social and economic roles previously denied them. Ultimately, when she strays too far into a masculine realm, she loses her life while engaged in the illegal mule-stealing scheme she and Ringo concoct. The dominant hegemony, therefore, does find a way to silence and pull her back into the fold.

Chapter Five discusses Drusilla Hawk. She is another strong female character in *The Unvanquished*, but she is very different from Rosa Millard. While Millard begins as a matriarchal ideal and crosses into the masculine social and economic realms, Drusilla is a young woman who proactively contributes to the war effort. Prior to the war, she anticipates a dull, “[s]tupid” life (Faulkner 100). However, after her father and fiancé are killed in the war, her house is burned by Northern troops, and the railroad in her town is destroyed, Drusilla finds herself detached from the path she was intended to follow. Instead, she chops off her hair, learns to shoot a gun, and joins Colonel Sartoris in the war effort, fighting alongside the rest of Sartoris’s men. Similar to Millard, Drusilla’s actions dramatically undermine her culture’s dominant hegemony. Also in a similar vein as Millard, the dominant hegemony finds a way to reincorporate Drusilla into postwar society. Instead of killing Drusilla, however, the women of the town scheme to get her married and recapture her in constricting ball gowns and hoop skirts. At the end of the final story, Drusilla disappears and carries with her a recalcitrant penchant for violence that the culture definitely endorses, just not when it is conducted by women.

Chapter Six focuses on Ringo, who is another anomaly in the narrative. He begins the story as a boy of twelve, the same age as Bayard. In the early parts of the narrative, he possesses the naiveté of a child, but by the middle of the book, he transforms into a shrewd and calculating criminal, along with Rosa Millard. Eventually, he takes on a leadership role as he assists Millard

in both planning to and in actually stealing mules from the Union army and then reselling them back to different Union regiments. Bayard, the narrator of *The Unvanquished*, constantly remarks how intelligent Ringo is and how his relationship with Ringo transcends race, which he claims is irrelevant between them. Ringo certainly manages to position himself between and outside the racial binary at times, but to claim that he enjoys all the rights and privileges of whites in the wartime and Reconstruction South would be grossly inaccurate; in the narrative's close, for instance, he is still reduced back down to Bayard's "boy" (Faulkner 213). Like Millard and Drusilla, however, Ringo does enact a kind of counter-hegemony against and within the dominant hegemony.

Chapter Seven focuses primarily on Bayard Sartoris, the final main character and the narrator and protagonist of the stories. Much of this chapter will discuss Bayard's changing relationship to the community, as depicted in the final story, "An Odor of Verbena." Bayard represents something of a fusion of the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic in *The Unvanquished*. At times, he willingly embraces the dominant hegemony and sometimes, childlike and unquestioningly, he follows its prescribed scripts. At other times, however, he violates the prescriptions of the hegemonic, refusing to engage in the violence demanded by the culture of honor. He never eschews the dominant hegemony entirely and, instead, clings to the vestiges of its racism, paternalism, and sense of honor; however, he does modify the prescribed script and finds a way to defend his personal and family honor without resorting to violent ends. Bayard's character represents the evolution of the dominant hegemony in the throes of a transformational process.

Chapter Eight discusses the actual production of *The Unvanquished* in terms of the hegemony of the 1930s. Faulkner originally produced the stories for the conservative magazine

The Saturday Evening Post, which was known for publishing and promoting stories that portrayed traditional views of American culture. This conservative view catered to the dominant hegemony of the 1930s. The conservative hegemony that Faulkner was enmeshed in and had to write through and (at times) against was characterized by romanticized portrayals of the Old South and “simpler” times that were purportedly more stable and definitely more restrictive in regard to race, class, and gender roles (sometimes resulting in episodes of violence, such as lynchings, in an effort to maintain some of those strictures). This chapter of the thesis draws upon Raymond Williams’s idea of tradition and its role in the workings of hegemony. According to Williams, any hegemony propagates a selective tradition that incorporates specific elements of the culture and its past that legitimize the hegemony’s continued dominance; simultaneously, the selective tradition must ignore or repress elements of cultural history that may undermine the legitimacy of the dominant hegemony. In the case of *The Unvanquished*, specifically in “An Odor of Verbena,” Faulkner writes against the white paternalistic hegemony of the 1930s. His portrayal of Bayard’s final refusal to engage in the violent culture of honor represents not only a depiction of how Faulkner viewed the historical hegemony and counter-hegemonies of the 1860s and 1870s but also a reaction to the violence present in the dominant hegemony of his own time. Bayard’s refusal to partake in the violence is Faulkner’s example of a path the culture could have taken (and, at the time of *The Unvanquished*’s composition, the culture still could take) as it worked its way through its difficult history of radical transformation. However, just as the hegemonic is not completely overturned in the narrative, neither is the conservative hegemony of the 1930s. The novelized publication of Faulkner’s stories (which includes the final story “An Odor or Verbena”), however, does open spaces for Faulkner to oppose and subvert the dominant hegemony of the 1930s. The final result, both within Faulkner’s narrative and in the culture of

the 1930s, is exactly as Raymond Williams describes: hegemony is never totalizing; it is a continual process through which culture develops.

CHAPTER II

HEGEMONY

Raymond Williams's Approach to Hegemony

In Marxist criticism, notions of hegemony derive from the work of Antonio Gramsci, who defines the concept as a manufactured consent among the populace. It is the “‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production” (Gramsci 12). Basically, Gramsci’s concept of hegemony explains how the dominant economic and social group imposes its beliefs, values, and culture upon a complicit lower economic class. Peter Lurie clarifies: “Hegemony describes the processes by which a disadvantaged segment of the population participates, apparently willingly, in its own oppression” (166). The social group that enjoys economic superiority is in a privileged position to dominate the whole of society with its own social, economic, and political agenda. According to Gramsci, this agenda is founded on the maintenance of an established social hierarchy (12). Ultimately, through hegemonic processes and practices, the lower classes come to identify with the values, ideas, beliefs, etc. of the dominant class and willingly support that dominant hegemony even to their own class’s detriment.

In his monograph *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams elucidates Gramsci’s conception of hegemony and differentiates it from another prominent Marxist concept: ideology. Williams insists that ideology, as a “conscious system of ideas and beliefs,” is more abstract than hegemony and fails to fully account for “the whole lived social process” (109). Ideology is

comprised of ideas and social consciousness; hegemony “is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living...it is a lived system of meanings and values—constitutive and constituting” (Williams 110). To Williams, hegemony is the lived culture of a society. It is not relegated merely to the abstract realm of ideas or cultural consciousness; it is comprised of all social beliefs, practices, and interactions. Hegemony is inescapable because it permeates social actions and interactions at all levels and in all arenas of life. According to Williams, ideology, however, does not account for actions and practices; it is limited to the conscious realm of ideas, values, and beliefs. Also, in keeping with Gramsci’s economic formulations, Williams explains that hegemony necessarily implies “dominance and subordination of particular classes” (110). The intertwined aspects of hegemony in a society cannot be extricated from the culture.

Williams’s definition of hegemony deserves further differentiation from the concept of ideology. Kevin Railey admits that many Marxist thinkers have “articulated nuanced and careful descriptions of the relationship between ideas/values and social class and the ways in which ideologies come to have power over people’s thinking” (4). He proceeds, adopting Althusser’s definition of ideology and provides a brief explanation of the function of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). Railey explains that ISAs include “religion, educational systems, family, laws and law enforcement, media, culture—all the ways in which ideas and values get promulgated and distributed throughout a society” (4). While Railey’s explanation of the function of ISAs is accurate, his examples require some slight clarification. Railey identifies both laws and law enforcement as examples of ISAs, and while Althusser defines laws as Ideological State Apparatuses, law enforcement (a realm under the purview of the police and other state agencies) would more accurately be described as a Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). RSAs include agencies, tools, and methods by which a government imposes order and power through

force or threat of force (Althusser 93). These would include: “the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc...Repressive suggests that the State Apparatus in question ‘functions by violence’ – at least ultimately (since repression, e.g. administrative repression, may take non-physical forms)” (Althusser 92). Gramsci, in his essay “The Intellectuals,” similarly discusses his differing conceptions between political governance via the use of force and via hegemony; the former is more akin to Althusser’s RSAs, whereas the latter is more akin to ISAs (Gramsci 12).

The major discontinuity between Railey’s and Williams’s conceptions of ideology and hegemony is that Railey interprets hegemony to be subordinate to ideology, whereas Williams emphasizes how hegemony encompasses and exceeds ideology, operating within and throughout the whole social process. Rather than limiting hegemony in scope to merely the mechanism by which ideology is promulgated (as Railey does), Cheryl Lester characterizes Williams’s formulation of hegemony as a concept that “refine[s] and enlarge[s] the concept of ideology” (2). According to Williams, hegemony is a more intricate process that individuals experience throughout society, rather than merely in the abstract sense of ideology. Hegemony differs from ideology “in its refusal to equate consciousness with the articulate formal system which can be and ordinarily is abstracted as ‘ideology’” (Williams 109). Williams views hegemony as that which includes and goes beyond ideology; Railey, however, views ideology as “that relatively organized system of values and representations that upholds and maintains a social system beneficial to the ruling class,” and he defines hegemony as the process by which the ruling class effectively disseminates its dominant ideology. Railey’s definition of hegemony fails to incorporate the level of nuance that Williams’s does. In Williams’s formulation, the ruling class does not simply possess and impose its ideology on the subordinate classes; instead,

through hegemony, there is an entire culture that surrounds the social, political, and economic subjugation of the non-ruling classes.

In discussing the formation of new hegemonies, Raymond Williams indicates the importance of tradition. Tradition, or more accurately, “an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present” is essential for any hegemony to establish itself as culturally dominant (Williams 115). Certain elements of the past are necessarily overlooked or discarded while others are valued and venerated in order to legitimize and ratify any hegemony (Williams 116). The appeal to a selective version of the past is a powerful tool that justifies the continued existence of the hegemonic in a society.

Despite the ability of the hegemonic to assert superiority, it should not be assumed that the dominant hegemony is singular or totalizing. An integral component of hegemony that Williams discusses is counter-hegemony. Because it is “a realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits,” hegemony cannot “just passively exist as a form of dominance” (Williams 112). Williams contends that hegemony “has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified” while it “is also continually resisted, limited, altered, [and] challenged by pressures not at all its own” (Williams 112). In other words, hegemony is always opposed by counter-hegemonies, and it must adapt and adjust in order to survive; due to the pressures and challenges it faces from counter-hegemonies within the culture, hegemony is incapable of remaining unchanged. These realities make hegemony resilient and flexible, able to evolve in response to changing cultural forces, but they also create a space for the expression of counter-hegemonies. It is impossible for a dominant hegemony to exist unchallenged.

The counter-hegemony is that which opposes the dominant hegemony; it is another necessary part of the lived experience of a culture. Just like the dominant hegemony, counter-hegemonies should not be viewed as abstract ideas or systems. They are powerful components of a society that may manifest on micro or macro-levels. Counter-hegemonies, despite how small they may seem relative to the dominant hegemony, are essential and influential (Williams 113). These counter-hegemonies provide alternatives to means of expression and ways of living within a hegemonic society. Additionally, they serve as exemplars of specific practices, beliefs, customs, and traditions to which the dominant hegemony does not subscribe and, at least partially, that which the dominant hegemony defines itself against.

There is a complex relationship between the dominant hegemony and counter-hegemonies within a society. Although sizable and significant portions of any given population may accept and promulgate counter-hegemonic practices, these counter-hegemonies are never independent of the dominant hegemony. For example, feminism cannot exist unless society first subscribes to patriarchy. Without the hegemonic oppression of women, it is impossible for women to conceive of themselves as a subjugated class; hence, feminist movements' very existence is dependent upon the oppressive force of patriarchy. By virtue of being the more prevalent, accepted, and typically traditional culture, a society's dominant hegemony imposes its values, beliefs, etc. on the culture at large and helps to determine not only its own nature, but also the nature of counter-hegemonies that oppose it. Williams states that "[i]t can be persuasively argued that all or nearly all initiatives and contributions, even when they take on manifestly alternative or oppositional forms, are in practice tied to the hegemonic: that the dominant culture...at once produces and limits its own forms of counter-culture" (114). So, any (or at the very least, nearly any) counter-hegemony is shaped and limited in nature by the

dominant hegemony. The nature of the dominant hegemony determines the possible kinds of counter-hegemonies.

Finally, Williams insists that, although scholars often discuss culture in fixed and finite terms, culture does not really operate in such a fashion. Rather, culture is always forming and formative (Williams 128). This is the kind of phenomenon Williams is describing when he explains that hegemony is a “whole lived social process” (109). With this in mind, the relationships between the dominant hegemony and counter-hegemonies can be viewed as a continually reshaping cultural process. Each disparate position negotiates a space in which it may exist, and parts of various hegemonies interpenetrate one another to varying degrees. An example of just such a process is evident in the evolution of American conservatism. Traditional American conservatism, as exemplified by the essays of the twelve Southern agrarians in the 1930 text *I'll Take My Stand*, while extolling traditional Christian values, was highly critical of capitalism (a singular element traditional conservatism shares in common with Leftist thought). Modern American conservatism, of course, tends to expound many of the same traditional values; however, following the collapse of slavery in the United States, American conservatism has increasingly embraced capitalist thought and practice (Genovese 31-38). While these hegemonic ideas were once at odds, they have influenced one another and been synthesized over the years in a dialectical fashion. Of course, not all counter-hegemonic beliefs and practices can be reconciled with an existing dominant hegemony. Political and economic conservatism are not liberalism, for example; a binary still persists. This is exactly the manner in which hegemonies evolve. Certain elements of hegemonies develop as they assimilate parts of counter-hegemonies; those elements that cannot be reasonably assimilated, however, are radically Otherized and opposed.

The interplay of the dominant hegemony and counter-hegemonies, more so than abstract notions of ideology, accurately describes the kind of lived dominance and subordination as it evolves in developed societies. This conception of hegemony suggests ways in which cultural practices can continually reshape a society. It depicts the means through which hegemony can adapt and survive, but it also creates the potential for the decline of a given hegemony in favor of parts of existing counter-hegemonies (which, in a dialectical fashion, would transform into a new dominant hegemony). Most importantly, this conception of hegemony can explain the nature of cultural ideas, beliefs, practices, customs, and traditions at any stage of a society's development; it is particularly apt for describing a society in a transitional state.

Societies, by their very nature, are constantly in a state of change. Certain periods are more marked by change than others (e.g., during wars, revolutions, economic booms or recessions, etc.), and it is during these times that hegemonies experience the greatest pressures or exercise their own influence to a more substantial degree. During times of severe change, counter-hegemonies can potentially manifest in a more pronounced fashion, or they can be completely quashed (in a wave of hyper-nationalism and patriotism, for example). These transitional moments and movements are significant because they assist in the development of a society's culture. They steer hegemonies in new directions and redraw cultural boundaries and limits.

Hegemony Contextualized in Faulkner's South

In making the case for utilizing Marxist theories to analyze literature, Raymond Williams states that "the most interesting and difficult part of any cultural analysis, in complex societies, is that which seeks to grasp the hegemonic in its active and formative but also its transformational

processes” (Williams 113). Works of art produced and/or set during transitional states in society capture the shifting nature of the hegemonic as it shapes and is shaped by society.

The society in William Faulkner’s collection *The Unvanquished* is experiencing exactly the kind of transformational process that Raymond Williams describes. Specifically, this collection of stories, set in fictional Yoknapatawpha County, takes place during the cultural rupture of the American Civil War and during the aftermath of Reconstruction. The society portrayed in the narrative is one that operates according to the rules of a restrictive dominant hegemony, although during the societal upheaval of the war, counter-hegemonies are more openly enacted and expressed. A dialectical process is at work between the hegemonic and the counter-hegemonic. While the dominant conservative, racist, and patriarchal hegemony is still very much present and active, counter-hegemonies become more prominent during the war. Women and some African Americans negotiate themselves into more active and autonomous roles as the majority of the white males are absent due to the war. The subjugated classes do not experience full liberation or autonomy, but their counter-hegemonic practices in the narrative do destabilize the dominant hegemony while simultaneously presenting alternatives to the traditional hegemony. Ultimately, the counter-hegemonic in *The Unvanquished* directly influences the dominant hegemony, reshaping it and synthesizing a new counter-hegemony that finds expression in the character of Bayard Sartoris by the book’s conclusion.

The dominant hegemony in Yoknapatawpha, and therefore the culture itself, is defined by hierarchy and social restrictions. The dominant cultural hegemony can be characterized as essentially a caste system wearing the trappings of an aristocracy, replete with an inviolable sense of honor and an unwavering adherence to codes of conduct, gentility, and race and gender norms, cauterized with a proud sense of individualism and defiance against any perceived threat

to that individualistic bent. In this society, counter-hegemonies, then, must account for the dominant hegemony's enforcement of social norms and its simultaneous push for (white, upper-class male) self-determinism. In the antebellum period, women, black individuals (both free and slave alike), and poor people all suffer from the crushing force of the dominant hegemony, which is designed to maintain a hierarchal structure with upper-class white males in a secure position of social dominance. These upper-class white males represent the prestigious and enviable elements of society, and the dominant hegemony ensures that they enjoy continued economic and social superiority. The culture's restrictive social norms and fierce adherence to a sense of honor and respectability further legitimate the wealthy class's claim to power and position.

In describing the social composition of the American South throughout most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Kevin Railey explains that two conflicting ideologies operated simultaneously: paternalism and liberalism. He utilizes these two terms in very specific ways. Adopting James Oakes's description, Railey defines "paternalism as a social order that is stable, hierarchical, consciously elitist, and therefore fundamentally antithetical to liberalism" (7). Liberalism, on the other hand, "stresses individualism, social mobility, and economic fluidity within a society that promotes equal opportunity" (Railey 7). The former ideology opposes and essentially precludes the possibility of the latter for any groups of people who do not exist at the top of the paternalistically-established social strata. More specifically, social mobility is restricted to white males, and typically it is denied to even poor whites. The paternalistic hierarchy is one of the most salient features of the American South throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and definitely during the time that Faulkner both sets and composes *The Unvanquished*. It is historically the South's traditional and dominant hegemony.

The Southern paternalistic system in the late nineteenth century “had both a class-based and a race-based element, but racial paternalism was heightened by an allegiance among all white men” (Railey 7). Poor whites, although denied the economic and social prestige of the “upper-class plantocrats,” still viewed themselves as superior to any black individuals, free or slave (Railey 7). The paternalistic, upper-class whites provided poor whites with enough social and political freedom to placate them and differentiate them from black people of any social standing; however, the reality was that the upper-class white males maintained strict control of access to material wealth and power. The social order was rigidly static.

Adding gender restrictions to the discussion, Andre Bleikasten further elaborates that Faulkner’s South is characterized by “male strategies of containment, division, and control and the establishment of a repressive, male-made, and male-centered social order founded on the subjection of women to men and blacks to whites” (90). In essence, paternalism permeates the culture at every level. The paternalistic hegemony maintains the existing social hierarchy and limits individual mobility based on gender, race, and class.

Bleikasten describes the Deep South, specifically that society depicted in Faulkner’s works, as a closed society. In such a community, the individual’s personal identity is entirely limited to that which the society permits. In Yoknapatawpha, “[i]dentities are defined and distributed according to the prevalent codes: everyone must be tied to a class, a race, a gender. To have a clear-cut identity is a social imperative. *Either/or*: male or female, white or black, elect or non-elect” (Bleikasten 97, italics in original). The closed society, of course, operates through the enforcement of arbitrary exclusions, social taboos, ostracization, and violence, if necessary. Individuals are not granted true autonomy; their social, economic, and cultural scripts are already composed by the dominant hegemony.

In Yoknapatawpha, the price of transgressing racial and gender norms is often a very violent end. For example, Joe Christmas in *Light in August* loses his life due to the mere uncertainty of his racial background; there is no room for ambiguity in the closed society. Once Christmas is suspected of being a black man living as a white man in a racist society, he is hunted down, killed, and castrated. Caddy Compson, the promiscuous daughter in *The Sound and the Fury*, becomes a ghost to her own family, and her voice is silenced in the text. After she leaves home, Jason does his best to ensure that her name goes unmentioned in the Compson household; meanwhile, her daughter lives under the stigma of her mother's transgressions. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, Shreve and Quentin Compson piece together the story of Henry Sutpen killing his best friend and intended brother-in-law Charles Bon. Although Henry learns that his sister and Charles are half-siblings, Henry is seemingly complacent with the marriage. Upon learning that the man attempting to marry his sister is actually part black, however, Henry murders Charles. The gender norms and racial divisions in place in Yoknapatawpha are enforced, often with severe brutality. The culture's strict race and gender norms are sacrosanct, intended to divide individuals into binary categories from which there is no socially-acceptable deviation.

Bleikasten contends that the purpose of dividing members of a society according to strict divisions is to place them in opposition to one another. The closed society operates on binary divisions between races, genders, classes, etc., and "[o]ne term in the binary opposition is always valued over the other... To divide is to pass judgment, to name the categories of good and evil, to assign them to fixed locations, and to draw between them boundaries not to be crossed" (Bleikasten 96). The boundaries are arbitrarily determined, and, according to Bleikasten, one group necessarily dominates the other. One side is valued as worthwhile; individuals on the other

side of the binary are demonized. The mere act of creating binary divisions leads to this harrowing result. The truly unsettling aspect of Bleikasten's contention is the absoluteness of the divisions. Although these binaries are arbitrarily formed, they are unyielding once established. Individuals must exist on one side or the other; the culture insistently categorizes individuals and then radically limits who they are permitted to be and how they are permitted to behave according to the arbitrary rules of the arbitrarily-established binary. This is the manner in which race and gender operate in Yoknapatawpha. The culture utilizes these distinctions to enforce exclusionary practices and punishments for violating the terms of those exclusions. Yoknapatawpha's dominant hegemony does not permit ambiguity or escape from its restrictions; it ultimately seeks a way to recapture, contain, reinscribe, or silence any deviants.

Regarding Faulkner's treatment of women in the closed society, Diane Roberts, in the essay "A Precarious Pedestal," states that the author's "fiction deals with the dangerous spaces between ladies and women and the means by which ladies (belonging to the officially virtuous antebellum period) might degenerate into women" (237). There is a fine line that women in Faulkner's South must toe. Sherrill Harbison aptly describes the scripts that Faulkner's most interesting female characters tend to follow as "caricatures of what Freudians most fear: a voracious, all-consuming, crazed nymphomaniac like Joanna Burden in *Light in August*, or a bitchy, heartless, manipulating, castrating intellectual-achiever, like Charlotte Rittenmeyer in *The Wild Palms*" (293). In Faulkner's South, society expects women (specifically, upper-class white women) to be contained within a restricted domestic sphere. They are permitted and expected to be nurturing care-givers. Via restrictions imposed by paternalistic codes of chivalry, women are treated as ornaments and are effectively removed from the spheres of men's professional and social worlds. Venturing outside of these prescribed roles (as Faulkner's women

often do), reduces the women to the kinds of stereotypes that Harbison notes. Faulkner's South does not provide much leeway for independent, free-thinking women who are simultaneously well-regarded by society. Some, such as Eula Varner Snopes, do manage to thrive in Yoknapatawpha for a time despite their promiscuity and other cultural transgressions; however, even that particular female character perpetually suffers the shame of gossip in the closed society and ultimately takes her own life. Yoknapatawpha is an unforgiving and polarizing environment. Women are typically allowed to occupy one of two spaces: pedestal or prostitute.

To identify race as another vexed issue in Faulkner's South would be a severe understatement. While Faulkner only explicitly centers a handful of novels around the issues associated with race in the South, none of his works escape these issues. During the time that Faulkner wrote and set his fiction, racial binarism was the prevalent code, and it prohibitively defined and limited individuals according to the exclusions and discriminatory beliefs and practices such binary distinction encourages.

The scholarship regarding the intricacies of racial issues, tensions, exploitation, and violence in the South is well-documented and comprises volumes. In his sociohistorical monograph *The Mind of the South*, W. J. Cash, one of Faulkner's contemporaries, was not hesitant to identify Southern xenophobia and exclusionary economic and social practices intended to openly discriminate against African Americans. Eric Foner, in *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, discusses in great detail the struggles African Americans faced in the post-Civil War South. He notes the manner in which African Americans were granted and subsequently denied varying degrees of autonomy throughout the period. In some areas, Reconstruction was a brief time of hope for African Americans to help shape their own futures; however, a strong conservative backlash inevitably followed, destroying many of

the strides the free and freed peoples were able to make. What Raymond Williams would identify as the hegemonic was ruthlessly violent in regaining cultural control and superiority for upper-class whites.

In the antebellum Southern society, violence or at least the threat of violence served a stabilizing function. A significant aspect of the dominant Southern hegemony was the culture's adherence to a code of honor. The antebellum South was a culture of honor, and such a code necessitated strict obedience to cultural norms; by deviating from the code, an individual risked losing public esteem and, hence, honor. In the culture of honor, to lose face or to have one's honor challenged by another individual is an affront to one's sense of self- and public worth. Consequently, a prescribed set of rules and practices (often violent in nature) exists to defend or to regain one's honor.

Bertram Wyatt-Brown offers an extensive discussion of honor and its relationship to violence in the antebellum South. According to Wyatt-Brown, the antebellum period was characterized by fierce kinship loyalties and entrenched social hierarchies that were moderated by race, class, and familial ties (14-16). Financially successful and traditionalist families, for example, received the respect of the community. This level of honor had to be maintained and defended at all times. If a family's sense of honor were ever challenged, for example, then it was expected that the threatened family member(s) must find a way to reassert their social dominance. Honor may be threatened by a personal insult or injury, the insult or injury of a family member, perceived transgression of cultural norms, tolerance of the disobedience or disloyalty of one's slaves, or the public accusation of generally aberrant behavior. Means of defending one's honor often manifested in the form of a violent spectacle such as a duel, honor

killings, castigation of disobedient slaves, lynching of African Americans, or other brutal and punitive actions.

In Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, the Sartorises are exactly the kind of paternalistic family that occupies the most esteemed social position in the Southern hierarchy. They are among the older families in Yoknapatawpha, they are financially successful, they own slaves in the antebellum period, and Colonel John Sartoris is precisely the kind of individualist that the community expects and respects. Colonel Sartoris readily joins the war effort and continues to fight even after being stripped of command of his unit, he violently kills Northerners who attempt to help enfranchise the freed slaves, and he does his utmost to generally maintain the existing social hierarchy.

In a doctoral dissertation, Katherine Clark makes a compelling case for viewing Colonel John Sartoris not as an esteemed and cultured Southern gentleman, but as more of a rugged frontiersman, with some bizarre quirks (40-44). He lets his dogs in the library, he puts his muddy boots on the desk, he chews and spits tobacco, and, instead of a Bible, he possesses both a Koran and a weird volume of literature on the history of werewolf men (Faulkner 15-16). While John Sartoris may not be typical of the Southern aristocracy, Clark admits that he is typical of Faulkner's satirical version of the "Mississippi aristocrat": "frontiersmen, not effete gentlemen" (39). The fact that John Sartoris may lack some of the stereotypical cultural refinements of aristocracy should, therefore, in no way imply that this is not the role he performs in his society. In Yoknapatawpha, the Sartorises are typical of and do represent the elite class, however crass, unrefined, and somewhat eccentric the dominant white males of that class may be. This is the class of people who have the most at stake in maintaining the dominant hegemony. This is the ruling class who enforces the culture's dominant values. Unlike the upper-class white males,

other groups in Faulkner's South are not permitted to perform in the role of the rugged individualist. As evidenced by the long list of victims to Yoknapatawpha violence, the extent to which members of the non-ruling classes are permitted to push against the dominant hegemony is determined by the hegemonic itself.

CHAPTER III

JOHN SARTORIS

Honor, Violence, and Paternalism in *The Unvanquished*

Although the world of Yoknapatawpha experiences a pivotal cultural transition in *The Unvanquished*, the dominant hegemony remains conservative and paternalistic before, during, and after the Civil War. This paternalistic hegemony is hierarchical in terms of race, class, and gender, positioning upper-class white males atop that social hierarchy. David Minter characterizes major aspects of this paternalistic hegemony that he locates in Faulkner's family history. Minter maintains that Faulkner's great-grandfather William Clark Falkner "embraced the three major legends of the South: the Cavalier Legend, about family origins and personal style; the Plantation Legend, about 'the golden age' before the war; and the Redeemers Legend, about the glorious unseating of the carpetbaggers" (4). In *The Unvanquished*, Faulkner utilizes the legends that his great-grandfather embodied and recreates them through the character Colonel John Sartoris, who is a powerful member of the dominant hegemony. John Sartoris displays bravery and quick-witted cunning in battle, he is hard-working and industrious, he comports himself in a charismatic manner that inspires people to follow him, and his very name is an indication of power and authority both socially and economically; John Sartoris epitomizes the kind of individual that Yoknapatawpha's paternalistic hegemony produces and encourages.

In her analysis of John Sartoris, Katherine Clark describes the man as a "quintessentially romantic portrait of the Confederate hero" (103). In many ways, this is an accurate description: Sartoris fights relentlessly against the Union Army; even when greatly outnumbered, he thinks quickly on his feet and tricks an entire Northern troop into surrendering; his soldiers respect and

follow him; and even after being stripped of his official rank, he commands a dedicated, if unofficial, unit that continues fighting. John Sartoris becomes a living legend even during the war, and his specter haunts Yoknapatawpha long after his death. The very name of Sartoris acquires a mythic property that commands respect and indicates power and superior social position.² As one of Faulkner's Mississippi aristocrats, John Sartoris may be rugged and less refined than the stereotypical owner of a Virginian plantation, but he is still at the top of the social hierarchy in Faulkner's South. He is the patriarch of one of Yoknapatawpha's seminal families, the owner of the Big House, and a shrewd and successful businessperson after the war. In the postbellum South, he maintains social superiority by transitioning from dominance based upon the ownership of land and people to that established in an increasingly industrialized economy, exemplified by his success with his railroad business.

John Sartoris's space in the social hierarchy is so engrained that the very mention of his name is an invocation of power and authority. On multiple occasions throughout the narrative, other characters reference the name of John Sartoris in direct relation to the power it holds over friend and foe alike. For example, as Uncle Buck sees Bayard and his family off during the story "Retreat," he tells Bayard that if they run into any Union troops on the road, all the child must do is say, "'I'm John Sartoris' boy; rabbits, hunt the canebrake,' and then watch the blue bellied sons of bitches fly" (Faulkner 52). For Uncle Buck, another prominent member of Yoknapatawpha, the Sartoris name inspires respect and awe; for him and other characters, it is a foregone conclusion that the cavalier John Sartoris instills fear in the hearts of his enemies.

² John Sartoris is further implicated as representative of the paternalistic hegemony not only by his surname, but also by the ways that Bayard and Ringo refer to him as "Father" and "Marse John," respectively. Although Ringo may be permitted to call Rosa Millard "Granny" just like Bayard, this is excusable only because of his youth (Faulkner 7; Hinkle and McCoy 225). The engrained paternalism of the culture, however, is emphasized through Bayard's continual capitalization of "Father" throughout the narrative and the impermissibility of Ringo using any moniker for Sartoris other than "Marse John" (Hinkle and McCoy 229-230; Duvall 50-51).

As a child, Bayard, too, is enchanted by the mythos of the Cavalier Legend surrounding his father. Because John Sartoris is not a tall man, Bayard describes him as “not big” and clarifies that “it was just the things he did, that we knew he was doing, had been doing in Virginia and Tennessee, that made him seem big to us” (Faulkner 9). Sartoris is, of course, off fighting in Virginia and Tennessee. His feats as a soldier solidify his standing in the minds of his community members, and it falls upon Bayard to eventually assume the Sartoris mantle of fighting and violence when he becomes a teenager and pursues the brigand and murderer Grumby. At that stage in his life, Bayard, just like his father, subscribes to the dominant culture of honor and seeks bloody retribution for his grandmother’s murder.

In the story “Vendée,” Uncle Buck provides another exclamation that reiterates the domineering power, authority, and violence that John Sartoris represents. The teenaged Bayard and Ringo return from killing Grumby, nailing his corpse to a compass door, and fastening his right hand to a board staked in Rosa Millard’s grave, and Uncle Buck then declares, “‘Aint I told you he is John Sartoris’ boy? Hey? Aint I told you?’” (Faulkner 186). In Yoknapatawpha, violence is directly equated with dominance, power, authority, and honor. Uncle Buck lauds Bayard’s actions because the boy’s revenge killing is acceptable and even expected of someone of his race, class, and gender. No one ever questions Bayard’s actions; no one ever investigates the killing. Violence, revenge, and honor are all inextricably bound up in the power that John Sartoris represents, and the mantle of the “The Sartoris” follows the family bloodline from one male to the next (Faulkner 214). By possessing the surname of Sartoris, the males of the family

also inherit societal expectations of heroism and lethal revenge³. “Sartoris” is as much a title as it is a surname conferring social dominance and simultaneous subscription to the dominant culture.

During the war and Reconstruction, Yoknapatawpha’s dominant hegemony experiences opposition as race and gender hierarchies are challenged, as African Americans seek a political voice, and as the agrarian economy gives way to encroaching industrialization. In response to these social, political, and economic changes, representatives of the paternalistic hegemony push back, sometimes violently, as was often the case with the Redeemers and the Ku Klux Klan. Consequently, the paternalistic hegemony and John Sartoris push back against the counter-hegemonic changes in order to reassert the dominance of the old order.

The first and most obvious of John Sartoris’s attempts to maintain his familiar way of life is his participation in the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy. He is a landowning, slaveholding, Southern white male, and he epitomizes “the good old days” of the Plantation Legend. In defense of his plantation lifestyle, John Sartoris directly opposes the Union Army to resist the change that a loss in the war would make inevitable. In the war, Sartoris is relentless; his reputation precedes him. For example, in the story “Retreat,” he fools an entire Union troop into surrendering to only Bayard and himself (Ringo is comically lost in the bushes on a runaway horse at the time) by merely invoking his own name and reputation: “Boys, I’m John Sartoris, and I reckon I’ve got you!” (Faulkner 67). It hardly matters that Sartoris’s own troop is some distance away “over the hill”; John Sartoris is convincing enough on his own to capture the Union troop (Faulkner 67).

³ In *The Unvanquished*, this cultural expectation is tied to valiant, violent acts and participation in honor killings. In *Flags in the Dust* (Faulkner’s first Yoknapatawpha novel, which narrates the lives of an older Bayard, his son, Aunt Jenny, and others), Aunt Jenny transforms the Sartoris penchant for violence into senseless acts of reckless endangerment for the sake of a thrill; she completely abjures the Sartoris code of violence, which is consistent with her character in *The Unvanquished*, as she approves of Bayard’s final repudiation of the code of honor killing.

The invocation of Sartoris's name affirms the power of the dominant hegemony, and as another image of the dominant hegemony's power, John Sartoris's house appropriately bears its owner's surname. The house is symbolic of the Plantation Legend: it represents social standing, power, and property ownership. It looms over its owner's land and hangs over the heads of the slaves forced to work on the property. Meanwhile, the slaves are denied access to the house except in an occupational capacity. Instead, they must reside in the nearby slave cabins. The family home is a marker and a symbol of social and economic status. For John Sartoris, it is his domain to which he periodically returns from the war. His occasional visits remind his family and slaves that he is still a living and domineering force and that, as far as the dominant white males are concerned, the Plantation Legend is still a reality. Sartoris's returns are full of pomp and circumstance, and Bayard states that as a child he could always smell "that odor in [John Sartoris's] clothes and beard and flesh too which [Bayard] believed was the smell of powder and glory" (Faulkner 10). Later in life, Bayard surmises that the odor represented "the will to endure" (Faulkner 10). It is this quality of John Sartoris that reaffirms his cavalier personality and confirms him as socially dominant and in charge of his household despite any adversity. Simultaneously, these visits provide Sartoris with a concrete image on a microcosmic scale of what he is fighting in the war to preserve.

Given the significance of the family home in *The Unvanquished*, Faulkner also employs an equally prominent motif of the house's destruction. During the war, the Union Army occasionally enacts a scorched earth strategy, and a common tactic is to burn the Southern family homes to the ground (Faulkner 75, 82-83, 87, 101). In the meantime, the white families are forced to relocate to the slave quarters, which are invariably left intact (Faulkner 78, 82-83, 96). After having their own home burned to the ground, in the story "Raid," Bayard and Rosa Millard

displace the slaves and live “in Joby’s cabin...with a red quilt nailed by one edge to a rafter and hanging down to make two rooms” (Faulkner 78). In other households, the slaves are similarly displaced or have voluntarily left to cross into Union-occupied territory. The burning of the white families’ homes and those families’ subsequent relocation to slave quarters represent both a reduction in their stations in life and the obliteration of the white families’ physical markers of social and economic superiority, thus threatening the stability of their hegemony. In response to this destruction, the white males set themselves to the task of rebuilding Southern society and reinscribing the social hierarchy—a course of action that leads to the development of the Redeemers Legend.

When John Sartoris returns home at the war’s end, he immediately begins to reestablish old paternalistic hierarchies. Bayard recounts: “After Granny died Ringo and Louvinia and I all slept in the cabin, but after Father came Ringo and Louvinia moved back to the other cabin with Joby and now Father and I slept on Ringo’s and my pallet and Drusilla slept in the bed behind the quilt curtain where Granny used to sleep” (Faulkner 192). While some strict divisions between race, class, and gender temporarily relax during the war, they are definitively reinforced upon John Sartoris’s return.

For John Sartoris, his house is the natural place to begin rebuilding his old way of life and reasserting the dominance of the paternalistic hegemony. Bayard states that immediately after John Sartoris’s return, “Drusilla and Father were home then. It was in the spring and the War was over now, and we were busy getting the cypress and oak out of the bottom to build the house” (Faulkner 192). John Sartoris’s first task is to re-erect the physical monument lauding the antebellum South’s stratified and discriminatory social and economic systems. Although the South’s agrarian means of subsistence may be disappearing, the monuments to that time remain,

and with those monuments come the cultural history of subjugation, defiance against the North and its mission to end slavery, and insistence on the preservation of discriminatory and paternalistic honor.

Despite the counter-hegemonic pressures from women and African Americans during and after the war, the paternalistic hegemony remains entrenched in Yoknapatawpha, and it becomes even more violent in asserting its power. In postwar Yoknapatawpha, John Sartoris continues in his role as paternalistic authority and epitomizes the Redeemers Legend that adamantly opposes any form of enfranchisement for African Americans. To this end, in the story “Skirmish at Sartoris,” John Sartoris and Drusilla lead the charge against two Northerners named Burden who encourage African Americans to vote in an upcoming election. Bayard learns that Cassius Q. Benbow, an African American man who fought on the side of the Confederacy, has been nominated as marshal, and the Burdens are supporting him and enabling African Americans to vote in an effort to provide the subjugated race with a social and political voice. When Bayard arrives at the scene, he finds a mob of armed white men “lined up before the hotel door, blocking it off,” and, through threat of violence, these men prevent the African Americans who are present from voting or interfering as John Sartoris enters the hotel “to vote” with his loaded derringer (Faulkner 206).

After killing the two Northerners, John Sartoris emerges alongside Drusilla who is carrying the voting box. He insists that he “let them fire first” and asks, “Does any man here want a word with me about this?” (Faulkner 207). No one objects to the killings, and they all actively engage in denying the vote to African Americans. Despite the lawless murder, John Sartoris contends (and the rest of the men present implicitly agree through their silence) that he has behaved in an honorable and fair fashion, according to the tenets of his culture.

What makes the voting scene even more puzzling is Sartoris's insistence on legally legitimating his actions; it underscores ways in which the dominant hegemony seeks to ratify its brand of domestic terrorism. After the murders, when Sartoris states that he will visit the sheriff alone, George Wyatt replies, "Like hell you will...The rest of us will come with you" (Faulkner 208). Presumably, the mob of armed white men intend to intimidate the sheriff into acquitting John Sartoris on the spot. Instead, Sartoris insists that he is "working for peace through law and order" (Faulkner 208). Based upon his recent action, his version of "peace through law and order" necessitates brutal violence and the maintenance of white male hegemony. In John Sartoris's ideal New South, the only law is that which perpetuates a system of white male dominance by any means necessary.

In keeping with his insistence on "legality," John Sartoris does, in fact, hold the election, although he and Drusilla literally steal the election, transporting the voting box, along with an armed cadre, back to the Sartoris home. Once there, Sartoris announces that "all who want the Honorable Cassius Q. Benbow to be Marshal of Jefferson write Yes on his ballot; opposed, No" (Faulkner 210). To "save some more time," George Wyatt writes "No" on all the ballots before distributing them to the men; the election is a landslide against Benbow, but it is significant that no one actually wins. The focus of the story is on the violence of the dominant hegemony and its denial of power and autonomy for African Americans. The racial hierarchy and violent sense of honor, as epitomized by John Sartoris and his old troop, are the central thrust of the story and highlight vital aspects of the paternalistic hegemony even after the conclusion of the war.

As the dominant hegemony violently reasserts its paternalistic nature, it simultaneously undergoes change, and this is exemplified in the text through John Sartoris's ventures as an entrepreneur. In the story "An Odor of Verbena," Bayard narrates that John Sartoris brings the

railroad to Jefferson, transforming that which previously symbolized freedom and escape for Ringo (according to Bayard) into a means of ensuring continued white male dominance in Yoknapatawpha. John Sartoris transitions from social dominance via ownership of land and people to that which is necessary in an industrialized economy. The dominant hegemony, therefore, does change economically and incorporates industrialism as it slowly sheds agrarianism, but it remains paternalistic. The African American characters are still denied a voice and pushed to the margins of society just as they were during the voting scene in which they “huddled beyond the hotel door with six or eight strange white men herding them” away from the polls (Faulkner 206).

Although John Sartoris is the quintessential representative of the dominant hegemony, he understands that change is inevitable. Before facing Redmond, John Sartoris confesses to his son that, in his life he has “acted as the land and the time demanded...But now the land and the time too are changing” (Faulkner 231). Sartoris acknowledges that the world is changing—that his time is passing. The war is over, and with it, slavery and the antebellum South. The period of wartime lawlessness that bred the likes of Grumby’s Independents has come to a close. Now, the South is working its way through Reconstruction, and this is all the more apparent by the fact that even John Sartoris, to his son’s initial befuddlement, hopefully anticipates Lincoln sending Union troops into the South to help stabilize and rebuild society while white male Southerners simultaneously help deny power and autonomy to women and African Americans. Regarding this turn of events, Bayard remarks, “Now it was as though we had not surrendered at all, we had joined forces with the men who had been our enemies against a new foe whose means we could not always fathom but whose aim we could always dread” (Faulkner 198). To further emphasize that Bayard’s statement involves the radical Otherizing and disempowerment of women and

African Americans, the quote is capped on either end by Drusilla being forced into marriage and Ringo being “abolished” just before the white men ride off to deny Benbow from being elected (Faulkner 198-199).

In response to these many societal changes, John Sartoris admits that his previous insistence on law and order through violence is no longer a viable option in the evolving South. He claims that the world that “will follow will be a matter of consolidation, of pettifogging and doubtless chicanery”—an environment in which he claims that Bayard, “trained in the law,” will be prepared to thrive (Faulkner 231). John Sartoris announces the imminent arrival of a new kind of law and order. The one element that both Bayard and John Sartoris (in his latter days) commonly abjure is the violent code of honor (not the bravery, the non-violent sense of Southern honor, paternalism, racism, or sexism). John Sartoris admits that he is “tired of killing” and, in contrast to the dominant hegemony’s pervasive code of violence, Sartoris intends to conduct a “little moral housecleaning” by going to face Ben Redmond unarmed, realizing that this will result in his own death because Redmond will certainly be armed (Faulkner 232). John Sartoris’s renunciation of the code of violence is definitively counter-hegemonic, indicating a means by which Sartoris subtly undermines the dominant hegemony at the end of his life, and it also presages Bayard’s nonviolent confrontation in “An Odor of Verbena.” Both father and son manifest an alternative script by which Southern white males may live, destabilizing the hegemony of the Redeemers Legend; however, the violence of John Sartoris’s life cannot be extricated from the memory of him.

John Sartoris’s singular element of resistance to the culture seems to go unnoticed by society at large who still clamors for violent and bloody revenge after his death. They ultimately accept Bayard’s non-violent response, but George Wyatt speaks for the community when he

states that Bayard's method is not the way he would have handled the situation (Faulkner 250). Culturally, John Sartoris's code of violence persists, despite what he may have privately expressed to his son shortly before his own violent end. His hegemonic persona lives on through his railroad, through the statue of him in the cemetery, and through the persistent tales in circulation long after his death about his violent wartime and postwar exploits. The dominant hegemony experiences the ripple of Bayard's counter-hegemonic action and rushes forward, not completely unchanged (as evidenced by George Wyatt's and Drusilla's expressions of approval of Bayard's actions⁴), but definitely powerfully dominant for the time. Despite his final act of non-violence, John Sartoris lives on in memory as the epitome and exemplar of Yoknapatawpha's dominant hegemony.

⁴ The narrative closes with Drusilla leaving a sprig of Verbena on Bayard's pillow—a sign of at least her acknowledgment of the validity of Bayard's actions. Verbena was significant to Drusilla because, according to Bayard, "she said verbena was the only scent you could smell above the smell of horses and courage" (Faulkner 220).

CHAPTER IV

ROSA MILLARD

The Southern Matriarch: Antebellum Piety and Propriety

The elderly Rosa Millard undergoes significant transitions in *The Unvanquished*, ultimately leading to her demise. She begins as the typical Southern matriarch, then she joins the war in a non-combatant role as a type that Diane Roberts refers to as the Confederate Woman. Eventually, Millard expands her wartime efforts to such an extent that she assumes roles and powers traditionally restricted from women in her society. The first role Millard plays (that of the matriarch) is perfectly acceptable and hegemonically-prescribed in Faulkner's South. The second role as a Confederate Woman is a temporarily sanctioned role that society allows white women during the Civil War; it provides a way for them to contribute to the war effort without sacrificing any traits that the culture conceives of as essentially feminine. Millard's final transition, however, is representative of culturally irreconcilable and, therefore, counter-hegemonic behavior. Millard transgresses into spheres of influence traditionally reserved for men and subsequently refuses to relinquish that role, attempting to incorporate her Confederate Woman identity into her antebellum identity. In a postbellum world, the culture makes this into an impossible task, and for this transgression, Millard is eventually killed.

Rosa Millard is proud to call herself "John Sartoris' mother-in-law" (Faulkner 105). By virtue of her age, race, sex, gender, and class, Millard is able to function in the role of Southern matriarch. June Dwyer notes that "By outlasting her sexuality (that is, by letting nature 'unsex' her), Granny has been transformed into a matriarch, a repository of Southern manners, breeding, and morality—a non-threatening embodiment of what the war is trying to preserve" (61). Millard

is typical of her culture in many ways: fiercely loyal to the South and her family, commanding of obedience and respect, and serving as arbiter of morality in the household. Millard does not hesitate to protect young Bayard and Ringo from the wrath of a Union soldier after the boys shoot and kill an army horse (Faulkner 28); she willingly rides into enemy lines to retrieve her confiscated property (56); and she, on more than one occasion, washes out the boys' mouths with soap for swearing and also forces them to pray for forgiveness for lying (35, 71, 118, 148). At least at the beginning of the book (and for most of the time that she is in the narrative), Millard typifies the revered Southern matriarch. She is a respected member of the Yoknapatawpha community, and as matriarch, all her actions are appropriately guided by devotion to home and family, piety, and propriety. Throughout the narrative, however, Millard begins to present a challenge to the culture by expanding her power and influence, shaking community conceptions of what behaviors and roles are acceptable for a Southern lady to perform. As her counter-hegemonic practices enlarge in scope, she attains a more prominent (and traditionally masculine) role in the community. Ultimately, it is for this transgression of hegemonically-prescribed gender roles that Millard is murdered. She is not actively attempting to undermine the dominant hegemony, but she has this effect simply by taking the actions she does within the confines of the closed society. For a woman to assume the level of authority that she does is unacceptable by the hegemonic standards of Faulkner's South.

Millard's role as matriarch is a prescribed one for someone of her station and status in society; it is proscribed to all others who do not fit neatly into the South's predetermined socioeconomic, sex, gender, and race schemata. With this role comes the responsibility of governing morality and ensuring that all members of the household remain within acceptable social and moral boundaries, as determined by the dominant hegemony. Women, in general, and

the matriarch, in particular, are expected to operate as gatekeepers of social conventions, and a large part of social and moral gatekeeping in Faulkner's South involves maintaining strict race, class, and gender norms. For Millard, specifically, examples of this gatekeeping occur in the form of actions such as demanding obedience from slaves, which maintains the existing racial hierarchy (Faulkner 114-15); demonstrating moral uprightness by conducting her Christian duty to provide food to other people's slaves, even as those slaves attempt to leave their masters—which would be considered immoral ingratitude on the part of the slaves (84-85, 115); politely offering a glass of milk to a Union colonel as he interrogates her in her own home, which exhibits a sense of Southern hospitality and propriety to a socially respectable guest within one's home—even if that guest is a sworn enemy (33); and insisting that Ringo refer to Abner Snopes as "Mister Snopes" to reinforce children's respect for their elders—and possibly also to reinforce the racial hierarchy (126, 133). So, although Millard is beyond her procreative years, she is still a representative of Southern white womanhood, and is therefore obligated to enforce all these strictures in the ways that she does in order to uphold the beliefs associated with moralistic Southern conceptions of white womanhood. Millard willingly internalizes and adheres to this obligation; she never expresses any dissent against the Southern cause or way of life.

Although the matriarch is a respected position in Southern society, it should not be mistaken as a position of autonomous power. While Millard exerts influence in her household and in society at large, she is still very actively reinforcing the strictures of the culture. As previously stated, Millard, as social and moral gatekeeper, reinforces existing cultural hierarchies, thereby helping to lock members of society more firmly into their limited roles. Additionally, although Millard is expected to maintain order, obedience, and stability within the household, she is also expected to remain within that domestic sphere. She is permitted to attend

church, exhort members of the congregation regarding matters of morality or righteous living, and to assume a leading role in some limited capacity in other social settings that are gendered feminine; however, to step outside of these spheres and into the political and economic realm of men would be an impermissible violation of gender norms. The matriarch, like a white, upper-class Southern woman of any age, still ultimately functions in a very ornamental role in the domestic space of the Big House.

In describing the mistress of the plantation, Thomas Nelson Page, one of the prolific “moonlight and magnolias” authors responsible for perpetuating the “Lost Cause” mentality among Southern whites, writes:

What she was only her husband knew, and even he stood before her in dumb, half-amazed admiration, as he might before the inscrutable vision of a superior being. What she really was, was known only to God. Her life was one long act of devotion—devotion to God, devotion to her husband, devotion to her children, devotion to her servants, to her friends, to the poor, to all humanity. Nothing happened within the range of her knowledge that her sympathy did not reach and her charity and wisdom did not ameliorate. She was the head and front of the church... (185-86)

In response to Page’s assertions, Roberts contends that “despite this devout obeisance to the mistress, she is really praised here for her submissive qualities, for her selflessness; she is both mistress of all and servant *to* all, secure for a while in her garden but destined like Job, or like Griselda, to be tested” (“A Precarious Pedestal” 235, italics in original). Roberts contends that whatever deference is realistically or hypothetically given to the plantation mistress is only conferred so long as she remains loyally subservient and attentive to the wants and needs of society at large; the mistress is but a servant. What applies here to the mistress of the plantation

applies equally well to the matriarch because the Southern matriarch is merely an aged version of the mistress; she is not permitted to shed her former social obligations simply because she is no longer young. Ladies in the Old South are expected to remain ladies until death. The role is permanent and binding.

Millard's lack of true agency is further evidenced by her appeals to masculine authority. According to the dominant hegemony, the feminine is not permitted to be an absolute source of authority; therefore, to avoid violating hegemonic codes of conduct while still asserting some authority, Millard invokes the name and authority of her son-in-law John Sartoris. This is the only hegemonically-approved recourse available to her if she expects to command obedience. For example, when Millard leaves for Memphis and then later to retrieve the family silver, she twice invokes John Sartoris's name to establish herself as someone who must be obeyed (Faulkner 56, 105). The warring colonel, as the masculine seat of power in his household, is the authority figure whom society truly respects. Any violation of Millard's will (so long as her wishes acceptably coincide with those permitted by the dominant hegemony) is, by extension, a violation of John Sartoris's will. To undermine masculine authority is the true transgression in Faulkner's South. The feminine, in and of itself, is not licensed to assert authority.

Two other incidents in *The Unvanquished* underscore the fact that Millard, in the closed society of Faulkner's South, must borrow masculine authority if she expects to be obeyed. The first incident involves the retrieval of the family silver, and the second incident involves the original loss of the same silver. In the first story of the collection, "Ambuscade," Millard encounters the Northern officer Colonel Dick even as she is concealing Ringo and Bayard from the Union Army underneath her skirt. In this scene, she commands and is given respect by the colonel. He does not challenge her within the domestic space, although he fully recognizes the

nature of the ruse she employs in order to hide the boys. When Millard later seeks out Colonel Dick, however, it is in the masculine realm of the battlefield. Here, she is forced back by the Union Army as they attempt to blow up a bridge. In order to seek an audience with the colonel, Millard realizes that she must proclaim her relation to John Sartoris and the masculine power he embodies: "I want my silver! I'm John Sartoris' mother-in-law! Send Colonel Dick to me!" Although Millard here claims that the silver is hers (by use of the first-person possessive pronoun), she cannot reclaim it by herself or on her own authority. Even her own property must be managed by a male figure.

A scene involving Loosh and the initial loss of the family silver further emphasizes Millard's lack of true authority. After Loosh tells the Union Army where the Sartoris family silver is hidden, the soldiers dig it up and confiscate the chest. Millard confronts Loosh:

'But the silver belongs to John Sartoris,' Granny said. 'Who are you to give it away?'

'You ax me that?' Loosh said. 'Where John Sartoris? Whyn't he come and ax me that? Let God ax John Sartoris who the man name that give me to him. Let the man that buried me in the black dark ax that of the man what dug me free.' (Faulkner 75)

This time, Millard does not refer to the silver as her own. She plainly states that it belongs to John Sartoris, recognizing that, Loosh, as a slave, acknowledges the patriarchal authority of John Sartoris even more so than most. He refuses to even truly entertain Millard's question and, instead, changes the context of the inquiry, interrogating the legitimacy of the system of slavery and the ownership of people. Furthermore, Loosh is not interested in hearing any of these answers from Millard; he demands them of an absent John Sartoris. John Sartoris's very absence is what then allows Loosh to ignore Millard's petitions and simply walk away, not to return to

the narrative until the last story. By herself, Millard cannot command authority. Her invocations of the masculine authority are, therefore, culturally appropriate and necessary. Up to this point, Millard is behaving in a manner amenable to the codes of the dominant hegemony.

If it is not to a literal man that Millard appeals for authority, then she entreats a masculine, Christian deity or justifies her requests according to an abstract notion of Southern paternalism. On multiple occasions, Millard kneels and prays for forgiveness of her sinful actions (typically lying) that she intentionally commits throughout the narrative in support of the war effort (Faulkner 28, 35, 118, 137). At certain points in the narrative, Millard does challenge even this deific patriarchal authority; however, most of her prayers, as opposed to being indictments against God, are presented as genuine requests for absolution on behalf of a sinful person. Even when questioning God, though, Millard is still directing her requests to a culturally-constructed masculine and paternalistic deity. In Faulkner's South, she must defer to this masculine source of power.

Outside the realm of the spiritual, Millard often reinforces the paternalistic system in the material world, as well. There are numerous examples (and certainly the invocations of John Sartoris's name may be counted among them), but one prominent example is in Millard's demand that Joby, Loosh, Ringo, and Bayard dig up the buried chest of silver and move it into the house and upstairs into her room. Because of her age and sex, no one expects Millard to carry the chest (she, does, of course, carry the lantern, providing light and guidance for the slaves and young boys); however, this expectation is equally founded on beliefs about her race and class. She is terse, demanding, and has exactly no time for debate. After the two men and boys haul the heavy chest into the house, Millard commands, "Take it upstairs...I want it in my room." Joby counters, "You mean you gonter tote this thing all the way upstairs and then tote it back down

tomorrow?” Millard, unwilling to entertain Joby’s protest, replies, “Somebody is...Are you going to help or are me and Bayard going to do it alone?” (Faulkner 41). Her question is, of course, rhetorical; she is not going to actually move the chest and no one believes this for a second. However, the question also performs a rhetorical move in which Millard perpetuates paternalistic white hegemony. She simultaneously aligns Bayard with herself as the only two white people in the room over and against the black people, who are implicated as lazy and disobedient. Her rhetoric implies that, of course, the white people could do the heavy lifting, if they really had to, but they should not be forced into such a role when there are slaves present. Millard (and everyone else in the room) fully expects the slaves to do the work, maintaining the social hierarchy. As a further rhetorical move, Millard indicates that Bayard will have no choice in the matter. Although his father is absent, Bayard is only in training as the man of the house; so, for the time, he is subservient to his elders. This dutiful respect for elders is yet another integrated component of the paternalistic system, and Bayard is, therefore, not permitted to challenge Millard’s decrees any more than the slaves.

Louvinia’s response to Millard’s demands only emphasizes the overwhelming power of hegemony. As Joby expresses dissent, not wanting to move the chest of silver up and then back down the stairs, Louvinia instructs him to “do like Miss Rosa tell you” (Faulkner 42). She even tries to help move the heavy chest herself before Joby pushes her back out of the way (Faulkner 41-42). Louvinia internalizes and unquestioningly accepts the racial hierarchy; she is the stereotypically loyal slave for which Civil War romance literature has received much criticism. Certainly, this criticism of the tirelessly faithful slave is not unfounded; however, hegemony does account for how individuals can exist in a hostile and discriminatory culture and be complicit with practices and ideas that run counter to their own interests. This is an integral

component of how the hegemonic operates and persists; Faulkner's depiction of loyal slaves only represents extreme cases of the power of the dominant hegemony.

While reinforcing the paternalistic system, Millard, of course, continues to perform her culturally-appropriate roles as maternal protector and moral exemplar. Her manner of exercising these roles certainly shifts over the course of the narrative, and she is ultimately killed for transgressing too far into a masculine realm; however, she never loses the respect of the society. For her culture, she performs a feminine role acceptably well, and most of her transgressions are forgiven, primarily because (unlike Drusilla Hawk) Millard does not live beyond the time of the Civil War. During the war, the vast majority of her gender norm transgressions are permissible because she is still working in the service of Southern society and its dominant hegemony. To continue performing in this manner after the conclusion of the war would simply be unacceptable according to the established norms and mores of the dominant hegemony. While embroiled in the middle of the crisis of the Civil War, though, Rosa Millard fulfills a necessary societal role. Most of the white men are absent, serving in the war, and the white women, slaves, and children are left to manage the estates and run the country. According to the tenets of the paternalist hegemony, the white women are the obvious group elected to be in charge. This results in an expansion of power and influence for upper-class white women—at least for the duration of the war. From this fertile ground erupts the feminine type that Diane Roberts refers to as the Confederate Woman. At first, Millard transitions into and properly performs the role of the Confederate Woman, according to hegemonic constructions of feminine roles. Eventually, this role proves fatal; it is the beginning of the end for Rosa Millard.

The Confederate Woman: Millard as Noncombatant Soldier

According to Roberts, “The Confederate Woman combines the images of belle and warrior, Spartan woman and Roman matron...embodying the religious, political, and gender discourses of the Civil War” (“A Precarious Pedestal” 233). During the Civil War, women were not allowed to abandon traditional gender roles, but some flexibility was necessarily afforded, and white women, for a time, transitioned into a more active role in society. The role of Confederate Woman was a necessary, albeit temporary, adjustment to the dominant hegemony that enabled Southern society to continue operating despite the white men being absent in the war. Basically, the Confederate Woman stretched and expanded some of the acceptable behaviors for women for the duration of the war. For example, women had to take a more proactive role in commanding the slaves, managing household and public affairs, and in generally keeping society functioning. Roberts notes that there is a longstanding literary tradition of representing the Confederate Woman and that this tradition draws on antebellum Southern literature to help develop images of the warrior woman who is allowed to wear boys’ clothes and even physically join the men on the battlefield (*Southern Womanhood* 3). While Millard does not pick up a rifle and physically join the fray, she does participate in the war in a substantial noncombatant role.

Women’s more active engagement in society should in no way indicate that the dominant paternalistic hegemony was toppled during the Civil War. Instead, the “Confederate Woman image allowed women to take on traditionally masculine roles with no sacrifice of what the culture identifies as *essential* white femininity: maternal feeling, sexual chastity, adherence to a male economy where property (land) is all-important” (Roberts, *Southern Womanhood* 3, italics in original). So long as the Confederate Woman does not abandon that which society considers

essentially feminine, then no one quibbles over the details. After all, everyone agreed that someone had to be in charge, keep the slaves in a subservient state, and tend to the land and animals while the men were fighting. To let these characteristics of the Old South slip during the war would have undermined the very cause for which many Southerners had internalized as the reason to continue fighting; if the Southern way of life was abandoned, then they would have nothing left to preserve and to distinguish them as distinct from the North. So, through the Confederate Woman, the South was able to maintain its paternalistic hegemony and agrarian way of life in as complete a manner as possible, given the circumstances of the war.

As Roberts identifies, a key component in literary depictions of Confederate Women is that they “rarely speak for themselves; they are spoken *for*, constructed to serve the ideology that made them into emblems of sexual and racial purity” (*Southern Womanhood* 13). An integral part of the dominant hegemony involves controlling the voice of the Confederate Woman. She is a symbol constructed according to the specifications of paternalism. She stands for those values that paternalism endorses; to allow her to speak for herself would provide her with agency, would remove her from her statuesque state, making her into a complex person rather than a fabricated type. In fact, Roberts contends that “[w]hen, in Faulkner’s fiction, [Confederate Women] do attempt to speak for themselves, they disrupt the pedestal and contradict the masculine discourses that placed them there” (*Southern Womanhood* 13). Both of Faulkner’s Confederate Women in *The Unvanquished*, Millard and Drusilla, accomplish exactly this. War and the changing roles of women during the war, begin to disrupt masculine discourse regarding gender norms and what women are permitted to do and be.

Millard's Usurpation of Masculine Authority: The Decline and Death of a Matriarch

To accuse Millard of being intentionally counter-hegemonic in her behavior would be grossly inaccurate. In accordance with Williams's explanation of how hegemony operates, Millard is complicit in her own subjugation. She fights to maintain the structure of the Old South that confines and prohibitively defines her. For example, after the Union Army confiscates the Sartoris mules and family silver, liberates the Sartoris slaves, and burns the house to the ground, Millard dutifully sets out to retrieve her belongings. She requires her property, animals, and slaves because they are markers of her and her family's economic status. They indicate that she is an upper-class lady in the stratified Southern culture. Without them, Millard and her family slip dangerously close to the lower classes, and this she cannot accept. Even (especially) in the middle of the war, it is essential that Millard keep up appearances and maintain cultural hierarchies as much as possible.

In adjusting to her evolving role in society during the Civil War, the Confederate Woman "recreated herself to accommodate, even valorize, hardship" (Roberts, *Southern Womanhood* 3). In *The Unvanquished*, the war creates many new hardships to which Millard must adjust. To make these adjustments, Millard inserts herself into masculine roles and begins to usurp masculine power and authority, rather than merely borrowing or invoking it. This is where she oversteps her hegemonically-prescribed boundaries and enters into a realm that is unforgiving to such transgressions. Her gender norm transgressions begin small and enlarge significantly: during the war, Millard's "hardships" include surviving Union Army raids, outsmarting Union soldiers, bossing slaves around, recapturing slaves, stealing army property, selling that property back to the Union Army under false pretense, forging government documents, assuming alternate identities to conduct her thieving, running over and drowning freed slaves (for which she never

asks forgiveness), working directly with the underclass, consorting with a slave as an equal, and earning and distributing resources in a totalitarian manner to the entire community. For a matriarch who was never intended to leave the Big House, Millard develops quite the résumé.

Roberts admits that many of Millard's "adventures are familiar Civil War tall tales: malefactors hiding under the lady's hoops, the burying of family silver, the outwitting of Yankees" ("A Precarious Pedestal" 238). This, however, does not account for the full range of her actions. Millard enters into a masculine realm of violence. She continuously forges a United States letter in order to repeatedly steal mules and sell them back to different US Army regiments. For this sin, she prays for forgiveness. Meanwhile, Millard has seemingly no qualms with actively pushing black people off her floating wagon and into the current of the river, quite possibly damning them to drown (Faulkner 107). She neither displays any regret nor asks for forgiveness for potentially murdering those individuals.

Millard's treatment of the black people at the river hardly seems congruent with the matriarchal lady who earlier provided food to different black people of the same party. The brutality of her actions appears to escape her. It is, appropriately, around this time that Millard becomes more enmeshed in masculine spheres of activity. The crossing of the river serves as a rite of passage, baptizing Millard and initiating her into a masculine position of authority and influence. Shortly after making it across the river and receiving far more silver, mules, and slaves than she had set out to retrieve, Millard begins to more actively seize traditionally masculine power. Whereas she had only just invoked the name of John Sartoris to establish authority on the other side of the river, after returning back across it with a hundred and ten black people, she makes no such appeal to a masculine authority. Millard taunts them:

‘I suppose you all want to cross some more rivers and run after the Yankee Army, dont you?’ Granny said. They stood there, moving their feet in the dust. ‘What? Dont any of you want to?’ They just stood there. ‘Then who are you going to mind from now on?’

After a while, one of them said, ‘You, missy.’

‘All right,’ Granny said. ‘Now listen to me. Go home. And if I ever hear of any of you stragglng off like this again, I’ll see to it. Now line up and come up here one at a time while we divide the food.’ (Faulkner 114-15)

Here, Millard comfortably asserts control over the situation and the people; she demands obedience and then accepts the position of authority that the people acknowledge. She then tells the black people to return home, promising to be the one to personally take care of the matter if she finds out that they have been disobedient. Here, she is stepping beyond her boundaries as delineated by the dominant hegemony. Through threat of force, she promises to manage the people and police the country. Whether she realistically can uphold this promise or not is irrelevant; by merely proclaiming herself as such an authority, she is behaving in a counter-hegemonic manner.

Also, as Millard doles out the food, she begins playing the counter-hegemonic role of authoritarian resource manager. This is a role she later expands until she is dictatorially managing the resources for her entire community. After successful heists, Millard returns to her home church, where she replaces the Bible with a “big blank account book” (Faulkner 138). Noel Polk notes Millard’s substitution of religion in the church with her brand of an economic system. Stressing Faulkner’s diction, Polk identifies the matriarch’s “patronizing and offensive” totalitarian manner: “The language of her distribution of these goods is weighty with her power over them [the community members]: she would ‘*make* them tell,’ they ‘would *have* to tell her,’

she would ‘*take,*’ ‘*give it,*’ ‘*making the man or woman,*’ ‘*telling them*’” (306, italics in Polk’s quotes). In this scene, Millard becomes quite the dictator. Polk claims that what Millard achieves through her actions is “a restoration of herself to what she would consider her rightful place in a class structure that the War threatens to turn upside down” (306-07). She uses her charity as a means of reasserting her class position (similar to how she had to go retrieve her confiscated property from the US Army). However, Millard’s manner of establishing her superior position is counter-hegemonic in that it allows her to dominate the economic affairs of her entire community; she basically becomes the state of emergency overseer. While Millard ascends into this role out of practical necessity, she gives no indication of eventually relinquishing her expanded authority, and for society to permit this state of affairs after the war would be culturally-unacceptable.

That Millard’s changing relationship to the community occurs in a church is no accident. She takes a role that is hegemonically-permitted, that of exhorter in the church, and alters it into an economic and political role. The venue also points to Millard’s evolving relationship with her masculine, paternalistic God. Deborah Clarke notes how Millard manipulates her Christian beliefs and challenges divine authority by justifying her non-Christian actions in her public and vocal prayers (239). What Clarke suggests is that Millard uses the opportunities she has to transgress gender norms to also “cheat in her Christian beliefs,” further undermining patriarchal authority (239). For example, as often as Millard asks for forgiveness, she also simply informs God of what she intends to do, consequences be damned. After all, she can just pray for forgiveness later (while simultaneously offering justifications for her actions).

Even Ringo notes the manner in which Millard questions God in a subtle but significant way. He states, “don’t yawl worry about Granny. She cide what she want then she kneel down

about ten seconds and tell God what she aim to do and then she git up and do hit. And them that dont like hit can git outen the way or git trompled” (Faulkner 93). One such example of Millard’s post-hoc justifications occurs in the church. After asking for forgiveness for stealing, lying, and causing the boys to sin, Millard offers this defiant prayer:

‘But I did not sin for gain or for greed,’ Granny said. ‘I did not sin for revenge; I defy You or anyone to say I did. I sinned first for justice. And after that first time, I sinned for more than justice: I sinned for the sake of food and clothes for Your own creatures who could not help themselves; for children who had given their fathers, for wives who had given their sons, to a holy cause, even though You have seen fit to make it a lost cause. What I gained, I shared with them. It is true that I kept some of it back, but I am the best judge of that because I, too, have dependents who may be orphans, too, at this moment for all I know. And if this be sin in Your sight, I take this on my conscience too. Amen.’
(Faulkner 147)

In her prayer, Millard implicitly accuses God of not doing as good a job as she could have, and she provides justifications for the sins for which she is supposedly asking forgiveness. She also “def[ies]” and basically dares God to accuse her of being a liar or in the wrong. By this point, Millard’s relationship to deific authority has certainly changed. There is a serious tension present in her prayer. While she does technically ask for forgiveness, her prayer is replete with venomous accusation and challenges to patriarchal authority.

Regarding Millard’s indictment, Clarke further indicates how Millard implies that the community’s God is failing on the job, and how Millard undermines patriarchal authority:

her critique of God the Father suggests that the system would be improved by bringing in God the Mother, someone more attuned to the problems of women and children, but who

still knows how to keep the slaves in line. And, not surprisingly, Granny herself seems the perfect candidate for the job. Yet shifting from a patriarchal to a matriarchal God does little to undermine the system. Granny may challenge the efficiency of Christian patriarchy, but she seeks to improve it, not overthrow it. (240)

Millard certainly implies as much—that the patriarchal God is failing the South, that He is failing to properly tend to His people and support them in the holy cause they are supposedly fighting for, and that Millard could do and is doing a better job at caring for the people. Clarke is also accurate in identifying that the shift from a patriarchal to a matriarchal God does not overthrow but only modifies an existing system. This is also completely in keeping with Williams's thoughts regarding the nature of hegemony and counter-hegemonies. The dominant hegemony imposes certain limits on the nature of possible counter-hegemonies. So, while Millard may attack the insensitivity she perceives in the patriarchal religious system, her implicit modifications hardly change the system's effects; she merely replaces the manager with someone who happens to be a woman but is equally as invested in maintaining the traditional Southern social and economic order. Millard would install herself as the head of the community, and resources and support would still be distributed according to her own authoritarian estimations. Similar to when she insists that the fleeing slaves mind her, Millard once more provides Yoknapatawpha with a matriarchal iron fist rather than a patriarchal one.

Millard falls into all her counter-hegemonic roles in the first place, of course, due to the mule-stealing scheme she and Ringo mastermind, and through this scheme, she enters into multiple social arrangements that are hegemonically-unacceptable. For example, Millard allows Ringo a significant role in the planning and execution of their heists, conferring some level of equality on him, which is completely inconsistent with paternalistic Southern notions. Not only

is Ringo acquiring some level of power in their social dynamic, but as he ages, he should not be permitted such a close relationship with the Southern matriarch⁵. Additionally, Millard consorts with Ab Snopes in the mule-stealing scheme, which Peter Sharpe contends “blurs class distinctions and rules of decorum” (101). It is true that she basically has Ab Snopes perform the dangerous grunt work of actually delivering and selling off the stolen mules, so that does reinforce class distinctions, indicating that there is still a hierarchy of what roles individuals of differing social standings must perform; however, the fact of the matter is that, according to the mores of the dominant hegemony, no upper-class Southern white woman of this time period should have been associating with a lower-class white male in such an illegal economic arrangement. The mere fact of their association challenges hegemonic notions of propriety that the matriarch is expected to uphold.

Millard engages in her criminal activities for some time and is wildly successful. Ringo calculates that they have managed to capture 248 mules (Faulkner 132). It all comes to close, however, when a Union lieutenant, with the help of Ab Snopes, tracks her down and retrieves the latest herd of stolen mules. This leaves Millard in a strained financial position and makes her receptive to Ab Snopes’s plan to gain some horses from a roaming band of vagabonds known as Grumby’s Independents. Prior to this incident, Millard was perfectly fine with leaving the truly dangerous part of the job to Ab Snopes. She let him take the stolen mules deeper and deeper into Union-occupied territory and sell them back to the US Army. He was the one who ran the risk of being captured and detained. Grumby’s Independents, though, are not a government-sanctioned entity; they are hard criminals and killers. Consequently, Ab is unwilling to risk his life on this

⁵ Although Millard’s changing relationship with Ringo problematizes racial hierarchies, it would be inaccurate to claim that either of these characters does not continue to subscribe to paternalistic racial norms. Ringo is ultimately still locked into the hegemonic caste system of the South. His character is discussed in further detail in Chapter Six.

particular transaction. However, while he and Millard agree that Grumby's men are murderers, they also reach the erroneous conclusion that because Grumby and his men are Southerners, they will behave as gentlemen and not harm an old lady. Millard, therefore, resolves to take care of this dangerous requisition on her own. The irony of the situation is that Millard bases her decision on hegemonic assumptions about how Grumby's Independents will behave; she makes the mistake of expecting them to adhere to a hegemonic code that she herself does not subscribe to and has already significantly undermined. Previously in the narrative, Millard went across a river and back to mark her passage into a more authoritarian position in society; when she goes to confront Grumby, however, Millard must traverse a crossroad, and there is no returning for her this time (Faulkner 152). She is going to very literally step into what the culture considers to be a man's role to directly deal with a band of outlaws. She very blatantly transgresses class and gender norms by consorting with a vagabond group of outlaws who terrorize the countryside. Up until this moment, she has been assuming increasingly more masculine roles and authority; here, her actions escape the realm of the abstract and become very real. The consequences are also very real and binding. The fluidity of Millard's gender and class performance comes to a sudden close. In the bowels of the "huge rotting building with the gray afternoon dying wetly upon it," Millard is shot dead (Faulkner 153). Bayard and Ringo find her body "collapsed in a quiet heap on the floor" (Faulkner 154). Her counter-hegemonic presence comes to a violent end like so many of Faulkner's aberrant characters. Society recaptures her within its hegemonic control and, to conceal the counter-hegemonic influence she has had, the church gives her a proper Christian burial befitting a deceased Southern matriarch.

There is much commentary on what really kills Millard. Andrew Lytle, one of the Twelve Southerners who contributed to the work *I'll Take My Stand*, accuses Millard of dying due to her

greed, making her into a symbolic moral exemplar who falls from grace (131-132); however, Cleanth Brooks, judging *The Unvanquished* as one of Faulkner's inferior works, contends that this makes Millard more symbolic than the book allows (93). Other criticism tends to converge on the belief that what Millard really dies for is her transgression of gender norms. Wolfgang Hochbruck states that "[i]t is, in fact, her continued scheming and the fact that she no longer recognizes where her borderlines are (the war has destroyed them physically as well as psychologically), which proves her undoing in the end" (225). Hochbruck contends that chivalric values have been undone by the war. Similarly, Sharpe states that Millard dies due her own naiveté and hubris: "Naiveté because she refuses to comprehend or honor the politics of the conflict; hubris because, in her growing moral blindness, she willfully prosecutes the worldview of the ruling elite on all comers even as the structure of Southern society comes boiling apart" (91). Millard's behavior has destabilized the hegemonic, and Roberts is correct when she argues that "[w]hat really kills [Millard] is transgression: she has strayed out of bounds, out of the enclosure of Big House and plantation fence, into a masculine territory she cannot regulate, where chivalric values are not paramount" (*Southern Womanhood* 16). The chivalric values are still there, but they exist in a different sphere—one which Millard has strayed beyond. These three authors converge on the idea that the war has uprooted traditional Southern values. While it is true that the war disrupts traditional paternalistic discourse, the war does not entirely overthrow the system. After all, Millard does end up paying for her behaviors with her life. Society finds a way to punish and reincorporate her into its hegemonic worldview. She simply represents that which opposes the hegemonic, not that which crumbles it.

The real crime that Millard commits is acquiring too much power and influence for a woman in her culture. When she begins stealing government mules, she assumes false names and

conducts her business under these pseudonymous identities. Toward the end, however, she gives her real name to the Union lieutenant who catches her (Faulkner 131, 145). This is a pivotal shift in the way Millard operates. Her acquisition of power and authority under her false identities is counter-hegemonic in and of itself; however, she goes too far when she then claims those identities and all their actions under the banner of her real name and identity. “Rosa Millard” is an identity around which the culture has constructed certain hegemonic assumptions; this identity has already been established and is operating under the strictures of the closed society. By attempting to rewrite her identity to include all of her counter-hegemonic activity conducted under pseudonyms, Millard pressures the hegemonic to an extent the culture cannot tolerate. Rather than continuing to displace her counter-hegemonic behavior onto those pseudonyms and leaving them behind with the war, Millard attempts to transition her temporarily-sanctioned identity as a Confederate Woman into a permanent part of postbellum society. This hybridization attempt is, however, radically opposed, becoming irreconcilably counter-hegemonic in nature. Unable to exist simultaneously in both spheres, and seemingly intending to attempt exactly that as the war draws to a close, the war claims Millard’s life. She strays too far outside of that which the closed society allows, and for that she is shot dead—her voice silenced.

CHAPTER V
DRUSILLA HAWK

The Girl Soldier, During and After the War: Parting Ways in a Postbellum State

Drusilla Hawk is another prominent Confederate Woman in *The Unvanquished*; however, she differs from Millard significantly. Whereas Millard plays a noncombatant role in the war effort, Drusilla contributes directly as a soldier. Millard goes through a series of changes in the book, but Drusilla enters the narrative having already begun her transformation. When Drusilla is introduced, she has already taken up arms and mounted her horse Bobolink to fend off the Union Army, her home has already been destroyed, and both her father and fiancé have been killed in the war. Drusilla petitions Bayard to convince his father to allow her to ride into the front lines with the men, and this is exactly what she does. She cuts off her hair, dons the garments of a common soldier, and goes off to fight in the Civil War. While the figure of the girl soldier is by no means Faulkner's invention, he does employ the type in a more subversive manner than is typical in a Civil War romance by emphasizing her violent nature, expunging her femininity, and depicting her sexual advance on Bayard. Drusilla Hawk, like most of the characters in *The Unvanquished*, internalizes and accepts the forms and structures of the dominant paternalistic hegemony; however, the dominant culture cannot accept her. As would be expected of a wartime Southerner, Drusilla actively opposes the North, helps John Sartoris kill the carpetbaggers trying to enfranchise African Americans, and insists that her purpose in the war is to "hurt Yankees" (Faulkner 191, 197). In her refusal to readily and willingly resume her "proper" place as a respectable lady in postwar society, however, Drusilla challenges the dominant hegemony. Society, accordingly, pushes back in an attempt to re-contain the aberration from the norm that

Drusilla represents. Despite eventually returning to the garments and apparent role of the Southern lady, Drusilla still remains just as violent and counter-hegemonic as ever even after her forced marriage to John Sartoris. She simply finds new ways to enact personal, counter-hegemonic practices, as demonstrated by her sexual advance on Bayard and continued penchant for violence, which is prescribed for white males but proscribed for women. Drusilla's commitment to these counter-hegemonic actions eventually leads to her expulsion from the narrative altogether.

Shortly after entering the narrative, Drusilla sits with Bayard as they watch a large group of fleeing slaves trudging north through the night. During their conversation, Drusilla delivers a lengthy monologue that demonstrates the disconnect she feels from her culture as it is embroiled in the midst of the war. She has lost her father and fiancé, her home has been decimated, and the course of her life has been irrevocably altered. Late into the night, Drusilla states:

Why not stay awake now? Who wants to sleep now? Living used to be dull, you see. Stupid. You lived in the same house your father was born in and your father's sons and daughters had the sons and daughters of the same negro slaves to nurse and coddle, and then you grew up and you fell in love with your acceptable young man and in time you would marry him, in your mother's wedding gown perhaps and with the same silver for presents she had received, and then you settled down forever more while your husband got children on your body for you to feed and bathe and dress until they grew up too; and then you and your husband died quietly and were buried together maybe on a summer afternoon just before suppertime. Stupid, you see. But now you can see for yourself how it is, it's fine now; you dont have to worry now about the house and the silver because they get burned up and carried away, and you dont have to worry about the negroes

because they tramp the roads all night waiting for a chance to drown in homemade Jordan, and you dont have to worry about getting children on your body to bathe and feed and change because the young men can ride away and get killed in the fine battles and you dont even have to sleep alone, you dont even have to sleep at all and so all you have to do is show the stick to the dog now and then and say Thank God for nothing. (Faulkner 100-101)

Drusilla's monologue elaborates on the anomie the young woman is experiencing at this juncture in her life. She summarizes the typical life that society expects of her and all women of her class, and twice she affirms how "stupid" it is. Cleanth Brooks reads Drusilla's monologue as indicative of her bitterness (80). Her closing statement of "Thank God for nothing" certainly implies bitterness; this bitterness, however, is accompanied with irony, which adds a certain nuance to her assertions, especially in relation to the events that unfold in the narrative.

Drusilla's monologue reveals her resentment at the loss of her woman's narrative, but it is also prophetic of her disenchantment with that same narrative. It was not her choice to abandon that prescribed role; this state of affairs was imposed upon her by the war. So, after losing that familiar narrative, Drusilla realizes that she no longer lives in a world where that life is possible. Consequently, she tells Bayard that she can ride a horse and that maybe she can learn to shoot a gun, and she asks Bayard to tell John Sartoris that she wants to join the men in battle. The further irony of the passage is Faulkner's use of dramatic irony: Drusilla joins the war, never to return to the kind of existence she narrates to Bayard. Although she later finds herself in a situation to return to that role after the war, she no longer pines for the traditional gender restrictions. She no longer desires the confines of house, marriage, and children. She chooses, instead, to forge a new

path that was previously inaccessible to her. Drusilla seeks new forms that are incompatible with the dominant hegemony.

After joining the war, Drusilla assumes the role of the cross-dressing girl soldier of the Confederacy, which is not a uniquely Faulknerian character type. In fact, “the girl-soldier was a popular Civil War figure who in no way gave up her privileged status” (Roberts, “A Precarious Pedestal” 240). Roberts goes into some detail regarding this particular character type and its function in Civil War literature.⁶ Roberts writes:

Eliza Frances Andrews tells how Roberta Pollock of Virginia was said to have ridden hell-for-leather through the woods one night with military information for Confederate officers, and Emma Sansom went off with Forrest’s troop, just like one of the boys (150, 278). The tomboy heroine has a long history from Sir Walter Scott’s horsewomen to John Pendleton Kennedy’s *Bel Tracy* to Faulkner’s great-grandfather’s novel *The Spanish Heroine* (1851), in which a young girl disguises herself as a man to follow her lover into the Mexican war. (“A Precarious Pedestal” 240)

There was certainly no dearth of this character type in Southern literature and literature that was popular in the South. Roberts insists, however, that a significant aspect of the girl soldiers in literature is that they “retain what is assumed to be an essential femininity even in the guise of another gender... Though they risk their precious bodies in the process, they do not *turn into* men; if anything, the cross-dressed heroine’s femininity is reinscribed in her uniqueness” (*Southern Womanhood* 18, italics in original). The Civil War girl soldier is as dedicated as the men to defending the land, the Southern agrarian way of life, Southern honor, and even the

⁶ Civil War literature, specifically Civil War romance literature, is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight. Common elements of the genre include cavalier soldiers, perfectly contented slaves, irreproachable Southern belles, and “paramythical and folkloristically Confedophile emplotments” that celebrate the antebellum South and the Southern cause that is lost in the war (Hochbruck 212).

virtuous status of White Womanhood. Her femininity and dedication to the cause are always emphasized; her gender is what makes her heroics on the battlefield an object of adulation, further reinforcing the paternalistic hegemony's insistence on the sacred status of upper-class white women. To preserve her femininity, of course, the girl soldier is always expected to abandon her martial role and her masculine attire at the end of the war.

Because the girl soldier is such a familiar character type in Civil War literature, Drusilla does not upset the Southern social order by merely taking on this role; Drusilla's challenge to social norms occurs when she refuses to relinquish the role, as her community expects at the war's end (Roberts, *Southern Womanhood* 19). Drusilla, in stark contrast to the hegemonic expectation, returns to society as a hardened warrior. She continues the role in post-bellum society by continuing to cross-dress as a man and by engaging in hard labor, working alongside the family's ex-slaves (now converted to "servants"). Rather than taking on the ornamental role of the lady of the house, Drusilla joins the men in physically laboring to rebuild the Sartoris home. The women of the community perceive Drusilla's actions as an affront to common decency and to Southern White Womanhood. They are perplexed by Drusilla's actions and cannot fathom why she will not simply behave in a typically feminine manner. Drusilla, meanwhile, is oblivious to the Jefferson women's concerns. She is merely being the person she has learned to be after her old life was torn out from under her by the war and after she has participated directly in that war. Drusilla's obliviousness to gender norms, however, does not grant her immunity from them. Her own mother, Aunt Louisa, declares her outrage at Drusilla's continued masculine behavior because it stands in stark opposition to the South's "heritage of courageous men and spotless women," which Aunt Louisa claims the Confederate men were

fighting to protect (Faulkner 190). Drusilla's mother and the other women of Jefferson recognize Drusilla's aberrant behavior as completely culturally-unacceptable.

As a result of the Jefferson women's outrage, Mrs. Habersham intervenes on the part of the community and attempts to convince Drusilla to return to her traditional gender role. This respected lady of Jefferson finds the wayward "Drusilla standing there in the sawdust and shavings, in her dirty sweated overalls and shirt and brogans, with her face sweat-streaked with sawdust and her short hair yellow with it" (Faulkner 195-196). For the women of Jefferson, this state of affairs will not do; it flies in the face of the dominant hegemony's gender norms. Drusilla has so offended the community's sensibilities by joining the war, and by disavowing "the highest destiny of a Southern woman—to be the bride-widow of a lost cause," by dressing "in the garments not alone of a man but of a common private soldier," and by continuing to labor as, stereotypically-speaking, only men should (Faulkner 191, emphasis in original). By committing these actions, Drusilla refuses to acknowledge and conform to the hegemonic gender norms. In addition to behaving in a manner that is expected of men, Drusilla also offends the women's sensibilities regarding social class. Consequently, what follows is the "Skirmish at Sartoris," where the ladies of Jefferson attempt to confine Drusilla back into a culturally-acceptable role, and Drusilla adamantly opposes their wishes, but is forced to relent—at least in her outward appearance.

While the men of the community admire Drusilla's bravery as she runs off to join the war and continue amicably working beside her as they all rebuild the Sartoris home, Diane Roberts notes that "the women, ironically, are scandalized" ("A Precarious Pedestal" 242). The response is stereotypically Southern in the way that it places the women of the community in the role of moral gatekeepers. The dominant hegemony genders individuals differently according to their

sex, creating different kinds of constricting roles: the women's highest priorities are the maintenance of morality and propriety, whereas the men's highest priorities are the maintenance of the racial hierarchy and their own position of power (through violence, if necessary). Therefore, just as the men are expected to go fight in the war and engage in physical labor to rebuild society afterward, the women are expected to return to submissive roles in their newly-rebuilt homes. The Jefferson women's response to Drusilla is also perfectly congruent with the way in which hegemony operates; the women are complicit in their own subjugation, internalizing the paternalistic culture and ensuring that all members of society remain in (or, in Drusilla's case, return to) their culturally-prescribed roles.

The Jefferson women engage in several tactics to re-indoctrinate Drusilla. They band together and attempt to convince her to join with them as a fellow woman. Their arguments, however, do not cease there. The women reach what they deem to be the logical conclusion that, because Drusilla was off gallivanting with the men at war, she must be pregnant with John Sartoris's child. At first, Drusilla is genuinely perplexed when Mrs. Habersham offers "help" and "sympathy" for the supposedly pregnant younger woman: "'My condition?' Drusilla said... 'My con—Help and sym—' Then she began to say, 'Oh. Oh. Oh.' Standing there, and then she was running" (Faulkner 196). In a flabbergasted daze, Drusilla flees from the situation, unable to fathom why she would be accused of having a sexual affair with John Sartoris. Despite the women's accusations, Drusilla is not pregnant (and never does conceive a child by John Sartoris—or by anyone in the realm of the text). This particular tactic is merely an attempt on the part of the women to remove Drusilla from the men and the masculine gender role that she is playing. By accusing Drusilla of being pregnant, they are insinuating that she has "become a lost woman and a shame to her father's memory...[and] living in a word that Aunt Louisa would not

even repeat” (Faulkner 191). Following this accusation, the women expect that Drusilla will accordingly return to the confines of the Big House. The scene depicts the way in which the dominant hegemonic codes attempt to control Drusilla’s body and actions.

After failing to convince Drusilla to simply act lady-like, the Jefferson women further attempt to re-contain Drusilla in a hegemonically-prescribed gender role by directly appealing to John Sartoris. Aunt Louisa addresses the former colonel at the dinner table: “‘Colonel Sartoris,’ she said, ‘I am a woman; I must request what the husband whom I have lost and the man son which I have not would demand, perhaps at the point of a pistol— Will you marry my daughter?’” (Faulkner 203). Drusilla drops her head to the table, arms splayed out like a soldier fallen in battle, and John Sartoris stands over her, his hand on her head, and remarks, “They have beat you, Drusilla” (Faulkner 203). This final stratagem is the only one that works because it hinges on Aunt Louisa appealing to a masculine realm of honor and violence to which both Drusilla and John Sartoris subscribe. Meanwhile, Aunt Louisa carefully acknowledges that, as a woman, she is not permitted to actively partake in such violence—implying that Drusilla ought to be bound by such rules, as well. Recognizing the thrust of Aunt Louisa’s argument, both Drusilla and John Sartoris acknowledge the dominant hegemony’s victory: Drusilla collapses into a submissive position before the weight of it, and John Sartoris concedes her defeat. Furthermore, John Sartoris’s choice of pronouns is very telling; Sartoris declares that “They” (the women of the town) have beaten Drusilla (and not both Drusilla and himself). He indicates that the dominant hegemony has captured her. Sartoris’s masculine hegemonic concerns are elsewhere—namely, in preserving a strict racial hierarchy through violence, when necessary. This is the realm from which Aunt Louisa attempts to extricate Drusilla, while simultaneously confining her daughter in the subjugated position of a virtuous, married white Southern woman.

According to Wade Newhouse, “Drusilla’s marriage ensures that her rebellion against sexual conformity is crushed and that the enemy of the old status quo is folded back into the comfortable confines of the family name that symbolizes prewar order” (161). Newhouse’s insight is accurate, and it describes exactly the way in which hegemony must operate: it must be conservative insofar that it continually resists change, and it must either incorporate or eliminate the counter-hegemonic. By reclaiming Drusilla with the trappings of Southern White Womanhood, members of the community attempt to quash Drusilla’s counter-hegemonic activity. Due to the dominant hegemony’s conservative nature, the only alternative to reclaiming Drusilla is to eject her from the society (which is, of course, her ultimate fate). A similar sequence of events transpires for Rosa Millard who is killed for overstepping the boundaries of her gender role and then posthumously reinscribed into that role with a Christian funeral befitting a Southern matriarch.

Drusilla’s aberrant behavior, of course, does not come to a halt simply because she and John Sartoris agree to marry, and this is what ultimately leads to her being removed from the narrative. On the very day that Drusilla and John Sartoris are to be wed, they, instead, lead the charge to violently deny African Americans the vote. In this scene, Faulkner’s use of an intercalation of events emphasizes the ways in which the dominant hegemony asserts itself by denying rights to all subjugated individuals—specifically, women and African Americans, in this instance. In the story “Skirmish at Sartoris,” Drusilla and John Sartoris head into town to marry. Instead, this event is interrupted as Sartoris and Drusilla steal the election and relocate the voting box to the Sartoris home. Aunt Louisa expresses her outrage when she screams, “Do you mean to tell me that Drusilla and that man are not married yet?” (Faulkner 206). In the final story, “An Odor of Verbena,” the reader learns that Mrs. Habersham forces the couple to go back into town

and get married immediately after the election (Faulkner 220). The intercalation of the events (wedding-voting-wedding) powerfully demonstrates the manner in which the dominant hegemony envelopes the whole of society from politics to propriety, and it indicates the common plight of subjugated individuals as they are swiftly and unmercifully situated back into the restrictive roles of the paternalistic hegemony. The fact that Drusilla, who is being forced into a restrictive gender role, so willingly contributes to a similar subjugation of African Americans only highlights how pervasive and ingrained the paternalistic hegemony is. No one escapes, and everyone contributes to the subjugation of others, regardless of their own subjugated status.

Despite their best efforts, the Jefferson women cannot expunge violent attitudes and actions from Drusilla. She is more than willing to contribute to the violent denial of the vote for African Americans, and she continues to hold fast to these attitudes even after her marriage. Outwardly, Drusilla does conform to hegemonic expectations. She dresses in hoop skirts and remains in the Sartoris home as John Sartoris's wife. However, she internalizes a masculine violence that runs counter to the dominant hegemony's prescribed passivity for women. The community cannot stop Drusilla from subscribing to the violent John Sartoris's rather vaguely-described dream for Yoknapatawpha that will supposedly benefit all parties regardless of race or gender (Faulkner 223). Based on Sartoris's previous dealings with the Burdens and the election, however, it is apparent that this dream involves the enforcement of a hegemonic racial hierarchy. To promote this dream, John Sartoris proves himself to be perfectly willing to resort to lethal violence. Drusilla, likewise, never shies away from this violence.

Drusilla's final violent act involves Bayard's duel with Redmond. In this sequence, Drusilla's violence is less direct than her involvement in the Civil War and in the voting scene, and, for the first time in the narrative, she is overtly sexual. Roberts notes that Drusilla, "[d]enied

the power of masculinity...tries the influence of femininity, manipulating the attraction her stepson Bayard feels for her to get him to act as surrogate killer for her, vicariously enjoying the agency in violence the constricting layers of corsets and petticoats deny her” (“Precarious Pedestal” 243). Here, Drusilla uncharacteristically performs the role of temptress in order to ensure that violence continues in the form of an honor killing. Bayard narrates the incident in which Drusilla insists that he kiss her, and he complies. Then, after John Sartoris’s murder, Drusilla presents Bayard with the two dueling pistols that she describes as “the long true barrels true as justice...slender and invincible and fatal as the physical shape of love” (Faulkner 237). The phallic imagery and the intertwining of sex and violence are overbearing. The fact that this sexual advance is so out of character for Drusilla indicates her desperation and desire to reclaim some vestige of her former violent glory as best she can from the confines of her feminine gender role. It also demonstrates her willingness to resort to extremes to preserve the violence epitomized by John Sartoris—and the situation is all the more dire now that John Sartoris is dead.

What transpires after Drusilla presents Bayard with the dueling pistols is a sort of ritual in which Drusilla kisses the hand she presumes Bayard will use to shoot Redmond. Drusilla intuits that Bayard does not intend to actually shoot Redmond, and she suffers a hysterical breakdown, “laughter spilling between her fingers like vomit” as her “incredulous betrayed eyes” stare at Bayard across the hand she had kissed (Faulkner 239). The young woman is reduced to yet another gendered type; this time, she finds herself in the role of “hysterical woman,” which Roberts compares to the hysterical breakdown of Lady Macbeth—another prominent female figure in literature whose body becomes a battleground for the conflicting characteristics of masculine violence and feminine passivity (*Southern Womanhood* 24). Drusilla’s breakdown is

the result of her thwarted sexual advance that is performed for the sole purpose of generating violence; Bayard's refusal to play his masculine hegemonic role results in a denial of her wishes. In the previous story, Drusilla's attempt to escape from her restrictive gender role was denied, and in "An Odor of Verbena," her desires are again vanquished. Denied the ability to perform in a role proscribed to her as a woman and similarly denied her vicarious enjoyment of masculine violence, Drusilla and her counter-hegemonic nature dissolve in a laughing fit.

Ultimately, Drusilla is an adamant subscriber to the dominant hegemony, at least as epitomized by John Sartoris. Although she desires to break out of restrictive gender norms, she still supports the paternalistic hegemony's insistence on a racial hierarchy and the enforcement of the paternalistic hegemony by force. In the end, because Bayard chooses to face Redmond unarmed, Drusilla determines that she must leave. She adheres to the dominant hegemony's code of violence that Bayard simply can no longer support. However, she does leave a trace of herself in the form of a single sprig of verbena on Bayard's pillow. Verbena, Drusilla claimed, "was the only scent you could smell above the smell of horses and courage and so it was the only one that was worth wearing" (Faulkner 220). Her final gesture is similar to George Wyatt's acknowledgement that Bayard's non-violent confrontation still required courage and was honorable; her departure from the narrative indicates her inability to personally conform to Bayard's non-violent mode of being. Simultaneously, her sudden disappearance from the narrative demonstrates her untenable position in either the dominant paternalistic hegemony or in Bayard's revised non-violent version. She is the only woman who subscribes directly to the violence in the narrative, and her violence is contrasted in "An Odor of Verbena" with Aunt Jenny and Bayard's commitment to non-violence.

Katherine Clark, in examining the final outcome of the collection, determines that “If Bayard is the ‘unvanquished’ one, then Drusilla is the ‘vanquished’ one. While Bayard’s struggles against the pressures of his society are successful, Drusilla’s are not” (165). Bayard is permitted to be an individual in his society, although his non-violence by no means becomes the new norm; Drusilla, on the other hand, disappears, leaving only a symbol of her love of courage. Regarding Drusilla’s disappearance and the lingering verbena, Patricia Yaeger suggests that “an incredible fantasy is held forth in this story... This is the fantasy that the South could erase its history and start again, could erase the scars of the past” (223). Drusilla’s confinement to the role of Southern lady, her hysterical breakdown, and her ultimate removal from the narrative all indicate that the scars of the past are slow to heal. She is subjected to the power of the paternalistic hegemony, folded back into it in a culturally-acceptable way, and then finally expunged for her unwillingness to play the role prescribed for her.

CHAPTER VI

RINGO

Ringo's Subscription to Sartorisism, Endeavors for Autonomy, and Hegemonic Racial Reinscription

According to Katherine Clark, there are two common Southern romance stereotypes of African Americans: 1) the loyal, content, amiable, and almost child-like slave “who stays on throughout the War, who buries the family silver and hates the Yankees as much as anyone...who would be lost without his white slave master and mistress, who would be lost without life on the Old Plantation” and 2) the disloyal slave, portrayed as an “animalistic brute,” “who helps the Yankees burn plantation homes and terrorizes the Southern whites” (181). Clark also notes that while “Faulkner does not tie in fully with either of these stereotypes, he is in many ways at his least original and most stereotypical with his portrayal of the slaves in *The Unvanquished*” (181-182). Peter Nicolaisen voices a similar concern when he indicates that *The Unvanquished* does not address the issues of race or race relations as intricately as Faulkner's other works of the time (81). Despite the narrative's overall lighter tone (at least in its first half), the narrative still raises some intriguing race relation issues in terms of hegemony. Ringo receives the most attention of all the African American characters in the collection, and, due to his unflagging support of the Sartoris family, he has the most complicated relationship with the hegemonic and the counter-hegemonic.

Even as children, Bayard and Ringo, playmates of the same age, are locked into the dominant hegemony's racial hierarchy with Bayard in a dominant position. In fact, the characters become increasingly more subjected to their racial categories as they age. The one great exception to this trend occurs for a time during the war when Ringo experiences some level of

autonomy that the dominant hegemony would not condone. The most salient example of Ringo's increased autonomy occurs when the boy designs, plans, and executes the mule-stealing scheme. However, even this experience is riddled with markers of Ringo's race and his subjugated position in the paternalistic hegemony. For example, in stealing the mules, Ringo directly contributes to the Confederacy that strives to keep him a slave. After the war is over, Ringo is denied any sort of autonomy and definitively reclassified as Bayard's "boy," an indication of his inferior social status as a consequence of his race (Faulkner 213).

Due to his vacillating position within the hegemony, Ringo maintains a complex relationship with his culture. He unapologetically promotes the Sartorises and the power they command. Consequently, because John Sartoris is the quintessentially dominant white Southern male, Ringo aligns himself with the paternalistic hegemony. However, Ringo, as a slave, destabilizes the paternalistic hegemony as he assumes a leadership position in his efforts to support the Sartoris family during the war. Ringo subscribes to a particular variant of the dominant hegemony that may be referred to as Sartorisism, which basically promotes the dominance of the Sartoris family above all else. Sharon Paradiso affirms this very idea when she argues that Ringo "is invested in the idea of a white-dominated hierarchy, at least as symbolized by the Sartoris clan. He seems to know that maintaining the power of the white elite is the only way of keeping what limited freedom he personally has" (46). Therefore, Ringo subscribes to a culture that confines and restricts him as an individual. Ringo's case is a detailed example of how hegemony operates: he is a member of society who willingly supports a system that runs counter to his own personal interests. On a societal scale, Ringo is complicit in his own subjugation. In essence, by subscribing to Sartorisism, Ringo actively promotes the paternalism of the dominant hegemony that limits him as an individual; however, on a microcosmic scale,

this is the only realistic option available to him if he desires to attain any level of autonomy or equality. During the war, he achieves exactly this; however, once the South loses and the slaves are freed, John Sartoris and the paternalistic hegemony quickly reaffirm and reestablish the racial hierarchy, focusing on violently halting the social and political progress of African Americans. This necessarily eliminates the possibility for Ringo to continue as a social equal to white people.

Through Bayard's narration, the reader learns that Ringo is genuinely and completely invested in Sartoris dominance. One example of this investment occurs during the mule-stealing scheme and involves the forged requisition letters that Ringo drafts. Initially, Ringo wants to unrealistically sign every forged letter with General Grant's name, and when Millard tells him "that would not do anymore," Ringo wants to sign the letters with President Lincoln's name because he "object[s] to having the Yankees think that [John Sartoris's] folks would have any dealings with anybody under the General-in-Chief" (Faulkner 128). Ringo situates the Sartorises at the top of the social hierarchy as much as anyone else in Yoknapatawpha, if not even more so.

The idea of whiteness as a form of dominance and power, at least as symbolized by the Sartorises, emerges multiple times in the text—typically from the mouths of slaves. For example, when Loosh declares that General Sherman is going to "sweep the earth" and free all the slaves, Louvinia chastises him, demanding, "Do you think there's enough Yankees in the whole world to whip the white folks?" (Faulkner 23). For the Sartoris slaves, "the white folks" only includes Southerners, and the Sartorises are the paramount white folks. Ringo similarly derides the Northerners when he has difficulty mounting a half-blind horse stolen from the Union Army. When John Sartoris tells him to mount the horse from the wrong side (the side the horse can still see on), Ringo declares, "I knowed Yankees wasn't folks but I never knowed before they horses aint horses" (Faulkner 63). Ringo is basically accusing Northerners of not being people, or of at

least not being the decent sort. He is dedicated to Sartorisism through and through, and, by virtue of this dedication, he unquestioningly works in the service of the Confederate cause.

In his youth, Ringo is so invested in white paternalism that he even seems to renounce identification with his own race. For example, when the family arrives in Hawkhurst and Cousin Denny insists that they go hear about the slaves who are fleeing the area en masse, Ringo declares, “I been having to hear about niggers all my life...I got to hear about that railroad” (Faulkner 91). Ringo denies any interest in and seemingly even dissociates himself from his own race. Instead, he replaces racial identification with a fixation on the railroad, which is a symbol of white male technological prowess, power, and dominance. During the war, the railroad represents the encroaching industrialization of the North; however, after the war, John Sartoris usurps and utilizes the railroad to become a prominent entrepreneur. John Sartoris is able to adapt in order to maintain a position of social dominance, and the railroad becomes an even more poignant symbol of Ringo’s fascination with and subscription to Sartorisism.

Despite Ringo’s promotion of the Sartorises and the dominant hegemony for which they stand, the dominant hegemony never permits him an equal role in society—either before or after the war. This very issue is introduced in the beginning of the narrative when Bayard erroneously insists that race does not matter between the two of them, that they had lived together and led such similar lives “that Ringo called Granny ‘Granny’ just like I did, until maybe he wasn’t a nigger anymore or maybe I wasn’t a white boy anymore, the two us neither, not even people any longer” (Faulkner 7). Bayard is sincere in this claim; however, Clark accurately argues that “Bayard’s assertion that skin color did not matter between himself and Ringo is no more than that: just an assertion” (223). There is little textual support suggesting that race does not factor into their relationship. As evidenced by his assertion, however, Bayard seems to naively think

that, although at one time he and Ringo must have been members of their respective racial categories, they can now shuck off these binary distinctions. However, bound as they are in their paternalistic culture, such an abnegation of racial identification is an impossibility.

As Clark indicates, Bayard and Ringo's relationship exhibits a level of equality not usually depicted in Civil War romances; however, to assert that they "are peers, equals," as she does, is a gross oversimplification (185). Clark contends that the dominance Bayard occasionally attempts to leverage over Ringo is more akin to how an older sibling would behave and less like a master-slave dynamic. In their Civil War game, for example, Bayard plays the Confederate General Pemberton twice in a row (while Ringo plays General Grant), and then Bayard "would have to be Grant once so Ringo could be General Pemberton or he wouldn't play anymore" (Faulkner 7). Clark interprets this arrangement in such a way that Ringo wields some level of power: he can refuse to play, if he so desires (Clark 185). Clark claims that "Ringo does not seem to live under the compulsion of slavery, and lacks the ready, automatic habit of submission. His free will and autonomy make for an equality and a parity about his relationship with Bayard which far transcends the master-slave relationship" (186). It is true that Ringo has the ability to refuse any of Bayard's requests, but to claim that this ability grants him parity with Bayard is incorrect. There are significant difficulties in trying to make the case that the two boys are equal.

Firstly, Bayard has no right to wield any form of older sibling dominance over Ringo. By his own admission, Bayard states that the two boys "had been born in the same month and had both fed at the same breast and had slept together and eaten together for so long" that they were practically equals and not bound by racial distinctions (Faulkner 7). Therefore, since Bayard supposedly views himself as Ringo's equal, he lacks the right to lord over Ringo as an older sibling might attempt. According to the dominant hegemony, Bayard's race is what provides him

with authority over Ringo. Bayard subscribes to a hierarchical system as a result of growing up a white boy in the South, and Faulkner's readers should not believe the assertion of a very young Bayard regarding equality between the two boys. This claim is, in fact, nothing more than an unexamined fantasy of youth.

Although Clark makes no argument that Bayard and Ringo are viewed as equals by their culture, it is impossible to extricate their personal relationship from the restrictions imposed by the dominant hegemony. For example, when they are riding to Hawkhurst, Bayard claims that "the difference in the color of their skin" did not matter and that "what counted was, what one of us had done or seen that the other had not, and ever since that Christmas I had been ahead of Ringo because I had seen a railroad, a locomotive" (Faulkner 81). Bayard states that he saw the railroad "that Christmas we [presumably, Millard and himself] spent at Hawkhurst" (Faulkner 81). Ringo, of course, would not have been invited because, although he is Bayard's playmate and friend, he is also one of the family slaves and not permitted equal freedom or access to the same leisure activities such as traveling to Hawkhurst for family holidays or engaging in any sight-seeing. Therefore, the game between Bayard and Ringo is rigged in Bayard's favor; the white boy simply has more opportunities available to him than his slave playmate.

Later in life, Bayard comes to recognize the lack of equality that has always existed in his relationship with Ringo. In the same passage involving the railroad, Bayard confesses that seeing the train was important to Ringo for reasons besides catching up in their game. Bayard states that, for Ringo, the train symbolizes "the motion, the impulse to move which had already seethed to a head among his people, darker than themselves, reasonless, following and seeking a delusion, a dream" (Faulkner 81). While Bayard admits the difference in their perceptions, the reader, of course, is not actually provided with Ringo's perception. Instead, the narrative only

provides what the train represents to Bayard as a boy and then what the adult Bayard suspects the train represents to a young Ringo. Bayard's claims here further indicate how inextricably he is bound by the paternalistic hegemony and how that affects his relationship with Ringo. Bayard's assertion regarding African Americans' "impulse to move" is rooted in a post-Civil War white stereotype about freed slaves aimlessly wandering as vagabonds and failing to establish themselves as productive members of society without the imposition of slavery. The reality was that most freed slaves barely moved more than a few miles from their former masters before establishing their new homes, but racist stereotypes about the freed slaves' aimlessness and inability to cope with freedom persisted, regardless (Foner 80-81).

Despite the racial inequalities built into the dominant hegemony, Ringo does eventually attain some temporary modicum of autonomy. Similar to Millard, Ringo's transition begins on the return trip from Union lines and is partially due to the cultural disruption of the war and partially due to his own active efforts. Upon Millard, Bayard, and Ringo's return home with their newly-acquired property and slaves, Clark notes that it is Ringo who first figures out how to manipulate the Union Army into providing the Sartoris family with even more mules (188). When a frustrated Union officer asks Millard how many mules she lacks to reach the number allotted her by Colonel Dick, the lady is confused, and Bayard states, "I reckon it was Ringo that knew first what he meant" (Faulkner 113). Consequently, the party acquires an additional forty-seven mules. Similarly, on the next day, Ringo assumes control of the situation and convinces a different Union soldier that, according to the order from Colonel Dick, they are entitled to an additional twelve horses (Faulkner 116). This is the origin of the mule-stealing scheme, and Faulkner ushers it in by having Ringo take control of the wagon that Millard had previously

refused to relinquish. Bayard states, “Ringo drove now. He didn’t ask; he just got in and took the reins” (Faulkner 115). Ringo actively asserts himself and edges his way into a leadership role.

As the mule-stealing scheme is fully underway in the chapter “Riposte in Tertio,” Ringo is in charge of plotting and planning each of the family’s heists. He is the one who goes on the scouting missions and determines from which regiment they should acquire the next batch of mules and how many they can take. Bayard assumes a lesser role in this chapter. He says that Ringo is now the taller of the two of them and that Ringo “had got to treating me like Granny did—like he and Granny were the same age instead of him and me” (Faulkner 126). Peter Sharpe suggests that Millard “slowly has evacuated her authority and put her relationship to Ringo, and his to Bayard, which should have been a matter of birth and uncrossable lines of demarcation, on a basis of merit and achievement” (101). That which was previously set in stone, namely, Ringo’s lack of access to the same opportunities as white people, changes as Millard confers more responsibility and equality upon Ringo. Her dealings with the boy transform from less of a master-slave relationship and into more of an arrangement between business partners.

Significantly, whenever Millard fails to act, Ringo assumes control of the situation. He is the one who insists that they acquire the twelve horses on the return trip; meanwhile, Millard hesitates. She will not commit to a course of action, expresses doubt, and then ultimately accedes to Ringo’s plan and quietly hands the official requisition letter over to the Union soldier. Later, when Millard expresses doubts about a different heist, insisting that she is “worried about this” and that they “ought not to risk it,” Ringo ignores her protestations and proceeds with planning. As a slave, he is expected to obey her, of course; however, he completely violates this hegemonic expectation in favor of striving for counter-hegemonic autonomy. Without pausing to consider Millard’s reservations, Ringo continues to his next step in the plan: determining what

identity Millard will use for the heist. He works his way through the alphabet and tells Millard to “Think of a name in ‘H.’” Millard complies, supplying the name “Mrs Mary Harris,” but Ringo tells her that they have used the name Mary before and suggests “Plurella Harris,” instead (Faulkner 128). Despite Millard suggesting that they not pursue this particular theft, Ringo continues to ignore her and provides Millard with her assumed identity. As he composes the counterfeit letter, Ringo literally overwrites Millard’s identity with the one the two of them jointly concocted, further emphasizing the level of equality that Ringo achieves during this sequence, undermining the paternalistic hegemony.

Deborah Clarke indicates two ways that one may read “Ringo’s appropriation of the master’s tools—writing and legality” (237). On one hand, it “reveals him as incapable of imagining any alternative, [but] we can also read Ringo’s active participation in this attack against the army which will liberate him as his claim to personal worth” (Clarke 237). The first scenario is indicative of the manner in which counter-hegemonies must operate; they are limited in nature by the dominant hegemony. Because the dominant hegemony insists on a world that operates according to the codes of legality, this is the way in which Ringo must work through and against that world. Consequently, he turns the legal forms against the North by acquiring official Union letterhead and then producing forged letters. It is not only the North who prizes legality. In the postwar South, even John Sartoris insists that he is “working for peace through law and order” (Faulkner 208). While John Sartoris’s definition of “law and order” may be somewhat skewed, so is Ringo’s in this instance. They both manipulate the law into serving their own interests.

Deborah Clarke’s second reading of Ringo’s employment of writing and legality is even more complex. It relates back to Ringo’s subscription to Sartorisism, but it also indicates how his

social position diminishes in the war's aftermath despite his affiliation with and promotion of Sartorisism. Clarke argues that Ringo can only attain any position of social equality during the war; after the war, he is just as limited as he was before it (238). She is correct in this assertion, and even Ringo realizes the tenuousness of his position in postwar society. For example, after the war is over and Cassius Q. Benbow is nominated to be marshal, Ringo claims, "I aint a nigger anymore. I done been abolished" (Faulkner 199). He does not provide a positive identity for himself, and when Bayard asks him what he is now, Ringo cannot speak; instead, he holds out his hand to reveal "a new scrip dollar...signed 'Cassius Q. Benbow, Acting Marshal' in a neat clerk's hand, with a big sprawling X under it" (Faulkner 199). Rather than the former agrarian and slave-powered economy of the South, in postwar society, Ringo is defined according to the power of encroaching capitalism. After presenting the dollar to Bayard, Ringo even refers to Cassius Q. Benbow as "Uncle Cash," utilizing the demeaning title for older African American men and pairing it with a word for money, indicating the way that the dominant hegemony is already folding capitalism into its structure while still retaining its paternalistic nature. The autonomy and equality Ringo enjoyed during the war quickly disintegrates as both Sartorisism and the dominant hegemony incorporate industrialization and capitalism, while reasserting their paternalistic racial hierarchy in force.

Ringo's descent in social rank commences as soon as he and Bayard return from hunting down and killing Grumby. This escapade occurs during the tumultuous period as the war comes to a close, and Ringo is permitted to participate despite the fact that this scenario places him in the likely position of having to kill a white man. Although Ringo makes significant contributions to hunting down and killing Grumby to avenge Millard's death, upon returning home, it is Bayard who receives praises, while Ringo must settle for only a shared hug with Bayard,

Drusilla, and John Sartoris. Meanwhile, as Louvinia is “crying and praying and pawing” at Bayard, Ringo is simultaneously the recipient of her “hollering and scolding” (Faulkner 185). The chapter closes with Uncle Buck proclaiming Bayard as “John Sartoris’ boy,” but Ringo receives none of the credit (Faulkner 186). He is not granted full admission into a white world and its culture of honor, and the war has now come to an end; the dominant hegemony firmly reinserts Ringo into a subjugated position—his contributions, like those of Cassius Q. Benbow during the war, go unrecognized and unappreciated.

In postwar society, Bayard is permitted to successfully move forward while Ringo is forced back into a subservient role, despite the fact that both John Sartoris and Bayard recognize that Ringo is the smarter of the two boys (Faulkner 81, 99, 125). Clarke claims that “[p]ostwar law, a different type of textuality from the divine authority which Granny and Ringo play at so deftly, demands different talents: formal study, an opportunity denied to Ringo. It is only during war that he can define himself as outside the binary” (238). During the war, he can temporarily enjoy a degree of social equality so long as he is working in the service of the Confederacy; however, in postwar society, the dominant hegemony has no use for him in a leadership capacity. He is once again denied white privilege. Ringo’s denial of power and equality ties directly into the boy’s claim that he has been abolished. The role he attained during the war is eliminated, and although he is an ardent proponent of Sartorisism, he is no longer permitted to function in a non-subjugated role. There is no acceptable social space left for him to occupy. Furthermore, Patricia Yaeger asserts that Ringo’s claim that he has been abolished “is equal in force to the potent illiteracy of Cassius Q. Benbow’s ‘X’: both connote an ostracism from power” (219). Punctuating this thought, as Ringo moves back into a subjugated position, Bayard, meanwhile, moves away to study law—a pursuit in which Ringo is not permitted to join. Instead, he must

settle for being once more reduced to Bayard's "boy"—so much for race not mattering between them (Faulkner 213).

Another indication of Ringo's altered position in society (and his recognition of his loss of social status) occurs after John Sartoris's death. In the final chapter, after Bayard learns that his father has been murdered, it is Ringo who suggests to Bayard that they seek vengeance by stepping outside of the textuality of the legal code and simply "bushwhack" Redmond like he claims they "done with Grumby that day"; Ringo, however, is quick to follow this suggestion with "But I reckon that wouldn't suit that white skin you walks around in" (Faulkner 208). Ringo recognizes that, as a black man, he is excluded from the culture of honor. It is an arena the dominant hegemony reserves for white men. Ringo has also determined that his participation in the killing of Grumby has gone unnoticed because he exists outside of this discourse; Bayard's killing of Grumby was considered honorable and based on a brutal code of vengeance, but Ringo's contributions were simply ignored. He also understands that the only way he can avenge John Sartoris, whom he loves and has already grieved while riding the forty miles to tell Bayard, is to step outside of the culture of honor and unceremoniously kill Redmond. Bayard might be able to engage in an honor killing; Ringo is not permitted because it violates the nature of the dominant hegemony.

During the showdown with Redmond, Bayard will not allow Ringo to accompany him. Bayard understands his culture's insistence on its preferred version of honor, and Bayard wants "to be thought well of" according to the tenets of the dominant hegemony's honor system (Faulkner 243). He recognizes that in order to act in accordance with the social imperative of honor, he must face his father's murderer in a fair, one-on-one fight. Regarding Bayard's behavior during the showdown and its aftermath, Paradiso states that while "Bayard will not

allow Ringo to be white, to stand beside him as he performs his white duty, neither will he allow him to be a ‘nigger’: Bayard gets his own water and bathes his own face. He has transformed the idea of whiteness, leaving Ringo, who cannot imagine any other system, out of place” (48).

Ringo has maintained a complex relationship with the hegemonic. In his subscription to Sartorisism, he has actively supported the dominant hegemony; however, he cannot find a suitable space in the postwar hegemony.

Prior to the war, the culture was certainly paternalistic, and it remains so afterward. However, the prewar dominant hegemony did not have to account for the same problems. After the South loses, the hegemonic battle lines are redrawn. For example, the postwar hegemony must address encroaching capitalism and industrialization to an extreme degree that the prewar hegemony did not have to consider. Additionally, the postwar hegemony must face the abolition of slavery and the new social arrangements and complications that arise as a result. Although slavery is over, Ringo finds that he still exists in a very paternalistic society that actively fights against any attempts at self-determinism on the part of African Americans. He no longer has a suitable role that is hegemonically-approved. Ringo, one of the dominant hegemony’s most avid supporters during the war, slips between the cracks. Because the paternalistic hegemony cannot simultaneously sustain itself and situate him in a position of social equality, Ringo is abolished; he is lost as the binary racial distinctions waver during the war and then violently reemerge in its aftermath, pushing him to the periphery.

CHAPTER VII

BAYARD SARTORIS

Emergent Hegemony

Bayard Sartoris is the narrator and protagonist of *The Unvanquished*. He begins the story as a twelve-year-old boy (around the year 1863) and ends the tale when he is twenty-four (around the year 1875)⁷. In that time, he and his society experience significant transformations. When the narrative begins, the nation is locked in the midst of the Civil War, and at the narrative's close, Reconstruction is still underway. The South loses the war, slavery is abolished, African Americans fight for political representation, Bayard's grandmother and father are both murdered, Bayard commits an honor killing to avenge his grandmother, and he later refuses to commit another honor killing to avenge his father and, instead, faces his father's murderer in a non-violent manner. As Bayard matures and experiences these transitions and events, he grows from an unquestioning child into an autonomous adult. In his youth, Bayard unfailingly subscribes to the dominant hegemony (including its insistence on violence in any form of honor-based confrontations) despite not always comprehending the intricacies of such subscription; as an adult, Bayard blends elements of the hegemonic and the counter-hegemonic elements to which he has been exposed. In so doing, he finds a way to oppose the violence that is built into the dominant hegemony for white males; he discovers a potential non-violent means of being of white man in Southern society. Despite the change that he embodies, however, the culture remains as steeped in racism and paternalism as it was prior to the war. Of all the characters in

⁷ While the narrated events occur in this time frame, Bayard is obviously several years removed from the events he narrates, as evidenced by the line in "An Odor or Verbena" in which he states that he did not learn how Ringo announced John Sartoris's death "until years later" (Faulkner 212).

the narrative, only the upper-class white male receives a voice and is able to effect any sort of lasting change.

When Bayard and Ringo are children playing war, they both cast the Confederate general Pemberton as the hero of their game. After Loosh informs the boys that both the cities of Vicksburg and Corinth have fallen to the Union Army, Bayard insists that he and Ringo role-play a battle in which the Confederate General Pemberton is victorious over the Union General Grant. At first, Bayard declares that he will be Pemberton, but Ringo remains transfixed by the reality that the Union Army may be encroaching on Southern soil. Bayard then proposes a reversal of roles “[b]ecause it was that urgent” that they play the game and that they reassert Southern dominance (Faulkner 7). Bayard underscores the urgency by casting Ringo in the role of Southern victor; he implicitly understands that everyone, especially slaves, must continue believing in assured Southern triumph.

Bayard and Ringo’s role-playing becomes deathly serious when they learn a Union troop is drawing near, and the burden of protecting the Sartoris home falls upon the two boys. Ringo acknowledges their responsibility as males to protect the household when he tells Bayard, “Look like hit haf to be us,” and Bayard confirms, “It’ll have to be us” (Faulkner 24). Besides this escapade being a boyhood adventure, it also indicates how both boys understand the constrictions of their race and gender roles. Although Millard, a typical authority figure for the children, is present, it is not her responsibility to fight because she is an elderly woman. Similarly, neither Bayard nor Ringo expect the other women or family slaves to fight on their behalf (Paradiso 32).⁸ Therefore, the two boys must take up arms and confront the Union soldiers. To convince a frightened Ringo that they must go through with their plan, Bayard

⁸ Ringo is permitted a special allowance in this case due to his status as Bayard’s playmate, and his complex relationship to the dominant hegemony has already been discussed at length in Chapter Six.

demands of his playmate, “Do you want to be free?” (Faulkner 26). Of course, Bayard, as a child, does not fully comprehend what freedom means; however, he does understand that slaves, unlike himself, are not free, and that granting them freedom would initiate a catastrophic upheaval of the Southern social order. This incident demonstrates Bayard’s subscription to the dominant hegemony and its insistence on the continued rigidity of race and gender norms. Additionally, it is an early indication of the boy’s willingness to engage in violence to preserve his familiar way of life.

Toward the end of the story “Raid” and throughout “Riposte in Tertio,” Bayard slips into the background as Ringo and Millard become the primary actors in the narrative. During this time, Bayard experiences first-hand the counter-hegemonic practices that they enact. He witnesses the ways in which Millard and Ringo usurp the power traditionally restricted to white males as they manipulate the codes of law to forge letters, steal mules, and then determine what goods are distributed throughout the community and in what manner they will be distributed. During the story “Vendée,” however, it is the dominant hegemonic code, not the counter-hegemonic, that holds sway over Bayard. He returns to the forefront of the narrated action as he pursues Grumby to avenge the murder of his grandmother. Upon catching Grumby, the teenaged Bayard shoots and kills the criminal, revealing his adherence to the intertwined notions of violence and honor, which are characteristic of the paternalistic hegemony.

In the story “Skirmish at Sartoris,” Bayard is again removed from the central action and serves as a narrating witness who internalizes both the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces in his culture as they violently clash. Whereas Bayard witnessed Millard and Ringo gain increasing levels of autonomy in the previous chapters, in this chapter, he observes how the dominant hegemony reasserts control. Drusilla is silenced and no longer permitted to express

herself as she would prefer (that is, as an autonomous individual not bound by restrictive gender norms), and African Americans are politically and socially silenced in the story. The ladies of Yoknapatawpha shame and force Drusilla into marrying John Sartoris, and the men, meanwhile, steal the election and deny an African American man from being elected marshal. In this chapter, Bayard dashes about to follow the action, choosing to follow Drusilla after she is initially confronted by the women of Yoknapatawpha. Similarly, he rushes into town in time to witness his father shoot the Burden men, steal the election, and deny the vote to African Americans. At this time, Bayard is experiencing and learning ways in which the dominant hegemony persistently and violently locks individuals into inescapable roles. Despite the doomed counter-hegemonic actions that Bayard observes other characters pursue, this does not discourage him from later taking his own counter-hegemonic stance in opposition to the violence that is built into the honor code.

In the final story, “An Odor of Verbena,” Faulkner revisits the social clash between the hegemonic and the counter-hegemonic that was previously depicted in “Skirmish at Sartoris.” This time, Bayard is again the central character, and he faces his culture of honor’s hegemonic pressure to duel Redmond, John Sartoris’s murderer, to the death. The whole of (masculine) society pushes Bayard to avenge his father’s murder: Bayard knows that Judge Wilkins is “trying to find the words with which to offer...his pistol” (Faulkner 214); Ringo suggests that they “bushwhack” Redmond like they did Grumby (218); Drusilla offers Bayard two dueling pistols (237); “five or six” men from John Sartoris’s old troop show up in support of the anticipated honor killing (246); and George Wyatt also offers Bayard a pistol and then declares that he will kill Redmond if Bayard refuses (246-247). Part of the code built into Yoknapatawpha’s dominant hegemony is an adherence to the maxim “eye for an eye.” Hence, so many males offer assistance

and/or support when they think Bayard will take Redmond's life in retaliation (Drusilla is an aberration; the rest of the women in the story do not condone the violence). Because Redmond's victim was the quintessentially-hegemonic John Sartoris, the cultural expectation is that Bayard will seek revenge for himself, for his family's honor, and for society at large. In the end, of course, Bayard refuses to comply with his culture's insistence on violence and faces Redmond completely unarmed.

What Faulkner achieves by denying the honor killing in the final story of the collection is a subversion of societal expectations. Instead, Bayard faces Redmond completely unarmed, and after shooting at and missing Bayard twice, Redmond stands up, walks to the train, and leaves town, never to return. In this sequence, Faulkner presents an alternative to the dominant hegemony; he offers an alternative version of what it means to be an upper-class white male in Yoknapatawpha. Sharon Paradiso pushes this argument further, contending that "Faulkner's white male characters embody the quandary of what it means to be a white, Southern man at a time when 'white,' 'the South,' and 'man' were all concepts under serious reconsideration" (22). In the Reconstruction South, white males were acutely aware of the challenges that the upset social and economic order posed to the dominant hegemony and its preferred power structures. Bayard, in living through these changes, has internalized the counter-hegemonic actions he witnessed in his youth and is ultimately the only character who is culturally-permitted to enact a continued form of counter-hegemonic action.

In discussing the conclusion of "An Odor of Verbena" and Bayard's commitment to non-violent action, Katherine Clark states that "[a]lthough something very right has just been accomplished in spite of tremendous difficulty, something very wrong has also been allowed to happen without anyone ever having raised an objection" (169). Clark is speaking of Drusilla's

ejection from the narrative and the fact that Drusilla's voice is completely silenced. June Dwyer expands on this assertion, including Millard as a subjected and silenced party:

Bayard is allowed to incorporate into his masculine persona a degree of the pacific and sometimes passive feminine world view. In so doing he makes a successful transition into adulthood and post-war life. Granny and Drusilla are not accorded the complementary privilege of retaining the active and empowering masculine elements that they have developed. Those masculine traits that they have taken on during the Civil War must be relinquished at its close. They are asked not to evolve, but to retreat, and they will not. In consequence, they do not make socially acceptable transitions into post-war life. And so the familiar theme of Faulkner's women who "disrupt" and then are "silenced" plays itself out in *The Unvanquished*: Bayard wins; the women lose. (55-56)

So, while Millard and Drusilla are not permitted to retain the masculine power they have attained, Bayard, in contrast, is allowed to retain his commitment to passivity that his culture genders as feminine. As a white upper-class male, he is permitted to deviate somewhat from the dominant hegemony's script. Ringo and even John Sartoris in his latter days may be read as characters who are similarly doomed like Drusilla and Millard; Ringo loses his autonomy and space in society, and John Sartoris's final commitment to non-violence in his showdown with Redmond goes completely unnoticed. In the end, it is only Bayard whose voice is not stifled.

Bayard's final refusal to kill Redmond has been variously interpreted by many different critics, some more positively than others. Peter Sharpe reads Bayard's refusal to kill Redmond as the emergence of a new white Southern male identity. Sharpe states:

A series of cataclysmic reversals and revisionings of gender, class, and race fomented by the war and absorbed by Bayard enable him to deflect Wyatt's challenge into an

interiority, a reflectiveness, that would mark for Faulkner, nothing less than a new style of postbellum consciousness in the South, a new way of being a man that displaces the rigid code of white male honor. (85)

Sharpe's assertions regarding Bayard are somewhat accurate, but this view is also too optimistic regarding Bayard's impact on his culture. While Bayard's choice is certainly permitted by the other white males in his culture, no one intends to follow his example. Therefore, Bayard does not "displace" the rigid code of honor; he merely finds an acceptable means of maneuvering around it. The exchange between George Wyatt and Bayard after Redmond departs intimates this exact sentiment:

"You aint done anything to be ashamed of. I wouldn't have done it that way, myself. I'd a shot at him once, anyway. But that's your way or you wouldn't have done it."

"Yes," [Bayard] said. "I would do it again."

"Damned if I would." (Faulkner 250-251)

While George Wyatt and others acknowledge their acceptance of Bayard's actions, they also indicate their unwillingness to conform to his non-violent practice. Furthermore, although Bayard may have removed the violence from the duel, he has not abolished the necessity of the duel itself; therefore, the Southern white male code of honor has not been overturned, but remains intact. To avoid the confrontation entirely would have resulted in Bayard losing his honor. Cleanth Brooks identifies this exact concern and how Bayard desires to preserve his own personal sense of honor while still satisfying the community's demand for an honorable confrontation (89). Bayard even admits to his Aunt Jenny that he must face Redmond because he "want[s] to be thought well of" (Faulkner 243). Following Bayard's train of thought, Koji Motomura reminds readers that "[d]espite his act of defiance, Bayard still must live the rest of

his life as a male in a gendered society where violence is gendered as male” (95). Hegemonic gender norms prevail, regardless of Bayard’s actions, and this includes the notion of the duel. Should Bayard choose to bring no weapon to a gun fight, that is his choice, but the encounter itself is hegemonically-dictated; Bayard’s pacifism in the matter does not overturn the code of Southern white male honor.

Arnold Goldman more accurately describes Bayard’s action as “a personal gesture” that allows him to step around the code of honor. Bayard’s choice is a personal “transcendence of the Southern ‘code of honour’” rather than an overthrow of it (Goldman 123). Goldman’s assertion echoes that of Brooks who claims that Bayard’s “action, then, is to be thought of not as the rejection of a wrongheaded code of conduct but as the transcendence of that code in a complex action that honors the community’s demand that he should call his father’s assassin to account, while at the same time acknowledging the higher law embodied in ‘Thou shalt not kill’” (Brooks 89). This is significant because Bayard realizes what is at stake. He understands that the men of the community will adhere to the hegemonic dictate for violence, and if he wants to truly remain committed to non-violence, then he must engage in the duel and he must remain silent regarding his non-violent intentions until after the duel is over. Otherwise, one or more of the other men would live up to George Wyatt’s promise to shoot Redmond himself. All of this indicates that if Bayard genuinely desires non-violence, then he can only realistically attain this goal as a personal decision and not at the societal level. In debating what to do, Bayard muses:

At least this will be my chance to find out if I am what I think I am or if I just hope; if I am going to do what I have taught myself is right or if I am just going to wish I were.

(Faulkner 215, italics in original)

Bayard's thought process demonstrates his internal struggle, and his unwillingness to vocalize this struggle indicates that he does not expect the rest of society to understand that which he has taught himself to be right. In this passage, he reveals that the non-violence to which he is committed stands in direct opposition to his culture's expectations; non-violence from a Southern white male (and "The Sartoris," no less) is yet another example of a counter-hegemonic practice in the narrative.

Ultimately, the narrative's conclusion indicates the resilience of the dominant hegemony. Despite the abolition of slavery, the dominant white male paternalists continue to oppress African Americans economically, socially, and politically. Despite the power that female characters acquired during the war, they must relinquish that power at the end of the war. Despite the collapse of the agrarian economy, the dominant hegemony remains entrenched and adapts to an industrializing economy in such a fashion that the same kinds of people remain in power. The only counter-hegemonic action that is ultimately permissible is Bayard's commitment to non-violence; he removes the necessity of killing from confrontations over honor. Even that opportunity, however, is only afforded to Bayard because he is a white, upper-class male and, most importantly, the son of the dominant hegemony's ideal man: John Sartoris. The white male is permitted to forge a modified means of living in Yoknapatawpha; all the others are still subjected to the oppressive restrictions of the dominant hegemony.

While this conclusion may seem bleak, it does not necessarily have to be read in this way. It is true that the dominant hegemony conservatively resists change, and often this change must come from the top—from those members who are in positions of social power. Bayard's non-violent action, although it is not immediately accepted as the new norm, still wins the approval of his community members. They acknowledge that he has behaved bravely and should not be

ashamed of his actions. Clark claims that “Bayard displays courage and honor and exacts a vengeance without also causing more bloodshed. In this way, he can be his own man within the community rather than outside of it” (125). This is the way in which hegemony operates; changes come slowly and subtly. Bayard’s choice presents the possibility for a new emergent hegemony that is not bound to violence and may eventually shed more of the culture’s restrictive gender and race norms.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRODUCTION OF *THE UNVANQUISHED*

Selective Tradition and Counter-hegemonic Subversions

To discuss the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic implications of the production of *The Unvanquished*, it is necessary to return to Raymond Williams's contentions regarding tradition. Williams defines tradition as "an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present" (115). The dominant hegemony of any society appeals to this selective tradition in order to ratify its own existence. Specifically, the dominant hegemony relies upon certain aspects of the past and intentionally excludes other aspects in order to legitimate its own continued dominance while simultaneously marginalizing counter-hegemonies. This process creates a hegemonic narrative about the nature of the present culture based on specifically-selected elements of that culture's past. Inevitably, this dominant hegemony also imposes its current values, beliefs, judgments, norms, and mores onto narratives about the past. This process is what enables the exclusion of the counter-hegemonic forces that may have been present in the past, further legitimizing the dominant hegemony.

In the 1930s, the dominant hegemony of the South was white-centric, paternalistic, and selective in nature; it hearkened back to the perceived positive aspects of the antebellum South while glossing over the injustices and brutalities of slavery. Wolfgang Hochbruck summarizes this process by explaining that "[o]ne generation's experiences are superseded by the preceding generation's need for a pre-established order, and overruled by succeeding generations' needs for myth and legends" (228). Essentially, the white paternalistic hegemony of the 1930s located stability in the culture of the antebellum South and elevated that place and time to a mythical

status. The Old South, with its agrarian lifestyle, rigid racial hierarchy, restrictive gender norms, and claim to moral uprightness, became a lost locus of identity, which spawned the highly romanticized myth of the Lost Cause—a myth that provided various explanations for the righteous South’s defeat, ranging from betrayal to divine punishment and an enduring will to piously thrive like Job or the Israelites under the weight of that divine test. The myth was further bolstered by an appeal to a supposedly greater prevalence of righteous moral values that were upheld by “courageous men and spotless women” (Faulkner 190).

The selective view of better, simpler times in the past is certainly not exclusive to 1930s America; however, the particular white paternalistic hegemony of that period was responsible for the rise of a cultural phenomenon that became known as the Civil War romance. This was a genre of media, both print and film, that resulted in the proliferation of Civil War stereotypes such as contented slaves who enjoy their life of simple servitude, quintessential Confederate war heroes, virtuous Southern belles and matriarchs, and deplorable and ruthless Yankee soldiers who steal the family silver. Jason Dupuy comments on the popularity of this genre, explaining that “the vast poverty of the Depression years saw the culture industry react frequently with images that reinforced a comfortable view of traditional American values” (2). As the Depression lengthened and worsened, romantic images of the past became increasingly more appealing, and the Civil War romance genre flourished. Some well-known examples of this genre include Thomas Dixon’s Reconstruction Trilogy, the movie adaptation *Birth of a Nation*, the novel and movie *So Red the Rose*, and the wildly popular book and movie *Gone with the Wind*. Through the culture industry, the dominant hegemony was able to continuously propagate its preferred romanticized images of a lost past, further legitimating the existence of the white paternal power structure.

Faulkner was certainly not immune to the influence of the hegemony of his time; he was just as enmeshed in it as any other individual, and he also found a space in the Civil War romance genre to publish some stories for a profit. Michael Millgate indicates how well Faulkner's collection fit into the genre, noting that *The Unvanquished* "was purchased by Hollywood—according to Faulkner's own story, as a potential rival to *Gone with the Wind*" (170). Many critics of Faulkner's day even lauded *The Unvanquished* as "Faulkner's best work so far" and anticipated "that the book would earn Faulkner a large new audience of appreciative readers, especially in the South" (Donaldson 186). However, no one should assume that Faulkner unwittingly and unconditionally believed in and supported the myths propagated by the 1930s' dominant hegemony. Although *The Unvanquished* is a collection of stories in the Civil War romance genre, it also subverts the genre and readers' expectations in the ways that it disrupts discourses about race, class, and gender and in the way that it challenges received notions regarding honor, virtue, and violence.

The first five of the seven stories of *The Unvanquished* originally appeared in print in *The Saturday Evening Post*, which was known for promoting an intentionally conservative viewpoint. Susan V. Donaldson offers an apt description of *The Saturday Evening Post*'s agenda by way of a quote from George Horace Lorimer, editor of the magazine for thirty-seven years: "Buoyed by fervent patriotism and boundless optimism, Lorimer once remarked in a famous interview, 'What this country needs is more professional Pollyannas'" (180). By promoting such a good, old-fashioned view of America, Lorimer actively furthered a conservative agenda to a receptive American audience. Donaldson contends that "a unified image of the *Post* reader emerged defined by conservatism, appreciation of business, hard work, celebrations of the past—and a largely white Anglo-Saxon Protestant heritage" (181). The *Post* definitely was attempting

to appeal to as many readers as possible; it was uninterested in publishing any literature that might unsettle or polarize readers because that would lead to fewer sales.

In Faulkner's Civil War stories, *The Saturday Evening Post* certainly identified something that it regarded as popular and traditional enough to sell. Initial criticisms were overall very positive and receptive to *The Unvanquished* (even after its novelization, which also included the more polarizing final story "An Odor of Verbena"). A more recent critic's commentary will help elucidate why the collection initially experienced a positive reception; Ineke Bockting remarks:

For many critics, the novel is a failure. Being narrated consistently by a young Southerner brought up with all the traditions of the white upper-class South, Faulkner's own voice is obliterated and may thus seem to condone, or even to celebrate, the racism and the often successful attempts at the re-oppression of the black population that the text presents.

(121)

In part, at least, the conservative readership enjoyed Faulkner's Civil War stories because they found them to be digestible: the narrative is relatively straightforward (as opposed to some of Faulkner's more convoluted prose); many of Rosa Millard's "adventures are familiar Civil War tall tales" and are portrayed in a comical, intentionally entertaining manner (Roberts, "A Precarious Pedestal" 238); and, at least on the surface, the stories seem to reinforce the image of the romanticized antebellum South as a land of upright and unvanquished individualists who were courageously opposing the encroaching North that threatened to obliterate traditional Southern culture. Based on these conventional emplotments, several critics have described *The Unvanquished* as a lesser Faulkner work, and Michael Millgate is certainly not alone in his estimation of the work when he describes the stories as suffering from a "lack of serious moral

complication” and bearing “the mark of stories skillfully and professionally created for the particular market offered by *The Saturday Evening Post*” (170).

That *The Unvanquished* has often been considered a lesser Faulkner work is no academic secret. Susan V. Donaldson states that even Faulkner himself scorned the stories he submitted to the *Post*: “They were, he told correspondents in the thirties—specifically his publisher Robert Haas and literary agent Morton Goldman—‘pot boilers,’ ‘mechanical stories in which I had no faith,’ ‘big check stuff,’ and tales that were simply ‘knock[ed] out’ (183). The question of why Faulkner would write fiction he would then so denigrate is easily answered: Faulkner needed money, so he wrote stories for popular magazines that would be successful in the white paternalistic hegemony that those magazines supported. However, to dismiss these stories as merely examples of nostalgic and formulaic genre fiction (as some critics have done) would be to draw too hasty a conclusion. The *Post* was certainly a traditional and conservative magazine, and a prominent hegemonic cultural element; however, Faulkner’s choice of publication venue should not be considered blind subscription to and promotion of the hegemonic purposes the *Post* served. Certainly, *The Unvanquished* is in some ways quite typical of its time; it is, after all, a culturally enmeshed artifact produced by an artist who is just as equally implicated in the American culture, values, beliefs and morals, and the driving forces of capitalism. It would be impossible for the writer to escape all these elements because he “is firmly entwined in the social fabric of meaning” (Lisman 81). Despite that, Faulkner’s stories undermine the expectations that were typical of Civil War romance and the selective tradition those tales reinforce.

The fact that many contemporary and conservative reviewers gave *The Unvanquished* a positive reception, commenting on its mass market appeal, is somewhat misleading. Notably, many of the positive reviews focused on the stories that had previously appeared in the *Post* and

failed to account for the final two stories: “Skirmish at Sartoris,” which was declined by the *Post* and “An Odor of Verbena,” which was previously unpublished (Donaldson 186). Donaldson notes that those reviewers who did take notice of the last story in the book “remarked, a bit uneasily, on the ‘incongruous,’ ‘different,’ or ‘question-marked’ nature of ‘An Odor of Verbena’” (186). The vast majority of critics who approach *The Unvanquished* still call attention to the turning point represented by the final story. Donaldson argues that “[i]f ‘An Odor of Verbena’ signals an end to the adventures of Bayard and Ringo, it also casts a disturbing new light on the preceding tales” (186-87). By negating the force of the codes of honor and glory that underpin all the stories, “An Odor of Verbena” interrogates the very social fabric and structure of the Old South, including the legitimacy of race and gender norms, while simultaneously hauntingly reinforcing those same norms in different ways as the text silences the voices of counter-hegemonic female characters and reinscribes both Ringo and Loosh as little more than slaves. The stories’ publication history further complicates a hegemonic/counter-hegemonic understanding of the text. Faulkner appended “An Odor of Verbena” to the stories in order to clarify the message, thereby providing a particular moral thrust against the romanticization present in the previous tales. However, the reinscribed race and gender norms indicate how hegemony can evolve and adapt, incorporating elements of the counter-hegemonic without fully destroying itself. Additionally, while “An Odor of Verbena” is a departure from the tone of the rest of the stories, it also emphasizes points of resistance that are already present throughout the narrative. These fissures in the tales allow for a more nuanced reading of the text for both its hegemonic and counter-hegemonic elements, and the ways in which they influence one another.

Donaldson presents additional evidence that discusses Faulkner’s revisions to the original stories when he transformed them into the novelized collection:

Reading text and intertext suggests that *The Unvanquished* first arouses and then frustrates and subverts expectations associated with those *Saturday Evening Post* readers Faulkner supposedly accommodates. Indeed, the last story, “An Odor of Verbena,” and the passages added to the preceding stories in *The Unvanquished* imply that reader expectations attuned to the tales of adventure and glory can be misleading and even dangerously blind to the rigid codification of storybook legends. (180)

Donaldson argues that Faulkner’s entry in the Civil War romance genre is a departure from the genre’s stereotypical character types and emplotments. Instead, *The Unvanquished*, in its modified form from the original stories, and with the addition of the final two stories, subverts the readers’ expectations by not delivering an unqualified tale of honor, violence, and glory in the antebellum, wartime, and Reconstruction South.

Clark posits an argument that is similar to Donaldson’s, stating that the romanticized images portrayed in *The Unvanquished* belong more to the order of a retroactively-imposed fantasy than to reality. Clark cites a list of satirical subversions of Civil War romance icons that are present in *The Unvanquished*:

Instead of the Cavalier Confederate hero, there is “Colonel” John Sartoris, the renegade leader of a small, ineffectual guerilla group... Instead of Southern gentlemen, we get Grumby’s Independents, an outlaw band of Southern poor whites who pillage the neighborhood and terrorize, not protect, the women. Instead of the delicate Southern belle, there is the tomboy Drusilla... Instead of faithful darkies, there is the traitorous Loosh, who *betrays* the hiding place of the family silver and joins the mass exodus of obviously *discontented* slaves leaving their masters. Instead of the depraved Yankee

marauders, there is Colonel Dick, perhaps the most gallant, courtly, and gentlemanly character in the novel. (5, emphasis in original)

Clark identifies additional ways in which *The Unvanquished* subverts reader expectations of the Civil War romance genre. Clark points out how *The Unvanquished* questions the myths of grandeur surrounding the war through John Sartoris and the notable absence of the Colonel and of fighting in the narrative. Koji Motomura corroborates this perspective by identifying how “[u]nlike other Southern writers, Faulkner emphasizes the negative, rather than the positive, aspects of the Cavalier myth from the Lost Cause period” (87). John Sartoris is, in actuality, significantly less impressive than the myth that surrounds him, and Clark asserts that his wartime feats “may well be more absurd than heroic” (85). In *The Unvanquished*, the Colonel is only once depicted in “battle,” during which he fools a Union troop into surrendering. In another instance, Clark observes that “[w]hen the Yankees come after the most-wanted Colonel John Sartoris at his home, he escapes by dissembling as the town idiot, Unc Few Mitch” (117). Furthermore, regarding issues of Southern propriety and morality, John Sartoris “is just as oblivious as Drusilla...and must be asked to marry her by her mother” (Clark 43). For Clark, what emerges from the text is a satire of the Civil War romance. Through the characters and actions of John Sartoris, Drusilla, Millard, Ringo, and Bayard, and through the lack of heroic battles, the book completely explodes stereotypical Civil War romance character types and conventions and subverts the hegemonic expectations of Faulkner’s 1930s readership.

The romanticized image of the Old South is further denied in *The Unvanquished* through the collection’s setting. In the book, there is a conspicuous lack of depiction of the antebellum South: “[b]y beginning as it does in the third year of the War, the novel avoids the necessity of setting the Old South scene by avoiding the whole issue of the Old South altogether. The novel

opens at the point of the Old South's imminent demise" (Clark 30). Consequently, for the older Bayard who is narrating the story, the Old South is already gone; it never exists either in his memory or in the realm of the narrative. The expected Civil War romance emplotments exist wholly in the minds of readers of the genre, and *The Unvanquished* undermines these expectations. Donaldson claims that this subversion of reader expectations is a kind of narrative trap that Faulkner employs (Donaldson 191). Such narrative traps are imbedded throughout *The Unvanquished*, and sometimes take the form of war stories that subvert hegemonic expectations of the genre of Civil War romance.

Civil War romance tales derive their content from historical fact, although these facts are often distorted and overly-romanticized. Critics Katherine Clark and Wolfgang Hochbruck contend that Faulkner approaches Southern history in such a fashion in order to emphasize its socially-constructed nature; for Raymond Williams, this would concur with his notions of the selective nature of tradition. The result of Faulkner's approach to Southern history, when applied to the war tales in *The Unvanquished*, is that the tales Bayard hears (or sometimes is denied the hearing thereof) subvert readerly expectations of the Civil War romance genre. Regarding this tendency in Faulkner's work, Clark argues that "Faulkner was not interested in recreating the past. He was not interested in the Southern past in and of itself, but as heritage, memories, and stories which affect later generations" (23). The effect of these distorted memories is that they produce the legends and myths associated with the Southern past; they transform into a selective tradition that promotes the myth of the Lost Cause, the Cavalier Legend as embodied by John Sartoris, and the Civil War romance genre of literature and film. Hochbruck delivers a similar assessment of Faulkner's approach to Southern history in his fiction: "It is not the facts that count, but the voice-induced vision, not the historical data but the celebration of this vision, and

the promise of its continuation—but with the incremental irony that this story will be handed on in the transmogrified form of blatantly counter-factual folklore” (219). “Folklore” is really one of the operative words of Hochbruck’s argument. As counter-factual as these tales may be, they are the stories the dominant hegemony circulates and uses to ratify its existence. In *The Unvanquished*, there are two important instances of what Faulkner calls “war-telling” at the hypodiegetic level: the first is actually a denial of such tales in “Ambuscade,” and the second one is about the locomotive chase that Drusilla narrates (95).

In “Ambuscade,” Bayard and Ringo celebrate one of John Sartoris’s semi-annual returns from the war and anxiously anticipate hearing his war stories. They desperately want to hear about “the cannon and the flags and the anonymous yelling” (Faulkner 15). However, after waiting all night to hear these tales, when Bayard asks, “How can you fight in mountains, Father?” then the only reply he receives from Sartoris is “You cant. You just have to. Now you boys run on to bed” (Faulkner 17). This scene, early in the collection, demonstrates Faulkner’s tendency to avoid the issue of the actual fighting of the war altogether, much like how Clark contends he avoids the issue of depicting the Old South. If *The Unvanquished* were typical of the Civil War romance genre, then it would be very curious for Faulkner to shy away from a depiction of heroic battle so early in the narrative. The first chance that the boys have to hear about an actual war (one which they began the story by reenacting in their role-playing game) is, instead, transformed into a refusal on the part of the teller to tell the tale. Bayard and Ringo’s desire for a good war story is denied, and their romanticized conceptions of the fighting are deflated, as are the readers’. As has been pointed out by several critics, it is not Faulkner’s purpose to romanticize the war, and had Faulkner desired to do so, then he would have portrayed more instances of glorious fighting, as would be typical of the Civil War romance genre (Brooks

80; Clark 16; Hochbruck 216). Instead, John Sartoris's refusal to tell a heroic war tale subverts hegemonic expectation of the Civil War romance.

In Drusilla's tale of the locomotive chase, Bayard and Ringo do actually get to hear the tale; however, the distorted nature of the facts and its conclusion of the loss of the railroad altogether are symbolic of the Lost Cause itself and ways in which that selective tradition is an inaccurate portrayal of history. In the tale, a Union locomotive chases a Confederate one, and although Bayard admits that Drusilla "probably told [them] the reason for it (she must have known)...[he and Ringo] didn't hear...didn't even listen" (Faulkner 96). To a young Bayard, the chase is symbolic of the war, and the details are extraneous. The myth surrounding the events becomes the more important part of the tale. Therefore, as a boy hearing the tale, Bayard perceives it "like a meeting between two iron knights of the old time, not for material gain but for principle—honor denied with honor, courage denied with courage—the deed done not for the end but for the sake of the doing" (Faulkner 98). In the end, Drusilla signifies Southern victory despite the fact that the Union Army later tore up the railroad track; she says, "they could tear the track up but they couldn't take back the fact that we had done it. They couldn't take that from us" (Faulkner 98-99). The emphasis is on the struggle and the Confederates proving that they could win until the Union Army somehow altered the rules of the conflict and petulantly retaliated; in Drusilla's telling, the Confederates enjoy the knowledge that they had won and could win, and they bask in the honor of the conflict. The final outcome is viewed through this lens of distorted triumph, much like the way in which the Lost Cause distorted perceptions of the entire war.

The locomotive chase is one of Faulkner's emplotments that demythologizes the Lost Cause. While Drusilla and Bayard celebrate the honor and valor of the locomotive chase, several

other significant meanings slip into the text. The tale of the locomotive chase mirrors John Sartoris's refusal to recount a war story for the boys in "Ambuscade." Like the myth of the Lost Cause, the triumph in the locomotive story depends on the honor of the conflict and a perceived sort of victory through that honor despite the ultimate loss of the entire railroad. However, both Bayard's inability to recount the purpose of the locomotive chase and the Union Army's destruction of the railroad signify the absence of victory and the denial of heroic feats of Civil War romance. Instead, the only power the story holds is that of fiction, legend, and myth. Like the romanticized portraits of the Old South, it is a mythic tale that lives on in the absence of the subject material (since the railroad, like the Old South, is destroyed).

Wolfgang Hochbruck further elaborates on the way that Faulkner turns the war-tale of the locomotive chase against the conventional Confedophile emplotment of heroic feats of Civil War romance. Hochbruck states that Drusilla's version of the tale muddles real life events, turning the actual tale on its head:

The only similar incident during the war, in which a lone engine was pursued by another lone engine up the route from Atlanta in the direction of Chattanooga, was the so-called Andrews Raid in 1862...when a Union commando tried to abduct a locomotive in order to destroy Confederate supply lines in Georgia...Drusilla Hawk narrates the story of the railroad chase from hearsay, and Bayard—by his own admission not the most intelligent of characters—again retells it as a boy of his age would have understood it. In consequence, little of the historical event remains intact. (218)

Hochbruck points out that, in Bayard's retelling of Drusilla's retelling, the facts are distorted; the Union civilian volunteer scout James J. Andrews who commandeered the Confederate train is removed from Bayard's version and is, instead, transformed into "the starred Saint Andrew's

cross nailed to the cab roof” of the Confederate train (Faulkner 98; Hochbruck 218). Hochbruck reads Bayard’s “complete distortion and the literal reversal of the ficto-mythical emplotment of the Locomotive Chase episode...[as] a prime opportunity for Faulkner to exemplify how history can ‘jump the rails’ in the re-telling” (219). Fiction, myth, and legend stand in for reality, and Faulkner’s subversion of the actual tale in favor of this Confedophillic emplotment questions the ability of the Lost Cause to accurately portray reality. The locomotive chase and the other mythic battles that Bayard and Ringo desperately wait to hear from John Sartoris are all suspect and work against the conventional purposes of the Civil War romance. These narrative traps enable *The Unvanquished* to exist in and seemingly conform to the conventions of the Civil War romance genre while actually interrogating traditional notions of the Old South, exposing them as selective and nostalgic, as a means of discrediting them.

Despite Faulkner’s concerns with the Civil War and Southern history, his works are, of course, engaged in the hegemonic discourse of his cultural moment. Faulkner wrote *The Unvanquished* during the Depression—a time during which the culture industry actively sought to reinforce traditional views of a conservative America in order to create a stable sense of continued American identity (Dupuy 2). While working on the stories of *The Unvanquished*, Faulkner simultaneously addressed the issue of cultural memory and representations of history through the narrative style of *Absalom, Absalom!*, a novel in which the Southern past does not speak for itself but is reconstructed seventy or more years later in a Harvard dorm room by two young men, based on an amalgam of the stories Quentin Compson has heard over the years from various sources. Clark is wholly accurate in identifying the manner in which Faulkner often chose to piece together versions of stories, sometimes distorted through the lens of cultural memory, and how he used this technique to undermine received notions of historical truth.

In destabilizing hegemonic notions of the past, *The Unvanquished* offers an alternative selective version of the Old South that is just as valid as *Gone with the Wind* ever was (or equally as invalid, as the case may be). As Donaldson postulates, “if this last story [“An Odor of Verbena”] reveals that readers can be trapped by their own expectations, it also suggests that the horizons or boundaries defining those expectations can be changed and expanded” (191). She cites as examples the fact that George Wyatt and Drusilla, although unwilling to subscribe to Bayard’s non-violent confrontation with Redmond, do “finally acknowledge [his] right to step outside the familiar drama” (Donaldson 191). So, too, can the reader’s perceptions be altered through experience. Just as Bayard presents a counter-hegemonic practice in reaction to the dominant hegemony of his time, Faulkner’s collection also presents a version of the past that stands in contrast to his readers’ selective and romanticized expectations of the Old South. Bayard’s non-violence and his ripple of an effect on his society indicate how the hegemonic undergoes slow and subtle alteration; simultaneously, the subversions of readerly expectations in *The Unvanquished* indicate ways in which counter-hegemonic notions may destabilize the dominant version of a selective tradition, thereby slowly reshaping the dominant hegemony.

Ultimately, as Raymond Williams explains, hegemony is a process of cultural change. Faulkner’s depiction of the dominant hegemony of the 1860s and 1870s captures the white paternalistic nature of the time period and utilizes the romanticized portrait of the Old South that the dominant hegemony of the 1930s conceptualized. Faulkner’s work differs in that it largely fails to deliver the Civil War romance tales in the hegemonically-expected way. The war is noticeably absent from the action; Millard, Drusilla, and Ringo destroy conventional Civil War romance emplotments; and Bayard repudiates the violence so often associated with honor in these kinds of tales. However, Faulkner’s text, while critiquing some elements of the genre, does

fail to treat the issue of race as seriously as some of his other prominent works, indicating how hegemony only slowly alters by incorporating new elements while repudiating some of its older views that it comes to dismiss as “out of date” or “nostalgic” (Williams 116).

Peter Nicolaisen, in discussing some shortcomings of *The Unvanquished*, indicates that issues surrounding Southern race relations are not as intricately addressed in these stories as they are in several of Faulkner’s other works, and this observation is further evidence of the slowly-changing nature of hegemony (81). Patricia Yaeger also identifies this same issue and states that slaves during the exodus scene are treated as so much “flotsam and jetsam” for the background of the tale (205). By the end of the narrative, of course, the paternalism of the narrative’s dominant hegemony is preserved: the escaped Loosh inexplicably returns to the Sartoris’ employ (Faulkner 242), and Ringo is reduced to Bayard’s “boy” (213). So, while the book directly challenges notions of honor and violence that dominated romanticized conceptions of the Old South, the narrative is much more subtle in the ways that it addresses race. Certainly, the treatment of this issue is not as persistent or sophisticated as it is in other Faulkner works such as *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, or *Go Down, Moses*. Consequently, the collection of stories, on the surface, seems to promote a similar view as the dominant white paternalistic hegemony in the way that it glosses over the serious issues associated with slavery and race relations.

At the conclusion of the narrative, the white paternalistic hegemony of Bayard’s day is preserved; women and African Americans are not provided a space for social and political representation in the final story. So, while Bayard’s action does counter one prominent aspect of the white paternalistic hegemony, it fails to address the imposition of the racial hierarchy and restrictive gender norms. Bayard continues to live as an individual enmeshed in a society that is

characterized by a white paternalistic hegemony; similarly, Faulkner's collection is not independent of the culture in which it was produced, but was created in that environment and must, therefore, address the issues circulating in the culture at the time of its production. As a literary artifact of the 1930s, it challenges romantic notions of the Old South as a glorious land of virtuous heroes, exposing the violent code of honor for the habituated and senseless brutality that it was; however, the narrative fails to directly address the brutalities of slavery, falling in line with a trend that was all too typical of Civil War romance novels. The result is exactly what Raymond Williams posits: that hegemony is a continuous process. Certain elements of the past and present are selected in order to promote the dominant hegemony, other elements are excluded, and counter-hegemonic elements are slowly incorporated into the narrative of the dominant hegemony in a perpetual process of hegemonic development.

Williams explains the hegemonic process of change by emphasizing how the selective tradition upon which it is built is at once both powerful and vulnerable. It is powerful because "it is tied to many practical continuities—families, places, institutions, a language—which are indeed directly experienced," and it is vulnerable because "it has in practice to discard whole areas of significance, or reinterpret or dilute them, or convert them into forms which support or at least do not contradict the really important elements of the current hegemony" (Williams 116). In *The Unvanquished*, the power and vulnerability of the selective tradition are both apparent. The dominant hegemony is tied to entrenched institutions of paternalism, racism, and sexism, and it is embodied by the Sartoris family name. Also, while the dominant hegemony is able to selectively dismiss, disregard, or silence most of the counter-hegemonic practices and beliefs in the narrative, it is unable to deny Bayard the ability to repudiate its intertwining of violence and honor. This is a demonstration of the vulnerability of the selective tradition and how "its

selective privileges and interests...can still be recognized, demonstrated, and broken” (Williams 117). The same assessments can be made for the actual production of the book in the 1930s. While Faulkner may have drawn his source material from the Civil War romance genre, the subversions to the genre in *The Unvanquished* threaten the dominant hegemony of the 1930s. Raymond Williams maintains that the “struggle for and against selective tradition is understandably a major part of all contemporary cultural activity” (117). The nature of the dominant hegemony cannot be overturned wholesale all at once; change is inevitable but gradual. Hegemony is a constant process.

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