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**Passing into the Darkness:  
Sexuality, Race, and Integration of the Segregated  
in the Works of the Southern Renaissance**

by

Miho Matsui

B. A.

Hokkaido University, 1987

M. A.

Hokkaido University, 1991

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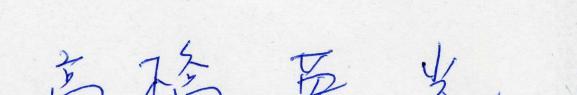
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## Introduction

During the Southern Renaissance, from the 1920s to the 1950s, when the policy of racial segregation was nearly universal in the South, certain white southern writers crossed racial boundaries into blackness in their literary efforts (or in their imaginations) and produced works through “double vision,” a vision that includes both white and black viewpoints.<sup>1</sup> This vision penetrates the seemingly ordered surface of southern society and sometimes leads to grotesque representations of the South. In other words, white female and male writers, by embracing the racial Other’s viewpoint and committing racial transgression or passing, reveal that the society constructed by whites is merely fictional. When looking through the Other’s eyes, white society itself is distorted. At the same time, these writers who call into question the notion of whiteness seek “alternative” gender, sexual, and racial subjectivities.

As a recent racial identity study has shown, cultural discrimination between whiteness and blackness in American society is a social construction. White people project negative thoughts or “undesirable qualities” (Entzminger 78), such as primitiveness, savagery, and promiscuity, onto their racial Others. Thus, blackness is not a representation of what black people really are, but rather of “what white is not” (Sturken and Cartwright 104) or, in other words, “the projection of the not-me” (Morrison, *Playing* 38).<sup>2</sup> This view of racial identity enables the argument that being born

white does not ensure whiteness. For example, John N. Duvall notes racial ambiguity of former President Bill Clinton described in Toni Morrison's essay:

Years ago, in the middle of the Whitewater investigation, one heard the first murmurs: white skin notwithstanding, this is our first black President. Blacker than any actual black person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime. After all, Clinton displays almost every trope of blackness—single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas.

(Morrison, "The Talk of the Town" 32)

Using Duvall's words, "[a]s President, Clinton projected a white face to America while performing cultural blackness" (*Race x*). Meanwhile, Duvall also argues that William Faulkner is "America's first Black Nobel Laureate" because of the "whiteface minstrel" performance in his work (*Race x*). Faulkner creates "racially inverted white characters" in the form of "individual[s] who appear white even as [they] perform cultural blackness" ("Black Sexuality" 133).<sup>3</sup> As Duvall argues, "white skin is insufficient to make a white Southerner" (*Race xv*), and "Caucasians as well as Negroes can perform blackness" ("Black Sexuality" 135). This approach to determining whiteness and blackness based on performance has expanded the range of racial identities to be considered.

The key element of the argument regarding

whiteness/blackness is sexuality. Sexuality has long played a critical role in the construction of racial and class identities, especially in the South. Southern sexual ideology, according to Anne Goodwyn Jones, emerged historically as “a sort of unhappy marriage between Victorianism and slavery” (“Like a Virgin” 56). In the South, sex, sexuality, and sexual desire are allocated according to the color line. The myth of southern womanhood defines white middle- and upper-class women as embodiments of purity, as opposed to black women (and also lower-class white women), who are presented as being inherently sexual: “Sexuality was natural, even desired by black women, and unnatural (thus never officially desired) for white women” (A. Jones, “Women Writers” 277).<sup>4</sup> Southern belles are supposed to lack sexual desire, and their sexuality is normative only when it is used for producing “a legitimate family line that is pure white” (A. Jones, “Women Writers” 281). The white southern woman is a “perpetuator of white superiority in legitimate line” (Cash 87) and a bastion against miscegenation, the southern white’s greatest fear. Thus, discrimination between the “asexual” female body and the “sexual” one creates southern whiteness, and in this regard, “the southern lady is at the core of a region’s self-definition” (A. Jones, *Tomorrow* 4).<sup>5</sup>

As Diane Roberts points out, in southern culture, white and black women are represented in terms of the dichotomy between “high and low, pure and polluted, bodies,” and [t]his opposition became part of the ideology of slavery

itself: the sexual availability of slave women (who could not without danger refuse the Master), their ability to perform hard physical labour, their exposed bodies, their dark skin itself served to make the lady in the big house more ladylike: more *untouchable*, more *angelic*, more *white*.

(*Aunt Jemima* 4; italics original)

In the South, “[s]exuality itself is represented . . . as something black” (Roberts, *Aunt Jemima* 175), and this notion of “sexuality as black” is used to control the bodies of both white women and black people.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, if white women have sexual desires and have sex outside of marriage, they transgress not only ethical but also racial boundaries. We can see this in the words of *The Sound and the Fury*'s Quentin Compson, who criticizes and laments the sexual behavior of his sister Caddy as something only black girls would indulge in:

*Why wont you bring him to the house, Caddy? Why must you do like nigger women do in the pasture the ditches the dark woods hot hidden furious in the dark woods.* (92; italics original)

Quentin criticizes Caddy so much not only because she loses her virginity (a symbol of the family's honor) outside of marriage but also because she ignores the southern code regarding race and sexuality. Thus, the sexual purity of southern women is closely related to the southern social system and its construction of “whiteness.” At the same time, as Quentin's words imply, southern belles can perform acts of blackness, and this can easily lead to the subversion of

southern social norms.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding sexual ideology, the South faced a particularly critical moment in the 1920s. Nationally, the cultural advancement of women in the early twentieth century made it possible for them to break into social, political, and economic spheres that had previously been male-dominated. Meanwhile, the popularity of Freudian theory and the new sexology led to the emergence of sexually emancipated women, such as flappers.<sup>8</sup> New sexual ideologies and sexology influenced the South as follows:

The emerging popular culture of sexuality in the post-World War I period was at odds with Southern sexual culture in several key and perhaps obvious points. Most important, the new sexuality challenged the desirelessness and sexual helplessness of the Victorian lady by representing the normal middle-class woman as having active sexual desire and, to a limited extent, the ability to take care of herself.

(A. Jones, “Like a Virgin” 58)

A. Jones also points out that this new national sexual ideology “had serious implications for men and manhood as well” (“Like a Virgin” 58). I would like to argue that it also greatly impacted the racial system in the South, where race, sexuality, and gender were closely related. To Nathaniel Hawthorne, the transgression of the sexual code was in opposition to Christian belief; to Victorians, it was in opposition to morals; and to southerners, it was in opposition to the very social system that supported white supremacy.

Another problematic sexual categorization related to the construction of whiteness is hetero/homosexuality. As Siobhan B. Somerville points out, the classification of hetero/homosexual bodies and the “constructing and policing of the boundary between ‘black’ and ‘white’ bodies” emerged at the same time (3).<sup>9</sup> In order to be white, the whites had to discriminate heterosexuality from homosexuality. In the culture of white supremacy in the South, whiteness and heterosexuality had been the absolute norm for two reasons. First, the white supremacists’ most critical concern was the maintenance of their white family lineages; second, if being homosexual meant being “penetrated by another” and if being penetrated meant “submission or passivity” (Entzminger 77), homosexuality could blacken as well as feminize the white body. Thus, southern society was “coded as masculine and heterosexual” (Entzminger 77), and deviating from this code meant being of another gender and race.<sup>10</sup>

In this way, in southern society, racial segregation was closely related with sexual (gender) segregation, and these types of segregation together constructed a privileged whiteness. The Jim Crow era was a time when southern whites struggled to maintain these boundaries. However, as mentioned above, the southern writers discussed here questioned the boundary between whiteness and blackness (or non-whiteness), between asexuality and sexuality, and between heterosexuality and homosexuality and attempted “literary integration” in order to understand what the South stood for. Their

literary conflicts with the South are, as the title of this thesis shows, a performance of racial passing, transgressing into the realm of blackness and interrogating the racial, gender and sexual identities that are supposed to be self-evident.

This study will examine two methods of literary or figurative integration used by white authors. The first is to make characters' white skin (or black skin, in Peterkin's texts) a vehicle of racial/sexual passing, and the second is to use the viewpoint of black characters as an ophthalmoscope to relativize the social codes, myths, and values of southern society. Sometimes, an author combines both approaches in order to portray southern society through a more subversive lens. Accordingly, this thesis reconstructs the textual history of the Southern Renaissance as that of texts on "racial/sexual passing" by showing that white Southerners transgressed racial boundaries through sexuality and normative sexual boundaries through race. Many of the recent critics of southern literature have discussed race, gender, and sexuality as the most critical issues, particularly after feminism, gender studies, and post-colonialism began to impact literary study as a whole. However, as Somerville argues, "dominant critical discourses" tend "to treat race and gender separately" (5). The critics have discussed these issues by focusing on only one or the other, and the interaction between race and sexuality has not been fully explored, except in some recent studies on Faulkner's work, for example, by Duvall. The significance of exploring the interrelationship between race and sexuality is that it

enables us to interrogate the racial/sexual identity of the white body itself, not that of hybrid bodies, and this interrogation, as this thesis will demonstrate, can provide a more subversive reading of southern texts.

The Southern Renaissance is generally considered to be a literary movement in which southerners questioned the very nature of the South, including its past and present, as Jeffrey J. Folks explains:

The Southern Literary Renascence (also spelled Renaissance) involved a critical reexamination of southern history, a new awareness of the restrictions of traditional racial and gender roles, an interest in literary experimentation, an examination of the role of the southern artist in relation to the southern community, and an increasingly realistic presentation of social conditions in the South. (835)

However, the writers of the Southern Renaissance did not have a common view of the South. Some, such as John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, and Donald Davidson—“the major Fugitive-Agrarians,” who are considered to be the canon of the Renaissance, along with Faulkner (King, “Framework” 15), denounce the modern South and find value in the Old South and its traditions. Agrarians’ “sympathies and allegiances were decidedly traditionalist” (Brinkmeyer 151), and their South was “only an idealized entity seen through the eyes of upper-class white males” (O’Gorman 302). Therefore, as O’Gorman maintains, “the Agrarians in defining their

region in term of past, place, and community deliberately ignored the real and troubling divisions of race, class, and gender that marked the region” (302). Others, such as T.S. Stribling and Lillian Smith, criticized southern society, particularly its racism, sexism, and romanticism, though these texts were dismissed as “liberal fiction” (Ransom 193) or “propaganda rather than art” (O’Gorman 302) and excluded from the canon by the Fugitive-Agrarians when they gained power over literary criticism as the “New Critics.”<sup>11</sup>

This study argues that the authors studied here find a fundamental southern problem in both the past and the present: the fictitiousness of southern society, which affects the identity of the people living in the South, regardless of their gender, race, or class. They do not idealize the South and do not merely criticize the South. They question self-evident southern identity. Their literary goal is to explore the formation of identity related to a social system based on various forms of discrimination and represent the fact that identity is strongly influenced by the social system but that this influence is never complete.

The thesis covers the writers of the Southern Renaissance from beginning to end, including those who are recognized as canon, such as Faulkner and Eudora Welty, and those who are not, such as Frances Newman and Julia Peterkin. This selection shows that this thesis resists the “orthodox theory” in which a literary renaissance in the South “began with the Fugitives and Agrarians” (Manning 242)

and deconstructs the Agrarians' canonization within the Southern Renaissance. The thesis is divided into four chapters: Chapter I is "Sexualizing a Pure Body, Passing as a Lady: Frances Newman's *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* (1926) and Julia Peterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary* (1928);" Chapter II is "Black Vision and Grotesque Whiteness: Julia Peterkin's Short Novels, Eudora Welty's 'The Burning' (1951), and William Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily' (1930);" Chapter III is "The Sexuality, Masculinity, and Fragile Whiteness of Quentin Compson in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936);" and Chapter IV is "Crossing into Queer Whiteness: Carson McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1940), *The Member of the Wedding* (1946), and *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1943)."

Chapter I, "Sexualizing a Pure Body, Passing as a Lady," discusses two texts by white female authors, Frances Newman's *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* and Julia Peterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary*, as pioneering works that transgress into the range of blackness through sexuality. Both authors, as privileged southern women, are aware that in the South, sexuality is not a mere matter of morality but is deeply related to the patriarchal and racist southern system. They use the portrayal of white/black female sexuality as a method of criticizing and resisting it. These texts are not generally included in the canon of the Southern Renaissance. However, this reading reassesses Newman and Peterkin as the "founding mothers" of the racial/sexual passing texts in Southern Renaissance literature.

The first section discusses *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, a story of

a southern woman who passes as white but is sexually black. The author reveals, through her protagonist, that a southern belle can have sexual desire and satires the southern patriarchal society, including its religion, education, sexism, and racism. In order to portray the protagonist, Newman, as an author who is very conscious of the modernist movement, uses a very esoteric and experimental style. This style functions as a method of resisting male-dominant society and showing the fictitiousness of southern society. Moreover, her style is also a mask used to hide her intentions, revealing the truth about a southern lady, while avoiding punishment for transgressing the gender code. Newman's experimentation is strongly related to her attempt to subvert the southern code by passing into black sexuality for fear of punishment.

The second section examines *Scarlet Sister Mary*, in which the skin of a black protagonist is a mask that allows the white author to criticize southern society. While she depicts a black girl growing to be financially and sexually independent of men, the community, and the church, Peterkin, through the protagonist, represents the alienation and sterility of southern upper-class society, which is governed by a white-male-dominant ideology. Mary is a reverse image of Peterkin. In her representation, the author uses not "standard English" but Gullah English, and gaining this black voice allows the author to express what she wants to say but is not allowed to say. By wearing a black mask, or gaining a black vision/voice, Peterkin gains a way of relativizing southern society and penetrating the true

nature of whiteness.

Chapter II, “Black Vision and Grotesque Whiteness: Julia Peterkin’s Short Novels, Eudora Welty’s ‘The Burning,’ and William Faulkner’s ‘A Rose for Emily,’” is relatively short, but it takes on a major significance in that it reconsiders the grotesque, a prominent feature of the Southern Renaissance. The grotesqueness in these southern texts opposes and deconstructs the social and cultural system made and maintained by the white-dominant class in the South. This grotesque representation of the South results from viewing southern society through the eyes of “the racial Other/black people.” The black eyes question the nature of the grotesque itself and further reveal that what the whites consider natural and normative is itself grotesque. Black viewpoints in these texts subvert the reality of southern society and offer a moment of liberation from southern confinement. In this sense, this grotesqueness can be called “subversive grotesque” or “liberatory grotesque.”

The first section discusses short stories by Julia Peterkin and Eudora Welty. Peterkin, in her early short stories about black people, often depicts grotesque figures. This disfigurement can be interpreted as representation of the sterility that Peterkin sensed as a southern upper-class woman. More importantly, by wearing a black mask, she uses these grotesque figures and incidents to relativize the white-dominant South and finds a moment of liberation in grotesqueness. Peterkin’s “Over the River” and Welty’s “The Burning” are both stories about black girls. Peterkin’s protagonist is a

deaf-mute orphan girl who experiences her lover's betrayal and the death of her baby. However, when the girl finally returns home, Peterkin depicts her as hopefully crossing the river. The girl suffering from the alienation and repression is Peterkin herself, and the author finds a moment of liberation in identifying with the protagonist. In "The Burning," Welty deconstructs the myth of race and sexuality in the South through the eyes of Delilah, a black female servant. The story first seems to be about the tragic deaths of two white southern ladies at the end of Civil War. However, through Delilah's eyes, Welty reveals the cruelty and grotesqueness of the dominant white people, including her (Delilah's) mistresses. At the end of the story, Delilah crosses the river to leave the South, and Welty also makes Delilah's departure hopeful, which suggests that this is a story of the emancipation of a black girl.

The second section analyzes "A Rose for Emily" by Faulkner through the eyes of Tobe, a black male servant. Tobe seems to be a minor character, and critics have not paid much attention to him. However, reading the story through his eyes leads to the subversion of the normative South. This story is interpreted as that of a white lady whose sexuality is distorted by her father and who finally comes to be a grotesque figure. However, looking through Tobe's eyes, it is revealed that what is grotesque is not Miss Emily's (black) sexuality but the southern patriarchal system. Finally, Tobe shows the truth of the white normative world to the townspeople and leaves the town. Again, the story tells of the emancipation of Tobe, as well as Miss

Emily, from the confinement of white patriarchal society.

Chapter III, “The Sexuality, Masculinity, and Fragile Whiteness of Quentin Compson in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!*,” discusses two Quentins (one in *The Sound and the Fury* and the other in *Absalom, Absalom!*) as a single subject and investigates the constructedness of his identity as a white southern man. Among Faulkner’s male characters, Quentin Compson is the most obsessed with southern tradition, but he always fails to perform as a normative southern man—a white, heterosexual, masculine man—because of his gender, sexual, and racial ambiguity. He is even misidentified as “a colored man” from minstrelsy in Massachusetts in *The Sound and the Fury*. Thus, his whiteness resists non-whiteness, but at the same time, he is always shadowed by, penetrated by, and even fascinated by blackness. Quentin’s identity as a white southern man is fragile, and this fragility makes him aware of the fictitiousness of southern society.

The first section discusses Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury*, and shows that his identity as a dominant southern masculine man is eroded by black sexuality, as represented by his sister Caddy. Quentin’s stream of consciousness shows that in the North, where he is forced to relativize the South, he begins to recognize the fictitiousness of what he has believed regarding the southern code of race, gender, and sexuality. His failure to execute a chivalric performance, that is, to protect his sister from promiscuity, as a southern man leads him to a final recognition that to be a southern

man is to act a southern man, but he lacks the ability to execute this. Caddy's black sexuality is generally considered a symbol of the degeneration of southern society, but the section argues that its significance is in revealing the impossibility of whiteness, even among white people.

The second section studies Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!*, exploring the constructedness of southern male identity through another non-normative black sexuality, homosexual desire, which is latent in the relationship between Quentin and Caddy's lover Dalton Ames in *The Sound and the Fury*. In *Absalom, Absalom!*, the author has the character narrate and create a story of a plantation owner. The act of narrating here functions as a kind of homoerotic performance that blurs the boundaries between the narrator and the narrated, heterosexuality and homosexuality, and whiteness and blackness. Faulkner, by making the act of telling into an act of merging the boundaries between the subjects, shows that there is no stable identity, even in a world where the racial, gender, and sexual boundaries are strictly policed. To put this in a different way, southerners are always fascinated by gender, sexual, and racial Others, and therefore, any clear boundaries between these categories are fictive. In reality, there are only gradations.

Chapter IV, "Crossing into Queer Whiteness: Carson McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, *The Member of the Wedding*, and *The Ballad of the Sad Café*," studies McCullers' three eccentric or non-normative characters: a homosexual officer, a tomboy, and a

spinster/phallic woman. These characters result from McCullers' radical exploration of the constructedness of identity in the South, and the examination of each character shows that McCullers pursues the meaning of southern identity profoundly from various perspectives. McCullers recognized her own gender/sexual ambiguity, which made her conscious of marginality and alienation in the South. This enabled her to see the South from a different ("queer") viewpoint. By creating white characters with ambiguous gender, sexual, and racial identities and interrogating the white, heterosexual, male-dominant code in the South, McCullers seeks alternative racial/sexual subjectivities.

The first section discusses *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, in which McCullers deconstructs the seemingly ordered South and reveals its grotesqueness through the "golden" eye of the racial Other. The argument focuses on the relationship between two men, Captain Pederton, a southern army officer with homosexual tendencies, and Anacleto, an effeminate Filipino servant, in relation to the construction of the heteromasculine identity of white men. In southern society, Anacleto is rejected as a colonial/racial Other who represents black/non-normative qualities such as primitiveness and savagery, but at the same time, he is required as the one against whom southern men define their normative masculinity. Anacleto plays a key role not only in constructing masculinity but also in revealing that what defines deviance in the South, namely whiteness, is itself grotesque.

The second section studies *The Member of the Wedding*, examining the ending of the story and the role of Berenice, a black female cook, and showing that this story can be read not as a normative female initiation story but as a queer version of a female coming-of-age story.<sup>12</sup> The story describes the childhood of a southern tomboy, Frankie, and many critics have argued that Frankie is finally confined to southern womanhood: the tomboy is finally tamed into becoming a good white girl. However, in the last part of the novel, McCullers suggests that there is a homosexual relationship between Frankie with her new female friend. Moreover, Berenice's mentorship as a black mammy, whose role is traditionally to make a white girl into a respectable white lady, is ambiguous. While she encourages Frankie to be a heterosexual lady, she also suggests non-normative sexuality to Frankie. It should be noted that their female homosexual/homosocial relationship functions as a form of resistance against the male-dominated world. At the end of the story, on the surface, almost everything/everyone perverse, black, or grotesque disappears from Frankie's world, but her queer identity can never be vanished. Thus, this story is a queer version of a white female coming-of-age narrative.

The third section discusses *The Ballad of the Sad Café* as the story of a white woman's resistance to white male dominance by wearing blackness and penetrates the meaning of the word "queer," which McCullers uses in the story. The protagonist, Miss Amelia, is a phallic woman with queer eyes in the rural South. The story revolves

around a triangular relation among Miss Amelia, her former husband, Marvin Macy and her supposed cousin, the hunchbacked Lymon, focusing on the battle between masculine/blackened Amelia and white masculine Macy. This battle is in part a battle of gazes that takes place between the one looking and the one being looked at, and in this sense, cross-eyed Miss Amelia is destined to lose this battle figuratively. In southern society, it is white males who gain the powerful position of being able to look at others. In fact, she loses the fight with Macy and finally locks herself in her house. Many critics interpret this ending as a woman's confinement being compelled by male force. However, a close examination of the text shows that being queer has a subversive function in a society in which racial, gender, and sexual categories are strictly policed by the dominant white male gaze. Being queer is a way of crossing boundaries "diagonally" and becoming a more subversive subject because crossing a boundary in a "straight" way means only exchanging opposites, namely white for black, man for woman, or privileged for unprivileged, which only produces another form of repression. In *Miss Amelia*, McCullers finds the possibility of alternative subjectivity through queer ways of being, which are beyond any boundaries or categories.

Toni Morrison, in her *Playing in the Dark*, a pioneering work discussing American literature from the perspective of whiteness/blackness, asks the question "What does the inclusion of Africans or African-Americans do to and for the work [of American

literature]?" (16). Here, Morrison argues that the Otherness/blackness of African-American people functions to define or fortify whiteness and its elements, such as innocence, freedom, individualism, virility, and so on. Morrison's argument seems to assume that a difference between whiteness and blackness always exists and that this boundary is never transgressed. The white authors I discuss here also recognize that white identity is dependent on blackness. However, at the same time, by bringing the concept of Otherness into their works, their works reveal that the boundary between whiteness and blackness is already transgressed and blurred and that segregation already entails integration. All the white texts discussed here show that there is no definite boundary between black and white and that there are no definitely "white" entities. In this way, the authors show that seemingly stable identities are actually unstable; this instability leads to the possibility of additional subjectivity. By deconstructing the social fiction created by whites through double vision, they seek an alternative formation of sexual/racial identity, although this process is never completed.

# Chapter I

## Sexualizing a Body, Passing as a Lady: Frances Newman's *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* and Julia Peterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary*

Frances Newman's *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* and Julia Peterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary* were groundbreaking works during the Southern Renaissance period in terms of crossing into the realm of blackness as it relates to sexuality. In spite of being from upper-class, southern families, both in their fiction write about subjects that southern ladies should not think about, talk about, or write about, particularly, white female sexuality. Both authors, as privileged southern women, were aware that sexuality was not merely a matter of morality in the South, but was deeply related to the southern patriarchal and racist system, and that white female sexuality could serve as a method of criticizing and resisting southern society. Newman and Peterkin, passing into the realm of blackness through their literary efforts, show that white women can perform sexual blackness and attempt to deconstruct the southern patriarchal system.

Although existing among the southern writers during the Southern Renaissance, Newman and Peterkin have not received much attention from literary critics, and their role in the emergence of the literary movement in the region has not been fully explored. However,

at least in the 1920s, Newman and Peterkin were famous southern literary figures not only regionally—though in the South, they are more notorious than famous—but nationally. Newman became a best-selling author with her *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* in 1926 along with Ernest Hemingway, whose *The Sun Also Rises* became a best-seller the same year. Peterkin was the first southerner to win the Pulitzer Prize with her *Scarlet Sister Mary* in 1929, and she was considered as one of the key white southern spokespersons of black culture in the South.

Newman and Peterkin were not only best-selling authors; they were also radical experimentalists in their literary efforts. They each broke away from the traditional southern writings, such as sentimental novels and plantation novels, which more or less romanticize or idealize the old southern society (Wade, *Frances Newman* 33). Newman demythologizes the pure southern belle and Peterkin the happy and humorous Negroes in the plantation. Moreover, their subjects are not traditional and their literary styles are new and experimental. Newman, exploring “a feminist, virginal aesthetics” (Beilke 80), traces the inner world of a southern lady with an esoteric style influenced by Virginia Woolf, while Peterkin depicts the life of black people using the Gullah English they spoke. Although these styles make it difficult to read the stories, they are products of the authors’ exploration into the issues of gender, sexuality and race in the South.

Thus, Newman and Peterkin can be considered female writers

who created a new style that represented the South prior to William Faulkner. They did not, however, appear abruptly as experimental writers. Newman and Peterkin entered the literary world through the invitation of H. L. Mencken to contribute literary articles to a literary magazine, *The Reviewer* and became its important contributors.<sup>13</sup> *The Reviewer* was an experimental and short-lived literary magazine that started in Richmond, Virginia in 1921 and ended in Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1926. As some critics have noted,<sup>14</sup> this magazine made no small contribution to the emergence of literature of the New South during the period when H.L. Mencken attacked the artistic, intellectual, and cultural sterility of the South in his essay “The Sahara of the Bozart.” Fugitives tried to counter Mencken’s attack in Tennessee by publishing the influential literary magazine *The Fugitive* (1922-1925).

It should be noted that *The Reviewer* offered female writers the opportunity to publish experimental works. *The Reviewer* did not seem to have definite editorial policy, and it could be “at times progressive and nostalgic, iconoclastic and sentimental, southern and not southern” (Wise 148). This editorial ambiguity made the magazine a forum for more liberal and experimental writers compared to the Fugitives. Therefore, while Mencken praised this magazine, the white conservative southerners saw it negatively because of its liberalism. (In fact, Mencken ultimately affected the editorial policy of the magazine strongly by southernizing it.) Wise argues that “*The Reviewer* serves as evidence that shedding romantic

view of southern history involved an extended and uneven cultural debate about race relations, gender roles, and power” (157). Newman and Peterkin were at least considered as representative liberal southern writers of *The Reviewer*.

Moreover, *The Reviewer* played an important role for southern women writers because, as John Herbert Roper argues, it provided “a number of feminists” with “a special forum at a time when virtually no other such platform was available” (77).<sup>15</sup> As “[w]omen writers in the South of this era faced exclusion both by gender and by region” (Roper 81), the magazine would be a place where they nurtured women’s art. Thus, the role that Newman, Peterkin, and *The Reviewer* played in the emergence of the Southern Renaissance becomes clear, all the more because their styles led to the works of William Faulkner and Zora Neale Hurston, which are now considered to be part of the canon of the Southern Renaissance.<sup>16</sup>

This chapter will show that although their styles differ greatly from one another, their function seems to be the same. Their literary style is a shield behind which southern aristocratic women can write about subjects they should not write about. It can also be said that these styles enable them to write the story of female sexuality. In this sense, their style functions as a mask that allows white women writers to resist southern society and transgress into the realm of blackness: the style is a figurative method of racial passing or cross-dressing.

## 1. Katharine Faraday, a Black “White Southern Lady”: Frances Newman’s *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*<sup>17</sup>

Frances Newman was born in 1883 as the youngest daughter of a prominent family in Atlanta. As was typical for the South, she was raised to be a southern lady and to marry a proper southern gentleman. After receiving a library science degree, she began to work as a librarian and wrote some reviews for the *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution*. Her reviews caught the attention of H. L. Mencken and James Branch Cabell, who encouraged Newman to write a novel. In 1924, Mencken published in his *American Mercury* her short novel, “Rachel and Her Children,” which, according to Anne Goodwyn Jones, “revealed . . . her profound concern with the dehumanizing effects of the role of the southern lady . . .” (*Tomorrow* 273). Newman, having entered the ranks of literary figures in the South, considered marriage to be “suicidal to a professional life” (Wade, *Frances Newman* viii) and ultimately chose not to marry in order to be a writer.

In 1926, upon the recommendation of Sherwood Anderson and Mencken, Newman participated in McDowell Colony, an artists’ colony, where she completed her first novel, *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*. Through its experimental style, this novel depicts the raising of a southern lady, Katharine Faraday, from her childhood, to the period of an unfruitful courtship, to being a writer who never marries, just like the author. The novel created a scandal, particularly in the

South, because Newman not only satirizes the tradition of southern society but also deals with matters related to sex; things southern ladies were not supposed to know about. In this novel, Newman transgresses the realm of a pure white southern lady and deconstructs the myth of southern womanhood, which most southerners at that time still saw as the truth. The novel was appreciated by some critics, including Cabell and Mencken. Meanwhile, it was banned in Boston and kept off library shelves in Brooklyn public libraries because of its obscene content (Wade, *Frances Newman* 16). Nevertheless, the novel sold well and, along with Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, became a best-selling novel in 1926.

In spite of the big commercial success of her first novel, just after publishing a second novel, *Dead Lovers Are Faithful Lovers*, which "blurs distinctions between . . . the selfless angel of the house and the other woman . . . and exposes the misogyny and racism underlying the image of the southern lady" (Wade, "Frances Newman" 338), Newman was found unconscious in a hotel room in New York by her friend and died three days later. Her death was initially reported to have been caused by a cerebral hemorrhage, but when subsequent reports suggested an overdose of a barbiturate, the newspapers began to claim suicide or poisoning as the cause of death and depicted her as "a neurotic spinster and sensational sex writer" (Wade, *Frances Newman* 19). This reaction shows how difficult it was for non-traditional women writers at that time to be assessed fairly.<sup>18</sup>

Leaving behind two novels, a few short stories and many articles, Newman passed away and was to be forgotten in the literary world.

One of the reasons her works failed to receive literary criticism is because literary critics, as well as ordinary readers, tended to focus exclusively on the apparent sensationalism of her works; thus, the meaning of her style and the subject of her work had not been fully examined by anyone except recent female scholars like Jones and Wade.<sup>19</sup> Newman was keenly aware that in the South, female sexuality and the southern social system were closely interrelated, and that the southern myth, including the “cult of southern womanhood” and the chivalry myth, was only fiction, contrary to what many white southerners believe. Her style, then, is the result of her exploration of how to tell the truth of the South; her style is created to reveal the fictitiousness of southern society and subvert the boundary in particular between blackness and whiteness. This section examines Newman’s style and content and shows that Newman de/reconstructs the figure of a southern lady by transgressing, through a white surface, into blackness.

The South has upheld a peculiar gender, sexuality, and race system brought about by the slavery system. The white lady is viewed as the pure one and the black woman as the promiscuous one, and these labels are used to mythologize the southern belle and justify the exploitation of black women's sexuality on the part of white men. However, the national cultural change caused by feminism and the

new sexology from the late nineteenth century also affected and stabilized southern society. Faulkner, as a modernist male southern writer, responded to this change and wrote *The Sound and the Fury*. Through the use of modernist literary technique, the story depicts a southern lady who, with her sexuality, brings an end to a respectable family in the South. Likewise, other female writers of the modernist period, such as Ellen Glasgow, Zora Neale Hurston, and Julia Peterkin, depict the condition of female sexuality in the South from the black-white female viewpoint. In this respect, Lucinda H. MacKethan argues that in terms of writing about sexuality, there is a difference between male and female authors:

[M]ale southern writers often depict women as objects whose sexuality and fertility are frightening (Toomer's Fern, Faulkner's Lena Grove), whose waywardness or rape threatens social order (Faulkner's Caddy and Drusilla Hawk, Toomer's Karintha, Tate's Jane Posey, Warren's Anne Stanton), or whose barrenness reflects the land's waste (Faulkner's Joanna Burden and Rosa Coldfield).

When southern women novelists take up modern positions, women characters can still embody these connotations, but they are more likely to act as agents than as objects simply reflecting the barrenness of land and culture. (254)

It is clear that as a southern white lady, Newman was keenly aware that sexuality was deeply connected with women's autonomy or independence because it was controlled through a

white-male-oriented code. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg notes, for New Women around the 1920s, sexuality was “the critical issue” and was linked “with identity and with freedom” (292). Next, I will closely examine how Newman depicts the issue of sexuality in the text.

*The Hard-Boiled Virgin* could be considered a Bildungsroman or Künstlerroman of Katharine Faraday, who, growing up as a southern lady and looking for an appropriate husband, becomes aware of the sexism and racism around her and recognizes the contradictions of the gender and sexuality system in the South. In a society where a woman’s value is defined by her outer beauty, Katharine, unlike her sisters, is born without physical beauty. She finds pleasure in reading books in her father’s library while her sisters enjoy conversations with their suitors. Katharine grows to be a clever girl but finds that in southern society, being a clever girl is of no benefit:

. . . the stupidest girl with a short upper lip and curly golden hair is born to a social situation much pleasanter than the social situation of the cleverest girl with a long upper lip and straight black hair. . . . (30)

Furthermore, even if a girl is the cleverest in the class, she cannot be at the top of the class, as “any boy is born to a more honourable social situation than any girl” (30). Katharine even realizes that the education required for southern womanhood is meaningless in that it merely leaves the brains of the young ladies “in a state of paralysis” (58).

Katharine recognizes that in the South, the women as well as blacks are oppressed by the white male-dominant code, and that this oppression is the basis of the white patriarchy. It is Neal Lumpkin, one of her suitors, that makes Katharine fully aware of it. Lumpkin is a typical southern gentleman who tries to attract Katharine's attention through chivalric behavior.

During the courtship, he forces her to listen to "his confidence in all the faiths of his fathers which concerned God and women and negroes and cotton . . ." (177). The narrator reveals that Katharine keenly criticizes Lumpkin's white male-oriented code concerning women and sexuality. Lumpkin presents his objection against raising "the age of consent," because it means "raising the possibility that perfectly respectable young Georgians—who might even be sons and grandsons of the heroes who wore the grey—would be hanged for nothing more than the violation of fourteen year old virgins" (174). Katharine makes an ironical remark about Lumpkin's argument, which Katharine's father and her brother also agree with, calling it "polite elaborations of a theory" (174). Katharine knows that southern gentlemen, including her father and brother, invent the code of womanhood to the advantage of white men.

Through her relationship with Lumpkin, Katharine eventually recognizes the falsity of the myth of the southern lady's virginity. She is certain that the "chief pleasure in life" of southern white gentlemen is the violations of virgins, and that in Georgia no lady is "supposed to know she was a virgin until she had ceased to be one . . ."

(174-75). In this way, Katharine's doubt regarding the tradition of the Old South deepens:

. . . since she had already discovered that a southern lady's charms are estimated entirely by their agreement with tradition and that her intelligence is judged entirely by her ability to disagree with tradition, she told him that she thought that there was a great deal to be said for the Old South, but not nearly as much as people had already said.

(244)

And finally, she is aware that marriage and prostitution are two sides of the same coin. This recognition causes Katharine to realize that the key to being an autonomous and independent subject as a female and as a writer lies in sexuality/virginity, and she decides to lose her virginity as an unmarried woman.

Regarding *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, Newman herself states that "it is about the first novel in which a woman ever told the truth about how women feel" (*Letters* 205). The truth is not only that southern women can satirize and criticize the southern patriarchal culture, including its religion, education, sexism and racism. In this novel, Newman also reveals that the southern woman can think about sex or things related to sex. The narrator reveals that Katharine has a great deal of interest in subjects such as pregnancy, delivery, menstruation, birth control, syphilis, penis size, and even homosexuality—the narrator mentions Oscar Wilde being sent to Reading Gaol (65)—which southern ladies are not supposed to think

or talk about publicly. For example, Katharine views her friend's menstruation as "her defeat":

Although Katharine Faraday knew that her chest was flatter than Sarah Rutledge's chest, and much flatter than Mildred Cobb's, she felt her defeat when Mildred Cobb was driven to the Calhoun Street School after a day's absence, and explained her absence with consciously reticent references to her mother's unwillingness to have her feet wet, which, Katharine Faraday realized even before the reticence ended, could only mean that Mildred Cobb had become a woman. (54)<sup>20</sup>

Newman's deviation from the code extends to her expression of the physical pleasure of the female body. The narrator often describes Katharine's sexual desire and pleasure as follows: ". . . she would feel her fountain rising and falling and dropping its electric spray down her body . . ." (206). These "fountain" and "electric spray" are repeated throughout the novel (78, 79, 105, 283). Moreover, Kathryn B. McKee even notes that "Katharine Faraday may well be the first Southern heroine, maybe the first American heroine, to masturbate, at least in print" (181).

Though menstruation, pregnancy, delivery, and sexual desire are physical truths of the female body, they are considered as something impure, unclean, or polluted/polluting and belong to "the lower stratum of the body," the grotesque realm (Bakhtin 21). As these are "the gross physical aspects of being female, gross from the

southern point of view,” the ideal white woman tries to deny them (Christian 2). Thus, Katharine’s status as a white lady prohibits her from “speaking a vernacular of bodily functions from sex to birth to menstruation to defecation” because she is constructed to be “‘innocent’ of such things, chaste, orifices closed, a silent endorsement of the patriarchal representation of her as the designated work of art of southern culture” (Roberts, *Faulkner* xiv). Meanwhile, these gross physical aspects that the whites deny are attributed to the black female body. If the middle-class white woman “deviated from certain codes, trespassing into the realm of behaviours relegated to black women (sexuality, ‘dirt,’ passion), she lost her value in the white economy” (Roberts, *Aunt Jemima* 2). And to keep white bodies from slipping toward the blackness, a constant vigilance and control of the body are required in the South (Roberts, *Aunt Jemima* 3-4). By having Katharine go down to explore the lower part of the body, Newman, though very cryptically, reveals the grotesque realm inside the white body, showing that the white lady can slip toward blackness.

In fact, Katharine finally decides to discard her value in the novel. The process through which Katharine is supposed to become a respectable southern lady is actually the one that deepens her doubts about southern society. She experiences a series of unfruitful romances caused by her recognition of the contradictions regarding the southern society, and, in time, she passes the proper age for marriage and, as a single person, decides to be a writer. After her

resolution, the issue which occupies Katharine's inner world is her virginity: ". . . she was beginning to feel the weight of her virtue almost as painfully as she had felt the weight of her religion" (253). As writing a good play and being a virgin is incompatible, Katharine decides to lose her virginity, though her internalized southern code makes it difficult for her to dare. Near the end of the story, Katharine finally loses her virginity to an American playwright, Alden Ames, in Germany. However, this experience brings her neither pleasure nor a sense of freedom, but an intolerable fear of pregnancy, and she is described as having keenly felt "she could not control her own body" (275) and that "she was not brave enough not to be virtuous" (276). She then "felt obliged to show Alden Ames that she could write a better play than he had written" (276) and completed her play, which was more successful than that of Ames. Finally, in front of Katharine, the younger man, who adores her talent as a dramatist, appears, and the hierarchical relationship between man and woman seems to have reversed the subversion which was supposed to bring her to the completion of an exploration of independence as a woman.

However, Katharine recognizes her real situation as revealed in the following excerpt:

And she was sure she would tell him that he had shattered her last illusion, but she knew she would go on discovering that one illusion had been left to her a minute before, and that she would discover it every time she heard another illusion shattering on the path behind her. (284-85)

The story ends when the female protagonist seems to have succeeded as a writer and gained sexual liberation. However, it is ambiguous as to whether she finally overcomes the code which repressed the southern woman. As is typical of the Bildungsroman, the story seemingly progresses toward the maturity of the protagonist, but, ultimately, she fails to gain a stability of self. The story leaves the conflict between the self and the norms of the society unresolved.

If female liberation and sexuality are viewed in the context of modernism, it will be understood that the female modernist shares this kind of ambivalence; the conflict between the desire for freedom and repression. As DeKoven maintains, changes in gender relations at the turn of the century—the rise of feminism and the appearance of the New Woman who are “independent, educated, (relatively) sexually liberated, oriented more toward productive life in the public sphere than toward reproductive life in the home”—played a key role in the emergence of Modernism (“Modernism” 174). In the works of male modernists, concern about this change was expressed as a fear of the empowered woman and it resulted in masculinist misogyny which is accompanied by “its dialectical twin,” a fascination with the empowered feminine. “The result was,” as DeKoven points out, “an irresolvable ambivalence toward powerful femininity that itself forged many of Modernism’s most characteristic formal innovations” (“Modernism” 174). Meanwhile, she also argues that while female modernists desired a “radical cultural change,” they “generally feared punishment” (“Modernism” 174-75), and this ambivalence is

represented in their works. Examples are Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* in which the structure of "desire for freedom in unresolved dialectic with fear of punishment" can be found (DeKoven, "Modernism" 183).

An in-depth exploration of Katharine's inner world reveals that as a southern lady who lacks physical beauty, one of her aims in her life is to acquire her father's intelligence and to make men recognize her intelligence in order to ultimately wrest the position of Father/men. Beneath her ambition, however, lie doubts concerning the authority of Father/men. Her father, who seldom appears in the novel, is a typical white masculine southern man like Neal Lumpkin. Already at the beginning of the story, Katharine is skeptical about her father's authority as "she did not understand how her father could have reached such age and such eminence without learning that all mothers are as infallible as any pope and more righteous than any saint" (10), and the absurdity of fatherhood is often alluded to:

She mentioned an Austrian doctor called Krafft-Ebing to show him that she did not expect to be answered in language suited to a southern lady, and she asked him just why fatherhood is so absurd and just why fathers love their children. (244-45)

On the contrary, among the men with whom she has had a romance, there are some intelligent men, like the scholarly gentleman or the writer. These men are surrogate fathers or mentors from whom Katharine acquires knowledge, and at the same time, they are men to

whom she tries to prove that she is clever. It is after a famous writer, Frederick Thomas, suggests that “her literary style would be greatly improved by the loss of her virginity” (246) that Katharine becomes conscious of her virginity as a burden to be discarded. Then Katharine sees a connection between improving her writing style and being a successful writer with losing her virginity and whiteness as a southern lady. In fact, she loses her virginity and succeeds as a dramatist, which should have made it possible for her to usurp the position of Father. However, her desire to deny Father’s law and subvert it, and her desire to be socially and sexually independent are accompanied by a sense of self-punishment. For example, when Katharine as a young woman had tea with men without having been introduced, she felt “as publicly depraved as Hester Prynne standing on her scaffold and holding her baby against her scarlet letter” (66). At this time, Katharine felt a “hot untidy feeling,” and she often suffered from this feeling in her relationships with men (213, 246). No matter how hard she tries to resist it, Katharine cannot avoid internalizing the southern social code, and at the end of the story, Newman makes Katharine recognize it.

Therefore, Wade argues that unlike “the male protagonist in the traditional *bildungsroman* who learns to master the world,” Katharine “is initiated into a world of confinement and limited possibilities” (*Frances Newman* 107). Newman provides the following explanation of her work:

I discovered that I was going to write a novel about a girl

who began by believing everything that her family and her teachers said to her, and who ended by disbelieving most of those things, but by finding that she couldn't keep herself from behaving as if she still believed them—about a girl who was born and bred to be a southern lady, and whose mind never could triumph over the ideas she was presumably born with, and the ideas she was undoubtedly taught. (“Frances Newman Tells” 6)

Is Katharine, then, denied a moment of liberation from the oppression? Next, I will show that the conflict between Katharine’s desire and repression is reflected Newman’s style, and that the style itself functions as a mask to prevent punishment, which she cannot avoid as a southern female writer who intends to usurp Fathers/men.

As a literary critic, Newman paid much attention to and praised modernist writers such as Dorothy Richardson, Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence (Wade, *Frances Newman* 8, 126), and she was “a pioneer in support of Joyce’s works” (A. Jones, *Tomorrow* 273).<sup>21</sup> Newman put primary importance on “style” and was much concerned with the technique of “stream of consciousness.”<sup>22</sup> Richardson, who is said to be the creator of “stream of consciousness,” declares that the aim of inventing such a style is “to produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism” (9). As Sydney Janet Kaplan maintains, the effect that the cultural change in the early twentieth century had created on women’s psyches could not be

expressed in the form of the popular realistic novel “since the larger share of the conflict lay beneath the surface within their divided consciousness” (1). Therefore, women writers, just like Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce, “found it necessary to break with tradition by shifting their focus from the outer world to the inner, from the confident omniscient narrator to the limited point of view, from plot to patterning, and from action to thinking and dreaming” (Kaplan 1-2).<sup>23</sup>

In her own literary efforts Newman as a woman writer, focused a great deal on connecting literary style with the representation of the female experience as American women writers, to her, failed to do so (Wade, *Frances Newman* 9). Thus, she appreciated female modernist writers in particular, and among them she was influenced by Woolf’s emphasis on small moments and her attention and focused on her ability “to reach beneath surfaces” (Flora, “Fiction” 281), as is shown by her own comments:

Therefore, I realized I could not paint it truthfully except by giving a truthful impression instead of an inaccurate photograph—that I would have to go far below the surface of my scenes and of my characters. (“Frances Newman Tells” 6)

As Wade argues, “[l]ike Mansfield and Woolf, Newman experimented with novelistic devices in an attempt to capture the essence women’s lives rather than their surface appearances, to express the truth about women’s experiences” (*Frances Newman* 127). Moreover,

Newman's exploration into the region beneath the surface of southern ladies means transgression into the non-white realm. Thus, her experimentation, borrowing the words of Ellen Friedman and Miriam Fuchs, "not only assail[s] the social structure, but also produce[s] an alternate fictional space, a space in which the feminine, marginalized in traditional fiction and patriarchal culture, can be expressed" (4).

Characteristics of Newman's style are, as the quote above shows, that one sentence is long and sometimes includes more than three negative words, there is no dialog, and the story consists of a sequence of episodes. This peculiar style is the result of her exploring the way in which to represent the female truth as well as to show that what southerners considered to be truth was only a fiction.

The technique of "not using dialogue" is a very effective way to explore the truth of southern society. Newman herself explains the reason as follows:

Naturally, conversation is nothing at all except surface. All of us know that we practically never say what we think. . . . So, in "The Hard-Boiled Virgin" I tried to show my characters as they really were, and I didn't dare let them speak. . . . ("Frances Newman Tells" 6)

Obscene subjects can be thought about in southern ladies' minds, but as they are supposed to lack of such evil thoughts even in their minds, they can never talk openly about them. In the text, what Katharine thinks about is not told by her directly but through the narrator. This

narrative technique makes it clear that there is the gap between her outside world, governed by the social code and manners peculiar to the southern aristocratic society, and her inner world, which rebels against them. As she matures, this gap widens. Katharine, even in her youth, has recognized that “southern ladies and gentlemen respect the polite fictions of society” (51), and in the novel Newman tries to show the fictitiousness of southern society not through the utterances of Katharine but through her consciousness.

Another important literary device related to the fictitiousness of southern society is what Wade called the “drama motif” (133). Newman herself explains, “All of Katharine Faraday’s masculine admirers were only actors playing in different acts of the same drama she was writing for herself by living her own life” (“Frances Newman Tells” 8). According to the rules of the aristocratic society, the process of courtship typically consists of merely acting as a young lady waiting to be courted. The relationship between Katharine and the men is described as a romantic drama or a comedy as follows: “the first episode of the story of Katharine Faraday and James Fuller” (86); “the romantic drama of Katharine Faraday and the scholarly gentleman” (195); “the cynical comedy of Katharine Faraday and the eminent author” (249). The use of the words “romantic drama” seems to suggest that their relationship will progress according to the convention of a “Romance,” which usually results in a happy marriage. However, the story ultimately fails to meet such expectations and ends up as a cynical comedy wherein no happiness

can be found in romance. Therefore, this story is a cynical parody of the romantic tradition, revealing that the process of romantic love is a performance. Thus, according to Wade, “[t]he drama motif highlights the artificiality of the life of a southern society woman whose primary preoccupations are with form and appearance” (*Frances Newman* 135). For Katharine to be a dramatist means not only subverting the hierachal relationship between men and women but also criticizing the southern society in which fact and fiction are confused.

Discussing “the Lost Cause mentality” that was widespread in the early twentieth century and how it affected Faulkner, Donald Kartiganer argues that this mentality “was fundamentally a gestural mode” (65). Then, quoting Mrs. L. H. Harris’s writing in 1906,<sup>24</sup> he explains “the psychic condition of Southern white male”: they are “torn between fact and fantasy, and needing to believe in the latter despite the unmistakable presence of the former,” and “this psychic split” resulted in “the elevation of gesture to paramount position” (65). “[T]he Southerner must be the master of gesture . . .” (65). As Harris argued, “he sits and watches the effects of his own mannerisms with all the shrewdness of a dramatic critic. . . . [H]e feels the part, sees himself in the eyes of the other and enjoys the performance as much as if he were himself observing a good actor. And he is always a good actor; every Southern man and woman must be that” (322). For Katharine to live as a southern white lady according to the southern social code is only to play a role as a

southern white lady, and the man who courts her is an actor who plays the role of a wooer. In *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, Newman attempts to reveal the fictitiousness of the white southern society in a “hardboiled” manner and that the southern myth and legend which the southerners had regarded as truth is now a mere fiction far away from reality.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, I will examine Newman’s style from the viewpoint of gender. Anne Goodwyn Jones argues that her style is masculine:

Newman’s style is simultaneously innovative and conservative. Traditional grammatical structures appear almost parodically (Virginia Woolf might have called them “men’s sentences”) as a vast network of parallel and balanced phrases and clauses, holding together differences in a structure of similarities, thus setting up the unexpected within a pattern of predictability. (“Foreword” xxvii-xxviii)

Marianne DeKoven argues that from the onset, modernist styles include anti-patriarchy and feminine factors:

. . . modernist form’s disruptions of hierarchical syntax, of consistent, unitary point of view, of realist representation, linear time and plot, and of the bounded, coherent self separated from, and in mastery of, an objectified outer world; its subjectivist epistemology; its foregrounding of the pre-Oedipal or aural features of language; its formal decenterednes, indeterminacy, multiplicity, and

fragmentation are very much in accord with a feminine aesthetic or Cixousian écriture féminine. (*Rich* 8)

According to A. Jones and DeKoven, Newman's style has both feminine and masculine characteristics. Thus, it can be said that Newman's literary style is a battleground, where the female modernist desire to deconstruct the traditional literary technique and the male traditional one to repress it conflict. This can be said to reflect an irresolvable ambivalence between the desire for freedom and punishment. What is more important is that A. Jones points out that Newman parodies male traditional grammar by repeating it excessively, because here we can find the moment of deconstructing the male code from the inside. Concerning her complex style, Newman herself explains that it came out of "the necessity of circumventing the Atlanta papers" (*Letters* 144). This "circumventing" can be interpreted as self-regulation to avoid punishment for transgressing the gender code. Her style functions, at least to her, as a mask to hide, though not completely, her intention to reveal the inner truth of a southern lady. However, considering that the novel caused a fierce reaction from genteel society, this regulation, paradoxically, disclosed the oppressed within. Newman's literary experiment with style results from her attempt to subvert the patriarchal code by passing into the realm of blackness with a fear of punishment.

Katharine, finding the southern code to be a great source of

resistance, seeks an alternative identity as a southern woman. She finally decides not to marry a man but to live by herself as a writer after she loses her virginity, though the text suggests that her search for identity is ultimately unsuccessful. Depicting the process of the protagonist's growth, Newman severely criticizes southern patriarchal, white-male-dominated culture—including its religion, education, sexism, and racism—which oppresses women. In the end, Katharine discovers the meaninglessness of the social codes for gender, sexuality, and race that the southern patriarchal society created yet finds that she herself has internalized these codes so strongly that she cannot efface them.

Her radical view of southern society has a black shadow. Newman herself explains how she gains such a critical eye concerning the southern society: it is her black mammy, Susan Long, who provided it.

I think she [Newman's black mammy] must be mostly responsible for my lack of a southern lady's traditional illusions. When I was a little girl, she used to tell me about slavery times, and I thought Miss —, her old mistress, was a woman and the devil was a man, and that was the only difference between them. If you grow up hearing of mistress's sons who set dogs on a little girl three years old to see her run, who beat the slaves, and who didn't tell them they were free, you can't admire the ante-bellum south completely. (*Letters* 273-74)

Considering the stereotypical mammy figures in the South, the role of Long as the nurturer of a white lady is significantly unique. According to Grace Elizabeth Hale, the mammy stories written by the southern white women in the early twentieth century created their own mammy figure as “the crucial nurturer, protector, and teacher of white children” (98). For example, Hale quoted a poem in which the poet, Howard Weeden, romanticized or mythicized the black mammy (99). Moreover, black mammies are supposed to have another more crucial role: to teach white children manners. After the war, when the people who had not previously been regarded as the genteel class began to enter the middle-class, manners were to distinguish the better-off white southerners from the other whites (Hale 100). In this respect, black mammies were given the role of constructing the whiteness of the white children. The image of mammies has also been constructed as “broad signifiers of whiteness” (Hale 102).

All mammies were in an important sense white fictions of black womanhood. As markers of both whiteness and class status and as the conduits through which these identities were reproduced within white children, mammies reinforced the fiction of continuity that legitimated the new southern white middle class. Beyond her race and class functions, however, mammy played an essential role in the reconstruction of white southern gender relations as well.

Crossing both time and space, the black mammy supported another crucial New South fiction, the southern

lady—an image of white purity and gendered passivity celebrated by white southern male writers from radical racist Thomas Dixon to the liberal W. J. Cash. (Hale 105)

In this context, Susan Long, whose words induced Newman to deviate from the norm, played an opposite role to that of the stereotypical mammy.<sup>26</sup> Thus, it could be argued that though there are actually no black characters in *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, the entire story is shadowed by the black presence. The skepticism about the southern society caused by her black mammy made it possible for Newman to transgress into the realm of grotesqueness that the southern belles were never allowed to be involved in. The importance of black mammies in the white southerner's novels will be examined further in later chapters.

## 2. Scarlet Mary, a White “Black Woman”: Julia Peterkin’s *Scarlet Sister Mary*<sup>27</sup>

Julia Peterkin, the daughter of prominent physician in South Carolina, was also from an elite family. Unlike Newman, after finishing graduate school, Peterkin married the heir of a big plantation and lived there as a plantation mistress with her husband, her son, and about 500 black people. She seemed to have lived an ordinary life as a plantation mistress. However, while in her forties, Peterkin suddenly began to write stories; stories about the black people and their culture using their Gullah English. These were first

written as sketches or short stories and then took the form of a novel. Her works, whose characters are mostly poor black people, are praised not only by white critics but also by Afro-American literati like W.E.B. Du Bois, Countee Cullen, and Alain Locke because her black people are not stereotyped. In 1928, her second novel, *Scarlet Sister Mary*, became a best-seller, making her the first Pulitzer Prize winner in the South. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Peterkin was well known in America as a southern white female author writing about the black people in rural South Carolina; in fact, as Wise noted, Peterkin, “was a central figure in southern literature in the 1920s” (159).

Like Newman, or even more so than Newman, Peterkin’s life was influenced by black culture through her two black mammies. One was Maum Patsy, who reared Peterkin because her mother died when she was a toddler. Maum Patsy taught Peterkin how “to speak Gullah before Standard English” (Williams 52). The other was Maum Vinner (Lavinia Berry), the model for Maum Hannah in *Scarlet Sister Mary* and “A Baby’s Mouth,” whom Peterkin met at Lang Syne plantation, where she lived after getting married. Maum Vinner took care of Peterkin when she had been sick for a long time following the delivery of her son. Maum Vinner taught Peterkin about the nature surrounding the plantation as well as black people’s habits, life attitudes, and superstitions. What is more important is that from these black women, Peterkin “fashioned a critique of her own class” (Robeson 785). Absorbing the black culture, Peterkin learned to see

the things through “double vision” (Landess 16), and gained “a doubly conscious, creolized worldview” (Cartwright 145).

According to her biography, Peterkin was definitely fascinated by the way that black people lived in the plantation. In the southern upper-class society still governed by Victorianism, Peterkin seemed to feel loneliness, oppression, and a lack of freedom. Meanwhile, “[t]he black women Peterkin knew pursued their lovers openly and changed them at will. By and large, they were not financially dependent on their husbands. They spoke openly about their feelings of lust, jealousy, and betrayal, subjects forbidden to genteel white women” (Williams xii). Peterkin, envying “her black friends for their apparent freedom from inhibitions” (Williams 12), resolved her sense of stagnation by associating with those black people. As Robeson states, “her decision to write about Lang Syne’s black community reflected her alienation and flight from a repressive Victorian culture” (765).

It was under these circumstances, while in her early forties and after her only son had already grown up, that she began to write a sketch about the plantation. These sketches caught the attention of Carl Sandberg and H. L. Mencken. Mencken published her story in *The Smart Set* and recommended her to Emily Clark, a publisher for *The Reviewer*, where Peterkin became a regular contributor and published several plantation sketches. In 1924, she published *Green Thursday*, a collection of sketches about the black people struggling with fate. As Williams points out, Peterkin wrote a book from the

black point of view, and it shocked the people because “[m]any white Americans had never imagined that black farming people *had* a point of view” (72; italics original). This book was also favorably accepted by book reviewers, but in the South she was widely criticized. It was not just the sympathetic description of the black people that invited the criticism of the southern genteel people; Peterkin’s subject matters, such as “[a]lson, adultery, disfigurement, [and] death” deviated from the respectability of the southern society (Landess 23). “It would have been all right for a woman to join the Charleston Poetry Society . . . and write sonnets about the Magnolia Gardens or the firing on Fort Sumter, but to deal so realistically with the sordid lives of croppers, black or white, was something else . . .” (Landess 23-24).

In fact, Peterkin’s works, particularly her early sketches and short stories, include grotesque matters, that is, grotesque to the extent that even Mencken considered these stories too “gruesome” to publish (Williams 34). (Peterkin’s use of grotesqueness will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.) One of the grotesque stories is “A Baby’s Mouth” (1922), which proves to be significant to her literary career. “A Baby’s Mouth” is the story of a baby that is born without a mouth. Maum Hannah, the midwife in the plantation who delivers the child, finds the baby has no mouth. She says, “Somebody got to cut a mout’ fo’ dat chile. . . . Dey got to. Ef dey don’t, he gwine dead” (*Collected* 89). She tries to find someone who can cut the mouth open, like John Green, the barber who has sharp scissors; Gip Ragin,

the butcher that has a sharp knife; or Dunk Bruce, who can pull out teeth better than anybody else. Hannah takes Gip to the house and asks him to cut, but he is so fearful that he holds the child out to Hannah “with trembling hands” (*Collected* 91). Then, Hannah says to him scornfully:

“You ain’ shame to ack so? A big ol’man ez you can’ he’p me wid dis po’ lil creeter? You’s mo’ cowardly dan de chile se’f, an’ he ain’ got not a mout’ fo’ holler wid!” (*Collected* 91)

In the end, Maum Hannah cuts the mouth open and the story ends peacefully with Doll, Hannah, and the baby sleeping soundly together.

According to Williams, “A Baby’s Mouth” was her “first sustained narrative from a black point of view,” which meant she had at that time developed her own new literary form, abandoning “the omniscient narrator favored by Mencken,” and “the naive free-verse transcription urged on her by Sandburg” (49).<sup>28</sup> Through writing this story, Peterkin, in the same way that Maum Hannah saved the baby without depending on the men or the specialists of cutting, became independent from her male literary mentors. This story can be also read as an allegory of “the voiceless” gaining “a voice.” Peterkin sent this manuscript to Mencken with a note which suggests that this story would make him notice the blessedness of having a mouth (Williams 49). Peterkin, as a southern white woman, felt that white men were all “born with ‘mouths’” (Williams 49). Contrary to “woman’s essential silence” (Dukats 141) as a Cameroon proverb,

“Women have no mouth,” suggests (Schipper 20), men, white males in particular, take it for granted that they have a mouth with which to speak.

“A Baby’s Mouth” criticizes the discrimination between those born with a voice and those born without one. Here, Peterkin, displacing herself with the black baby without a mouth, finds a way to open her own mouth. In other words, Peterkin liberates herself by transgressing the racial boundary into the realm of grotesqueness. Had Peterkin not done so, she would have gone on living as though dead. Thus, borrowing the black figures, Peterkin dramatizes her own problem as a white southern woman.

*Scarlet Sister Mary*, like her other stories, is set in a plantation of black people, “Blue Brook Plantation,” where the Big House, an old white master’s house only remains as a desert ruin in which ghosts are sometimes seen wandering.

A great empty Big House, once the proud home of the plantation masters, is now an old crumbling shell with broken chimneys and a rotting roof. Ghosts can be heard at sunset rattling the closed window-blinds up-stairs, as they strive for a glimpse of the shining river that shows between the tall cedars and magnolias. (12-13)

The depiction of a white planter’s house as a ruin haunted by ghosts has a striking kinship to the Faulknerian gothic South. However, in Peterkin’s southern world, it is not declining southern masters or

aristocrats that are depicted, but poor Gullah people who, enduring hardship, live a primitive and self-sufficient life.

The protagonist of the story is a black orphan girl, Mary Pinesett. Mary had already been baptized to be “Sister Mary” when she married her lover, July. However, because she got pregnant before her marriage and danced a forbidden dance in public after the wedding, the church decided to banish Mary. Although she was labeled “Scarlet Mary” because of her “scarlet sin,” she still lived a happy married life for a while, but then July began to go out with another girl, Cinder. At the same time, July forces Mary to continue the housekeeping, but she argues for the right to enjoy her life. Meanwhile, Mary seeks a way to win back July’s love. She receives a “love charm” from Daddy Cudjoe, who can use both white and black magic, but July ends up leaving the house with Cinder. Left alone, Mary is overcome with sorrow for a while, but then, using the love charm, she attracts July’s brother, June, and has a child with him. After that, Mary gives birth to seven children, each of whom has a different father and she adopts her daughter’s baby. The church and religious people, of course, reproach her as a sinner, but she chooses to be loyal to her desire. In the end, the story reveals that Mary keeps on living as a sexually, economically, and socially independent woman.

In this way, *Scarlet Sister Mary* is, like *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, a Bildungsroman, this time of black woman in which she finally finds, unlike Katharine Faraday, stable identity as a woman.

Through this process, Peterkin sharply depicts the conflicts between the individual and the social institution, community and church, and desire and sin. Mary (or Peterkin) criticizes the rigid way of thinking of the church and the community: “They all belonged to Heaven’s Gate Church, whose strict rules tried to curb their conduct. They allowed no ground between sinners and Christians” (218). She is also against the people who stick to tradition.

. . . both of them [Budda Ben and Mary] resented many of the ways and customs of the plantation people who never stopped to think about things, and accepted ideas and beliefs which were handed down to them, the same as they accepted the old houses where they were born and worked in the same old fields which their parents and grandparents had salted with sweat. (220)

Mary affirms earthy pleasure and does not deny her desire.

. . . to save Mary’s life she could not keep her mind fixed on the joys of Heaven, but sought her pleasure right here in this world, where pleasures are in such easy reach. She believed in God and Satan and Heaven and Hell too, and she had no doubt that sinners fed Hell’s fires, but the rules of Heaven’s Gate Church made the Christian life very difficult for a young, strong, healthy woman. (219)

Through conflict and suffering, Mary seems to gradually gain a feminist view of life. Looking at the male-oriented society critically, she even finds female alignment with her rival, Cinder.

Thank God, she knew men at last, and she knew that not one of them is worth a drop of water that drains out of a woman's eye. Once, long ago, she used to think that Cinder was a mean, low-down hussy, but now she knew Cinder was not to blame for July's sins. (191)

Moreover, Mary also gains enough physical and economic power to live independently of men, which is very contrastive to a southern lady who is supposed to be physically fragile and not work to earn money.

“ . . . Me an' my chillen don' need no man. We can git on better widout em. I can easy pick three hundred pound o cotton in a day. I can hoe a acre clean o grass quick as any 'oman on the whole plantation. . . . ” (261-62)

She transgresses the gender boundary and would be considered a phallic woman. Therefore, when July returns to the Blue Brook plantation after 15 years, she does not let him come back to Mary.

Regarding Christianity, Peterkin shows an anti-traditional view at the end of the story. When Mary's first child, Unex dies, she regrets her sin and experiences a revelation in her dream in which she sees her sin visualized as red stripes on the white cloth and these stripes disappear.<sup>29</sup>

Unex called her, but when she turned her head to find him she saw an open grave. Her naked soul stepped down into it. Unex spoke:

“Looka dat white cloth on de ground.”

There it was, right at her feet.

"You done give your soul for dat." He began weeping.

"You see dem stripes red on de cloth, enty, Si May-e?"

There they were, ten stripes red like blood across the width of white cloth.

"Dem scarlet stripes is Jedus' blood. Every sin you had laid a open cut on Jedus' back."

. . .

One by one all the stripes were gone and the cloth became shining and beautiful. It was white as snow. Whiter than snow, and so shining her eyes could not face it. (335-37)

Then the church invites her and all the people to decide if "her vision meant that her sins were forgiven, or if Satan had sent a dream to deceive her" (339). When she goes to the church, she wonders whether or not she should wear earrings and the love charm because it might be sinful to wear them when going to the church. However, she ends up deciding to wear them because "[t]he deacons [are] men who needed to be ruled in her favor" (340). Finally, she is allowed to be baptized again and rejoin the church by the head deacon, Brer Dee, and when Mary accepts the decision, the narrator tells that earrings are "gay and bold and shiny" (345). At the end of the story, Daddy Cudjoe asks her to return the charm to him if she is going to quit with men, but Mary denies his request, saying "E's all I got now to keep me young" (345). She has been excluded from the male-dominated church because of her scarlet sin, but finally she

succeeds in rejoining the community of the church by seducing the deacons with her charm. Thus, Mary is determined to live according to her desires. This ending acts as a criticism of the male-oriented system of the society and suggests that to Mary, religion is a personal matter and has nothing to do with the church as a male-oriented institution.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast to Newman's Katharine, Mary realizes that romantic love is an illusion during her first marriage, and, struggling between men and women, between religious belief and desire, and between the community and the individual, grows up to become an independent woman. As the title suggests, this is also a black girl's version of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*.<sup>31</sup> Mary seems to be primitive in that she believes in superstition, thinks negatively about modern technology and literacy education, and lives close to nature. In this respect, Mary represents the primitiveness that the whites always project onto black people, or it might seem that Peterkin adored the primitiveness in contrast with modernity. However, focusing on her female way of life, she highly resembles the New Woman or a flapper, though these names are exclusively given to white women. In fact, it is described that even in Blue Brook, the women have changed:

“Times is changed, Si May-e. Womens is changed too. Nobody can’ rule a ’oman by switchin em dese days. Dey hides is pure tough. A leather strap can’ sweeten em now.”

Though she lives in a primitive world, Mary's view and way of life are quite modernized and therefore she is the one who represents both Africanism and Americanism.

Does Peterkin, then, despite being white, seek an alternative gender and sexual identity for the black woman, just as Hurston does through her protagonist, Jennie, in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)? The protagonist is a black woman, but considering her background, Peterkin seeks an alternative gender and sexual identity of a white woman through a black character. Peterkin's biographical facts show that Mary is a reversal of Peterkin herself. First, though her life as a plantation mistress was seemingly comfortable, she was frustrated by genteel white upper-class society. A more important factor concerns the traumatic experience of her first and last delivery. Soon after her marriage in 1903, Peterkin became pregnant, but the delivery was so difficult that her father, who thought his daughter would never survive another one, sterilized her himself while she was unconscious. It can be guessed that the reason her father offered to do such an operation and her husband consented was that they now had a male heir (the baby was a boy). According to her biography, Peterkin could never forgive three men: her father, her husband, who allowed his father-in law to perform the sterilization, and even her son, and some fifty years later, she said that they had wrecked her life (Williams 8). Though, in 1904, Peterkin was unable to say these words out loud, "[o]ver the years

she would find ways to punish her father, her husband, and her son, using her fiction as a form of revenge" (Williams 8).

This castration on the part of her father clearly shows that, in a patriarchal society, the female body is controlled not by her own will but by her father or men. The sexuality of southern white middle-class women, as mentioned above, is only utilized for the purpose of maintaining the legitimate white paternal line. If her baby had been a daughter, rather than a son, her father might not have sterilized her. Mary, who gives birth to babies with different fathers and lives independently of men, shows the reverse figures of Peterkin herself, who keenly feels her sexuality is oppressed. Peterkin subverts the meaning of black sexuality which had been stigmatized in the southern society, and indicts the sterility of white southern women's sexuality. Therefore, it is a devastating satire that Peterkin dedicated the novel to her husband. Peterkin as a white lady criticizes the southern society by assuming the identity of a black woman.

Peterkin, by wearing the black mask of Mary, finds a way to say out loud what she cannot say in a real life, a way to criticize the male-dominated society that controls the female body and desire. "Peterkin in essence appears in black face in order to mask and find voice for unorthodox views that she (as a South Carolinian white "lady") could not otherwise express" (Cartwright 148). Mary is Peterkin, who passes as a black woman to resist southern society. From this context, there is an impressive scene in which the white

lady and the black woman are secretly communicating each other:

The great silent house looked grand and solemn, with its high gray roof and tall red chimneys. She [Mary] had a timid feeling when she walked near it or sat alone in the garden, lest a ghost of somebody who once lived there, a servant or one of the fine white ladies, should call out to her and ask her what she wanted. (250; emphasis added.)

Mary often goes to the ruined Big House and meditates on something. In this episode, she imagines a fine white lady as a ghost talking to her. And here, the subject of the verb “ask” and the subject of the verb, “want” can be both Mary and Peterkin herself: the white woman and the black woman are exchangeable.

*Scarlet Sister Mary* is a story in which a white lady, deprived of her body as the origin of desire, regains it through a black body. Mary is a mask through which Peterkin can speak freely about what she cannot speak aloud as a white lady. In this respect, Gullah English also functions as a mask for maintaining the freedom to speak. Interestingly, Peterkin even uses Gullah English intentionally to subvert the gender boundary. Williams points out that at first, “Peterkin was fascinated by the way Gullah speakers played with English conventions of gender, whether by blurring personal pronouns, by giving men ‘feminine’ sounding names, or . . . by reversing male and female nouns” (78). However, Mencken advised her that “doing so would only confuse her audience” (78). Mencken

was not aware of the subversive character of Gullah English as was Peterkin.

Mary is “a veil” (Leder 67) or a “cover” (Robeson 770), like a black skin for Peterkin that makes it possible for her to express what she wants to express. However, looking at it from another angle, it could be argued that Peterkin takes advantage of the racial other to give her a voice. As A. J. Verdelle argues in the Foreword to *Scarlet Sister Mary*, Peterkin cannot evade the stereotypical representation of the black people completely and sometimes romanticizes the labor and laborers in the plantation, often comparing African Americans with animals stereotypically (xi-xii). Moreover, she did not write about the racial conflict that could be actually found around Peterkin, at least in her novel. However, it cannot be missed that Peterkin is extremely fascinated by this racial Other, the black presence that the white have marginalized and excluded from their society. Peterkin expresses such fascination frankly in her essay “Seeing Things” (1928), as follows.

None of the diversions I knew best were in reach of me. . . .

Boredom troubled me. Life threatened to stagnate.

Sinister questions without answers crept into my mind and rankled.

One question that persisted was, how could the Negroes, people whom I pitied as ignorant, poor, dependent creatures, be so contented, so happy and care-free, here, where my days were often tedious and dull? They were

pitifully destitute of material things; they had to work constantly for life's necessities; few of them could read or write; and not one of them had what is commonly regarded as education. Yet, for the most part, they were not only cheerful and merry, but they met what life sent with courage and grace. Why couldn't I do it as well as they could? What ailed me?

. . .

. . . Love, Birth, Death, Joy, Sorrow, all walk stark in the open here with an arrant frankness. It was often shocking, and yet, against the vivid, colorful lives of these black people, my quiet, orderly, idle, peaceful existence began to look strangely drab and dull. (*Collected 64-66*)

To Peterkin, seeing the way the black people are is to relativize her own situation and also to liberate herself. In other words, Peterkin sees the true nature of whiteness in the blackness, and this double vision enables her works to go beyond ordinary plantation novels and ordinary representations of the blacks.

However, it might be risky for a southern woman to transgress the racial sexual boundary into the other realm. Peterkin, in the 1920s, was usually neglected or criticized in the South, and was considered to be a liberal spokesperson of the black culture. In the 1930s, she wrote few works and often expressed a paternalistic and conservative view on race issues. Thereafter, she became a forgotten writer in literary history. However, we cannot overlook Peterkin, who,

in the beginning of the Southern Renaissance period, was fascinated by blackness and wrote novels through a double vision—a vision including that of the whites and blacks and through which the whites relativize their own society. In other words, Peterkin secretly injected blackness into the emergence of a new southern literary movement. And her literary challenge looks all the more important because Faulkner also in his masterpiece of the Southern Renaissance, *The Sound and the Fury*, ends his novel by relativizing the decline of the white aristocratic family through the eyes of their black Mammy, Dilsey. It might be that among the Southern Renaissance writers it is Peterkin, as “a white black writer,” (Lewis 22), who first argues that a reexamination of the South on the part of dominant whites requires an inclusion of the other’s or black viewpoint.

The 1920s is the time in which a new type of woman, a sexually liberated flapper, appears in American society. Moreover, the national trend of sexual liberation after World War I shakes the social code of the South. Meanwhile, the white people, in particular, the white male, believe in the myth of black men as rapists, as seen in Faulkner’s short story “Dry September” (1931), and are always afraid of miscegenation resulting from sexual relationships between white women and black men. Therefore, at this time the white society increased racial segregation legally via the Jim Crow laws and through violent acts such as lynching.

Some southern writers of this period make this turmoil their central literary theme in their works. Frances Newman, using a modernist style and diving into the consciousness of a southern lady, criticizes the southern patriarchal society based on racism and sexism and shows that a southern lady can have the sexual desire that had been forbidden to her. Julia Peterkin, by exchanging her white skin with a black one, shows how the body of a white female is controlled by the male dominated code and reveals its falsity. Both realize that, as their sexuality as a southern white lady is strongly related with the social system, it plays a critical role in keeping the society stable. Therefore, they explore the question, “What is the South?” making sexuality and race its axis. The southern society had always made black sexuality problematic. However, what matters now is not black sexuality but white sexuality. Later chapters will examine this issue deeper.

## Chapter II

### Black Vision and Grotesque Whiteness: Reconsidering the Southern Grotesque<sup>32</sup>

This chapter is a relatively short one but is a significant one in that it revisions the meaning of “grotesque” in southern literature, discussing several short stories from the South. These stories, which are typically grotesque, make clear what including a black point of view brings the literary representations of white authors. Through the viewpoints of the black characters, these authors relativize southern society in these stories, invert the white world into the grotesque one and find moments of liberation in the presence of black characters.

The “grotesque” is one of the most striking aspects of the literature of the American South, especially as it pertains to Southern Renaissance writers. It is often said those writers share the tendency to write about aberrant people and incidents. In fact, Sarah Gleeson-White points out that the Southern Renaissance has become “synonymous with the grotesque” (*Strange Bodies* 1). However, ordinary southerners did not seem to think that the South was full of grotesque characters, as Flannery O’Connor suggested, “I am always having it pointed out to me that life in Georgia is not at all the way I picture it, that escaped criminals do not roam the roads exterminating families, nor Bible salesmen prowl about looking for girls with wooden legs” (38). Moreover, during the Southern

Renaissance, mainstream white southerners did not consider acts of violence (such as lynchings) and racism as perverse. Altogether, the white people who dominated the American South did not consider southern society grotesque. So there must be other reasons why the South appeared grotesque when these white southern authors wrote about it.

Thomas Mann argues in his essay on Joseph Conrad, which O'Connor also quoted in her "Some Aspects of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction" (1960), "the grotesque is the genuine anti-bourgeois style" (241). Thus, it may be added, the grotesque in southern literature is the discourse that resists the cultural and social system put forth by the dominant white population. The southern grotesque is the genuine anti-southern myth. Mann also argues that "the striking feature of modern art is that it has ceased to recognise the categories of tragic and comic, or the dramatic classifications, tragedy and comedy. It sees life as tragi-comedy, with the result that the grotesque is its most genuine style . . ." (240–41). This idea suggests that the grotesque in modern art is the result of blurring between polar categories.<sup>33</sup> As Peter Stallybrass and Allon White write, "the bourgeois subject continuously defined and re-defined itself through the exclusion of what it marked out as 'low'—as dirty, repulsive, noisy, contaminating" (191); the identity of the bourgeois is constructed based on separation from the "low." In the South, the white bourgeois defined itself in terms of racial and class distinctions. The southern grotesque results from a willing

resistance to distinguish between dirty and pure, low and high, and black and white, categories that segregated southern white people from the Other.<sup>34</sup>

White southern authors can conjure grotesque representations of the South, blurring bourgeois categorical boundaries, because they gain a double vision—a vision that includes the Other's perspective, namely, a black vision. By including black characters or black vision in their texts, southern writers produce grotesque stories that resist the southern myths of race, gender, and sexuality. This section examines this phenomenon through stories by Julia Peterkin, Eudora Welty, and William Faulkner,<sup>35</sup> which involve black viewpoints and create grotesque narratives that go against the grain of southern bourgeois myth, in particular, southern myths about race and sexuality.

Peterkin's early short stories are full of grotesque incidents. Peterkin, as a white female author wearing a black mask, finds moments that relativize southern white society, deploying the grotesque to liberate herself from such a society. This chapter discusses two short stories about black girls, Peterkin's "Over the River" and Welty's "The Burning." Peterkin's protagonist is a pregnant deaf-mute black girl who, abandoned by her lover, lets her baby die. Welty's story is set on a plantation during the Civil War, in which, after Northern soldiers rape a white lady and a black servant, they burn the house and only the black servant, Delilah, survives. Welty reexamines the reality of the South and deconstructs the

southern myth about race and sexuality employing Delilah's viewpoint. Ultimately, these two stories are analyzed together because of their similar conclusions. In both stories, black girls who have had tragic and painful experiences finally cross the river, symbolizing that they will gain a new life and liberation on the other bank. These endings may also refer to the biblical Jordan River, as found in gospel music or spirituals.

William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," a representative southern gothic story, has been examined and analyzed from "many different critical perspectives" (D. Jones 106). This study reexamines the story from the perspective of the black character Tobe, a seemingly minor character who lives with Miss Emily and is the only connection between the inside and outside of the house, or Miss Emily and the townspeople. Tobe, who grows older together with Miss Emily, is her double or shadow. A close analysis of the townspeople's narration will show that their status, as narrators of Miss Emily's life, is tenuous. Tobe may be the only legitimate person to tell her story. "A Rose for Emily" is a story of Tobe's liberation from Miss Emily and patriarchal society, as he also liberates himself from the South.

## 1. Looking through the Grotesque: Short Stories of Julia Peterkin and Eudora Welty

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Julia Peterkin, especially

in her early short stories, often depicts incidents of death, illness, and disfigurement. For example, “A Baby’s Mouth,” which was discussed above, is a story of a baby born with no mouth. “Missy’s Twin” (1922), which is, according to E. Clark, “as grim and terrible a bit of writing” as she found in the English language (217), depicts the tragic death of babies delivered by a black girl. This story, unlike her other stories, includes white characters. In it, Peterkin implicitly criticizes the “Southern idealizations of milk-bond relationships” (Cartwright 144) between the white master’s child and the black “Mammy.” Missy is a black, motherless, pregnant girl under the care of the mammy (which reflects autobiographical elements—Peterkin was motherless and reared by her black mammy). However, Mammy is forced to leave the plantation to accompany and tend to her charge, a white boy traveling to the family’s summer residence. After a while, Mammy returns to the plantation and is told by the boy’s father that Missy gave birth to stillborn twins. Because their bones were not buried properly in Mammy’s garden, the hounds dug them up and ate them. The story ends with a description of the white boy sleeping soundly:

“The hounds—” he [the boy’s father] went on, “the hounds broke in and dug them both up—and ate them—”

The silence was intense, like a thing in the room. The little white boy’s quiet breathing seemed harsh. (*Collected* 98)

Thus, as Williams argues, white sentimentalists in the South painted

the mammy figure as “kind and devoted” to the white master, but “underneath the personal affection is an impersonal force, white supremacy” (51). The last sentence shows that what is really grotesque is the drastically different conditions of the white child and the black children or, more precisely, what white supremacy has done to Others.

“The Foreman” (1924) is a Peterkin story *Atlantic Monthly* rejected because it considered the story to be “too terrible” (Williams 94). The protagonist, Killdee, is a strong plantation foreman in his fifties, but one day, he finds his legs are numb. His wife, Rose, puts his legs in hot water to cure them, and then his toes come loose and swim around the tub:

The water began to move. The toes, all loose, free, swam around swiftly, and circled and danced in a gay, foolish sort of a way. One big toe slid over right next to the littlest one and stopped!

Killdee half rose to his feet and shouted:

“Look out, Rose! Look out! My Gawd! Is you eber see sich-a-t’ing een you’ life! Dem toe is come loose! Dey duh run ’roun’ all by deyse’f! Fo’ Gawd’s sake! De big one gwine ketch de lil’ one!”

His eyes turned with excitement. He tried to step, then he sat down clumsily, heavily, in his chair again. He leaned forward fascinated, and whispered,

“Rose, git a stick, Gal! Git a stick! Knock da big one!”

*(Collected 121)*

What happens is tragic, and Rose thinks that Killdee is going crazy looking at his own toes becoming necrotic. However, the way Peterkin describes the situation makes this scene a kind of tragi-comedy, because it looks as if the toes enjoy their emancipation from the feet. Killdee is fascinated by this terrible spectacle. The toes, loose from the feet, might be seen as a metaphor for liberation from restriction, and thus the image is a grotesque blurring of the tragic and comic categories that Mann describes.

As evident in “Missy’s Twin” and “The Foreman,” Peterkin deals with grotesque incidents and bodies repeatedly in her works. These grotesque episodes are said to be based on real events at Peterkin’s plantation, Lang Syne. As a southern aristocrat, it would not have been proper for Peterkin to talk about, nor write about, these grotesque matters. However, it seems that when Peterkin had these experiences, she was fascinated by them, finding meaning under their grotesque surface.

In this respect, Peterkin can stand among southern female writers whose prominent feature is the grotesque. Discussing the postwar female gothic genre, including southern female gothic writers (Flannery O’Connor, Katherine Anne Porter, and Carson McCullers), Elaine Showalter argues that female artists focus on the grotesque because “[l]ooking at freaks in the 1940s and 1950s signified a woman artist’s determination to confront the forbidden without flinching, to activate a powerful female gaze. Freaks and

feminists were weirdly bonded” (135). For example, McCullers’ tomboy, Frankie, in *The Member of the Wedding*, which will be discussed later, fears her own gender ambiguity and feels herself to be a freak:

She was afraid of all the Freaks, for it seemed to her that they had looked at her in a secret way and tried to connect their eyes with hers, as though to say: we know you. (27)

Ellen Moers paraphrases this scene when she writes, “the girl stands riveted before the booth of the Half-Man-Half-Woman, with the fascinated horror . . .” (166). The adjective “fascinated” directly qualifies “horror,” but it can also qualify the subject of the sentence, “the girl”—namely, the girl is fascinated by the freaks with horror. In a male-dominated world, a woman who deviates from the norm is a freak or made into a freak; she is made to believe in her own freakishness. Therefore, she can bond with a freak, and through the eyes of the freak, gain a subversive view of the world.

Robeson points out that Peterkin’s “macabre themes of infant disfigurement and death are metaphors for her sterility and evidence of her Modernist courage to face ‘the awful truth’” (771).<sup>36</sup> Peterkin's father and husband came to the consensus that she was unfit to bear children after 1904, having her sterilized and, in a sense, disfigured, and these representations in her stories are metaphors for the body of the southern white woman controlled by patriarchs. Peterkin's father and husband presumably did not consider their decision to sterilize her unnatural. Thus, what was natural to southern white

men was unnatural to southern white women. It can then be assumed that this gender gap in recognition led Peterkin to a racially subversive mindset.

In conclusion, Peterkin, who had come to see southern society through a racial double vision, could not avoid being fascinated by the grotesque, finding meaning under its surface. What she saw was the truth of white society, namely, the fictitiousness of the southern white societal norms that oppressed both Peterkin and black people. Through the grotesque, Peterkin found liberation. For Peterkin, encounters with the grotesque among her black characters allowed her to transgress social boundaries and gain of voice of her own.

According to Williams, “Over the River” (1924) may also be “a literal account of a real incident” at Lang Syne Plantation (69). Its protagonist is an unnamed pregnant black girl who is deaf and mute. Because the girl cannot speak, the narrator explains what she is thinking, which makes this narrative a kind of “stream of consciousness.” The story begins when the black girl’s lover has returned home. The girl starts out “lighthearted, proud, [and] full of hope” at the prospect of crossing the river to meet her lover, because their baby is soon to be born (*Collected* 101). She is sure her lover will “provide for her needs, hers and his child’s . . .” (101). Reaching the other side of the river, she has difficulty in finding him, because she cannot make herself understood. She is then nearly raped by a black plowman as she sees her lover approaching. However, instead of saving her, her lover abandons her. Peterkin writes, “He saw her.

He looked right at her. He looked straight into her eyes. And he turned away to the others” (106). Thereafter, her lover and the other plowmen laugh at her, and she delivers a baby that soon dies for lack of food. According to the girl, “[i]t was better off asleep than awake—Dead than living” (109). She then buries the baby in a grave she made in a place “[s]afe from dogs and possums and cats” (112), and crosses the river again to the place where she came from.

“Over the River” deals with physical deformity and death (infanticide). Alan Spiegel argues that the grotesque always appears in southern fiction as either a physically deformed figure, a cripple, dwarf, deaf-mute, blind man, androgynous adolescent, or a mentally deformed figure, an idiot, half-wit, or the mentally deranged (428). Spiegel also points out that if we find such a character meaningful, “his deformity will not separate him from us, but rather will bring him closer to us” (428-29). Moreover, when such a grotesque character transcends his grotesquery, he becomes an archetype of the scapegoat, the outcast, the figure “whose alienation from society never seems quite justified because his punishments always exceed his crimes” (Spiegel 429). Thus, the grotesque figure in modern southern novels wears “his alienation, as it were, on his sleeve” because he “demonstrates the extent of his exclusion and victimization in the very distortions of his physical or mental make-up” (Spiegel 429).<sup>37</sup>

Being deaf-mute, the girl in Peterkin’s story is separated from society, and society takes advantage of her disability when she

transgresses the boundaries of her isolation. Deafness in “Over the River” symbolizes the same alienation from the social world as it does with McCullers’ deaf mute, John Singer, in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*. After becoming pregnant, the girl is twice betrayed: first by society (she had been an efficient worker because she could not talk or hear, but being pregnant, lost her job) and then by her lover. The girl hesitates to nurse the baby, remembering that her lover did not provide for her and their baby. She then thinks of letting the baby die and committing suicide thereafter. Thus, death seems to be better than living as a victim of a harsh world. Yet, as Williams states, “[t]he girl seems to draw courage from her baby’s death” at the story’s end (69). “Her departure is strangely hopeful; having rejected the idea of suicide, she intends to go on with her life” (69).<sup>38</sup> Before crossing the river, Peterkin describes the girl:

As the sun showed above the tree tops she closed the cabin door behind her and started on the path to the little clear spring that bubbled with good clean water. Thank God for water.

She knelt and drank thirstily, then took up her bundle and went on. It wasn’t far to the railroad track. Soon she’d be back. Back, over the river. (*Collected* 112)

In this short story, Peterkin might be vicariously describing her own sense of societal alienation. The deformation of the girl and the grotesque incidents of her life could symbolize Peterkin’s sterilization. In this sense, the girl is Peterkin’s persona or mask to

recount her own condition just like Mary in *Scarlet Sister Mary*, as examined in the previous chapter. While Mary represents the reverse image of Peterkin's sterilization, the black girl is closer to Peterkin herself in that pregnancy brings not joy and power as in *Scarlet Sister Mary* but suffering for the mother. Remarkably, the black protagonist in this story seems to experience death and rebirth through the infanticide. The quoted passage above clearly shows that crossing the river can mean redemption and the expectation of a new life, referring to the biblical River Jordan as known from gospel or spiritual music, in which crossing over signifies passage to the promised land and freedom from toil and tears. Peterkin, through the use of the grotesque, tries to find the way of liberation from a sterilized society.<sup>39</sup>

Eudora Welty's "The Burning" recounts the story of three Civil-War era women: two aristocratic white sisters, Miss Theo and Miss Myra, and their "good obedient slave," Delilah (484). With their father dead and their brother presumably gone to war, the white women are left behind in a plantation mansion with some of the black servants. Then, northern soldiers come to foray and burn down the house; the soldiers' actions and what happens after the burning is told from Delilah's perspective.

In his study of the Southern Renaissance, Richard King included Welty among the movement's female writers who "were not concerned primarily with the larger cultural, racial, and political

themes" (*Southern Renaissance* 9). However, in this short story, Welty revises the white-centered history of the South through a black gaze. The story first seems to be the white women's tragedy: a Yankee soldier rapes Miss Myra, and after the mansion is burned, the two sisters hang themselves, with Delilah left alone in the ashes to gather the bones of a black boy named Phinny and to leave with his remains.

What is critical in this story is the blurring of the racial lines regarding white and black female sexuality. First, the rape of Miss Myra puts her in the position of black women who were often raped by white men. Then, Miss Theo, eager to maintain the fragile veneer of racial discrimination, offers Delilah to the soldiers as their sexual object:

“Is it shame that’s stopping your inspection?” Miss Theo asked. “I’m afraid you found the ladies of this house a trifle out of your element. My sister’s the more delicate one, as you see. May I offer you this young kitchen Negro . . . ?”

(484)

After this, the boundary is obscured again. The conversation between Miss Myra and Miss Theo while fleeing the burning house reveals that there is a grotesque truth in the structure—a child was hidden there, and he has now been burned with the house. The child seems to be Miss Myra's illegitimate child, although Miss Theo strongly denies it:

“. . . Who had Phinny? Remember?” cried Miss Myra

ardently.

“Hush.”

“If I hadn’t had Phinny, that would’ve made it all right.

Then Phinny wouldn’t have—”

“Hush, dearest, that wasn’t *your* baby, you know. It was Brother Benton’s baby. I won’t have your nonsense now.”

. . .

“Oh, to my shame you saw me, dear! Why do you say it wasn’t my baby?”

“Now don’t start that nonsense over again,” said Miss Theo, going around a hole.

“I had Phinny. When we were all at home and happy together. Are you going to take Phinny away from me now?”

(488)

The mere fact that Miss Myra, a southern woman, had a child outside of marriage was devastating to her respectability, but their conversation reveals a more awful truth—the child is not white but black.

Miss Myra said, “Oh, don’t *I* know who it really belonged to, who it loved the best, that baby?”

“I won’t have you misrepresenting yourself.”

“It’s never what I intended.”

“The reason dictates you hush.”

. . .

“You hide him if you want to,” said Miss Myra. “Let Papa

shut up all upstairs. I had him, dear. It was an officer, no, one of our beaux that used to come out and hunt with Benton. It's because I was always the impetuous one, highstrung and so easily carried away. . . . And if Phinny *was* mine—”

“Don't you know he's black?” Miss Theo blocked the path.

“He *was* white.” Then, “He's black *now*,” whispered Miss Myra, darting forward and taking her sister's hands. (489; italics original)

If the child is Miss Myra's, as she asserts, it means that a southern white belle committed miscegenation, which the southern white community feared most. (It should be noted that this was a double standard because the southern white community had no issue with white men engaging in sexual activity with black women.) Miss Theo denies Miss Myra's argument as nonsense, because, according to Miss Theo, Phinny is Brother Benton's child.<sup>40</sup> The opposition of pure white blood and racially mixed blood is replaced by that of rationality and irrationality, where Miss Theo represents the former and Miss Myra the latter. Miss Theo and Miss Myra soon commit suicide, which, according to the townspeople in Faulkner's “A Rose for Emily,” may be “the best thing” for dishonored southern women to do (*Collected* 126). Finally, while the house hides the transgressive desire of a white woman, the mansion and the product of that desire, Phinny, are burned, and Delilah is left alone.<sup>41</sup>

As Patricia Yaeger considers Delilah as “focalizer” through out “The Burning” (“Black Men” 187), this story is ultimately told through Delilah's viewpoint. It is Delilah who sees the ruination of the white family and its house. Moreover, Delilah has the task of reflecting the reality of the southern past. After the ladies die, Delilah sees “Miss Myra’s ghost” (492). When Delilah returns to the place where the mansion used to stand, she finds a Venetian mirror among the ruins. At the beginning of the story, Miss Theo and Miss Myra looked into the mirror before the soldiers rode into the house (482). Delilah also watches Miss Myra’s rape reflected in the mirror. Thus, in the ruins, Delilah readily recognizes the mirror’s unique function: “Though the mirror did not know Delilah, Delilah would have known that mirror anywhere, because it was set between black men. Their arms were raised to hold up the mirror’s roof . . .” (492). This symbolizes the racial construction of southern society. Hence, the mirror is Delilah, or Delilah is the mirror, and in this mirror, she sees various images from the past and present of southern society based on slavery:

The mirror’s cloudy bottom sent up minnows of light to the brim where now a face pure as a water-lily shadow was floating. Almost too small and deep down to see, they were quivering, leaping to life, fighting, aping old things Delilah had seen done in this world already, sometimes what men had done to Miss Theo and Miss Myra and the peacocks and to slaves. . . . (493)

Delilah sees grotesque images of the South. Her vision reveals that in the South, the grotesque can be defined as “what is not white,” but reality, what is really grotesque is the nature of whiteness.

As Carol Ann Johnston argues, the mirror reflects “[t]he nature of the antebellum South, and . . . of the entire country,” in the way the South treated slaves (34). However, Delilah also sees her own “motherly image” (493), remembering her son taken from her long ago. As if encouraged by this image, standing up stiffly, Delilah collects Phinny’s bones, puts on Miss Myra’s shoes, and drinks water from the river. And, just like the girl in Peterkin’s “Over the River,” she then crosses the river:

Submerged to the waist, to the breast, stretching her  
throat like a sunflower stalk above the river’s opaque skin,  
she kept on, her treasure stacked on the roof of her head,  
hands laced upon it. She had forgotten how or when she  
knew, and she did not know what day this was, but she  
knew—it would not rain, the river would not rise, until  
Saturday. (494)

Although Delilah experiences tragedy, the story ends on a positive and “hopeful” note (Weston 127), as does “Over the River.” After seeing reflections of the “grotesque” past and present of the South, Delilah finally runs away from the plantation, carrying Phinny’s bones. Thus, as Thornton Fuwa Naoko points out, the story is definitely about Delilah who has just gained liberation (58). But it is also a story of salvation—the salvation of a discarded child of mixed

blood (the salvation of a victim of southern racial fiction by a black girl). “The Burning” is the story of Delilah’s liberation and her salvation of or from the South. Welty tellingly reveals this moment of liberation through black eyes.

## 2. Who Is Tobe?: William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily”

“A Rose for Emily” is one of William Faulkner’s representative gothic, grotesque stories that has invited several interpretations and discussions, partly because of its shocking ending. The story recounts the life of Emily Grierson, the daughter of a respectable family in Jefferson, Mississippi, Faulkner’s fictitious southern town. Miss Emily remains unmarried until her thirties because her father is too proud to allow her to associate with the men in the town. After her father’s death, she begins to date Homer Barron, a Yankee foreman who came to Jefferson to make pavement, a job that invites criticism from the genteel population. The townspeople, who have always paid attention to Miss Emily’s behavior, gossip that she and Homer Barron are going to marry. However, Barron disappears from the town, and after that, Miss Emily lives unmarried to the age of seventy-four, shutting herself in her house. At the end of the story, after Miss Emily’s funeral, the townspeople investigate a long-neglected room in Miss Emily’s house and find the rotten body of Homer Barron and “a long strand of iron-gray hair” on the bed in the room decorated for a newlywed couple (*Collected* 130).

The narrators, the “we” of this story, are the townspeople of Jefferson, including a man and a woman from the town's older generation and others from the younger generation. However, the dominant tone of the narrating is white male-oriented, and as John Duvall mentions, the reader is given “access to communal ideology” via the male narrators who speak “as the voice of the community” (*Marginal Couple* 127). They recount Miss Emily’s life, including several episodes they presume to know, and the story develops as the townspeople not only speak of what happened to Miss Emily but also how they feel about her, how they thought her life might have been, and how they judge her for her behavior. In this sense, Miss Emily represents the image of “our” Emily, constructed by what the townspeople see, know, and assume about her. Meanwhile, the text makes it difficult for the reader to reconstruct her life chronologically because, while reminiscing about Miss Emily’s life, the narrators move forward and backward in time, according to their association with her,<sup>42</sup> and deconstruct the time-sequence of her life. Therefore, there is an ineluctable difference between the chronology of her life and the narrative plot:

1882       Miss Emily, a single woman, is thirty years old.

(123)

1884 (?)   Miss Emily’s father dies. (123–24)

1884/5      Miss Emily begins to date Homer Barron.

(124–27)

1885/6      Miss Emily buys arsenic. (125–26)

Homer Barron disappears from the town. (127)

The town is annoyed by the smell from Miss Emily's house. (121–23)

1892 Miss Emily teaches china-painting to the girls in the town. (128)

1894 Colonel Sartoris makes a decision to exempt Miss Emily from taxation. (119–20)

1906/07 Colonel Sartoris dies. (120–21)

1916 The townspeople try to make Miss Emily pay tax. (120–21)

1926 Miss Emily dies. (119, 128–30)

The dead body is found in Miss Emily's house. (130)<sup>43</sup>

The story begins with the townspeople going to Miss Emily's funeral and ends with them finding the dead body in her room after the funeral. Between these scenes, the townspeople offer recollections about Miss Emily. This narrative structure is problematic because the murder of Homer Barron is not revealed until the end of the story. When the townspeople remember episodes that, in the end, turn out to be causally linked to Barron's, but the links are unclear at the time they are revealed in the narration. Rather, the townspeople interpret these events in ways that the final revelation of facts subverts. Moreover, when they find the dead body, the narrators never link it to the past events nor reinterpret the meaning of those events. If the narrators tell the story of Miss Emily's life after they find Barron's corpse in her house, they should

recognize the causality between the past events and the death of Barron. However, they never mention his death during their recollections, nor do they explain the causality after they find the body.

One of the reasons for the narrators' silence about Barron's death can be attributed to Faulkner's desire to make the story more shocking. After all, this story turns on the grotesque event of a respectable townswoman killing her lover and hiding his corpse for the rest of her life. For example, Kyouichi Harakawa argues that this story owes too much to the unpredictability of the ending (168). Yet, Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren goes beyond such reading:

Faulkner has, we can see, been rather careful to prepare for his denouement. Miss Emily, it becomes obvious fairly early in the story, is one of those persons for whom the distinction between reality and illusion has blurred out.

(228)

This explains why Miss Emily killed Barron, namely, she killed her lover because of her madness; but this does not explain why the murder is not revealed until the end of the story. To examine this problem, the narrators' temporal and narrative position and the relation to the unfolding story must be carefully considered. This analysis will lead to a reexamination of the townspeople's status as a narrator and, finally, to a reinterpretation of the role played by Miss Emily's black servant, Tobe, in terms of the grotesque. As Judith Fetterley argues, "Faulkner . . . is not interested in invoking the kind

of grotesque which is the consequence of reversing the clichés of sexism for the sake of a cheap thrill” (34). Rather, the author tactfully concocts the grotesque ending to show what is truly grotesque in southern society.

When the narrators tell the story, they neglect the chronology of Emily’s life. Rather, their narrative depends on similarities, in other words, on the metaphorical relationship between the events in her life. For example, at the end of Chapter I, the narrators recount the event in which the townspeople of the new generation visited Miss Emily’s house to ask her to pay taxes. Because Colonel Sartoris had previously exempted her from paying taxes, Miss Emily refuses, saying: “See Colonel Sartoris. I have never taxes in Jefferson” (121). Yet, at the time, Colonel Sartoris had been dead for about ten years. Then, in the first half of Chapter II, the townspeople recall their annoyance at the smell that had emanated from Miss Emily’s house some thirty years ago.

So she vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had  
vanquished their fathers thirty years before about the  
smell. That was two years after her father’s death and a short time after her sweetheart—the one we believed would marry her—had deserted her. (121; emphasis added.)

Being too polite to offend a respectable southern lady, they do not address the problem with Miss Emily directly, stealing into her yard to eliminate the smell through liming. As the quotation above shows, the smell and the tax collection are events connected by the

repetition of Miss Emily's stubborn and impassive attitude toward the townspeople. The narrators develop the story from one episode to another through triggered similarities (the act of Miss Emily vanquishing two generations of the town), and then they explain a temporal sequence of the episodes.

Likewise, in the quotation below, two episodes—Miss Emily's courtship with Barron and her acquisition of poison—are connected by her common attitude of obstinacy:

She carried her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness. Like when she bought the rat poison, the arsenic. That was over a year after they had begun to say “Poor Emily” . . . (125; emphasis added)

Here, the timeline of the episodes is also explained after drawing the associative parallel between them. Thus, the narrators seem to neglect the causal relationship of events.

Explaining the difference between a story and a plot, E. M. Forster defines a story as “a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence,” and a plot as “a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality” (87). If we keep to Forster’s definitions, the narrators of “A Rose for Emily” neither tell “a story” nor develop “a plot.” This narrative condition becomes fully apparent at the ending of “A Rose for Emily” because, when they discover the body in Miss

Emily's house, they do not reexamine their assumptions about Miss Emily's life to draw the causal links with Barron's murder. For example, one townsperson assumed that Miss Emily bought the poison to kill herself because suicide "would be the best thing" for a genteel woman to do when discarded by a man (126). The townspeople should have understood that Miss Emily bought the poison to kill Barron after they discover the body. However, they never restate their assumption in the story. Furthermore, concerning the smell at Miss Emily's house, it was assumed that it came from dead rats—due to the inadequate housekeeping of Miss Emily's black servant—and not a human corpse. But even when they find the corpse, they never make the obvious connection with Barron's disappearance. Why then do the narrators end the story without reexamining the meaning of the past events?

Looking closely at the narrative's temporal construction reveals another interpretation. If the narrators are telling the story from a point in which sufficient time has passed since Miss Emily's death, this narrative time distance would have enabled them to look over every episode of her life and reinterpret it; they should know the truth. The fact that the narrators cannot reconsider what they have narrated proves that this time difference disappears at the end of the story; the narrative present time in the story is the final scene in which they find Miss Emily's secret. The narrators cannot look back to the past events nor figure out whose body it is. In fact, we find the narrative tone changes in the final scene of discovery:

The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights, upon the dressing table, upon the delicate array of crystal and the man's toilet things backed with tarnished silver, silver so tarnished that the monogram was obscured. . . .

The man himself lay in the bed.

. . .

Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair.  
(129-30; emphasis added.)

The use of “seemed” and “something” suggests that the narrators have yet to come to terms with the scene that unfolds before their eyes.<sup>44</sup> The use of these words in this manner suggests that the narrators are, as it were, now speaking from the present, in the scene. Hence, in the final scene, the temporal interval between what has been narrated and the narrating vanishes. The narrators who have told a story they had already known are transformed into the ones who tell what they are seeing and experiencing now. Using F. K. Stanzel's terminology, here “the narrating self” withdraws and “the experiencing self” dominates the narrative; therefore, what is told is

limited spatially and temporally to what “we” are experiencing here and now.<sup>45</sup> As a result, the white townspeople as narrators are confined to the final scene, closed in the room of Miss Emily’s house, eternally.

Up to the last scene, the townspeople narrate and recreate the image of Miss Emily as they recollect. They think that Miss Emily and her father have too high of an opinion of themselves. Thus, when her father dies, they are “glad” because, “[a]t last they could pity Miss Emily” (123). The genteel ladies of Jefferson deride her relationship with Barron as “a disgrace to the town” (126), whereas the townspeople become sympathetic to Miss Emily because Miss Emily’s cousins, who have come from Alabama to prevent the courtship, are more “Grierson” and more arrogant than Miss Emily. After confining herself to the house, Miss Emily is widely considered a burden or the hereditary of the town, but the townspeople are resigned to let her pass from generation to generation as “dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse” (128). In this way, the townspeople create their own image of Miss Emily as an object of curiosity, the image of their own assumptions. However, the last scene alters that image of Miss Emily. The end of the story reveals that, in actuality, southern patriarchal society can make a lady grotesque by repressing female sexuality and, at the same time, exposed the fallaciousness of the townspeople, who make Miss Emily an object of curiosity, observation, and pity.<sup>46</sup>

The narrators’ legitimacy as those who reconstruct Emily’s life

is subverted because they do not know her most important secret until it is too late. Consequently, Miss Emily's black male servant, Tobe, becomes a more reliable narrator. Tobe and Miss Emily grow old together and he continually cares of her. Thus, Tobe is the only person who freely moves within and without Miss Emily's house, and he is the only link between the inside and outside worlds of Miss Emily's life. He always appears in the story when the townspeople visit the house, although the reader does not hear his voice directly.

In the manuscript of "A Rose for Emily," Faulkner included a long conversation between Miss Emily and Tobe before the townspeople enter the house. This passage shows that Miss Emily and Tobe share some similarities: "Their breathing was alike: each that harsh, rasping breath of the old, the short inhalations that do not reach the bottom of the lungs" (*Manuscripts* 211). Tobe is a double or a shadow of Miss Emily. Moreover, the manuscript suggests that Tobe knows what is inside the room upstairs: "I know what's in that room. I don't have to see" (*Manuscripts* 211).

This conversation was omitted when the story was published. However, it is obvious that in Faulkner's imagination, the relationship between Miss Emily and Tobe is something different from or beyond that of the ordinary relationship between mistress and servant.<sup>47</sup> For a white woman to live alone with a black male was unusual, even if in the mistress-servant dynamic, and thus it can be argued that Miss Emily deviates from the white social norms. Inasmuch as the house figuratively refers to the body, Faulkner's

manuscript shows that the house or body contains blackness—male blackness, to be more precise. Moreover, in the published story, Tobe's role as Miss Emily's only connection to the outside world means he must be important not only to Miss Emily but also for the readers to understand her life.

Tobe has been critically unexamined in Faulkner scholarship. However, it can now be said that Tobe, who knew the secret of Miss Emily's nuptial chamber, is the only reliable narrator of her life. It is Tobe who finally invites the townspeople into the house. After that, Tobe disappears from Jefferson and the text (the manuscript suggests that he will go to Chicago), whereas the townspeople are left in Miss Emily's house and the room with the rotted corpse. Thus, it is important to reread the story to include Tobe's perspective, which leads not only to a reconsideration of the narrators' role but also to a reexamination of the story as a whole.

At the beginning, the narrators talk about the Grierson house as it used to be: "a big, squarish frame house that had once been white" but is now a "coquettish decay" (119). The house is personified as "coquettish," as a metaphor for a woman's body. Hence, the narrators already may have recognized that Miss Emily had lost her "white" purity. However, they never explore that truth. Only in the end do they find the body of her "grotesque" sexual desire, its grim vestige acting as a final reminder of a female sexuality that they only "seem" to glimpse. Even though Miss Emily sometimes ignored the gentility of her social station, she was still a southern lady to the

townspeople. In the end, Miss Emily's desire transformed her into a dark lady. Thus, it is no accident that Tobe, Miss Emily's reliable narrator, is the one who finally invites the townspeople into the house and into the secret. And Miss Emily's truth is that she has passed herself off as a proper southern white lady while privately deviating from the norm. Her grotesque story not only exposes the oppression of women in a patriarchal society but also deconstructs the myth or fiction of southern white female propriety.

This reassessment of the narrative enables us to reverse the social roles of Tobe and the white townspeople. Tobe finally disappears from the house, which means that he is liberated from southern society.<sup>48</sup> A black servant is free, and the white narrators are caught in the house as Faulkner abruptly closes the narrative. At the same time, because Tobe is Miss Emily's double, it also suggests that Miss Emily is liberated from and revenged on southern society. Tobe liberates Miss Emily from her oppressed and distorted role in southern patriarchy, and the story shows that Miss Emily and her actions are not the true grotesques, but rather Southern society itself is. As Judith Fetterley maintains, "at the end, the town folk finally discover who and what she is, they have in fact encountered who and what they are" (43). Here again, the black viewpoint reveals what is really grotesque is seemingly normative southern whiteness. "A Rose for Emily" is the story of Tobe's liberation and of Miss Emily's posthumous liberation through Tobe, a liberation that contrasts with the narrative confinement of the white townspeople.

The short stories discussed here show the constructedness or fictitiousness of the code concerning race, gender and sexuality in the South, using the grotesque elements. The grotesqueness represented in these stories interrogates the nature of what dominant southern people consider to be grotesque and radically reverses the meaning of grotesque. Peterkin, wearing a black mask, depicts grotesque figures and events as a mode with which to relativize white society and liberate herself from it. Welty, through the vision of a slave girl, reveals that what is really grotesque is the white code; she allows for the girl's vision to deconstruct the southern myth. Faulkner also suggests, through the black point of view, the way southern womanhood makes a white lady grotesque, which ultimately exposes that what is truly grotesque is the southern white society itself.

Grotesqueness had been assigned to "not white" in the South; however, these white authors reverse this by telling the grotesque stories through a black point of view and deconstructing the white myth. It is significant that the black characters here—the nameless black girl, Delilah, and Tobe are liberated in the end, either literally or metaphorically, and survive in contrast to the white characters and the authors who remain confined in the southern society. This contrast of liberation and confinement does not mean that the hierarchical relationship between whites and blacks can be easily inverted. However, this pattern—the blacks liberated and the whites confined—can be seen repeatedly in the texts by these white authors, who recognize that whiteness can be a dungeon to the white people.

Chapter III:  
The Sexuality, Masculinity,  
and Fragile Whiteness of Quentin Compson  
in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!*

Whiteness of Quentin Compson shows that whiteness always resists against, but is both penetrated by and fascinated by blackness. This argument examines two Quentins as one subject, the first from *The Sound and the Fury* and the second from *Absalom, Absalom!* This combination enables us to demonstrate Faulkner's belief that gender, sexuality, and race are closely related to construction of southern male whiteness, that is, that there are not boundaries between these categories but gradations.

Quentin Compson is the most important of Faulkner's characters, and among Faulkner's male characters, the most obsessed with southern tradition; Quentin is an alter ego or persona of the author. As Thadious M. Davis argues, Quentin "is an exaggeration of the southern gentleman, whose mind, no longer creative, is locked into sterile types and kinds, codes and manners" (*Faulkner's "Negro"* 93). Like Katharine Faraday, he hopelessly internalizes the southern idea; unlike Katharine, he tries to adhere to this code as a southern white male, and tries to be "a good actor" only to fail.

His identity as a southern white gentleman is always and

already eroded by his own recognition that the southern norm he has believed in is not absolute but relative, and what he believes to be true about the norm of race and sexuality in the South is only a fiction. In this respect, the reason why Faulkner put Quentin in New England far away from the South in both novels (i.e. *The Sound and the Fury*, and *Absalom, Absalom!*) is that the author gives his character a chance to see the South through others' eyes. As mentioned later, Quentin is even mistaken for a black person in Massachusetts because his way of speaking. More ironically, he, who has tried to protect of his sister's purity, is also mistaken for a rapist of a little girl in Boston. Quentin is forced to reexamine what he is and what the South is in the North.

Quentin's section in *The Sound and the Fury* is apparently a story of his agony about his sister's dishonor. However, his stream of consciousness shows that though he tries to act like a respectable southerner, he also suspects what he believes in or what the southern society makes him believe in. It also reveals that Quentin is fascinated by non-normative desire; he is fascinated by his sister's lover, or the object of his sister's black sexuality. Quentin finally decides to kill himself as if he resolves his agony in the river. In contrast to *The Sound and the Fury*, Quentin's major role in *Absalom, Absalom!* is to tell a story of a southern plantation owner, Thomas Sutpen and his white/black children. Quentin and his roommate in Harvard University, Shreve

MacKenzie explore the reason why Sutpen's son killed his daughter's fiancé and they finally seem to construct a coherent story from fragmented information. However, this narrating makes Quentin's identity unstable. The authorial narrator strangely mentions the act of narrating of Quentin and Shreve as "some happy marriage of speaking and hearing" (*Absalom* 253). Through narrating, Quentin "the narrator" is identified with the narrated, and finally, homosocial/homoerotic relationship between the narrators is identified with the one between the narrated, that is, between Sutpen's white son, Henry and his black son, Charles Bon. In this way, the act of narrating in *Absalom, Absalom!* reveals, as Gary Richards mentions, "the eroticism of narrative game playing" ("Male Homosexuality" 33).<sup>49</sup> Thus, narrative acts on the southern past blurs the boundary between gender, sexuality and race, and finally makes Quentin say "I dont hate it [the South]" (*Absalom* 303).

### 1. The "Failed Champion of Dames" : Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury*<sup>50</sup>

Three years after Frances Newman stated in her novel that "the loss of virginity" of a southern lady is "relatively meaningless" (A. Jones, "Like a Virgin" 61), Faulkner published *The Sound and the Fury*, a novel in which a distinguished but deteriorating family

is upended by the loss of their daughter Caddy Compson's virginity and her subsequent promiscuity. Thus far, it is generally accepted that Faulkner uses this work to describe the degeneration of southern society, and that Caddy's lost purity/black sexuality symbolizes the fall of southern tradition. Further, Caddy's promiscuity is often cited as being the cause of Quentin's suicide. Such an argument would posit that white women's sexuality is equivalent to social corruption; this study refutes such a reading. Instead, it finds that this novel describes southern aristocratic whiteness, which Quentin tries in vain to exemplify, as always fascinated by and finally conquered by blackness. This does not mean that the white world is subject to moral corruption, but that what the white characters believe is normative proves to be a fiction.

It is not a meaningless exercise to consider the influence Newman's *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* would have had on *The Sound and the Fury*. It shows that when this southern white woman passed into blackness in order to write her novel, she affected the male author, who is now considered a great master of the Southern Renaissance. While there is no hard evidence showing that Faulkner read *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, there are some facts that do seem to suggest it. First, Faulkner's library catalog—edited by Joseph Blotner—includes the aforementioned novel (*William Faulkner's Library* 44). Second, as Kathryn B. McKee points out,

the name of the man Katharine lost her virginity to, Alden Ames, closely resembles Dalton Ames, the character with whom Caddy Compson had her first sexual relationship (181). Moreover, looking at his literary career, it can be found that female sexuality was an obsession of the young Faulkner, and the subject dominated his early poems and prose writings. He also confessed in a letter to Anita Loos, the author of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, that "I am still rather Victorian in my prejudices regarding the intelligence of women . . ." (*Selected Letters* 32). It can be assumed that Faulkner could not dismiss this scandalous and bestselling novel about a southern lady with both intelligence and sexual desire.

These facts make it legitimate to maintain that *The Sound and the Fury* is Faulkner's response to *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*. The most significant influence that *Hard-Boiled* had on Faulkner is that it gave him a perspective from which to explore the theme of sexuality as the fundamental issue of southern society.<sup>51</sup> As mentioned before, women, sex, and sexuality was a dominant theme in his earlier poems and novels, but these were depicted as a general problem peculiar to the male adolescent—a private matter of young men—which was common throughout the world and not unique to the South.<sup>52</sup> In fact, in *Mosquitoes* (1927)—the novel before *The Sound and the Fury*—Faulkner makes both male and female characters talk about virginity and sexuality. For example, two flappers have a conversation about whether or not they are

virgins (*Mosquitoes* 147-49), and at the end of the novel, Faulkner makes Dawson Fairchild—"another of these philosophic spokesmen for the views of the young Faulkner" (Geismar 149)—discuss the violation of virginity. However, this preoccupation with sexuality does not appear to have anything to do with southern society. Rather, it seems that Faulkner describes these subjects in a way that connects them to more universal concerns such as youth or art.

In *The Sound and the Fury* and the subsequent works, it is obvious that Faulkner is exploring this issue as resulting from the oppressive southern patriarchal society. *The Sound and the Fury* has female sexuality as its main theme; as Deborah Clarke argues, it is not a novel about Caddy, her promiscuity but about "how men deal with women and sexuality" (20). In particular, Chapter II (Quentin's section) connects the issue of sexuality to the problem of southern society via Quentin's stream of consciousness. It can be assumed that it is *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* that has positioned him to explore the discourse of women, virginity, and sexuality deeply and from various angles as they relate to the inner problems of southern society.<sup>53</sup>

In comparing Newman and Faulkner, a shared commentary about the South can be found: the fictitiousness of Southern society. In fact, before *The Sound and the Fury*, Margaret Powers, character in *Soldiers' Pay* (1926) had already declared that the good name of women is nothing but what men construct, regardless

of the female truth:

“They’ll think you are one of them French  
what-do-you-call-’ems the Loot brought back with him.  
Your good name won’t be worth nothing after these folks  
get through with it.”

“My good name is your trouble, not mine, Joe.”

“My trouble? How you mean?”

“Men are the ones who worry about our good names,  
because they gave them to us. But we have other things to  
bother about, ourselves. What you mean by a good name  
is like a dress that’s too flimsy to wear comfortably. . . .”

(87; emphasis added)

This notion that women’s honor is merely a male construction is transferred to Quentin’s Father in *Sound*. Quentin remembers applying his father’s words to a description of southerners’ nature:

. . . and Spoade. Calling Shreve my husband. Ah let him alone, Shreve said, if he’s got better sense than to chase after the little dirty sluts, whose business. In the South you are ashamed of being a virgin. Boys. Men. They lie about it. Because it means less to women, Father said. He said it was men invented virginity not women. Father said it’s like death: only a state in which the others are left and I said, But to believe it doesn’t matter and he said, That’s what’s so sad about anything: not only

virginity and I said, Why couldn't it have been me and not her who is unvirgin, and he said, That's why that's sad too; nothing is even worth the changing of it. . . . (78)

Throughout the chapter, Quentin is ambivalent. On one hand, his sister's virginity is equal to the family's honor, which fits with southern conventions. On the other hand, virginity is only a fiction men created, first stated by his father and then exemplified by his sister.<sup>54</sup> Quentin's inner world is where the traditional conventions of the South and alternative notions about sexuality conflict.

It is not only the constructed nature of southern womanhood that Quentin is aware of. Living in Massachusetts as a Harvard student, and far away from the South, Quentin has the opportunity to relativize southern society, and he finds that the concept of race is a fiction:

I used to think that a Southerner had to be always conscious of niggers. I thought that Northerners would expect him to. When I first came East I kept thinking You've got to remember to think of them as colored people not niggers, and if it hadn't happened that I wasn't thrown with many of them, I'd have wasted a lot of time and trouble before I learned that the best way to take all people, black or white, is to take them for what they think they are, then leave them alone. That was when I realized that a nigger is not a person so

much as a form of behavior; a sort of obverse reflection of the white people he lives among. (86)

Moreover, the boys he met along the Charles River peg Quentin for a black man because of his speech patterns: “He talks like they do in minstrel shows” (120). Outside the South, Quentin’s gender, sexual, and racial identity are gradually blurred. Davis points out that in *Soldiers’ Pay* and *Sartoris* (1929),<sup>55</sup> “the Negro as character or theme” was not “the central focus” (*Faulkner’s Negro* 15). It is not a coincidence that Faulkner began to explore the meaning of black presence in the South with *The Sound and the Fury*. Both women and black people are the bedrock of white male supremacy, and Faulkner notices that these groups are not separate but entwined in their support of the dominant white male society.

In the South, if a white lady loses her sexual purity, it means that she belongs not to the range of whiteness but to the range of blackness, as Quentin’s words show:

*Why wont you bring him to the house, Caddy? Why must you do like nigger women do in the pasture the ditches the dark woods hot hidden furious in the dark woods.* (92;  
italics original)

Eighteen years after Quentin’s suicide, Jason tells Miss Quentin, Caddy’s illegitimate child who starts to go out with men like her mother—“When people act like niggers, no matter who they are the only thing to do is treat them like a nigger” (181), and calls her “a

nigger wench" (189). As Richard Godden points out, Quentin calls his sister's white suitors "blackguards," and "the epithet is carefully chosen and much repeated" (443). Caddy's lost virginity shocked Quentin because it was not merely a moral issue, but because it meant that Caddy completely ignored the southern conventions that define the rules of race and class.

Caddy's practice of crossing racial boundaries when choosing sexual partners does not only ignore the southern code, it also threatens southern masculinity. As suggested in the previous quotation ("In the South you are ashamed of being a virgin. Boys. Men. They lie about it."), Faulkner also examines the fictitiousness of southern masculinity, which is inextricably linked with southern femininity through Quentin's character. It is because of this notion that Faulkner placed southerners such as Spoade, Gerald, and Gerald's mother around Quentin at Harvard University in Massachusetts. The quotation above appears after Quentin remembers when Spoade called Shreve, Quentin's Canadian roommate, his husband. In other words, Spoade's innuendo hinting at homosexuality evokes the problem of Quentin own virginity, which is followed by that of female virginity. This association reveals that as a southern man, Quentin is aware that his own virginity can lead to deviation from normative sexuality, the denial of masculinity, or the feminization of a man. After recalling his father's words, Quentin remembers his own words: "Why couldn't it

have been me and not her who is unvirgin . . ." (78). This recollection clearly shows that Quentin understands that in terms of virginity, Quentin and Caddy's positions in the hierarchy are reversed. His father's words show that in the South, there is a double standard regarding white male sexuality: while white men are proud of their morality—which they think that black people lack—they also think that "the proof of masculinity" is "strongly equated with sexual prowess" (Rubin 50). Caddy's sexual prowess threatens Quentin's masculinity and it forces Quentin to perform masculine gestures, which he fails to do.

In this respect, Gerald Bland and his mother function as mirrors, reflecting Quentin's agony about his identity as a southern gentleman and his sexual/gender identity. Gerald is an attractive, masculine southern man, and he seems to have everything Quentin lacks. Quentin's feelings toward Gerald and his haughty mother are ambivalent; while Quentin despises their pretenses, he is fascinated by Gerald when he sees him rowing a boat, and he later confuses Gerald and Dalton Ames in his consciousness. Gerald's mother is proud of her son, telling Quentin about "Gerald's horses and Gerald's niggers and Gerald's women" (91). Mrs. Bland is also proud of her pedigree, just like Quentin's mother. Quentin himself despises their obsession with pedigree, though considering his obsession with his sister's virginity as being tied to their family's honor, it is obvious that Quentin also

dwells on his pedigree. Spoade, a cynical southerner from South Carolina, criticizes Mrs. Bland, stating that she had never been “a lady.” In the end, this son and his mother illustrate the delusion and vanity of southern aristocrats.

Toward the end of the story, Gerald and his mother begin to function in Quentin’s mind as a confusion of past and present, and illusion with fact. Before committing suicide, Quentin remembers his fight with Dalton Ames as chivalric: an attempt to protect his sister’s honor. In reality, he hits Gerald, who has been “blowing off” about his women (166), and is then hit back, while in his recollection, Quentin tries to fight with Ames only to faint like a girl. Looking at Quentin’s behavior, Spoade calls Quentin “the champion of dames” (167), which ironically reveals that Quentin’s gallantry is only a performance. Quentin himself recognizes his gesture is a farce. Just before the end of the chapter, Quentin recalls telling his father that he was not lying about committing incest with his sister (177). To Quentin, incest is the best way to preserve the purity of the family line, to prevent his sister’s sexuality from transgressing into the range of blackness. To Quentin, having sex with his own sister is the fact as well as the fiction. What is tragic is that he recognizes that he cannot make fiction into fact: “If we could just have done something so dreadful that they would have fled hell except us” (79). Quentin, half noticing that what he believes about female virginity is only words

—a fiction—has tried to protect his sister from being black, and he fails. This failure also reveals that he cannot be a successful southern man. To dissolve the gap between myth and fact, he drowns himself, which symbolizes Caddy's sexuality changing as time goes by and as she transgresses racial boundaries.

Bearing this interpretation in mind, one must ask if Faulkner depicts Caddy's sexuality as completely destructive and negative. Faulkner himself explains that *The Sound and the Story* developed from “a mental picture” of “the muddy seat of a little girl’s drawers in a pear tree where she could see through a window where her grandmother’s funeral was taking place and report what was happening to her brothers on the ground below” (*Lion* 245). He realized “the symbolism of the soiled pants, and that image was replaced by the one of the fatherless and motherless girl climbing down the rainpipe to escape from the only home she had, where she had never been offered love or affection or understanding” (*Lion* 245). This image suggests that Caddy is already dirty, and belonging to the range of blackness; Caddy is also depicted as the one who has the power to break southern codes of conduct.

*The Sound and the Fury* as a whole depicts the force of Caddy’s impenetrable and uncontrollable sexuality through the consciousness of her three brothers, and from the viewpoint of Dilsey, the Compson’s black cook/mammy. To each of these three brothers, Caddy symbolizes different things: for Benjy, loving care;

for Quentin, the honor of the family; and for Jason, money. These are what they think are the most important aspects of their lives. However, her sexuality makes them lose what she symbolizes to them. Benjy, the mentally retarded youngest son, loses Caddy—the only member of the family who loves him—because she left home after discovering that she was carrying a baby whose father was unknown. Quentin, as mentioned before, equated his sister's virginity with the honor of the family, therefore the loss of her virginity and her promiscuity shocked him so deeply that he decided to commit suicide. Caddy's fiancé promised Jason a job at the bank, but when it was found out that she had already been pregnant before their engagement, Jason lost the job. After Caddy left home and her new baby behind, Jason stole the money Caddy sent to her daughter, Miss Quentin, to compensate for the loss of his job. However, on Easter Sunday in 1928, Miss Quentin runs away from home sneakily with a show man having this money. Jason, the most practical person in the family, again loses what is most important to him due to his niece's promiscuity. The last section, told from the viewpoint of a black servant, Dilsey, describes how Jason runs after Miss Quentin and the money in vain.

In this way, each brother attempts to make her what he wants her to be, but Caddy (and Miss Quentin) escape this by using their sexuality. As a means of overcoming their limitations and

transgressing the borders of her brother's fixed and alienated inner world, their sexuality, however disastrous it may be to their family, represents a dynamism that is able to break the rigid structure of the patriarchy, and hence is deeply positive. Faulkner as well as Quentin are fearful of female sexuality while being fascinated by it at the same time, more specifically, its power to transgress boundaries.

In the last section of the novel, Faulkner makes the black servant and mammy figure, Dilsey, a viewpoint character. Dilsey relativizes the stories of the fall of the southern aristocratic family told thus far by the Compson brothers' streams of consciousness. The last chapter objectively relates the impact Caddy's sexuality had on the Compson family. Because the text focuses on Dilsey, it occasionally depicts the conversations between black characters that occur where there are no white people to overhear; revealing what the black people really think about them. For example, Luster, Dilsey's grandson, tells her that the Compsons are "funny folks," and "Glad I aint none of em" (276). When Frony, Dilsey's daughter, suggests that they should not take Benjy to the black people's church, (the white people think that Benjy is not good enough for white church, but "nigger church" is not good for him), Dilsey criticizes the white people's attitude toward Benjy: "Tell um de good Lawd dont keer whether he bright er not. Dont nobody but white trash keer dat" (290). Dilsey thinks that the white people

who discriminate against Benjy are white trash. However, the Compsons themselves psychologically exclude Benjy from their own bloodline. When he was found to be mentally disabled, Mrs. Compson changed his name from Maury to Benjamin because Maury was her brother's name. Moreover, Dilsey's attitude toward the turmoil of the Compsons should be paid attention to. Dilsey sympathizes with Miss Quentin and consistently argues that Miss Quentin is "all right" (282). Her attitude shows how cruel the Compsons are to Miss Quentin, and at the same time, suggests that what the white male considers as promiscuity means nothing to black people. Through this black person's eyes, the last chapter reveals that the Compsons are conquered by what white people have invented, namely, "black sexuality," which means "nothing" to the genuinely black people, as the title from Macbeth's soliloquy suggests.<sup>56</sup>

## 2. With "Garrulous Outraged Baffled Ghosts": Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!*<sup>57</sup>

As Betina Entzminger argues, southern society "is coded as masculine and heterosexual," and southern men are either born to or aspire to whiteness, which "shapes their view of themselves" (77). Moreover, "[w]hite supremacy merges with compulsory heterosexuality because white supremacy involves dominance and

control over women and blacks, and to be penetrated by another suggests submission or passivity" (Entzminger 77). This section examines the Quentin in *Absalom, Absalom!* in continuity with the one in *The Sound and the Fury*, and argues that Faulkner projects Quentin's problem of homoerotic sexuality onto an interracial male-male relationship, deconstructing and reconsidering the myth of whiteness. *Sound* focuses on the power of Caddy's (hetero)sexuality, which has the power to destroy Quentin's fiction of aristocratic honor and white "chivalric" masculinity. Caddy's sexuality highlights Quentin's ambiguous gender/sexuality, as a close analysis of Quentin's stream of consciousness shows that Caddy's sexuality forces his self-awareness regarding his lack of such sexual power and masculinity. Caddy's blackness further feminizes Quentin.

Furthermore, Quentin is made to lose his whiteness by his homosocial/homoerotic desire. In *Sound*, Faulkner often obscurely depicts Quentin's homosocial/homoerotic relationships and desires. As pointed out in the last section, Spoade calls Shreve Quentin's husband. When Gerald's mother arranged for a new roommate to replace Shreve without consulting Quentin, Shreve tells Quentin: "Well, I'll say a fond farewell. Cruel fate may part us, but I will never love another. Never" (106). Strangely, Quentin shows no response to this rather overt suggestion of homosexuality. It is as if Quentin completely represses the possibility of homosexuality.

Meanwhile, this homosocial/homoerotic relationship is fortified by making Gerald's mother "a bitch," not, "lady" (107). In other words, misogyny reinforces the male-male bond between Quentin and Shreve.

There seems to always be a hint of homosexual subject between Quentin and his sister's lover, Ames. Throughout Chapter II of *Sound*, in his consciousness, Quentin repeats the name of Dalton Ames (79-80, 92, 105), which enables us to understand that Quentin is not preoccupied with the loss of his sister's virginity, but actually fascinated by Ames himself.

*Did you ever have a sister? No but they're all bitches.*

*Did you ever have a sister? One minute she was. Bitches.*

*Not bitch one minute she stood in the door Dalton Ames.*

Dalton Ames. Dalton Shirts. I thought all the time they were khaki, army issue khaki, until I saw they were of heavy Chinese silk or finest flannel because they made his face so brown his eyes so blue. Dalton Ames. (92)

Again the word "bitch" appears in a male-male relationship. Dalton Ames' word "bitch" seemingly makes Quentin angry because Ames dishonors his sister. However, this episode can be interpreted in another way; by showing a misogynistic attitude, a homosocial relationship arises between Quentin and Ames. Caddy's black sexuality enhances the white male-male bond; more precisely, excluding the black sexuality of a white female reinforces this

white male homosocial/homosexual bond.

Moreover, in this scene, when Quentin stands face-to-face with Ames to defeat him, Quentin's role changes from a male avenger to a girl who faints. Ames gives Quentin a gun, but he is not courageous enough to shoot Ames, nor can he even hit him using his fists. Finally, he passes out like "a girl," even though Ames never hit Quentin (*Sound* 162). Quentin is, as it were, raped by Ames without the use of any violence. If "[f]rom a white supremacist point of view, the white male body is that which possesses and penetrates," while "the black body, like the female and the homosexual body . . . is that which is penetrated and possessed" (Entzminger 77), then Quentin now loses his whiteness. His homoerotic desire makes Quentin a wife or a girl, which means that Quentin hides his feminine nature, usually only barely passing as a southern man. Then, it can be argued that Quentin considers his sister's sexuality problematic because he latently notices his own non-normative gender, and sexual identity. As Quentin recognizes the construction of female sexual ideology in the South, he also vaguely feels the constructed nature of heterosexual ideology in the South. Homosexuality, as well as white female sexuality, can make a white man non-white.

In *Absalom, Absalom!*, the homoeroticism between Quentin and Shreve is foregrounded through another homoerotic

relationship between Charles Bon and Henry Sutpen. In this novel, Quentin, along with Shreve, constructs a story about a legendary southern man named Thomas Sutpen. Sutpen, born as a poor white man, becomes a successful planter in Jefferson before the Civil War, eagerly desiring to maintain his legacy. He manages to get married to a respectable lady from the town, and has a son and a daughter with this white wife. However, he ultimately fails to keep his white family line; only his black great-grandson, Jim Bond, remains at the end of the story, because his legitimate son Henry, after killing his sister's fiancé, Charles Bon, died in his house on which his black sister Clytie set fire. Quentin and Shreve try to resolve the mystery of why Sutpen forbid the marriage between Charles and his daughter Judith, and why Henry had to shoot Charles. They resolve the question using what Quentin had heard in Jefferson: that Sutpen begat Charles with a woman of mixed blood in Haiti, and that it is not incest but miscegenation that made Sutpen and Henry prohibit the marriage.

Faulkner claims that this is a story of "a man who wanted a son and got too many, got so many that they destroyed him" (*University* 71). However, Quentin and Shreve's construction of Sutpen's story leads to another explanation. The cause of Sutpen's failure is the interracial/homoerotic desire of his white son, Henry, toward another black son, Charles; as it will be discussed later, it is Henry who is first fascinated by Charles. In Chapter IV of the

novel, Quentin's father describes how the relationship between Henry, Charles, and Judith develops, saying that Henry loved Bon (71,72). Henry loved Bon so much that Henry is identified with Bon's octoroon wife: "She [the octoroon mistress] must have seen him in fact with exactly the same eyes that Henry saw him with" (75). However, Quentin's father says that Henry, "even though subconscious to the desire," notices "the insurmountable barrier which the similarity of gender hopelessly intervened" (75-76). To Henry, Charles is the man "whom he would be if he could become, metamorphose into, the lover, the husband; by whom he would be despoiled, choose for despoiler, if he could become, metamorphose into the sister, the mistress, the bride" (77). Henry's love and desire for Bon blurs his identity.

Later in the novel, Quentin, describing Charles as the cosmopolite and Henry as the youth, retells how Charles and Henry were at the University of Mississippi when they first met:

. . . a country youth . . . whom he [Charles] watched aping his clothing carriage speech and all and (the youth) completely unaware that he was doing it . . . he (the cosmopolite ten years the youth's senior almost, lounging in one of the silk robes the like of which the youth had never seen before and believed that only women wore) watching the youth blush fiery red yet still face him, still look him straight in the eye while he fumbled, groped,

blurted with abrupt complete irrelevance: "If I had a brother, I wouldn't want him to be a younger brother' and he: "Ah?" and the youth: "No. I would want him to be older than me' and he: "No son of a landed father wants an older brother" and the youth: "Yes. I do," looking straight at the other, the esoteric, the sybarite, standing (the youth) now, erect, thin (because he was young), his face scarlet but his head high and his eyes steady. . . .

(252-53)

Then Henry gives his sister to Charles without knowing he is not white, which means that he gives himself to Charles (263). Just like Quentin, who is fascinated by his sister's lover and switches positions with Caddy when he faces Ames, Henry is also identified with his sister in the relationship with Charles. In the end, Sutpen's design based on white supremacy and heterosexism is finally defeated by a homoerotic, interracial, and even incestuous relationship between his white son and black son.

In the novel, Quentin is not the first narrator of telling Sutpen's story: first is sixty-four-year-old spinster Miss Rosa Coldfield, next, Mr. Compson tells Quentin Sutpen's story, and finally, Quentin and Shreve complete the story. Strangely, early in the novel, it does not seem that Quentin wants to be involved in this story telling. The novel begins with a scene where Quentin, who is about to leave for Harvard University, is asked to listen to

Rosa (who is angry at Sutpen) tell the story, but he does not actively pay attention. Then his father tells Quentin, and first it seems that Quentin would not listen to him: "Mr. Compson's voice speaking on while Quentin heard it without listening" (102). However, when his father relates that Henry stops Charles from getting married with his sister, because Charles had already married an octoroon woman and had a child, Quentin begins to imagine Henry and Charles face to face on horseback. In Chapter V of the story, Rosa again assumes the role of narrator, telling how Sutpen insulted her and claiming that someone had hidden inside Sutpen's house for four years. Then it is revealed that Quentin had not listened because he was obsessed with Henry shooting Charles:

But Quentin was not listening, because there was also something which he too could not pass—that door, the running feet on the stairs beyond it almost a continuation of the faint shot, the two women, the negress and the white girl in her underthings . . . as the door crashed in and the brother stood there, hatless, with his shaggy bayonet-trimmed hair, his gaunt worn unshaven face, his patched and faded gray tunic, the pistol still hanging against his flank; the two of them, brother and sister, curiously alike as if the difference in sex had merely sharpened the common blood to a terrific, an almost unbearable, similarity, speaking to one

another in short brief staccato sentences like slaps, as if they stood breast to breast striking one another in turn. . . . (139)

In Chapter VI, the location of where the Sutpen story is told shifts from Jefferson, Mississippi to Harvard University, Massachusetts, and Quentin shifts from a passive listener to an assertive narrator of the Sutpen story. After this chapter, Quentin and Shreve try to reconstruct the story, mainly by reinterpreting the reason why Henry killed Charles. As Quentin (and Shreve) become devoted to this telling, the boundary between the individuals becomes blurred. First, in Chapter VI, while Shreve retells the story, Quentin thinks that Shreve sounds “*just like Father*” (147; italics original). To Quentin, Shreve as a narrator becomes equal to his father as a narrator. Then in Chapter VII, Quentin becomes an assertive narrator—when Shreve interjects, Quentin tries to stop him, saying “Wait, I tell you!” and “I am telling” (222). The authorial narrator describes how Quentin and Shreve are fascinated by constructing the story. For example, when he explains how Sutpen came to be killed after the Civil War by a poor white man named Wash, whose granddaughter had Sutpen’s baby but was abandoned by him because the baby was a girl, Quentin keeps on talking: “Quentin did not even stop. He did not even falter, taking Shreve up in stride without comma or colon or paragraph” (225). Moreover, in this scene, narrating becomes

closer to “playing”—“‘No,’ Shreve said; ‘you wait. Let me play a while now. Now, Wash’” (224), and their narrating is described as “the strained clowning” (225). Here, through playing, the boundary between the narrator and the narrated becomes ambiguous.

This blurring is more pervasive in Chapter IIX, in which Quentin and Shreve finally resolve the mystery, discovering the secret to be Charles’ mixed blood. At the beginning of the chapter, the authorial narrator tells the discrimination of the narrator and listener in Quentin and Shreve becomes more blurred.

They stared—glared—at one another, their voices (it was Shreve speaking, though save for the slight difference which the intervening degrees of latitude had inculcated in them. . . , it might have been either of them and was in a sense both: both thinking as one, the voice which happened to be speaking the thought only the thinking become audible, vocal; the two of them creating between them . . . and talking, people who perhaps had never existed at all anywhere, who, shadows, were shadows not of flesh and blood which had lived and died but shadows in turn of what were . . . shades too). (243)

And then the boundaries not only between Quentin and Shreve, but also between the narrator (Quentin and Shreve) and the narrated (Henry and Charles) are resolved:

Shreve stood beside the table, facing Quentin again

though not seated now. In the overcoat buttoned awry over the bathrobe he looked huge and shapeless like a disheveled bear as he stared at Quentin . . . who sat hunched in his chair, his hands thrust into his pockets . . . while both their breathing vaporized faintly in the cold room where there was now not two of them but four, the two who breathed not individuals now yet something both more and less than twins, the heart and blood of youth. . . . Not two of them in a New England college sitting-room but one in a Mississippi library sixty years ago. . . . (235-36)

The telling merges the subjectivity of the individuals, and Faulkner shows that their desire to tell or construct the story is similar to sexual desire. The authorial narrator suggests the sexual desire in Quentin and Shreve's relationship: "There was something curious in the way they looked at one another, curious and quiet and profoundly intent, not at all as two young men might look at each other but almost as youth and a very young girl might out of virginity itself—a sort of hushed and naked searching . . ." (240). This indication of (hetero)sexual desire in male-male relationship leads to the authorial narrator's calling their reconstruction of the story "some happy marriage of speaking and hearing" (253). Considering that the authorial narrator calls so when Shreve says "we're going to talk about love," it could be said

that the relation of the teller and the listener is analogous to that of lovers. Through this speaking-hearing relationship, Quentin and Shreve enter into a homosocial/homosexual relationship.

At this point in the narration, not only the boundary of the teller/listener, but also that of the narrator/the narrated, is blurred: the distinction between Henry, Charles, Shreve, and Quentin disappears:

That is, for all the two of them, Shreve and Quentin, knew he had stopped, since for all the two of them knew he had never begun, since it did not matter (and possibly neither of them conscious of the distinction) which one had been doing the talking. So that now it was not two but four of them riding the two horses through the dark over the frozen December ruts of that Christmas eve: four of them and then just two—Charles-Shreve and Quentin-Henry, the two of them both believing that Henry was thinking *He* (meaning his father) *has destroyed us all.* . . . (267; italics original)

It must be pointed out here that the narration about Henry and Charles suggests that the former is obviously fascinated by the latter, though it is never called homosexuality.

At the end of their telling, it is revealed that Sutpen forbid the marriage not because of the possibility of bigamy or incest, but because of Charles' black blood. Further, the true reason why

Henry shoots Charles in front of the Sutpen House turns out to also be Charles' blood. The bond between Henry and Charles deviates from the South's codes for gender, sexuality, and race. Henry shooting Charles, the act which Quentin fails to complete with Dalton Ames, can be interpreted as the figurative consummation of an interracial sexual relationship. And Quentin, who has become so involved in the telling of the story that he is displaced by Henry and Charles, finds that he himself transgresses the race boundary through his narration. While solving the mystery with Shreve about the reason why Henry prohibits Bon's marriage with his sister, Quentin is identified with Henry and/or Bon, and by the homosocial/homoerotic bond. Their telling ends with Henry shooting Bond, and as this shooting is considered a figurative homoerotic consummation, Quentin's telling, in which he is identified with Henry or Bon, is paralleled by the consummation of his homoerotic desire.

However, the happy marriage of speaking and hearing in which the discrimination of individuality disappears in the homosocial/homosexual relationship finally makes Quentin's inner world unstable. In contrast to Shreve, after finishing the construction of Sutpen's story, Quentin seems very unsettled: ". . . he began to jerk all over, violently and uncontrollably . . ." (288). Then Quentin recalls that just before he left for Harvard University, he and Rosa went to Sutpen's house, only to find out

that Henry had been sheltered by Clytie, Sutpen's black daughter. Clytie and Henry died when Clytie burned down the house. In the end, after Quentin remembers encountering Henry in Sutpen's house, he notices that he has forever lost the possibility for peace of mind:

He [Quentin] lay still and rigid on his back with the cold New England night on his face and the blood running warm in his rigid body and limbs, breathing hard but slow, his eyes wide open upon the window, thinking, 'Nevermore of peace. Nevermore of peace. Nevermore. Nevermore. Nevermore.' (298-99)

Faulkner talks about the relationship between the character and the act of telling as follows:

. . . it's Sutpen's story. But then, every time any character gets into a book, no matter how minor, he's actually telling his biography—that's all anyone ever does, he tells his own biography, talking about himself, in a thousand different terms, but himself. (*University* 275)

The characters tell the story of Sutpen while talking about themselves simultaneously. What Quentin did while creating the story—where the subjectivity is confused between the teller and the listener, the narrator and the narrated, the lover and the loved, the white and the black—is to listen to his own story as well as

that of Henry and Bon, to tell his own story as well as that of Henry and Bon. Quentin finally finds in the maze of blurred identity “the Otherness inside him”; we can also call it a desire which is always repressed. His desire is mirrored by the incestuous, homosexual, and interracial relationship between Henry and Bon; this parallel reveals that the subjectivity is always shadowed by repressed desire, and this desire makes him/her slip into the opposite range of whiteness. The black Jim Bond, who is excluded from Sutpen’s authentic white male family line, but finally remains as the only descent of Sutpen family, is a symbol of this repressed desire:

“You’ve got one nigger left. One nigger Sutpen left. Of course you cant catch him and you dont even always see him and you never will be able to use him. But you’ve got him there still. You still hear him at night sometimes. Dont you?”

. . .

“Then I’ll tell you. I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere. Of course it wont quite be in our time and of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again like the rabbits and the birds do, so they wont show up so sharp against the snow. But it will still be Jim Bond; and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings. . . .” (302)<sup>58</sup>

In the end, Quentin's telling/listening of the South makes him aware that there is no definite racial/sexual identity, and that as Shreve's prediction suggests that eventually there will be no white people, and that everyone will be the descendants of Africans on the Western Hemisphere, the myth that white people have created is destined to end sometime in the future. Therefore, after finishing the narrating, when Shreve asked, "Why do you hate the South?" Quentin is forced to respond as follows:

"I dont hate it," Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately; "I dont hate it," he said. *I dont hate it* he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark: *I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!* (303; italics original)

Quentin notices southern whiteness is only a fiction and there is no stable identity as a southern white man. However, he has no choice to act as a southern man. Southern whiteness constitutes Quentin's self, but it always confines himself. "[T]he dungeon" is whiteness itself (*Sound* 173).

In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner makes Quentin recognize that "a nigger is not a person so much as a form of behavior" (86). It is not content but a form of behavior, a performance that constructs blackness. As such, whiteness can be also constructed through performing as a white person.

Furthermore, Quentin is mistaken by the boys in Massachusetts for a black person in a minstrel show because of his accent. This episode suggests Quentin can be a black person passing as a white, and racial boundaries that are rigid in the South can be easily disrupted outside the South. This misunderstanding seems more critical to Quentin because in *The Sound and the Fury*, he always tries but fails to be a good actor as a southern hetero-normative gentleman, particularly concerning his sister's sexuality. His failure is inevitable, as Quentin is always shadowed by his homoerotic, non-white desire. In telling the tragedy of Sutpen's children on race, sexuality, and whiteness in *Absalom, Absalom!*, Quentin acts both as Sutpen's white son and black son, through which he finds the former's homoerotic desire toward the latter. The narration in which the boundaries between the subjects are blurred makes Quentin recognize his ambiguous gender, sexual, and racial identity; he only passed as a white heterosexual man in the South. In the end, Quentin Compson is a character who is not only obsessed with the southern tradition, but he also has an ambiguous identity as a southerner. Faulkner reveals the fragile construction of a southern identity through two Quentins. The next and the last chapter will see Carson McCullers, a female writer from Georgia, explore the meaning of cross-gender, cross-sexual, and cross racial identity in the South more radically than Faulkner.

Chapter IV

Crossing into Queer Whiteness:

Carson McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye*,

*The Member of the Wedding*,

and *The Ballad of the Sad Café*

Among Southern Renaissance writers, it is Carson McCullers who is particularly conscious of what the deviation from the social norm mean in the South and most radically explores how the southerners' identity is constructed, regarding gender, sexuality and race. Many of the characters in McCullers' fiction, whether outwardly or cryptically, transgress the normativity. Some are deformed, and some are androgynous or homosexual. These characters are represented as grotesque in the normal world. Mab Segrest argues that in the South “[b]oth patriarchy and racism depend on creating a category of Other—or freak, not ‘normal like me’” and “[i]n Southern racism, it is the Black person; in patriarchy, the female” (27). As Gleeson-White suggests, Segrest seems to consider that “the grotesque is dangerously entangled with both racism and patriarchy in the South” (*Strange Bodies* 4). However, McCullers' grotesqueness is more subversive one. The black person and the female—and the homosexuals can be added here—are the abnormal who are required to construct the identity of those who are normal, namely, the white male of dominant class in the South. McCullers challenges this way of identity formation

in the South through the grotesque. Her grotesqueness subverts the categories of the normative and the non-normative.

Carson McCullers has been known for representing human loneliness and alienation in the modern world, which are universal themes and not particular to the South. According to her biography, McCullers recognized her gender/sexual ambiguity, and this raised her consciousness of marginality and alienation in the South, where the traditional gender, sexual, and racial codes still govern the southern society. At the age of ten, McCullers was too tall for her age just like her tomboy Frankie and she feared to become one of freaks she saw at the Fair, though she was at the same time fascinated by them and “felt a kinship through some mysterious connection” (Carr 1). In her girlhood, McCullers was considered “eccentric” by her high school classmates (Carr 29): they labeled her as “‘weird,’ ‘freakish-looking,’ and ‘queer’” (Carr 29-30). She was alienated from the other girls because of her non-normative look and attitude as a white southern girl.

At the age of 20, she married to a southern young man Reeves McCullers. However, after the marriage, she was often fascinated by a woman. She also preferred to dress herself like a man. According to the biography, McCullers “could be deadly serious about her masculine nature, which she felt was more real than her feminine one” (Carr 159), and “[d]iscussing her bisexuality,” she declared that she was born a man (Carr 159). Later in their marriage, Reeves recognized his own bisexual nature when he

found himself in loving David Diamond, a composer whom McCullers also loved so much that she wanted to divorce Reeves and married to Diamond.<sup>59</sup> This happened after she published *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, and during the period when she wrote *The Ballad of the Sad Café*. She dedicated the latter to Diamond.

In this way, her sense of alienation was closely related to her conflict with southern society over her gender/sexual identity, and it enabled her to see the South from a different—I would like to say “queer”—viewpoint. This chapter explores McCullers’ gender, sexual, and racial consciousness in her works, sees how she calls into the question the white, heterosexual male-dominant code in the South where, according to Anne Goodwyn Jones, “rigid gender boundaries had always been part of a network of racial and class boundaries as well” (“Work of Gender” 43). Finally it will show the possibility for an alternative subject crossing gender, sexuality and race boundaries McCullers suggest in her works.

## 1. Queering the Southern White Masculinity: *Reflections in a Golden Eye*<sup>60</sup>

This section examines the representations of the eroding/eroded white male masculinity and heterosexuality, focusing on the figure of a southern military man, Captain Penderton in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. In the South,

traditionally white male's masculinity was constructed in comparison with femininity and with the black male's "primitive" masculinity. McCullers here gives a screw into this construction by showing that Penderton's fictitious masculinity is constructed in difference from not the black men, but the feminine Asian male, Anacleto. She also gives another screw to heterosexism in the southern society by making figuratively the white southern man toward whom Penderton have homoerotic desire, non-white man, "a Gauguin primitive" (46). Penderton is similar to Quentin in that he is emasculated by female sexual prowess—Penderton cannot accept his voluptuous wife's sexuality—and is fascinated by homoerotic relationship with the man. This section argues that McCullers, taking over the problem of the southern masculinity/heterosexism from Faulkner, questions the formation of southern male identity and shows that southern normative code made by the white dominant male is already always blurred by their "Other."

When published, Carson McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye* was received unfavorably by readers, in particular in the South, because, though the story is set on a southern army post, most of the characters and incidents were abnormal. According to her biography, while in Columbus, McCullers received a threatening call from a member of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK); she was told that "unless she got out of town immediately he was coming with his friends to 'get her' that very evening" (O. Evans

87). The voice also said, “We know from your first book that you’re a nigger-lover . . . and we know from this one that you’re queer. We don’t want queers and nigger-lovers in this town” (O. Evans 87).

What made the KKK angry is clear: this novel focuses on the homoerotic desire and queerness of a southern military man who is also a descendant of a planter in Georgia. The KKK must have noticed that McCullers’ novels can destabilize the norm of patriarchal heterosexual southern society, which is rigidly based on demarcations in race, class, and gender/sexuality.

Meanwhile, the KKK’s attitude also shows that they were sensitive to what menaces the manhood of white southern men, and were keenly aware of the crisis of southern masculinity. During the period between the two world wars, masculinity was a highly sensitive issue among southern men.<sup>61</sup> First, the social advancement and sexual emancipation of women from the turn of the century menaced the prestige of men, and the Great Depression deprived men of confidence as the breadwinner. However, these phenomena were also seen nationally. What makes this issue different from the other regions can be found in the relationship of the South to the North. As often pointed out, in comparison with the North, the South had been represented as feminized because of its defeat in the Civil War and the region’s backwardness. This crisis of southern masculinity seems to be heightened in the 1920s and ’30s, when the South was criticized of its cultural, economical, and religious backwardness, which is typically found in H.L.

Mencken's "The Sahara of the Bozart" and the dispute of Scopes Trial (1925), which made the South paid much more attention nationally. For example, Frank Tannenbaum, in his report on the South, *Darker Phases of the South* (1924), presents an image of the (Anglo-Saxon) southerner as "a helpless and impotent being," lacking manhood (183). From Northerners' perspective, because of the South's backwardness, southerners are degenerate and demasculinized.

In this social destabilization, Agrarians, the promoters of Southern Renaissance, sought the way to resist against the rebuke from the North and rescue the New South in a tradition of the Old South. It should be noted here that in order to resist against the northerners' demasculinizing the southern men in their bashing, Agrarians retorted by re-masculinizing the South; as Hiromi Ochi argues, they created and re/masculinized "Fathers" of the South or heroes of the past in their literary works such as Allen Tate's *The Fathers* (139). Moreover, the discourse of New Criticism includes masculinized language. Agrarians, creating many Fathers of the South, reading the poetry in a masculine way and making the canon of the white male, became fathers who create the tradition (Ochi, 169).<sup>62</sup> Therefore, as Richard H. King maintains, to agrarians, the tradition's "essential figures were the father and the grandfather" (*Southern Renaissance* 7).

In *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, McCullers, who appeared on the literary world at the end of the '30s as a young female writer,

also attempts to represent the condition of gender/sexuality in the South in a very different way or view from that of these male authors. In contrast to Agrarians' reconstruction of southern masculinity by depending on the South's past, McCullers tries to represent how unstable the gender/sexual category is.

### 1. Captain Penderton: An Officer with a Delicate Masculine-Feminine Balance

*Reflections in a Golden Eye* is a story about a murder that happened at an army post in the South during peacetime. The participants are “two officers, a soldier, two women, a Filipino, and a horse” (3). An army post, even in peacetime, is a place where discipline, regulation, and physical and mental soundness are required: “all is designed according to a certain rigid pattern” (3), all these characters seem, at least to the reader, more or less abnormal; as Oliver Evans suggests, in this novel, “not even the horse is normal” (59).<sup>63</sup> The protagonist, Captain Penderton, though considered a promising military man, has kleptomaniac and homosexual tendencies. The other officer, Major Langdon, secretly engages in adultery with Penderton’s wife, Leonora; meanwhile, Langdon’s wife, Alison, aware of her husband’s adultery, cuts her nipple. The narrator states early in the story that Alison is “on the verge of actual lunacy” (18), and only the Filipino servant Anacleto understands and serves her faithfully. Private Williams, who

fascinates Penderton, is attracted by Leonora's naked body, and creeps into her bedroom to look at her in the night. The murder occurs when Penderton shoots Williams dead while the latter is peeping at Leonora.

Within the story, not everyone at the army post is cast in such a negative light. Langdon demonstrates military manhood, as he comments that joining the army makes feminine Anacleto a man. In his view, the army is a place where nonnormative men can be made normative/masculine. In addition, Langdon argues that it is important for a military man "to be a good animal" and to serve his country with "[a] healthy body and patriotism" (117). Thus, the qualities that contradict this manhood, that is, being effeminate, intellectual (not animalistic), and unhealthy, are all considered negative.<sup>64</sup> Alison, who is too feminine, delicate, and intellectual according to her husband, is beyond his comprehension. Therefore, when she broaches the subject of divorce with him, Langdon sees her words as proof of her insanity and sends her to a sanatorium, where she dies very quickly of a heart attack.

Penderton is also recognized as a brilliant and promising officer in the army. He was raised in the South by "five old-maid aunts," and as a descendant of a planter, behind him lies "a history of barbarous splendor, ruined poverty, and family hauteur," though "the present generation had not come to much" (71–72). As the narrator states, "the Captain set exaggerated store by the lost past" (72). Thus, Penderton is also a man who is proud of the southern

past, and who counts on his identity as a southern white man.

However, he has some secrets. According to the narrator, Penderton has “a sad penchant for becoming enamoured of his wife’s lovers” (11), and sexually, he possesses “a delicate balance between the male and female elements” (10).<sup>65</sup> He is attracted to Langdon and then to Private Williams, without knowing that he peeps at Leonora. Meanwhile, Penderton hates women. In addition to loathing Alison’s fragile and delicate femininity, he hates his voluptuous and somewhat feeble-minded wife, particularly her sexuality, because he cannot respond to her sexually, which emasculates him. What Penderton longs for is a world of “men without women,” or “no woman’s land.”

Upon examining the descriptions of Penderton, however, it is clear that his body is feminized to some extent—not only sexually, but also physically—as he maintains a delicate balance between the male and female elements. For example, he has “white, fattish hands” (6), and the description of him on the horse reveals that his body has a trait that is not suitable for the militant masculine body –“a grotesque effeminate who desperately tries to appear a virile horseman” (Sarotte 84).

Major Langdon was called The Buffalo. This was because when in the saddle he slumped his great heavy shoulders and lowered his head. The Major was a fine horseman. . . .

On the other hand, Captain Penderton was no rider at all, although he himself was not aware of this. He sat rigid as

a ramrod in the exact position taught by the riding master. Perhaps he would not have ridden at all if he could have seen himself from the rear. His buttocks spread and jounced flabbily in the saddle. For this reason he was known to the soldiers as Captain Flap-Fanny.

(25–26)

His physical characteristics coincide with the physical standards issued by the army between the World Wars, when screening to remove men with psychiatric disorders from the military.

According to Allan Bérubé, these guidelines listed “feminine characteristics among the ‘stigmata of degeneration’ that made a man unfit for the military service”:

Males with a “degenerate physique,” the regulation explained, “may present the general body conformation of the opposite sex, with sloping narrow shoulders, broad hips, excessive pectoral and public adipose [fat] deposits, with lack of masculine hirsute [hair] and muscular markings.” . . . In addition to these “anatomical” stigmata of degeneration, the interwar standards listed “sexual perversion” . . . as one of many “functional” stigmata of degeneration. . . . With these 1921 standards, the Army established its first written guidelines for excluding men who displayed feminine bodily characteristics or who were sexual “perverts” or “psychopaths.” (13–14)

From the front, Penderton looks very masculine sitting on a horse, even representing a phallic figure, but from the back, his broad hips reveal his physical femininity. In addition, Penderton fails as a rider, which means that he fails to complete the masculine performance.

In the army, where effeminate or homosexual men are considered “degenerates” or “deviants,” Penderton can blur the boundary between male and female, between normalcy and deviance. Then what makes Penderton’s identity as a heterosexual male officer, as recognized by the people at the army post? One is the fact that Penderton marries. Though his wife’s sexuality reveals his impotence to her and himself, his marital status ensures his heterosexuality at least on the surface. To him, Leonora is a mask to hide his deviant sexuality and also the one whom Penderton offers to Langdon to keep his homosocial bond with him.

With regard to the construction of Penderton’s identity as a southern white masculine man, we must consider the Filipino Anacleto, who represents gender and racial Otherness to a white male in southern society. As Gary Richards notes, “[h]is [Anacleto’s] effeminacy is so extreme that even Penderton seems masculine in comparison” (*Lovers* 173); therefore, Penderton can be recognized as a normal white man in comparison with this feminine Asian man. This leads us to the analysis of how normative male identity in the southern army is constructed in relation or

opposition to the racial “Other,” here not a black man, but an Asian man, Anacleto.

### 1.2 Anacleto: Grotesque Otherness that De/Constructs Difference

In this story, the “reflections in a golden eye” are the grotesque realities hiding under the apparently controlled, normal, and monotonous surface of the army post. Meanwhile, “a golden eye” is an image created by Anacleto in the story:

“Look!” Anacleto said suddenly. He crumpled up the paper he had been painting on and threw it aside. . . .  
“A peacock of a sort of ghastly green. With one immense golden eye. And in it these reflections of something tiny and—”

. . .

“Grotesque,” she [Alison] finished for him.

He nodded shortly. “Exactly.” (86)

Then, we can assume that in this novel, the eye of the Filipino reflects some grotesque aspects of southern military society as the view of Tobe and Delilah reflect the truth of the southern society.

At the army post, Penderton’s deviance is almost unnoticeable to others, perhaps with the exception of Leonora and Alison who had seen his theft, while Anacleto is stigmatized as a visible deviant. He is a childish, feminine man and is “imitative,” almost, as Langdon says, like “a little monkey” (84). Anacleto dresses like a

woman, loves ballet and European classical music, and is eager to learn French. In the army, the only people he respects and regards as sane are Alison and her friend, Lieutenant Weincheck, who is to retire without “his Captain’s bars” (36), because the medical board did not pass him. These three “feminine” or “feminized” people share a love for music, art, and European culture.<sup>66</sup> It is only Alison and Anacleto who care for Alison’s dead children Catherine. Catherine was born with some of her fingers combined and seeing that, Major Langdon thought that “if he had to touch that baby he would shudder all over” (38). This Langdon’s reaction to the disfigured baby shows that the normative always excludes the grotesque reality from the ordered world.

To Anacleto, the white men are his enemies. Penderton fabricates “ridiculous anecdotes about Alison and Anacleto” and spreads them around the army post (99). Langdon despises and harasses him, and also makes a joke about him to spread it in the party: “the little Filipino thoughtfully scented Alison Langdon’s specimen of wee-wee with perfume before taking it to the hospital for a urinalysis” (74). These white men construct the story of Anacleto as the abnormal. Anacleto resists such white malevolence by playing a childish trick or speaking in French and confusing Langdon, who does not know the language.

Behind Anacleto’s relocation all the way to America is the rise of expansionism in imperial America during the latter half of the nineteenth century. As many critics argue, this imperial

expansionism is closely related to the construction of the masculinity of dominant, middle-class, white, heterosexual men. White masculinity is constructed in relation or opposition to “subordinate OTHERS, especially colonized/enslaved men onto whom denied aspects of the self were projected” (Andermahr 128). From this viewpoint, Kristin L. Hoganson explores the relation between gender politics and American imperialism during the Spanish-American War and at the turn of the twentieth century. Hoganson notes that one of the reasons why the United States “wage[d] a lengthy war for control of the Philippines” was to “keep American men and their political system from degenerating” (138). At that time, American manhood was under the threat of degeneration due to the feminization of American society and women’s social advancement (here, again, “degeneration” is almost equal to “being effeminate”).<sup>67</sup> Hence, the war was considered to be a good opportunity for recovering manliness. Imperialists, arguing that Filipino men were “savage, childish, and feminine” (Hoganson 138) and lack governing capacity, and American white men had to govern them, believed that holding colonies could “prevent national and racial degeneracy” (Hoganson 139).

After the Philippines were colonized, Filipino men influenced the construction of the masculinity of American white men. Michael Kimmel, in *Manhood in America*, explores the relationship between American manhood and the immigrants who rushed to the United States in the 1930s. Rising unemployment and fierce

competition deprived American men of a way to prove their manliness, and at the same time, racial exclusion and anti-immigration sentiments grew in light of the increasing number of immigrants. Then, “[r]acial exclusion and anti-immigrant nativism were again a recourse for some who searched for a foundation for secure manhood” (Kimmel 194). In particular, Filipinos, whose numbers had increased even after the Immigration Act in 1924, as they were “classified as ‘American nationals’” (Kimmel 194) evoked racial antipathy, and this discriminatory sentiment rested on “twin gender images” (Kimmel 195) of the castrated/effeminate men and the sexually primitive and heathenish men:

Racism and nativism bore the mark of gender, as if depicting “them” as less manly would make “us” feel more manly. So on the one hand, Filipinos were cast as effete and effeminate; small with delicate features, great dancers who possessed an obsessive concern with clothing and appearances. On the other hand, Filipinos were hypermasculine “jungle folk,” “scarcely more than savages,” “with primitive moral codes.” (Kimmel 195)<sup>68</sup>

The gender image of Oriental men, constructed by the colonial gaze of whites, is a reflection of the denied aspects of the self by white men. Anacleto, who Gleeson-White appropriately calls “the Langdons’ eunuch-like Filipino houseboy” (*Strange Bodies* 46), projects the image of the feminized Filipino man. As a colonial

subject, he is a reverse image of the masculinity defined in the United States and also the southern army, and here his role is very critical to white masculinity. Anacleto as a castrated/effeminate man is required to help construct and secure the white American man's gender normalcy, masculinity and privilege.

### 1.3 Alison/Anacleto: Subversive Assimilation

Now, from the point of colonialism, we must examine the relationship between Alison and Anacleto. Their mistress-servant relationship is also represented as one influenced by colonial discourse after the colonization of Philippines by the United States. According to Vicente L. Rafael, who examined how the United States ruled the Philippines from 1899 to 1912, "in the Philippine colony over three-fourths of the live-in servants were males," and they were referred to "by the infantilizing and desexualized Spanish term *muchachos*, or 'boys' in English, regardless of their age" (70). These desexualized, good servants and their white mistresses maintained the domestic order in colonial society, and this servant literalized on his body "the allegory of benevolent assimilation" (Rafael 73).

Alison and Anacleto's relationship is a reproduction of this colonial relationship. Langdon sees them as a pair so assimilated that he cannot distinguish their voices: "Their voices and enunciation were so precisely alike that they seemed to be softly

echoing each other" (42).<sup>69</sup> As Hugo McPherson notes, Anacleto imitates Alison in all things, and he is her "alter-ego" (144). This mimicry of the white by a colonial subject is considered evidence of the latter's racial inferiority and of being only half-civilized. Rafael argues that "precisely for this reason . . . it is also an invitation to white supervision," quoting Taft's statement in *Census of the Philippine Islands 1903*: "They [The Filipinos] are imitative. They are glad to be educated, glad to study some languages other than their own, glad to follow European and American ideals" (34–35).

Anacleto is also glad to study French and imitate European culture, and this makes him more despised by the whites. However, here we must not overlook the fact that Anacleto's mimicry also subverts the colonial or racial hierarchy.

As mentioned before, Anacleto sometimes confuses his master Langdon by speaking in French, and this might overturn the dichotomy between master and servant.

"Idiot!" the Major said. "How is she [Alison]?"

Anacleto lifted his eyebrows and closed his delicate white eyelids very slowly. "*Très fatiguée.*"

"Ah!" said the Major furiously, for he did not speak a word of French. "Vooley voo rooney mooney moo!" I say, how is she?" (39)

A Filipino man, who is considered racially inferior to white men, and a white woman, who is also inferior to white men, are the

white men's Others, and these characters' images are projections of deviance from the code of white men, such as "madness," as Ania Loomba notes:

These associations between European male adulthood, civilization and rationality on the one hand, and non-Europeans, children, primitivism, and madness on the other are also present in Freudian and subsequent accounts of the human psyche. (137–38)

Alison and Anacleto are the ones who the people at the army post consider "eccentric" or "neurotic," grotesque persons. However, from Alison and Anacleto's view, everyone but they and Weincheck is "wrong," and Alison especially judges, Langdon "as stupid and heartless as a man could be," Leonora "nothing but an animal," Penderton being "at bottom hopelessly corrupt" (78). If Alison is, as Margaret B. McDowell points out, "the most clear-sighted character"(59) in the story,<sup>70</sup> seeing the army post through her eyes and the eyes of her double/Anacleto makes the boundary between normality and abnormality subverted here.

Then we need to reconsider what is considered as female abnormality through the gaze without the dichotomy between the normal and the abnormal, the sane and the madness. Alison is superficially described as a lady of domesticity and morality, as Richards sees Alison as "delicate and refined in fulfillment of idealized southern womanhood" (*Lovers* 166). However, it must be mentioned that she tried to divorce her husband and live by herself

with Anacleto. Langdon considers his wife's offer of divorce the sign that "she was crazy" (106), and sends her to a sanatorium where she is to die soon by the heart attack. Alison's conduct which is against the law of patriarch is understood as the madness by the white male gaze. Here it seems the female effort to be independent from the men ends up as unsuccessful in the same way as Frankie and Miss Amelia, who will be discussed later. However, it cannot be missed that a southern lady and a colonial Other, both of whom are considered as dependent and immature by the dominant white men, show resistance against the southern domestic ideology. In this context, her cutting the nipple can be reinterpreted now. To Langdon, Penderton, and Leonora it only means her being insane. However, it can be understood that by cutting the nipple, which relates to female reproductivity and sexuality, Alison tries to express, though subconsciously, her reject of a role as a mother or an object of sexual desire. McCullers uses the desexualized colonial mistress-servant relationship to subvert the gender/racial dichotomy and hierarchy in the southern white society.

#### 1.4 Golden Eyes: Penderton and Two Men as Racial Otherness

Penderton's hate for Alison/Anacleto originates in the fact that these two persons assumes the quality Penderton consider as the negative, femininity and abnormality. These are required to construct his identity as the normative in its comparison.

Meanwhile, as discussed before, these qualities are what he has inside without being known by Others even by himself. After Alison and Anacleto disappear from the army post, losing the Others who construct his identity, the time finally comes when he has to notice that the boundary between the normative and the non-normative inside Penderton becomes obscure.

As mentioned before, Langdon argues that in order to make a man of effeminate Anacleto, it is necessary to put him in the army. However, in order to construct white, militant manhood, they need a man who represents Otherness. This is because their superficial, fragile “normalcy” is narrowly established in opposition to the man who the whites consider to be abnormal. After Anacleto’s disappearance, Langdon feels sorry to lose such a good houseboy, while for Penderton, the loss of Anacleto means a lot to his identity. After the discussion about making a man of Anacleto in the army, Langdon and Penderton continue their talk as follows:

“You mean,” Captain Penderton said, “that any fulfillment obtained at the expense of normalcy is wrong, and should not be allowed to bring happiness. In short, it is better, because it is morally honorable, for the square peg to keep scraping about the round hole rather than to discover and use the unorthodox square that would fit it?”

“Why, you put it exactly right,” the Major said.  
“Don’t you agree with me?”

"No," said the Captain, after a short pause. With gruesome vividness the Captain suddenly looked into his soul and saw himself. For once he did not see himself as others saw him; there came to him a distorted doll-like image, mean of countenance and grotesque in form. The Captain dwelt on this vision without compassion. He accepted it with neither alteration nor excuse. "I don't agree," he repeated absently. (114–15)

Penderton denies that Langdon's equation that "any fulfillment obtained at the expense of normalcy is wrong," and defends Anacleto. This means that what has been denied or repressed by Penderton returns. Then Penderton accepts his grotesque figure.

This grotesque figure represents Penderton whose identity cannot be defined because every boundary is blurred by the return of the repressed. Moreover, it overlaps the grotesque image of Alison/Anacleto created. Then, it can be said that Penderton, identifying with Alison/Anacleto, shifts from the center to the margin, from the normative identity to the non-normative one, looks at the true image of himself and accepts it. Ihab Hassan points out that, "the Golden Eye only reflects; it does not see" (216). However, as opposed to Narcissus who drowns himself fascinated by his own image, he relativizes his image and accept his own grotesqueness. Penderton's reply to Langdon ("I don't agree") means that the difference between normalcy and abnormalcy, between masculinity and femininity, between whiteness and

non-whiteness dissolves in parallel with Anacleto's disappearance.

After this recognition, Pederton's desire for Private Williams who also has kind of golden eyes, "gold-brown eyes" (19) grows more to the extent he wants to transgress any boundaries. At first, Penderton hates Williams (72). William's look and behavior, as Virginia Spencer Carr suggests, represents primitiveness and animality (39), and deviates whiteness. His expression is "found usually in the eyes of animals," and he moves "with the silence and ability of a wild creature or a thief" (4). He also seems to lack conscience and intelligence and has even killed a black man. Moreover, through the eyes of Alison, Williams is compared to "a Gauguin primitive" (46). Williams represents what Penderton hates and denies.

However, the dream he dreams when he uses Seconal suggests that he is already fascinated by the golden eyes.

This quantity of the drug gave him a unique and voluptuous sensation; it was as though a great dark bird alighted on his chest, looked at him once with fierce, golden eyes, and stealthily enfolded him in his dark wings. (51-52)

This dream is very meaningful. Actually, while Penderton is dreaming this dream, Williams peeps at Penderton's wife in her room. Without his knowing, Pederton changes his position with his wife: now Penderton is a woman whom he really hates. Likewise, the more Penderton is fascinated by Williams, the more blurred

becomes every boundary which defines the order of the southern army.

Before he is deeply fascinated by Williams, the Captain had worked hard and his mind was brilliant from a military point of view (109). He always “had bee keenly ambitious,” and “had imagined himself as a Corps Area Commander of great brilliance and power” (110). But now he is eager to make himself “Private Weldon Penderton” (110).

Instead of dreaming of honor and rank, he now experienced a subtle pleasure in imagining himself as an enlisted man. In these fantasies he saw himself as a youth, a twin almost of the soldier whom he hated—with a young, easy body that even the cheap uniform of a common soldier could not make ungraceful, with thick glossy hair and round eyes unshadowed by study and strain. (111)

Penderton used to think that there is definite boundary between officers and solders: “To him, officers and men might belong to the same biological genus, but they were of an altogether different species” (10). However, his homosocial/homosexual desire leads to dissolve the boundary. Then, finally, Pedernton becomes “conscious only of the irresistible yearning to break down the barrier between them” (119).

While Penderton follows Williams, the narrator tells that Williams mind is occupied by Leonora’s body and her sensuality.

On the contrary, he thinks of the Captain as “a series of mental pictures” that has no meaning (123). “To this young Southern soldier the officers were in the same vague category as Negroes . . .” (123). In this way, when Penderton’s desire and Williams’s go each toward the opposite directions, the murder takes place. The Captain finds Williams peeping at Leonora and shoots him:

The soldier did not have time to rise from his squatting position. . . . The Captain was a good marksman, and although he shot twice only one raw hole was left in the centre of the soldier’s chest. (126-27)

In the end, this shooting means doubly. Outwardly, it can be understood as Penderton’s revenge against the one who dishonored his wife, a heroic, masculine deed—the typical chivalric behavior of the southern masters. However, on a symbolic level, his conduct is clearly a consummation of his homoerotic desire, by penetrating his love with a phallic tool. Penderton finally establishes masculine identity externally, while internally he satisfies his homoerotic desire without knowing by anyone. Thus the story ends when he finally reveals himself as a queer black figure—the wrapper he wears that of “rough black wool” (125): “The Captain had slumped against the wall. In his queer, coarse wrapper he resembled a broken and dissipated monk” (127).

The penetration signifies the disappearance of the boundary between heterosexuality and homosexuality, masculinity and femininity, and normalcy and abnormalcy. Moreover, if Williams is

figuratively non-white, this shooting also signifies the consummation of homoerotic relation beyond the race boundary. Penderton finds that what makes his identity as a masculine military man is this hierarchical differentiation, losing the Others onto whom the dominant white men had projected what they consider as the negative. At the end of the story, Alison, Anacleto and Wincheck leave the army post: those whom the army post consider as eccentric disappear from the army. Seemingly, order resumes at the army post. However, this story has already revealed that the border between race, gender and sexuality is always already blurred and the southern masculinity and heterosexuality is a fiction. Then, this last queer black figure is a result of McCullers' exploration of the way in which gender/sexual identity is constructed in the South, and it definitely reveals the constructedness of southern white masculinity founded on fragile discrimination. Penderton's identity, which is finally revealed to be ambiguous and therefore grotesque, always already subverts the category of the normative and the non-normative.

## 2. Taming of the Tomboy and Her Queer Resistance: *The Member of the Wedding*<sup>71</sup>

This section argues that McCullers uses whiteness as a method of the protagonist's gender/sexual passing as a heterosexual southern woman and that it is her black mammy, Berenice who implicitly teaches this queer passing. *The Member of the Wedding* is a coming-of-age narrative of a southern motherless girl, Frances Addams during World War II. At first, Frances appears as a typical tomboy, called Frankie, and her appearance—too tall for her age and dirty as a white girl—and her conduct, such as violence, theft, and sexual behavior, show that she deviates from the white female code and belongs to the range of the grotesque, or of blackness. Frankie is ambiguous about her gender and racial identity and it makes her feel alienated from the white respectable girls' world and makes her fear not knowing why. Through the story, she progresses from the naïve childhood to the threshold of adulthood through her brother's wedding. Frankie finds the resolution of alienation in being a member of the wedding and decides to follow their honeymoon to get out of the suffocating town, which results in fail. During this process, she changes her name from the boyish "Frankie" to the feminine "F. Jasmine" and finally, to her real name, "Frances," which seems to mean that she becomes initiated into the world of a normative white female in the end.

Many critics have interpreted the end of this story as confining Frankie to an appropriate gender role, giving up being androgynous: she finally acquires white-womanliness and submits to the limited world. For example, Keith E. Byerman argues that Mick Kelly, another of McCullers' tomboyish characters, in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* and Frankie "are compelled to take on a more socially acceptable feminine identity" (20).<sup>72</sup> Louise Westling goes so far as to state that the ambitious tomboy changes into "a giddy teenager, having accepted her femininity and her real name, Frances" (127).

It must be considered here that there is a significant difference between boys' coming of age narrative and that of girls'. The coming-of-age narrative, or the novel of adolescence, tends to have a form of initiation story "where the protagonist experiences a significant change of knowledge or character" (White 3). However, adolescence is a different experience for boys and girls in a male-oriented society; as Judith Halberstam argues, "If adolescence for boys represents a rite of passage (much celebrated in Western literature in the form of the *bildungsroman*) and an ascension to some version (however attenuated) of social power, for girls adolescence is a lesson in restraint, punishment, and repression" (156).

This section reexamines an interpretation of the text as that of normalizing/whitening a tomboy, but shows Frankie's initiation into the normative is successful only on the surface and her

initiation is actually an implicitly queer one. In this respect, this section focus on a black character, Berenice: it is Berenice, an African American cook and also Frankie's surrogate mother/mentor, who plays a crucial part in her queer initiation. Berenice seems to be a stereotypical mammy figure who intends to bring up Frankie to be a respectable southern lady. (I have already examines the role of black mammy in constructing whiteness in the previous chapter). She is a heterosexual woman, believing that only male-female relationships are correct, so she tells Frankie to have a "white boy beau" and try to be a good white girl (98). If white womanhood, as Kate Davy argues, is "a racialization process in which middle-class respectability functions as a structuring principle" (215), Berenice seemingly leads to Frankie to acquire respectability and whiten her. However, McCullers, though not openly, provided Berenice with another subversive role.

Before examining the story closely, it should be pointed out that the meaning of female sexuality has changed between Newman/Peterkin who wrote in 20s and McCullers in the late 30s and 40s. In the female works in early twentieth discussed in Chapter I, for southern women to be sexually autonomous subject can mean to liberate themselves from the patriarchal norm, though they fear of punishment. However, in the works of McCullers written after the depression era, for female to stay true to "hetero"-sexual desire cannot be a method of becoming such one;

rather, in the relationship with men, female autonomous sexuality not only brings a punishment of men but also makes women an object of male desire.

Behind this change lies backlash to the social advancement and sexual liberation of women during the 20s after the great depression. The Depression made an end of flapper's era and the expectations of sexual liberation exit from the popular culture (S. Evans 200). Meanwhile harsh financial conditions made the men lose his power as breadwinners as discussed in the previous section—"‘Manliness’ was socially bound up with the power to earn" (Rowbotham 218). Feminism had already threatened white masculinity and the depression further damaged the white men's pride as a bread-winner. Then the male anger appears as the form of women capitulated to men in the movies—for example, proud and selfish Scarlett O'Hara was raped by Rhett Butler and emerged tamed and transformed in *Gone with the Wind* (S. Evans 197-98),<sup>73</sup> while "an exaggerated form of maleness was culturally celebrated in the New Deal's manly-worker images and in popular culture, where tough-guy crime fiction, John Wayne-style cowboys and Superman concealed unstated anxieties" (Rowbotham 218). Men had to restore damaged masculinity. The Depression brought the time women have to fear of being punished and tamed.<sup>74</sup> After the Great Depression, there seems little room for women to be an emancipated, independent and autonomous subject.

Through Frankie and Miss Amelia, McCullers depicts this

fear and each ending seems to suggest that they finally capitulate to the male-oriented norm. However, McCullers also explores the way to seek for becoming another subject outside the normative gender, sexuality, and race code in these texts. This leads one to a reading of *The Member of the Wedding* not as an ordinary coming-of-age narrative but as a queer coming-of-age narrative, in which the protagonist's initiation into normal adulthood seems finally complete; however, from the queer perspective, this initiation is not finished.

## 2.1 What Is Frankie Afraid of?

In the “green and crazy summer” (7), Frankie spends most of her time with Berenice and five-year old cousin John Henry in the “silent and crazy and sad” kitchen (29), because, being denied initiation into the older girls’ club, she is not a member of anything. Each of these three has queer features. Berenice has a blue glass eye, though the other eye is dark, which gives the impression that there is something wrong about Berenice. John Henry, who sometimes wears Frankie’s dress has ambiguous gender. Frankie is too tall for her age and is afraid she looks almost like a monster. The kitchen is “a sad and ugly room,” and as John Henry covered “the walls with queer, child drawings,” it looks like a room “in the crazy-house” (10). Besides, outside the kitchen, there is another crazy boy who affects Frankie’s mind deeply: Honey Brown,

Berenice's young foster brother. Honey is "a sick, loose person" (47) but can speak like a white teacher. He is so light-skinned that he can pass as a white boy, but he suffers from being black in a southern small town. The people and the room around Frankie are all queer or crazy. In other words, Frankie's world consists of the non-normativeness and it makes impossible for her to join the club of normal white girls.

This sense of alienation annoys her very much—"She belonged to no club and was a member of nothing in the world. Frankie had become an unjoined person who hung around in doorways, and she was afraid" (7). At the same time, a sense of confinement in a small southern town worries and frustrates her. Both Frankie and Berenice suffer from the sense of being "caught" (141): Frankie is confined by the southern society, and Berenice by racial code. And both don't want to be caught.

F. Jasmine's voice was thin and high. "I know," she said. "But what is it all about? People loose and at the same time caught. Caught and loose. . ." (143)

Then, one day, in order to break through this sense of stagnation, she decides to join her brother's wedding and leave the town with them forever. To be with the couple is for Frankie a means to evade the alienation and go out of the town.

In the novel, the narrator repeatedly describes Frankie as being "afraid." Early in the story, Frankie is fear as she stands beside the arbor, which she has already grown too tall to walk

under: “Frankie was afraid. She did not know what caused this fear, but she was afraid” (13). Here, the narrator does not describe the object of Frankie’s fear, although it is not too difficult to guess it: she is afraid of freakish self. However, it is to be noted that the narrator deliberately fails to mention it. This narrator’s silence shows Frankie’s inability to articulate her own feelings.

There is another feeling that Frankie cannot understand or name; the narrator expresses this as “the tightness.” When Frankie recollects the visit of her brother and his bride, the narrator states that there was “something about this wedding that gave Frankie a feeling she could not name” in her mind (8). Then, while wondering “who she was, and what she was going to be in the world,” Frankie “was afraid, and there was a queer tightness in her chest” (32). Several pages later, this “queer tightness” is related to the bride and groom:

. . . and the first sight of her brother and the bride had shocked her heart. Together they made in her this feeling that she could not name. But it was like the feeling of the spring, only more sudden and more sharp. There was the same tightness and in the same queer way she was afraid.  
(35)

In this manner, when narrating Frankie’s inner world, the third-person narrator in this novel evades the omniscient point of view, and his viewpoint is adjusted to that of a twelve-year old girl who is too young and naïve to understand the change inside and

outside herself. Yet, what the narrator does not try to explain seems to further urge us to read the unexplainable matter in the text.

## 2.2 The Wedding: Normalizing a Tomboy

Wearing a pair of shorts and a B.V.D. undervest and sporting a short haircut like that of a boy, Frankie fits the image of a stereotypical tomboy. She lives alone with her father, as her mother died during delivery, and her brother is in the army. She practices throwing knives and carries her father's pistol all over town, shooting the cartridges in a vacant lot. She even has stolen the three-bladed knife from Sears and Roebuck store, which makes her feel that she is also known by the prisoners in jail, all of whom are colored people brought there by "Black Maria." Frankie's dream is to go to war, and the fact that she cannot do this makes her restless and blue (30–31). In fact, she wants to be a boy. Her appearance, conduct, and desires show that Frankie transgresses the gender code of the white southern womanhood, which prevailed during the time when McCullers was writing her novels. Therefore, Frankie, a tomboy, who possesses these cross-gender/race qualities, can be regarded as threatening the normativity of the society.

However, as several critics point out, the deviance of tomboys is not always denied; on the contrary, it is accepted under certain conditions in society. In American culture, Michelle Ann Abate

argues, the “strength, independence and assertiveness” of tomboys are not completely denied, but rather, can be valued as long as they are “young girls” (xix). Even in the South, during McCullers’ time, boyishness was accepted for girls, and “tomboys,” as Westling points out, “had complete physical freedom and often served as a lively companion for her father, temporary stand-in for a son”(111).<sup>75</sup> However, significantly, being a tomboy is “not a lifelong identity” (Abate xix): tomboyishness is a quality that only a young girl is allowed to possess, not a grown woman. When tomboys reach the beginning of adolescence, they are “expected to slough off tomboyish traits” (Abate xix) and “to begin the metamorphosis” into ideal womanhood (Gleeson-White, *Strange Bodies* 13). Thus, adolescence is the time for “tomboy taming” (Abate xix). “As a girl,” Westling points out, “the tomboy is charming, but as an adult she is grotesque” (113). In this manner, tomboyishness might be tolerated, only as far as the girl obeys the gender normativity that governs the male-oriented society when she enters into adulthood. If she breaks it, she will be punished (Halberstam 155); as an adult tomboy of McCullers, Miss Amelia in *The Ballad of the Sad Café* is defeated/punished in the fight by her ex-husband. Thus, it can be said that a coming-of-age narrative in which a tomboy is finally initiated into normal white womanhood can enhance the ideology of gender normativity.

Frankie is now reaching the age when she ought to normalize her tomboyishness. Before the summer, Frankie worked for her

father every Saturday afternoon and even slept in the same bed with him; she was a “son” of her father. However, just as summer began, she was unexpectedly denied the right to sleep next to her father. She feels much frustrated by his denial and cannot really understand the reason for the change in his attitude, although it certainly implies that Frankie can no longer remain in her tomboyish childhood. Frankie’s father proclaims that she is not his son but his daughter, with whom a father is not allowed to sleep and requires her to obey his command.

As is implicit in her father’s rejection, “tomboy taming” includes making young girls aware of “normal” adult sexuality. The most powerful factor that compels young girls to abandon their tomboyishness, Abate claims, is “pressure to get married and become a mother”; therefore, many tomboy narratives end with “the all-too-familiar trope of wedding bells and baby cries” (xix–xx). Tomboys are obliged to make themselves more feminine, find a man, learn about sex, and prepare for motherhood. As Gleeson-White argues, all weddings represent “the domestication and heterosexualization of social relations” (*Strange Bodies* 92).<sup>76</sup>

Although it is not her own, the wedding of her brother has a great impact on Frankie: “when her brother and the bride came to the house, Frankie knew that everything was changed” (34). The change Frankie expects the wedding will bring is obviously a positive one. First, it gives Frankie a chance to avoid alienation by being a member of the wedding. Moreover, she can fulfill her

aspiration of escaping her “ugly” house and the suffocating small southern town and venturing out into the world by following the honeymooning couple. The wedding seems to give Frankie a sense of identity, freedom, and connection with other people, as, at the end of Part I, she describes her expectations as follows:

At last she knew just who she was and understood where she was going. She loved her brother and the bride and she was a member of the wedding. The three of them would go into the world and they would always be together. And finally, after the scared spring and the crazy summer, she was no more afraid. (57)

Meanwhile, the wedding makes Frankie face another type of change, a change in her self-recognition, which causes her much uneasiness. After hearing about her brother’s marriage, Frankie worries whether her figure is suitable for the ceremony and often looks at herself in the mirror, only to see her image as “warped and crooked” (8), contrary to the “prettiest” (9) and “natural” (37) bride and groom. The reflection of her body makes her fear that others would consider her as a freak, like the ones she saw at the House of Freaks (25–26). Thus, she tells Berenice that she has to improve herself, that is, normalize herself before the wedding (28), although it is not easy to cast aside her fear.

Frankie looked for a last time at herself in the mirror, and then she turned away. She thought about her brother and the bride, and there was a tightness in her that would

not break. (28)

The bride and groom and the wedding itself make Frankie aware of her unnaturalness and freakishness because she is transgressing the gender code, and this self-awareness, or the fear it brings about, might be expressed by the word “tightness.” Frankie’s words, “I doubt if they [freaks] ever get married or go to a wedding” (27), show that she recognizes that marriage and freakishness are incompatible. Thus, at the beginning of Part II, on the day before the wedding, with her new name, F. Jasmine, she appears dressed as an adult woman, in “the pink organdie,” putting on “lipstick and Sweet Serenade” (61), making herself fit for the gender code. Moreover, she goes so far as to have a heterosexual relationship with a man, promising to have a date with a soldier she happens to meet. Frankie’s metamorphosis indicates that she internalizes the code of gender/sexual normativity to some extent, perhaps unconsciously, although as will be examined later, this masquerade makes her the object of male desire. Thus, in the crazy summer, the wedding brings to Frankie the season of normalizing her gender and sexuality.

### 2.3 Fear of Sex, Fear of Marriage

As mentioned in the last section, the wedding makes Frankie face the problems of her gender/sexual identity. Yet, at the age of 12, Frankie is too naïve and innocent about sex. She cannot

understand, or rather, seems to rebel against understanding adult sexuality. When the older girls talk about the “nasty lies about married people” (18), Frankie does not understand what they mean. However, in order to join the girls’ club, she must be party to this secret of marriage and adult sexuality.

Despite her rejection of the truth about sex, heterosexuality gradually infiltrates Frankie’s world. One day, she happens to commit a “queer sin” with her neighbor Barney MacKean, which creates a shriveling sickness in her stomach and makes her dread everyone’s eyes (33). Frankie hates Barney to such an extent that she plans to kill him with a pistol or a knife. This violent reaction, although in her imagination, can be interpreted as queer revenge on heterosexual sex with phallic tools in order to avenge her autonomy having been damaged by engaging in a sexual act with a boy. As Barbara A. White claims, “. . . resistance to sex is almost universal in novels of female adolescence. The reason is always the same: adolescent heroines view sex as domination by a man . . .” (103).

Here, it is significant to note the difference in the reactions to sexual experience between Frankie and Mick in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*. In contrast to Frankie, who is harassed by her sense of guilt, Mick does not feel guilty after having sex with her neighbor Harry, nor does she worry about the loss of her virginity. Rather, the one who is more deeply affected is Harry, who tells Mick, “It was all my fault. Adultery is a terrible sin . . .” (*Lonely*

*Hunter* 275). When walking back home, she feels that she is “a grown person now, whether she want[s] to be or not” (*Lonely Hunter* 276). This experience has different results for both of them: Harry leaves town for a job somewhere else and Mick, although she wants to stay in school, must work at Woolworth’s to support her family. They used to be “good comrades” sharing their interests in mechanics. However, now, Harry enters manhood and Mick is forced to enter womanhood; that is, the boy goes into the world, and the girl is confined to the home. Compared to Mick, Frankie’s reaction to sex reveals not only her naïveté but her vague awareness of what a sexual relationship with a man means to a woman. Frankie’s sense of guilt is akin to her fear of losing her freedom or herself as a result of having sex.

The summer of the wedding is the time for Frankie to recognize the secret connection between sex and marriage. Near the end of Part I, after discussing her brother’s wedding with Berenice, Frankie recalls an experience that she had at the age of 9, when she accidentally saw the lodgers in her house making love. Frankie mistook what she witnessed as “a fit” and Berenice, when asked what the matter was with them, replied that it was “just a common fit” (50). Remembering the scene, Frankie, who is now 12 years old, feels that the conversation with Berenice about her brother’s wedding was somehow wrong; further, her feelings are as follows:

She looked at her dark ugly mug in the mirror. The

conversation about the wedding had somehow been wrong. The questions she had asked that afternoon had all been the wrong questions, and Berenice had answered her with jokes. She could not name the feeling in her, and she stood there until dark shadows made her think of ghosts.

(50)

Again, Frankie has a feeling that she cannot name, but we can assert that it is fear caused by what married men and women do. Just after this recollection, the idea of “being a member of the wedding” comes to her, and as mentioned before, for Frankie, on the surface, it means casting off her fear of loneliness and sense of bewilderment. However, considering that the fear of adult sex and marriage brings this idea to her, “being a member of the wedding” can also be read as Frankie’s subconscious denial and obstruction of the heterosexual relationship or as a symbolic act of resistance to heterosexism, which is the norm of patriarchal society.

In Part II, as we have already seen, Frankie reinvents herself with the name F. Jasmine and a feminine appearance in order to adjust to the wedding. Then, she feels as though “the town opened before her and in a new way she belonged,” and “all was natural in a magic way” (59), which suggests that she feels the success of normalizing herself. Frankie is so excited that she tries to share her plans about the wedding with anyone she meets and dares to enter the Blue Moon Café where she has never been because she knew “in an unworded way that it was a forbidden place to children”

(69). There, she encounters a redheaded soldier who asks her to go on a date with him. His intention is to have sex with her, which Frankie cannot recognize, although she feels that “their two conversations would not join together, and underneath there was a layer of queerness she could not place and understand” (158). It is not until she is in the soldier’s room that she notices his desire and after escaping with fierce resistance, she remembers “a common fit” and nasty Barney; however, at that time, “she did not let these separate glimpses fall together . . .” (162). It is when she is determined to run away from home after failing to leave with the bride and the groom that Frankie really understands the truth about adult heterosexuality. Unsuccessful in her endeavor to be part of the couple’s honeymoon, she wonders about marrying the soldier in order to leave home. Then, she has a sudden revelation: “. . . all at once a fit in a front room, the silence, the nasty talk behind the garage—these separate recollections fell together in the darkness of her mind . . . so that in a flash there came in her an understanding” (181).

The wedding encourages her to dress like an adult woman, but ironically, this feminine masquerade makes Frankie appear as though she is a prostitute: unintentionally, she becomes an object of masculine desire. Her final attempt to leave home by herself results in failure as she is caught by a police officer, and she finds “the reflection of her own lost face” in his eyes (184).

Normalization brought by the wedding makes Frankie feel lost; the

truth she finally discovers is that heterosexual normativity requires females to be objectified and makes her lose her subjectivity.

## 2.4 Berenice with a Blue Glass Eye

In order to discuss Frankie's gender and sexual identity, it is necessary to closely examine the role of Berenice. To Frankie, Berenice is a black mammy figure and a mentor who encourages her charge to grow up to be a nromal white heterosexual woman according to the social norms in the South. White notes that "Berenice's advice to Frankie is a classic compression of traditional 'womanly wisdom,'" and even says that "[n]o real mother could do a more thorough job of socialization" and that Berenice is "a completely man-oriented woman" (94). Berenice tells Frankie to "get clean" and fix herself nicely for her brother's wedding (28, 98). When Frankie worries about her height, Berenice suggests that marrying will certainly stop Frankie's growth (36), which implies that marriage might make her a normal female.

The purpose of Berenice's mentorship is not only to whiten and feminize Frankie but also to heterosexualize her. She is a heterosexual-oriented woman, "not the kind of person to go around with crowds of womens [sic]," but rather to "go out with a beau" (101); therefore, she urges Frankie to find "[a] nice little white boy beau" (98). She also teaches Frankie that without exception, a

couple consists of a male and a female. When Frankie insists on joining the couple on their honeymoon, Berenice cautions her by referring to the story of Noah and the Ark: “He [God] admitted them creatures two by two” (93).

However, Berenice’s role is not limited to normalizing Frankie; on the contrary, it seems more complex and ambiguous than White thinks it to be. The heterosexual relationships that Berenice herself represents do not seem normal; in fact, they are represented as rather grotesque. She has been married four times: first, when she was 13 years old, which makes 12-year-old Frankie “uneasy.” The first husband was a very good one, but the other three were “all bad, each one worse than the one before,” and “it made Frankie blue just to hear about them” (36). The last husband “gouged out Berenice’s eye and stole her furniture away from her” (36), so that now “her left eye was bright blue glass” (9). Her artificial blue eye symbolizes the gruesome reality of the heterosexual relationship. Though Berenice, as an African American woman does not seem to be oppressed by the sexual norm of the womanhood like Sister Mary, her hetero-sexual relationship with men oppresses her way of being. Undeniably, Berenice’s descriptions of her marriages affect Frankie deeply transgressing the racial boundary, as “Frankie could not keep still,” after hearing about Berenice’s marriages (36).

Berenice’s sexual orientation is undoubtedly rooted in heterosexism; however, it should be noticed that she also

introduces “queer” things into Frankie’s world. Berenice says that it gives her “the creeps” (28) when she sees freaks, but she never stops Frankie and John Henry from being exposed to freaks; moreover, it is Berenice who informs Frankie and John Henry of Lily Mae Jenkins, a boy who, with “a pink satin blouse,” fell in love with a man and “turned into a girl” (96).<sup>77</sup> John Henry, who wears Frankie’s clothes and is an androgynous character, is fascinated by the story of Jenkins, while Frankie seems to pay little attention to it. However, considering that later, when these three talk about how to improve the world, Frankie’s idea is to create a world where “people could instantly change back and forth from boys to girls, whichever way they felt like and wanted” (116), it appears that the story of changing sexes through a homosexual relationship has been latent in Frankie’s mind. Berenice insists that “the law of human sex” (116) is exactly right just as it is, but her story of Jenkins certainly casts a queer shadow on Frankie. Berenice is a heterosexist who never denies that there always exist queer desires in heterosexual society. When Frankie suggests that Berenice is the biggest crazy in town, Berenice replies that “[t]he crazy calls the sane the crazy” (99), implying that in Berenice’s world, the boundary between binary oppositions such as sane/crazy and heterosexual/homosexual is ambiguous, and that these dichotomies may be invalid.

Berenice’s trait as a “queer heterosexist” appears to give her an ability to recognize the homosexual latent in the heterosexual.

She seems to notice the queerness in Frankie's plan to run away with the married couple, although she does not express it clearly. After talking about Jenkins, Berenice argues that she has known many peculiar things, but Frankie's falling in love with a wedding is the most peculiar thing she has heard of. Then, she tells Frankie, "So I have been thinking it over and have come to a conclusion" (98), which is that Frankie had better have a white male beau. Here, Berenice seems to interpret Frankie's idea as "queer desire" that transgresses a normal heterosexual relationship. Therefore, Berenice advises Frankie to find a boyfriend to avoid this queerness. Just before they go to the wedding, Berenice again criticizes Frankie: "You think you going to march down the centre of the aisle right in between your brother and the bride. You think you going to break into that wedding, and then Jesus knows what else" (127). Being a member of the wedding might simply mean being an attendant at the wedding, but Berenice is clearly highlighting Frankie's intention to intervene in the relationship of the bride and groom, that is, break into the heterosexism that governs human sex. Frankie denies this opinion; Berenice then cautions her in stronger terms:

"But what I'm warning is this," said Berenice. "If you start out falling in love with some unheard-of thing like that, what is going to happen to you? . . . And what kind of life would that be?" (127–28)

At last, Berenice gives up reasoning with Frankie and proclaims,

“You determined to suffer” (128). Berenice sees Frankie’s desire to be a member of the wedding as an interference with or resistance to heterosexism. She presumes that Frankie is “not fit to live in a house” (45); thus, Berenice penetrates Frankie’s desire with her real and artificial eyes. As we will see later, the heterosexualization of Frankie will never be successful; the most important role Berenice played is to make the reader notice Frankie’s latent fear or desire through her grotesque, queer eyes.

## 2.5 End of Innocence and Awakening/Returning of Queer Desire

Frankie’s final attempt to run away from home results in failure and her father takes her home; at last, she is drawn back to the patriarchal society.

It was her father who had sicked the Law on her, and she would not be carried to the jail. In a way she was sorry. It was better to be in a jail where you could bang the walls than in a jail you could not see. The world was too far away, and there was no way any more that she could be included. She was back to the fear of the summertime, the old feelings that the world was separate from herself—and the failed wedding had quickened the fear to terror. (183-84)

Frankie recognizes that her sense of connecting to the others was an illusion and finds in the eyes of the Law, “there was only the

reflection of her own lost face" (184).

The final section of the story shows that the life of Frankie has drastically changed. She is now 13 years old, called Frances, and never speaks about the wedding. She and her father are going to move to a new house in a suburb of the town. Berenice has decided to give her notice and marry her boyfriend. Frankie's queer counterpart John Henry has already vanished from her life, since he dies of meningitis after suffering terribly, and the crazy pictures drawn by Frankie and John Henry on the wall are already whitewashed. Honey is now in jail with a sentence of eight years. These Frankie's queer counterparts are all gone, while Frances, who was eager to get out of this society, remains with her father. On behalf of Berenice, John Henry and Honey, Frankie finds another partner—this time, a white female friend, Mary Littlejohn. Frankie no longer visits the Freak Pavilion, as Mary's mother claims, "it was morbid to gaze at Freaks" (188). These changes symbolically mark the end of Frankie's freakish tomboyhood; she is now a normative white girl. However, whether Frankie has been completely normalized is still questionable.

As mentioned first, many critics argue that Frankie finally surrenders to the conventional femininity that the southern society imposes on tomboys. However, it is important to again note the difference between Mick and Frankie after their initiation. One discerns a clear contrast on comparing Frankie with Mick at the end of the novels. Mick's feminization is described through the eyes

of Biff Brannon as follows:

Early in the evenings Mick came in for a cold drink or a sundae. She had grown older. Her rough and childish ways were almost gone. And instead there was something ladylike and delicate about her that was hard to point out. The earrings, the dangle of her bracelets, and the new way she crossed her legs and pulled the hem of her skirt down past her knees. (*Lonely Hunter* 357)

In *The Member of the Wedding*, there is no objective description of the feminization of Frankie's outlook after the wedding. Thus, the reader does not learn whether she has altered her appearance to suit the feminine code. Before the wedding, Frankie was too conscious of her mirror image, which caused her to fear her own appearance, and this implies that her appearance is deeply connected to the construction of white female gender identity. Then, it can be said here that the absence of such a description not only indicates Frankie's ambiguous gender identity but also suggests her resistance to the male-oriented way of constructing female gender identity.

Another difference is that while Mick is finally confined to a small world according to the gender code, Frankie finds alternative ways to realize her dream of traveling around the world, this time, not with a heterosexual couple or a white beau or a soldier, but with a female friend, Mary Littlejohn. Her encounter with Mary is the culmination of the changes that she undergoes during her

period of initiation: “The changes had come about . . . during the middle of October. Frances had met Mary at a raffle two weeks before” (187). Now, her dream is to be “a great poet,” or “the foremost authority on radar,” which was a rather masculine profession at that time, and Frankie and Mary are “going to travel around the world together” (186). Although she enters the threshold of adult womanhood, Frankie has not given up her aspiration.

As for the relationship of Frankie and Mary, some critics find the homoerotic/lesbian desire in Frankie’s crush on Mary, “the wonder of her love” (187),<sup>78</sup> especially after the emergence of queer theory. Certainly, there are some clues to consider her love as a lesbian one in the last section.<sup>79</sup> Berenice’s dissatisfaction with Mary, although Frankie finally finds a suitable female friend, implies that Berenice again notices queerness in Frankie’s friendship. The reading of Alfred Tennyson’s poems together by Frankie and Mary and their plan to travel around the world remind us of Tennyson’s homosocial/homoerotic relationship with his friend in *In Memoriam A.H.H.* What must be confirmed here is that the homoerotic desire glimmers throughout the text, including the story of Lily Mae Jenkins. Prior to the summer, Frankie had a friend named Evelyn Owen and “they would go down to the ten-cent store together,” one in the football suit and the other in the Spanish shawl (32). This pair seems to represent a type of butch and femme pair, and significantly, Frankie herself feels that it is

wrong and not what she wants, which suggests that she repressed her homoerotic desire according to the norm.

In the middle of the story, Frankie half-sees “a dark double shape” in the alley, the one putting his arm on the other’s shoulder, which she first recognizes as a picture of her brother and the bride (89). Yet, to her shock, she soon finds that it is “two coloured boys,” and she explains to herself that one of the reasons for her misrecognition is the pose of their shapes. This picture is so shocking to her that during the afternoon after she saw it, Frankie is obsessed with this experience and when she tries to tell Berenice about it, she again finds it difficult to express herself well. Here Frankie’s misrecognition is gender one and also racial one. She preliminarily excludes the possibility that two persons huddling together might be a colored same-sex pair. She sees a white pair as the convention of a heterosexual society, but it does not give her the right vision. This episode, besides the story of Lily Mae Jenkins she also heard on this afternoon, triggers the shattering of the obviousness of heterosexism in Frankie’s inner world and secretly teaches her that even in the seemingly “normal”—that is, heterosexual—world, homosexuality exists even though it is always repressed. The sexual and racial boundary is always already blurred but the people are forced to see according to the norm.

In this way, there are some codes that make a queer reading of the story possible. However, the last section complicates the relationship between Frankie and Mary and makes it difficult for

the reader to decide whether it is a homosocial or homosexual one. Then, it is significant to examine this obscurity and the meaning of their bond. In *Between Men*, comparing female homosociality with that of males, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick points that the opposition between the homosocial and the homosexual in the female bond is “much less thorough and dichotomous” than that in the male bond (2). Male homosocial desire supposes misogyny and homophobia to keep the male bonds in the society of patriarchal heterosexism; therefore, the relation of male homosocial and homosexual bonds is radically discontinuous, and there is no continuum between “men-loving-men” and “men-promoting-the-interests-of-men” (3). On the contrary, the relation of female homosocial and homosexual bonds is relatively continuous. As Sedgwick argues, “an intelligible continuum of aims, emotions, and valuations links lesbianism with the other forms of women’s attention to women,” for instance, “the bond of mother and daughter” and “women’s friendship”(2). This difference, according to Sedgwick, is affected by the difference in the access to power between men and women in our society (2). Male homosocial desires always repress the homosexual desire and fortify heterosexism. On the contrary, homosocial bonds of women, who have less social power than men in the patriarchal system, do not exclude the homosexual; therefore, as Kazuko Takemura suggests, “it does not enhance heterosexism or rather can serve as a means to criticize it” (“Boukyaku” 82–83).

On the surface, Frankie's resistance against the normative heterosexuality as a white southern girl results in failure; however, her homosocial/homoerotic desire is latent in the heterosexual society as a crack in monolithic heterosexism. Moreover, the repressed desire sometimes returns secretly, as is shown by her queer double John Henry and Honey, who exists now only in her inner world, more precisely who are repressed under her consciousness, but sometimes returns with the voiceless words, "a hush":

. . . there were times when Frances felt his presence there, solemn and hovering and ghost-grey. And at those times there would come a hush—a hush quivered by voiceless words. A similar hush would come, also, when Honey was mentioned or brought to mind. . . . (185)

This "hush" is heard when Frances is making sandwiches for Mary and more significantly, when Frances speaks her last words of this novel, "I am simply mad about —," she hears "the hush." Because of this hush, her speech is left unfinished, but it must be "Mary Littlejohn" that follows after "about," which can bluntly make her homoerotic desire open. John Henry seems to admonish her to keep her queer desire invisible and unheard, yet accordingly, readers could find it in her unfinished words. Frankie's queer desire is never open, never verbalized, but it is waiting to be read and expressed in order to destabilize the monolithic heterosexism.

*The Member of the Wedding* is a story of two women's

interracial/homosocial relationship, which creates resistance, though of very subtle type, to white patriarchal heterosexism. Despite the fact that everything in the world of Frankie appears to be normal in the final section, inside Frankie/Frances, the normative heterosexuality, which is essential for the construction of gender/sexual identity as a white southern girl in the patriarchal southern society, turns out to be unstable. Although she gains knowledge about adult sexuality and gives up her tomboy identity, Frankie's feminization, whitening, or heterosexualization, is never truly complete, and there remains a possibility for her, through her queer identity, to gain an alternative subjectivity and vision that is not biased by the normative code. Thus, *The Member of the Wedding* is a queer version of a female coming-of-age narrative.

### 3. Queer Eyes: Cross-Gendering, Cross-Dressing, and Cross-Racing Miss Amelia<sup>80</sup>

*The Ballad of the Sad Café* is considered one of the representative southern gothic stories, and it has some marked similarities with Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily." They are both stories about eccentric spinsters in the South, though the former belongs to the New South, and the latter to the Old South. Both characters are motherless and raised by their fathers; both, after their fathers died, live alone with a male black cook, as mentioned in Chapter II. Their lives as spinsters cannot avoid attracting the attention of the townspeople who are very curious, in particular, about their sexuality. They are eccentric women in southern society, finally rejecting their relationship with the townspeople and—as if to avoid being looked at by their voyeuristic eyes—the women lock themselves within their own houses.

However, McCullers' spinster, Miss Amelia Evans, who lives around the middle of the 20th century, seems to have a more ambiguous identity in terms of gender, sex, and race. In fact, Miss Amelia is an extremely subversive southern white lady. Her appearance and conduct definitely deviate from the norm of southern womanhood. McCullers depicts Miss Amelia with racial ambiguity at least on the surface. Miss Amelia is born "dark and somewhat queer of face" (*Collected* 206), and she is "a dark, tall woman with bones and muscles like a man" as an adult (198). Her

sunburned face has “a tense, haggard quality,” and she is slightly “cross-eyed” (198). After her father’s death, she runs the store she inherits from him, but she also “operated a still three miles back in the swamp” (198); namely, she is a moonshiner and bootlegger, jobs that are usually associated not with middle class white women but rather with lower class white or black people.<sup>81</sup>

In this way, Miss Amelia transgresses from white femininity to black masculinity. Additionally, her sexuality is also ambiguous. The narrator reports that Miss Amelia “cared nothing for the love of men,” and that her marriage was a “queer marriage” lasting only for ten days (198). She resists the masculinity and heterosexuality of her husband Marvin Macy, and her resistance seems successful until Macy returns home and fascinates Cousin Lymon. The hunchbacked Lymon lives with Miss Amelia and helps her run a café. At the end of the story, Miss Amelia is beaten by the revengeful Macy and his partner Lymon and forced to shut herself inside her house where she becomes “sexless and white” (197). Miss Amelia was born dark; then she becomes a white old maiden.

This ending can be interpreted as Amelia being punished by male power because of her transgressing gender, sexuality, and race codes. However, the story can also be interpreted as a white woman resisting white male dominance by affiliating with blackness and cross-dressing. It is important to explore the meaning of the word “queer” that McCullers uses and to focus on Miss Amelia’s crossed eyes which the narrator sometimes calls

“queer” eyes (217, 228, 236).<sup>82</sup> To be precise, this section focuses on how “gaze” or “the act of looking” functions in this story.

In the South, white men in the dominant class are given privilege. Women and black people, as the Others of the dominant white male, are observed and controlled by this white male gaze and are not to transgress beyond their category. This gaze is what Michel Foucault calls “a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” (184). Miss Amelia’s queer eyes subvert the authoritative, normalizing gaze and show that McCullers, by deconstructing the politics of looking and being looked at, seeks an alternative context regarding gender, sexuality, and race. In contrast to Frances Newman, who resists the southern patriarchal system by revealing what is under the surface of a southern lady, McCullers resists it by making “the surface” subversive, or by subverting via the surface, namely, by cross-dressing and “wearing blackness.”

Recent theories on vision and visuality have revealed that looking is not a neutral act, and in the relation between “seeing” and “being seen,” the viewer and the viewed form a hierachal power relationship. “Perspective,” which is dominant not only in the visual arts but also within scientific discourse in Western culture, is a system in which a Cartesian subject looks at the world from a privileged position. This gaze is “authoritative, normative and male oriented” (Ohbayashi and Yamanaka 47) and the related disequilibrium dynamics have ruled the discourse of art and

science since perspectivism was invented. Therefore, feminist critics argue that vision is patriarchal, and they refute the idea of making vision privileged. Laura Mulvey, in her groundbreaking paper “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (based on the theories of Freud and Lacan), analyzes the “structure of looking” in mainstream Hollywood cinema. She maintains that in these movies, males are positioned as gazing subjects, while females are objects of the male gaze, objects to be surveyed by the male’s active and voyeuristic gaze, and thus deprived of subjectivity. A female body is a fetish object of the male gaze, and audiences see the movie while assimilating their gaze with the male voyeuristic gaze. To be sure, women can be the “gazing subjects” (Wolstenholme 9). However, as Wolstenholme argues in regards to Freud’s reading of “The Sandman” by E.T.A. Hoffmann in the “The Uncanny,” the female gaze is to be repressed in a male-dominated society.

. . . the gaze of women and girls evidently threatens him. Evidently the female gaze, as well as the woman’s body that forms the object of the man’s gaze, is frightening, something to be avoided, perhaps disallowed or repressed. To relieve the anxiety it creates in men, the woman’s gaze must be sacrificed to the woman’s role as object and to the man’s gaze. (Wolstenholme 9)

If “seeing” includes power relationships between those who see and those who are seen, it also relates to racism. Because racial segregation is based on the color of the skin, the white gaze is

repressive to black people, as Frantz Fanon describes:

I arrive slowly in the world; sudden emergences are no longer my habit. I crawl along. The white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me. I am *fixed*. Once their microtomes are sharpened, the Whites objectively cut sections of my reality. I have been betrayed. I sense, I see in this white gaze that it's the arrival of not of a new man, but of a new type of man, a new species. A Negro, in fact! (95; italics original)

As quoted above, black people are forced to form their consciousness or subjectivity “through the eyes of others,” specifically through the eyes of the whites (Du Bois 8). As for women in the male dominant society, women’s subjectivity is constructed through the male gaze.

Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of women in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object—and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. (Berger 47)

Under the patriarchal visionary system, the female gaze through which women look at themselves as a subject is the others’/male gaze, which means that what constructs female identity is not the female gaze but the male gaze. It might be a

crude argument, but black people and white women are both located as an object of the dominant white male gaze and are both observed and controlled by it. How can the oppressed resist this gaze? This section will show McCullers' answer to it by examining Miss Amelia's queer eyes.

### 3.1 Miss Amelia and the Gaze

Miss Amelia is a grown-up tomboy, a woman who has grown up without sloughing off her masculine traits. Besides being dark, tall, and muscular like a (black) man, she is familiar with the world of men, such as those in medicine, commerce, law, and even with the world of gangs or black people, such as bootlegging or moonshining. Miss Amelia is biologically female, while her conduct and role in the society resemble those of not only white but also black men. She is a phallic woman transgressing the racial boundary.<sup>83</sup> Also, Miss Amelia is cross-eyed. Psychoanalytically, eyes are an alternative to a penis; therefore, Miss Amelia, who loses normal vision, is figuratively emasculated. Moreover, it is significant that after losing the final boxing battle against Macy, Amelia's body loses its masculinity—"the great muscles of her body shrank until she was thin as old maids are thin when they go crazy." Her eyes become more crossed—"those gray eyes . . . were more crossed" (252). Thus, to be cross-eyed is closely related to being emasculated.

The story unfolds over the triangular relationship among a masculine woman Miss Amelia: a masculine white man Marvin Macy: and a feminine dwarf Cousin Lymon. The story ends when Macy and Lymon defeat Miss Amelia and leave the town after they destroy the café. Their battles are related to gaze. During their “queer marriage” (198), which was prompted by Macy’s one-sided courting, Miss Amelia is less cross-eyed and has the power to resist forced heterosexual sex with Macy. However, after Miss Amelia becomes somewhat feminized by being fascinated with Lymon and assuming the role of his mother, it is Macy who has an advantage in the battle of the gaze.

Macy is sent to a penitentiary for committing repeated crimes after Miss Amelia kicks him out of her house. When he returns to the town, Macy regains the masculine and active gaze/power, which he lost during his marriage to Miss Amelia. As soon as he returns to the town, the narrator describes Macy wandering and looking around everywhere: “First, he went to the mill . . . and looked inside” (233). Then, his gaze is related with a phallic image: “Marvin Macy folded the knife he had been honing, and after looking about him fearlessly he swaggered out of the yard” (236). Macy is “one of seven unwanted children whose parents could hardly be called parents at all,” “an evil character,” and a womanizer (217). His savageness and immorality almost make him lose his whiteness, but he still benefits from the privilege of being white. When he is abandoned by his parents, the town saves him

because they do not let “white orphans perish in the road” (218). It is also suggested that he is a member of the KKK. As Paulson argues, “Marvin represents the brute masculine force of a misogynist and racist community . . . ” (194).

Meanwhile, strangely, the color of Miss Amelia changes when she hears about Macy. “Within half an hour Miss Amelia had stomped down the stairs in breeches and a khaki jacket. Her face had darkened so that it looked quite black” (220; emphasis added). Then, after “she read *The Farmer’s Almanac*, drank coffee, and had a smoke with her father’s pipe,” her face becomes hard, stern, and “whitened to its natural color” (220).

Subsequently, whenever Miss Amelia hears about Macy, her face becomes darkened. When Miss Amelia hears of Macy’s return, “the face of Miss Amelia was very dark, and she shivered although the night was warm” (230). When she hears about a letter from Macy, “her face was still hardened and very dark.” When she hears Lymon groan “Oh, Marvin Macy,” “her face was dark and hardened” (238). These changes in facial color suggests that Miss Amelia is upset by referring to Macy, but they also show that Miss Amelia resists Macy by assuming a black mask as a form of mimicry. For Miss Amelia, being dark is a way to resist and be independent from white masculinity.

In contrast to Miss Amelia, Lymon is fascinated with Macy’s gaze from the moment he meets Macy, and they see each other as two criminals: “It was a peculiar stare they exchanged between

them, like the look of two criminals who recognize each other” (233). Moreover, Lymon goes so far as to “wiggle his large pale ears with marvelous quickness and ease,” flutter “his eyelids” so that they look like “pale, trapped moths in his sockets” (235), and perform a little trot-like dance in order to get Macy’s attention. Lymon is “a sight to see” (235). Miss Amelia only watches Lymon doing these things “with her crossed, gray eyes, and her fists closed tight” (238).

Miss Amelia’s eyes cannot exchange a stare with other people’s eyes. Even if someone looks at Miss Amelia’s eyes, her eyes seem to be staring at each other, since they are crossed inwardly. In fact, there are few scenes in which Miss Amelia exchanges a stare with someone, which is very contrastive to the mutual gaze relationship of Lymon and Macy. It is more important to notice that, even if the female gaze is threatening to the men, Miss Amelia cannot return her stare when she is looked at. In the dichotomy between the one who sees and the one seen, Miss Amelia has the disadvantaged position within the dynamics of gaze. Therefore, when Macy approaches Miss Amelia and Lymon, “[s]he locked the doors and all the windows very carefully,” so that “nothing was seen of her and Cousin Lymon . . .” (236-37).

In this way, we can find an asymmetry between Miss Amelia, who is passive about the act of looking, and Macy, who is active. At the end of the story, Miss Amelia decides to have a fight with Macy only to lose it because of Lymon’s collusion with Macy. Then after

Macy and Lymon leave the town together, Miss Amelia becomes more cross-eyed and loses her muscle, with her appearance being like that of an old crazy maid. Ultimately she stays in her house, which is “bound to collapse at any minute” (197).

In the story, there is another gaze surrounding Miss Amelia that needs to be examined closely: that is the gaze of the townspeople, most of whom are white male laborers in a small southern town. Miss Amelia, as a spinster, is always an object of their curious gaze, just like Miss Emily: Miss Amelia is a freakish spectacle to the townspeople, who are tired of the drudgery of daily life. For example, on the night after the wedding, the young boys in the town peep inside of Miss Amelia’s house through the window and report what really happened between the bride and groom to the whole town: “A groom is in a sorry fix when he is unable to bring his well-beloved bride to bed with him” (220). Likewise, the relationship between Miss Amelia and Lymon, as well as the triangular relation between Miss Amelia, Lymon, and Macy draw curious stares from the townspeople. The highlight of the spectacle is a boxing match between Macy and Miss Amelia, which can be interpreted as a pornographic scene, as will be discussed later.

In this way, the narrator relates that the townspeople are obsessed with a desire to see Miss Amelia. Moreover, the narrator also demands that we see her:

So for the moment regard these years from random and disjointed views. See the hunchback marching in Miss

Amelia's footsteps when on a red winter morning they set out for the pinewoods to hunt. See them working on her properties. . . . (214; emphasis added)

Here, the reader is supposed to assume the role of a voyeur who peeps at Miss Amelia through the eyes of the narrator, in the same way as the townspeople watch her. Thus, the greater the number of subjects who see Miss Amelia, the more Miss Amelia becomes firmly fixed as a spectacle in the text.

In terms of a spectacle, Lymon who is a "dwarf," is vulnerable to becoming an object in the eyes of "normal" people. However, it is significant to notice the difference between Miss Amelia and Lymon in terms of their being objects of the others' gaze. Lymon seems to be willing to be an object of the gaze and takes pleasure in it, while Miss Amelia rejects being an object beyond necessity. For example, she sells the expensive accessories that Macy presented her with (accessories make women more spectacular). Meanwhile, Lymon, who does not appear in public for a few days after visiting Miss Amelia's house, and is believed to have been murdered, reappears before the townspeople as follows:

The hunchback came down slowly with the proudness of one who owns every plank of the floor beneath his feet. In the past days he had greatly changed. . . . Beneath this [his coat] was a fresh red and black checkered shirt belonging to Miss Amelia. He did not wear trousers such as ordinary men are meant to wear, but a pair of

tight-fitting little knee-length breeches. On his skinny legs he wore black stockings, and his shoes were of a special kind, being queerly shaped, laced up over the ankles, and newly cleaned and polished with wax.

Around his neck, so that his large, pale ears were almost completely covered, he wore a shawl of lime-green wool, the fringes of which almost touched the floor. (209)

His appearance makes the men present dumb with shock.

Because femininity, as Gleeson-White mentions, is a more spectacular gender than masculinity (*Strange Bodies* 86), then, it can be said that Lymon represents femininity—in this instance, exaggerated femininity. Lymon is a caricature of a woman as the object of the gaze. If, as Gleeson-White also notes, Macy in “a red shirt, and a wide belt of tooled leather” carrying a tin suitcase and a guitar (81), is a “hyper-masculine image of the cowboy” (*Strange Bodies* 223) or a caricature of ideal American masculinity,<sup>84</sup> then a coalition between Macy and Lymon seems to be one between hyper-masculinity as a subject of the gaze and hyper-femininity as an object of the gaze. In other words, the Macy-Lymon pair represents a caricature of a heterosexual couple, and Miss Amelia, who denies a heterosexual relationship with Macy, is finally avenged by this mock-heterosexual couple. We might infer here that Lymon’s self-spectacularization is a way of turning his objective position into a subjective one by actively making himself an object and catching others’ eyes. However, there is a rumor that

after Macy and Lymon leave town, Macy sells Lymon into a sideshow; therefore, being an object of the gaze can lead to objectification. It is a dangerous world in which “looking at” or “being looked at” constructs the power relationship, and one thus becomes the object of the gaze.

### 3.2 Cross-Dressing Amelia / Cross-Dressing Narrator

In the story, Miss Amelia does not always appear dressed as a man. When necessary, she wears feminine attire. In the wedding ceremony, she wears a wedding dress, which was passed over by her mother. After she is mesmerized by Lymon, she comes to sometimes wear a red dress, for example, on Sundays. Then after Macy comes to town, Miss Amelia puts aside her overalls and “always [wears] the red dress” (238). However, we must closely examine what Miss Amelia’s dressing according to the code of femininity really represents.

Here it is necessary to consider how the clothes a woman wears function in relation to the gaze of others. Clothing is a sign of what those who wear it are. When a woman wears a feminine dress, it means that she may be an object of the male gaze, that is, an object of male sexual desire. For example, just as tomboy Frankie is dressed like an adult woman, she comes close to being raped by a soldier who sees Frankie, in her dresses, as a kind of a prostitute. Likewise, when Miss Amelia appears in a wedding dress,

this indicates to Macy that she accepts being his object of heterosexual desire. In both cases, Frankie and Miss Amelia do not intend to draw attention from the male gaze. They only intend to adjust themselves to the gender code. However, the men interpret the women's feminine appearance as an acceptance of sex and try to have sex with them. Frankie and Miss Amelia both refuse this.

In contrast, when a woman dresses like a man, she will become an object of the gaze because of her deviance from the normative code. This gaze is meant to surveil and normalize them, and it functions as a punishment, much like the gaze focused on Hester Prynne on the town scaffold. Frankie fears that if she grows up to be an extraordinarily tall woman, she will be a freak, which means that she has internalized this normalizing gaze. As to the gaze focused on Miss Amelia, it is the gaze of curiosity, the desire to see or peep at a freak who deviates from the norms of the society. This gaze also includes the gaze of normalization because the townspeople expect that Miss Amelia will be "a calculable woman," when they see her in a wedding dress (219). In this way, on the surface, Miss Amelia in a feminine dress seems to adjust herself to the gaze, which makes her an object of desire or of the gaze itself.

However, it should be noticed that the more the narrator describes Miss Amelia in a feminine dress, the more it is revealed that there is inconsistency between her feminine appearance and her real self, as can be seen in the scene of the wedding ceremony:

Anyway, she strode with great steps down the aisle of the church wearing her dead mother's bridal gown, which was of yellow satin and at least twelve inches too short for her. . . . As the marriage lines were read Miss Amelia kept making an odd gesture—she would rub the palm of her right hand down the side of her satin wedding gown. She was reaching for the pocket of her overalls, and being unable to find it her face became impatient, bored, and exasperated. (219)

Here, Miss Amelia looks like a caricature of an ordinary bride. Moreover, the discord between her real self and her appearance shows itself in the form of a physical sign, “an odd gesture.” To the townspeople, a wedding dress should be a sign that means an exemplary female figure in the patriarchal society. However, when the wedding dress, as a song of femininity, is put on the body of Miss Amelia, its meaning deviates from the expected.<sup>85</sup>

Moreover, when Miss Amelia wears a red dress, she reveals that her surface is inconsistent with her reality. For example, the narrator reports that she wears swamp boots and overalls during the week, but on Sunday, she puts on a dark red dress that hangs on her “in a most peculiar fashion” (214). Likewise, when Macy shows a threatening attitude toward Lymon, she comes out from behind her counter and approaches Marvin Macy very slowly, with her fists clenched and “her peculiar red dress” “hanging awkwardly around her bony knees” (241).

Here Miss Amelia wears a red dress in order to draw the attention of Lymon, whom she loves. “A red dress” is one that makes female sexuality visible, and in this sense, it is correct to wear a red dress. However, she fails to draw Lymon’s attention. Instead, this red dress reveals her lack of femininity. Whether it is a wedding dress that symbolizes the purity of a woman, or a red dress that might make a woman seem like a prostitute, Miss Amelia’s feminine way of dressing is always cross-dressing.

When Miss Amelia constructs herself according to the male-oriented/patriarchal gaze, the reader can recognize a contradiction between her inside and her outside. Looking at Miss Amelia, it is difficult to determine if Amelia is cross-dressing when she wears male clothes or female clothes. Suzanne Morrow Paulson sees this red dress as “a symbol of feminine weakness” (194). However, Miss Amelia’s “feminine dressing as a cross-dressing” seems to subvert the woman’s position as an object of the gaze. Miss Amelia, who is made an object of the gaze by the townspeople or the men, rebels against this by being an object of the gaze as a parody. Miss Amelia, who is “cross-eyed,” and therefore weak in terms of the dynamics of the gaze, subverts the desire of the gaze by “cross-dressing.” This is in contrast to Lymon, who attempts to subvert the dichotomy between subject and object but falls into a trap.

In terms of subverting the desire of the gaze, the narrator tells the story in such a way that the voyeuristic desire of the gaze,

which includes that of the readers, fails to be fulfilled. For example, in the following scene, the gaze or camera eye of the narrator focuses on Miss Amelia's thigh, which is revealed via her tucking up her red dress.

She did not warm her backside modestly, lifting her skirt only an inch or so, as do most women when in public. There was not a grain of modesty about Miss Amelia, and she frequently seemed to forget altogether that there were men in the room. Now as she stood warming herself, her red dress was pulled up quite high in the back so that a piece of her strong, hairy thigh could be seen by anyone who cared to look at it. (243)

This gaze intends to normalize her conduct from the patriarchal point of view, suggesting that to do such a thing in front of men is immoral. Meanwhile it can be also interpreted as a form of the male voyeuristic gaze that peeps at the women's bodies, that is, the pornographic gaze. However, at the same time, the narrator also frustrates male desire because Miss Amelia's thigh is "a strong, hairy thigh." Clair Kahane notes that this strong, hairy thigh signifies "male power" (348), and that Miss Amelia's body is thus masculinized. In this way, the narrator's eye focuses on the confused gender identity of its object.

In the same way, during the fight between Miss Amelia and Macy, which is the largest spectacle in the story, the eyes of the narrator, the readers, and the townspeople who see this event

create a voyeuristic gaze. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that this fight is Macy's revenge for his unconsummated heterosexual relationship, and that therefore it is a reproduction of the "sexual consummation which did not take place on their wedding night" (109). In fact, in the narrators description there are more than a few words that imply that this "battle *is sex*" (Gilbert and Gubar 109; italics original).<sup>86</sup> According to Joyce Carol Oates, boxing is a "mimicry of a species of erotic love in which one man overcomes the other in an exhibition of superior strength and will" (30), and is "akin to pornography" in that "in each case the spectator is made a voyeur, distanced, yet presumably intimately involved . . ." (105-06). The reader must be careful regarding the gaze that sees this battle. What is significant here is a difference in the structure of visuality between this battle scene involving Miss Amelia and Macy and the scenes of ordinary pornography. The visual structure of this battle deviates from the ordinary gender construction of seeing pornography. Generally, when watching a pornographic film, the audience obtains pleasure when a man takes on an active role and a woman takes on a passive role, while in this scene involving Miss Amelia and Macy, the audience (most of whom are male) cannot obtain pleasure from seeing Miss Amelia finally conquered by Macy. This is because the audience expects to watch Miss Amelia conquer Macy; therefore, the male gaze fails to satisfy their desires even though the man subdues the woman. The narrator, in describing the scene as pornographic, offers it up to

the male/voyeuristic gaze, but the desire of that gaze is frustrated. Thus, this fight is a parody of a pornographic scene/gaze.

Mulvey points out that the male gaze that sees mainstream Hollywood movies is masculinized and that the gaze that sees films is also gendered. Thus, some questions arise: What is the gender of this narrator who functions as a camera eye via which to see Amelia? Can we say that because the author is female, then the narrator is also female? Does the reader unconsciously behold the narrator's story from the townspeople's point of view, that is, from southern male-oriented view? Many critics describe the narrator as a "he," but some consider the narrator to be female.<sup>87</sup> Paulson points out that "the fact that the narrator is an ambiguous figure —conforming to patriarchal views at times and at other times demonstrating feminine compassion—implies how difficult it is for anyone to overcome conditioning determined by gender" (193). However, as mentioned above, the narrator sees Amelia with the male active gaze and, at the same time, reflects the image that subverts the male desire. This gaze intends to frustrate or distract the desire to determine his/her gender. While the narrator apparently depicts Miss Amelia with the male gaze, he/she also describes what frustrates male desire. Thus it is crucial to consider that the gender of the narrator is not ambiguous but that he/she repeatedly changes his/her gender through cross-dressing. This transgendered narrator destabilizes the male-oriented gender code and visual structure.

### 3.3 Return of the Crossed/Queer Eyes

Many critics interpret the defeat of Miss Amelia as a form of retaliation or punishment because she transgresses the gender code of patriarchal southern society and thus believe that finally she is confined to the femininity, as in *The Member of the Wedding*.<sup>88</sup> To be sure, Miss Amelia, as the southern white woman who crosses the boundaries of gender and race and attempts to subvert the white-male dominion, could not avoid being punished in southern society. However, considering that the narrator—pretending to see Miss Amelia through the lens of white masculine desire—also reveals a viewpoint that frustrates this desire, it is questionable whether we can call the outcome of the story simply a “defeat.” After she loses the battle with Macy, as is mentioned above, her body is feminized. Just like Miss Emily, Miss Amelia becomes a crazy old woman: “Her face lengthened, and the great muscles of her body shrank until she was thin as old maids are thin when they go crazy” (252). However, it would be fairer to say that her body, which is masculine by its nature, becomes androgynous or cross-gendered. Meanwhile, though the narrator reports that her face finally becomes white, the house, a metaphor for Miss Amelia’s body, finally shows itself to be as partially blackened: “. . . the painting was left unfinished and one portion of the house is darker and dingier than the other” (197). Miss Amelia, though forced into whiteness by the white man, is still

metaphorically cross-racial.

Miss Amelia finally boards up the house, confines herself inside, and blocks the gaze of others. Meanwhile, she keeps one window upstairs unboarded, and according to the narrator, she looks down on the town from behind this window. This means that eventually Miss Amelia herself becomes invisible, and at the same time, she morphs into a large (crossed) eye that looks at the others. This eye reflects a futile world in which the people lose their café and have nothing to do except listen to the songs sung by the chain gang:

Yes, the town is dreary. On August afternoons the road is empty, white with dust, and the sky above is bright as glass. Nothing moves—there are no children's voices, only the hum of the mill. The peach trees seem to grow more crooked every summer, and the leaves are dull gray and of a sickly delicacy. . . . There is absolutely nothing to do in the down. . . . The soul rots with boredom. You might as well go down to the Forks Falls highway and listen to the chain gang. (252-53)

This “chain gang” is variously read by critics because in spite of the racial distinction (the chain gang consists of seven black men and five white men), the voices that sing together achieve harmony—“The voices are dark in the golden glare, the music intricately blended, both somber and joyful” (253). The gang is often interpreted as a symbol of “harmony in human relationships”

(Paulson 187). Meanwhile, Paulson herself argues that the chain gang “represents a destructive force in an American society grounded in misogyny and the acceptance, indeed the celebration, of homosocial groups, masculine aggression, and criminality” (189). She also notes that the chain gang, even though composed of criminals, can only enjoy some freedom outside the prison, while “the defeated Amelia” is completely boarded up inside the house (188). Amelia is not only confined inside the house but also “‘gender-locked’ in the female body” (Paulson 188-89). However, here, Paulson seems to miss the fact that the gang is also watched by a phallic gaze of the guard. As the narrator says, “There is a guard, with a gun, his eyes drawn to red slits by the glare” (253). Michel Foucault points out that public penalties include “two things: the collective interest in the punishment of the condemned man and the visible, verifiable character of the punishment” (109). In this way, though the chain gangs seem to enjoy their freedom, we must not forget that they labor under the repression of the surveillance gaze. It can even be said this condition is an allegory for the southern society itself. By revealing that white and black people can both be surveyed by the normalizing gaze, the chain gang shows the sterile condition brought about by the binary opposition of black and white, “the subject that sees” and “the object that is seen.”<sup>89</sup>

Miss Amelia is oppressed by the dominant white gaze based on sexism and racism and the gender-coded eyes of the innocent

townspeople, who impose gender norms on Miss Amelia and desire to make her a “calculable woman.” Lymon is said to be sold into “a side-show” by Macy at the end of the story, and Macy, who continues stealing, may be put imprisoned again and therefore become an object of the surveillance gaze. In the binary opposition of the gaze, the subject and the object are easily exchangeable. After describing the townspeople’s voyeuristic way of seeing, the narrator goes on to describe the surveillance of the criminals because he or she intends to show that there is no difference between the voyeuristic gaze and the surveillance gaze. In either case, the exchange of the subject and the object only brings about another form of oppression.

Miss Amelia resists the repressive gaze with her subversive surface. And seemingly, she loses the battle. However, the repressed “queer” eyes of Miss Amelia, after being defeated once, return as eyes that are even more crossed and deflected than before. The gaze of Miss Amelia, whose inside and outside are incongruous, cannot be exchangeable with the linear gaze that exists between those who see and those who are seen, in other words, the gaze of the binary opposition in which the subject and the object can always be exchanged. The queer gaze of Miss Amelia does not intend to subvert this opposition but to deflect or cross its linear quality to reveal the sterility of this binary opposition. These queer/crossed eyes that see the townspeople through the window appear at the beginning of the story. Thus, it can be said that the

narrator intends to construct the story as it develops, as shown by this queer gaze in the opening. In sum, cross-eyed, cross-dressed, cross-gendered, cross-racial Miss Amelia looks at the small southern town askew and attempts to deconstruct the patriarchal code of its society. Miss Amelia's battle of the gaze is determined to defeat but intended to deconstruct the oppression by being defeated in the battle.

In her works, McCullers shows that the external appearances of human beings—that is, their behavior, clothing, and skin color—constitute their gender, sexual, and racial identities. She is also strongly skeptical of discrimination between male and female, as well as black and white, in the South and distrusts the normative and non-normative categories based on such appearances. The following minor episode from *The Member of the Wedding*, which was mentioned in the above section, illustrates the author's skepticism:

It was a mysterious trick of sight and the imagination. She was walking home when all at once there was a shock in her as though a thrown knife struck and shivered in her chest. . . . There was something sideways and behind her that had flashed across the very corner edge of her left eye; she had half-seen something, a dark double shape, in the alley she had just that moment passed. And because of this half-seen object, the quick flash in the

corner of her eye, there had sprung up in her the sudden picture of her brother and the bride. . . .

. . . Her eyes stole slowly down the brick wall and she glimpsed again the dark double shadow. And what was there? F. Jasmine was stunned. There in the alley were only two coloured boys, one taller than the other and with his arm resting on the shorter boy's shoulder. That was all—but something about the angle or the way they stood, or the pose of their shapes, had reflected the sudden picture of her brother and the bride that had so shocked her. (89-90)

This mistaking of a homosexual black couple as a heterosexual white one stuns F. Jasmine, who then dresses/cross-dresses as a proper white girl because she has learned that looking does not reveal the truth and that visual discrimination is arbitrary. However, this episode also suggests that a black homosexual couple can pass themselves off as a white heterosexual one. As in the case of Quentin Compson, who is mistaken for a black man in the North, the white can be seen as black, and the black can be seen as white. In the same way, the homosexual can be seen as heterosexual, and the heterosexual can be seen as homosexual.

McCullers' skepticism regarding the dominant view brings to life many eccentric people and freaks. While these characters transgress norms, their existence is essential for the construction of normative identity. However, or therefore, they can subvert the

binary systems of race, gender, and sexuality in the South. McCullers' freaks do not merely represent human loneliness and alienation; rather, they are subversive characters whose gaze pierces the surface of white prejudice and reflects the grotesqueness of the seemingly ordered/segregated southern society.

Conclusion:  
From Double Vision to Queer Vision

During the early period of the Southern Renaissance, social, cultural, economic, and industrial modernization conflicted with the traditional southern values. At the same time, the South was denounced as being socially and culturally backward, as may be seen in H. L. Mencken's rebuke of the South as "the Sahara of the Bozart,"<sup>90</sup> and in the debate on the Scopes trial. During this period of social destabilization, the Agrarians defended the southern traditions,<sup>91</sup> criticizing the liberalism, progressivism and industrialization of the modern world. However, when Robert Penn Warren said, "In defeat the Solid South was born—not only the witless automatism of fidelity to the Democratic Party but the mystique of prideful 'difference,' identity, and defensiveness" (14), his South was idealized and portrayed as a mythologized unity. Moreover, when Warren said, "The citizen of that region 'of the Mississippi the bank sinister, of the Ohio the bank sinister,' could now think of himself as a 'Southerner' in a way that would have defied the imagination of Barnwell Rhett—or of Robert E. Lee, unionist-emancipationist Virginian" (14-15), the identity of the southerner was self-evident and unquestionable. The Agrarians' southerners are a white-male oriented, coherent whole, which does not include the "Others" who also make up their society.

This study argues that, in contrast to this view of the South,

some white southern writers have interrogated the identity of the white southerner, and have exposed the fictitiousness of certain southern beliefs. They have recognized that the constructed white identity is always dependent on “Others”, namely on those who are not white; and they have explored alternative gender, sexual, and racial identities that are not limited by a single category.

In southern society, identity is constructed according to differences in race, class, gender, and sexuality. William E. Connolly explains identity and difference as follows:

An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized. These differences are essential to its being. If they did not coexist as differences, it would not exist in its distinctness and solidity. Entrenched in this indispensable relation is a second set of tendencies . . . to congeal established identities into fixed forms, thought and lived as if their structure expressed the true order of things. When these pressures prevail, the maintenance of one identity . . . involves the conversion of some differences into otherness, into evil, or one of its numerous surrogates. Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.

Identity is thus a slippery, insecure experience, dependent on its ability to define difference and vulnerable to the tendency of entities it would so define to counter,

resist, overturn, or subvert definitions applied to them.

(64)

In the South, those who have traditionally defined the differences and observed the boundaries between the categories are generally the dominant white race, and are mostly men. They have defined themselves as belonging to a socially positive category. At the same time, they have rejected what is outside of themselves, and “by producing it as the negative category, they form their own identity” (Takemura, “Ai ni tsuite” 244). Therefore, the white is only white because of the black, the male is only male because of the female, and the heterosexual is only heterosexual because of the homosexual (Takemura, “Ai ni tsuite” 244). However, as Kazuko Takemura argues, quoting Freud’s theory of “negation,” to negatively state, for example, “I have never thought about such a thing” or “This is what I am not” is to recognize what is repressed inside the self (“Ai ni tsuite” 244): “Negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed” (Freud, “Negation” 235). What is despised and feared as a negative, returns to, and occupies a place in the self, through the very act of negating (despising and fearing) it. Regarding this negation, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White also argue in support of the relationship between what is denied out of disgust, and the subject responsible for the denial: “. . . disgust always bears the imprint of desire. These low domains, apparently expelled as ‘Other’, return as the object of nostalgia, longing and fascination” (191).

According to the race system of the South, blackness is the

projection of what the dominant white society represses and excludes as being negative. Therefore, blackness disgusts those who are white, and as this discrimination defines the male dominated white society, one concludes that southern white men fear that blackness will invade their white world. If the construction of blackness by the whites is really the “symbolic contents” of their desire (Stallybrass and White 191), and if Otherness is a projection of what is negated inside them, then “the Other” is in fact a part of the subject. That which is negated—the Other as the unfamiliar—returns as something familiar. It would then seem natural that, in their literary efforts, the white authors studied here would in a sense wear black masks, create white and black doubles, or completely blur their white characters’ gender, sexual, and racial identities. They acknowledge that white people are already fascinated by “blackness,” and they invite their readers to integrate the segregated in their literary imagination. Such integration in the literary imagination is a means of questioning social norms, revealing the fictitiousness of such norms, and above all, reclaiming and restoring that part of themselves that they had repressed and lost.

This thesis rewrites the history of the Southern Renaissance, whose white authors’ whiteness has not been much questioned by critics, as that of the figuratively integrated literature by white authors. They incorporate both black and white perspectives into their work, and this “double vision” leads them not only to represent the white world as grotesque, an attribution often associated with

blackness, but also to find a moment of liberation through the conversion of grotesqueness. McCullers radicalizes this double vision by making it into a queer vision, in an effort to locate an alternative southern identity. In seeking the significance behind “being queer,” one must not only focus on the meaning of the term “homosexual,” but also focus on the term’s origins: queer, as meaning “oblique, off-center, diagonal.” In the politics of visuality, the relationship between those who look and those who are looked at is linear and hierarchical, and normally the power belongs to the former group, the lookers. In the South, the look and gaze of the white male has dominated the Others: women and black people have been looked at, and their identities defined by that dominant gaze. Queer vision serves to disrupt this process, or “queer,” the dichotomy between those who govern and look, and those who are governed and looked at—in other words, it disrupts the dichotomy between the centered and the marginal. As it is not based on a linear relationship, queer vision is not intended to change the positions of people in hierarchical dichotomies, as this would only serve to produce another form of oppression. The queer gaze always crosses the boundaries between segregated groups, questions what is considered normative, and blurs the boundaries between the dominant and the marginal. Such crossing or queering can be a way of emancipating oneself from a situation in which people are confined into a racial, gender or sexual category.

Identity can be a dungeon to anyone. In the South, it is not only

black people, but also the white people, who are “caught up” in their society and must be emancipated. However, the authors discussed here demonstrate that identity is also a social fiction, and can be deconstructed if an individual transgresses into the realm of Otherness, and there finds that the Otherness is actually a part of self. The literary efforts of these authors tell us that “the Other is I” and this recognition can bring moment of emancipation in the segregated world.

## Notes

1. I use “double vision” while being conscious of W. E. B. Du Bois’s “double-consciousness,” which means that black people are always looking at themselves “through the eyes of the others” and are deprived of “true self-consciousness” in a white-dominated society (8). This dissertation argues that white authors also examine the existence of true white consciousness in the South through the eyes of their others and represent the notion that “whiteness” is always already eroded by its opposite, “blackness.”
2. Regarding whiteness studies, see David R. Roediger’s *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1991), Toni Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992), Ruth Frankenberg’s *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993), Grace Elizabeth Hale’s *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (1998), Mason Stokes’s *The Color of Sex: Whiteness, Heterosexuality, and the Fictions of White Supremacy* (2001), and Julian B. Carter’s *The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880-1940* (2007).
3. Regarding Faulkner’s “black Caucasian characters,” Duvall mentions Pierrot in Faulkner’s earliest work, *The*

*Marionettes*; a little black man named Faulkner in *Mosquitoes*; Quentin Compson; Popeye in *Sanctuary*; and so on. See Duvall's "Black Sexuality."

4. Kelly Lynch Reames points out that "[t]hese racial stereotypes persisted throughout the twentieth century, despite the civil rights and feminist movements" (5).

5. Yaeger also explains the connection between the white female body and race as follows:

The racially pure and diminutive female body in need of protection becomes the motive force, the purported source for the taboo against race-mixing. As southern myth, this fragile white body helps motivate (1) southern modes of population control, reproducing black and white populations as separate, (2) the regulated segregation of these racial bodies in space, and (3) the need for deeply interiorized categories of racism that will do the work of segregation. (*Dirt* 120)

6. Diane Roberts explains the dualities of light/goodness/virginity versus dark/evil/sensuality as originating in Western European racial representations, myths, and metaphors that were easily translated into a Caucasian/Negro dichotomy (Roberts, *Aunt Jemima* 4). See also Wade 28-29.

7. Regarding performing blackness, Duvall argues:

There's a big difference between having one's behavior named through a simile (you're acting *like* a "nigger") and being identified as (or sensing that one's identity is) black. In the former, whiteness is not really problematized and in fact is confirmed. There is no social misrecognition: white is white and Negro is Negro. Telling these women that they were behaving "like niggers" merely polices the boundary of their whiteness; it's their behavior (which is correctable), not their being, that is linked to racial otherness. ("A Strange Nigger" 97; italics original)

Though Duvall discusses the fact that the words "acting like niggers" only police the boundary between whiteness and blackness, it cannot be missed that "acting like niggers" suggests that even white women can behave like "niggers" and that therefore, the boundary between whiteness and blackness is arbitrary if racial descriptions are based on supposedly distinguishing behaviors.

Ruth Frankenberg, in her *White Women, Race Matters*, argues that white women's lives can be considered as "the reproduction of racism," but also as "challenges to it" (1). Faulkner also recognizes the deconstructive function of white female sexuality. In his short story "Elly" (1934), a white girl has a sexual relationship with a boy in the community who is

suspected of being black. She does so in order to resist her grandmother, who represents the traditional southern code. This ultimately leads to the death of the grandmother. To Elly, her sexual action is a means of subverting the color line and southern society itself, as well as getting away from Jefferson or what has trapped and repressed her (Skei 18), just as Caddy Compson in *The Sound and the Fury* escapes from the South through her sexuality, as will be mentioned in Chapter III.

According to Joseph Blotner's biography, the idea for this story, which was initially called "Selvage," was originally created by Estelle Franklin, who was Faulkner's wife (*Biography* 233). After Estelle abandoned the story, Faulkner went on to complete it. Blotner also mentions that "[p]erhaps Faulkner had known the Creole at Ole Miss [the University of Mississippi] whose proposal Estelle had accepted, only to be told by Lem Oldham [Estelle's father] that her dashing Jack had Negro blood" (*Biography* 233). This episode is very interesting because in writing the story, Faulkner replaces Estelle, showing his fascination with the sexual relationships between white women and (supposedly) black men. Faulkner goes on to develop this theme more deeply in his later novel *Absalom, Absalom!*.

8. Frances Newman, in the beginning of *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, mentions the effect of Freud on the South. "Katharine

Faraday's mother had no reason for suspecting that the Atlantic Ocean and the German language were concealing the opinions of Sigmund Freud from Georgia, or for suspecting that some women can be mothers only by day and wives only by night . . ." (9-10).

9. The Jim Crow Era was also a time when people in the West began to pay attention to "homosexuality." This was affected by the rise of the new sexology, which defined it as abnormal, and Oscar Wilde's trial (1895). Among the authors discussed here, Newman, Faulkner, and McCullers, as their works and biographies show, had a particular interest in books by new sexologists, such as Havelock Ellis, and Sigmund Freud.
10. This is also demonstrated by the fact that the KKK excluded not only their racial others but also their sexual others from the legitimate Southern world. See Entzminger 77.
11. Regarding the process in which the Agrarians established a new literary theory, "New Criticism," and formed the canon of the Southern Renaissance according to their traditionalist views, see Ochi.
12. *The Ballad of the Sad Café* first appeared in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1943, three years before *The Member of the Wedding* was published. However, McCullers began to write *Member* first, and *Ballad* was written when McCullers was still working on *Member* (O. Evans 126; Carr 570-71). This chapter first

examines *Member* and then *Ballad* according to the chronological order of McCullers's ideas. This sequence makes it possible to see Miss Amelia in *Ballad* as a grown-up tomboy with more ambiguous gender, sexual, and even racial identities than Frankie in *Member*.

13. The writers it published include Donald Davidson, Ellen Glasgow, Amy Lowell, Sara Haardt, Gertrude Stein, Louis Untermeyer, Carl Van Vechten, and Allen Tate among others.

14. Regarding the role *The Reviewer* played in promotion of literature in the South, see Wise and Roper.

15. Those women writers include Sara Haardt, Julia Peterkin, , Josephin Pinckney, and Frances Newman.

16. As “[g]othicism can be defined as a mode of fiction utilized by critically acclaimed modernist writers of the Southern Renaissance” (Boyd, “Gothicism” 311), it is to be noted that Roper describes Newman as “a registered eccentric in the Southern Gothic Hall of Fame” (86). See also Manning 247-248.

17. This section is a revision of the author’s “Modanizumu, jenda, *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*: Frances Newman no saihyouka ni mukete [Modernism, Gender and Frances Newman’s *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*.]”

18. Even Kenneth Burke showed his cynical attitude toward women writers Anita Loos, Radclyffe Hall, and Newman, describing them, for example, as “a Lesbian man-eater,” or “a

virginal whore" in his letter to Malcolm Cowley (Burke and Cowley 186).

19. MacKethan maintains that "[t]he modern novel, in the South as well as elsewhere, has usually been defined as male property" (252), though female writers such as Glasgow, Peterkin, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Hurston, and Caroline Gordon "have made significant contributions to the development of the modern novel in its southern forms" (252).

20. Considering the fact that 10 years after *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, a girl's early initiation story, "Like That" by Carson McCullers was purchased by *Story* but never published because it "graphically referred to a young girl's menstruation" (Carr 63), Newman's attempt to write about the truth of female body seems very radical.

21. Donald Davidson, who had a negative view of Newman as a southern feminine writer, argued in 1928 that her method was "perverse and sterile" and it linked up with "the writing of defeated Europeans like Joyce and jabbering expatriates like Gertrude Stein, thus expressing complete artistic weariness rather than the vitality of thought and feeling that a Southern writer at this time might well experience" (28). See also Seidel, 40.

22. Edwin Mims had already appreciated Newman in 1926 and wrote the following about her:

Her knowledge of contemporary English and French fiction is almost uncanny, and she has the sympathetic attitude toward the most radical departures from the form of fiction as well as from the conventional standards of content. (253-54)

Mims also points out that Newman appreciated Joyce and D.H. Lawrence and quotes Newman's writings, which say that the twentieth century has a certain interest in its unconscious (254).

23. Female modernist works result from their desire to express their experience or their own truth, which has been neglected in a male dominant society. However, even in the 50s, Robert Humphrey gave a negative view about Richardson's intention, stating, "An adequate purpose is not found in presenting these (Richardson's) viewpoints merely for the sake of novelty" (11). It is only after feminism that the truth of women becomes included in that of human being.

24. Mrs. L. H. Harris (Corra Harris, 1869-1935) from Georgia was a celebrated writer at that time in the South. According to Catherine Badura, Harris was a "upholder of premodern agrarian values," and "[a]t the same time she criticized southern writers who sentimentalized a past that never existed" (201). She also wrote essays on southern society and womanhood, but her name is almost forgotten in the literary

history just like Newman and Peterkin. Martha Banta pays attention to the fact that Mrs. Harris “speaks of the double consciousness experienced by all post-Reconstruction Southern whites” in this “Southern Manners” (208), which was published three years after Du Bois’s “famous discussion of ‘double consciousness’” in *The Souls of Black Folk* (215).

25. Here, it is meaningful to compare Newman’s view of the southern myth with that of Allen Tate. Tate describes it as follows:

. . . the Southern legend is a true myth which informed the sensibility and thought, at varying conscious levels, of the defeated South. (By myth I mean a dramatic projection of heroic action, or of the traffic failure of heroic action, upon the reality of the common life of a society, so that the myth *is* reality.) (151; italics original)

Newman, contrary to Tate, observes that the myth is fiction. I will later argue that Quentin Compson, being aware of the fictitiousness of the southern society, tried to perform an action that would be considered heroic according to convention only to find failure in his performance and the impossibility of making the myth reality.

26. In this way, to look into the construction of whiteness in the South, it is critical to consider the role of the black mammy.

However, this thesis will maintain that the white authors discussed here give mammies more subversive roles to enable them to penetrate into southern whiteness.

27. This section is a revision of the author's "White Lady, Black Mask: Julia Peterkin no *Scarlet Sister Mary* ni okeru jinshu to sekushuarithi [White Lady, Black Mask: Race and Sexuality in Julia Peterkin's *Scarlet Sister Mary*]."

28. It also means that by gaining a black point of view, Peterkin could be independent from her male mentors. Peterkin, as well as Newman, considered writing as a male job (Williams 32).

29. In this revelation, her sin seems to be assoiled. The stripes are a symbol of her scarlet sin and they are now whitened. Here, Peterkin uses a stereotypical definition of colors, with white as innocence and black as sin. However, Mary's regeneracy cannot be accepted at face value. "So shining her eyes could not face it" seems to suggest that Mary cannot easily recover her innocence represented by "white."

30. Regarding "the misandry of *Scarlet Sister Mary*," Robeson finds the influence of Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, who was Peterkin's friend and once was Willa Cather's lover, briefly. She also points out the "textual evocations of Cather's *My Antonia*" in *Scarlet Sister Mary*. See Robeson, 775-76.

31. In addition, Peterkin seems to use Gothic elements of Hawthorne in the scene where Mary experiences a kind of

epiphany in the woods. First, the wood is an allegory of Mary's mind, just as the wood in "A Young Goodman Brown" is also an allegory of Brown's psychology. Mary sees a white cloth with ten red stripes, which symbolizes her scarlet sin, as Brown beholds pink ribbons of Faith, his wife, which also symbolizes his lost Faith/faith.

32. This chapter is a revision of the author's " 'A Rose for Emily' no katari no kouzou: sono nijyuuno jikan to katarite no ichi ni tsuite [The Narrative Structure in 'A Rose for Emily']" and "Nambu no gurotesuku saikou: Julia Peterkin, William Faulkner, Eudora Welty no tampen wo tooshite [A Reconsideration of the Southern Grotesque: Julia Peterkin, William Faulkner and Eudora Welty]."

33. Geoffrey Galt Harpham also argues that the grotesque disrupts categorization:

Grotesqueries both require and defeat definition: they are neither so regular and rhythmical that they settle easily into our categories, nor so unprecedented that we do not recognize them at all. They stand at a margin of consciousness between the known and the unknown, the perceived and the unperceived, calling into question the adequacy of our ways of organizing the world, of dividing the continuum of experience into knowable particles. (3)

Molly Boyd explains that “[i]n the twentieth century, southern writers primarily utilize elements of the ‘high’ grotesque to suggest a wholly inscrutable universe with which twentieth-century man no longer feels any intimate moral kinship and to suggest that man himself is an inextricable tangle of rationality and irrationality, love and hatred, self-improvement and self-destruction” (“The Grotesque” 322).

34. In this context, *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, in which Newman makes her female protagonist transgress these boundaries, can be read as an anti-bourgeois grotesque story, as Roper suggests (86-87).

35. Faulkner, Welty, and O’Connor are always considered the quintessential southern gothic or grotesque writers, but Cartwright has included Peterkin in the genre, declaring Peterkin as “an early practitioner of Southern gothic” (143). This paper will show that Peterkin must be regarded as an originator of the grotesque in the Southern Renaissance literature.

36. As Robeson explains in the note, “the awful truth” comes from a title of Arthur Richman’s 1922 play, which Ann Douglas uses as a representative slogan of America’s early modernist writers in her *Terrible Honesty* (1996).

37. Spiegel specifically refers to characters such as Benjy, Jim Bond, and Quentin Compson in Faulkner, Mick Kelly in

McCullers, and Hazel Motes in O'Connor (429).

38. According to Williams, “Over the River” is a black version of Peterkin’s short story, “The Confession” (69). In “The Confession,” a lower-class boy impregnates Edna Clark, the daughter of a respectable family. The family doctor advises her to have an abortion, but Edna, following the minister’s suggestion, tries to secure a shotgun wedding in the North. However, her lover runs away, and she returns to the South to die during the delivery. This story was never published because “[w]hite girls of good families did not get pregnant in print” in the early 1920s (Williams 70). It has the same pattern as “Over the River,” in that a girl becomes pregnant, is abandoned by her lover, and runs to him, only to be abandoned again. The significant difference is that the white girl dies and the black girl survives. Furthermore, according to Williams, “Over the River” allows the reader to access the deaf-mute black girl’s inner narrative, whereas “The Confession” only offers an objective description of Edna. Thus, “Over the River” details the black girl’s inner struggle and agony, and the reader consequently sympathizes with her. See Williams 69–70.

39. Regarding the Jordan River as a symbol in gospel music, Scott Tucker explains as follows:

The themes of “Jordan” and “Canaan” have biblical

connections, but surely there is also some influence from another source of songs in the South. The Jordan River was a euphemism among Southern slaves for the Ohio River. If slaves could cross the Ohio into free states, then they would be made free. In essence, the area north of the Ohio River was viewed as the Promised Land. Slave songs used the Jordan River and the Promised Land as symbols to communicate about freedom. It seems that these symbols have survived within the lyrics of Southern Gospel music, though they have been completely spiritualized and have lost the ambiguity that provided such effect within the spirituals. (Tucker 38)

40. Regarding the question of Phinny's parentage, several readings exist. Michael Kreyling argues that a baby is "either the offspring of an incestuous relationship with her (Miss Myra's) deceased and dipsomaniac brother, or the illegitimate child of that brother and Delilah" (172). Some critics argue that Phinny is or could be the child of Benton and a slave, probably of Benton and Delilah (see Harold Bloom 9-10; Ruth M. Vande Kieft 131; Yaeger, "Black Men" 189). Naoko Fuwa Thornton maintains that Phinny is the child of Miss Myra and Benton's black friend (57). If the father is white, it does not seem necessary for the sisters to take such extreme measures

to hide the child inside the house, nor to let the child die there.

41. It must be noted that in both “A Rose for Emily” and “The Burning,” the house functions as the equipment of racial passing, as a metaphor for a female body that conceals “blackened” female sexuality inside. A “white house” is a symbol of whiteness or white supremacy, but it can also blur white identity with the presence of black characters inside its body or structure. We will see this motif of a white house explored more subversively in McCullers’ *The Ballad of the Sad Café* in a later chapter.

42. Thus, association is what dominates the movement of the narration here, which makes the narrative style similar to “stream of consciousness.”

43. In the story, a definite chronology of Miss Emily’s life is not given; therefore, several explanations for the time-sequence exist. Here, I refer to Cleanth Brooks’s chronology (*William Faulkner* 382-84).

44. Compare this description with one in which the townspeople entered Emily’s house to make a claim about the taxes:

They were admitted by the old Negro into a dim hall from which a stairway mounted into still more shadow. It smelled of dust and disuse—a close, dank smell. The Negro led them into the parlor. It was furnished in heavy,

leather-covered furniture. When the Negro opened the blinds of one window, they could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray. On a tarnished gilt easel before the fireplace stood a crayon portrait of Miss Emily's father. (120)

45. See Stanzel, 81-82 and 212-13.

46. Fetterley also points out that a distinction exists between the story Faulkner is telling and the one the narrators are telling. Fetterley argues that “[t]his distinction is of major importance because it suggests . . . that the narrator, looking through a patriarchal lens, does not see Emily at all but rather a figment of his own imagination created in conjunction with the cumulative imagination of the town. Like Ellison's invisible man, nobody sees *Emily*” (40; italic original). Fetterley's argument is very significant because it suggests that a southern lady is invisible just like the black people are in the white dominant society.

47. In this regard, there is a striking similarity with McCullers' Miss Amelia in *The Ballad of the Sad Café*. Miss Amelia also lives alone with a black cook after her father dies. Considering that it was not usual for a single woman to live with or hire only a black male servant, these authors definitely posit the

black male servant inside a white spinster's house with intention. In this respect, the former director of the Carson McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians, Prof. Cathy Fussell, provided me with beneficial information.

48. Confinement and liberation are motifs that appear repeatedly in Faulkner's fictions and other southern gothic stories. For example, in *The Sound and the Fury*, Caddy and her daughter escape from the Compson house, which is a kind of prison to these women, while Benjy, Jason, and their mother remain in the house at the end of the story. Therefore, it is highly significant that in the appendix to *The Sound and the Fury*, which Faulkner wrote in 1946, the author describes how Jason freed himself forever "not only from the idiot brother and the house but from the Negro woman too" when his mother died (344). Faulkner continues:

He was emancipated now. He was free. "In 1865," he would say, "Abe Lincoln freed the niggers from the Compson. In 1933, Jason Compson freed the niggers from the Compsons." (345)

In *Absalom, Absalom!*, Sutpen's legitimate son, Henry, who had hidden himself inside a Sutpen mansion, finally sets fire to the house and dies there. Meanwhile, Sutpen's black grandson runs away as Sutpen's only surviving descendent. Those who escape the confinement are mostly women or black

people because they are the ones who are confined by the dominant southern social system.

49. Richards also argues that “[r]epeatedly in his fiction and perhaps reaching its finest articulation in Quentin and Shreve’s contourings of Sutpen’s narrative on *Absalom, Absalom!*, Faulkner foregrounds a youthful male duo who establishes itself as artistically creative not through solitary efforts within the visual arts or the written word but rather through same-sex interactions that construct a communal narrative” (“Male Homosexuality” 33). Richards finds a model of this male duo in Faulkner’s relationship with William Spratling, “Faulkner’s roommate in the French Quarter and elsewhere, his traveling companion on his first European sojourn in 1925, his collaborator on the satiric *Sherwood Anderson and Other Famous Creoles*, and his inspiration for figures in several early prose pieces” (“Male Homosexuality” 21).

50. This section is a revision of the author’s “Nambu no vajiniti wo megutte: Newman no Katharine, Faulkner no Caddy soshite Quentin [On Virginity in the American South: Newman’s Katharine, Faulkner’s Caddy and Quentin].”

51. Regarding Faulkner’s literary style, Joseph Warren Beach points out the influence of Newman as follows:

What were Faulkner’s models for these breathless

interminable sentences we can only guess. Henry James was famous for the fussy elaboration of his syntax. There was Marcel Proust, with sentences even longer and more involved. Frances Newman, herself a southern writer, made a great and well-deserved hit with the literati in her novel *The Hard-Boiled Virgin*, entirely composed in sentences of extreme length and involution of syntax. These were authors whom Faulkner could hardly have missed, and hardly have failed to admire. . . . *The Hard-Boiled Virgin* comprises the reactions and reflections of a highbrow remarkable for her wit and orderliness of mind. (160)

52. Takaki Hiraishi argues that Faulkner develops sex, sexuality, and women as his literary theme in his early prose and poems. See *Merankorikku dezain*. Meanwhile, Kristin Fujie points out that “the author’s [Faulkner’s] turn toward the issue of miscegenation in the thirties should be understood not as a moment of division . . . but of transformation, when race explodes within an established landscape of sexual anxiety that takes the female body as its troubled matrix” (115).

53. Many critics have wondered what lead Faulkner to write such a masterpiece as *The Sound and the Fury*, after his unexalted novels like *Soldiers’ Pay* and *Mosquitoes*. For example, Irving Howe asks in his early criticism on Faulkner, “What happened

to Faulkner between *Mosquitoes* and the novel that came a few years later, *The Sound and the Fury*? What element of personal or literary experience can account for such a leap?" (20-21)

This section shows one of the factors which gave Faulkner a literary "leap" is the intertextual relationship with the works of his contemporary southern woman writer.

54. Quentin also remembers his father's words which mean that virginity is just a word (116).

55. *Sartoris* is the first novel of Faulkner's "Yoknapatawpha Saga," a group of novel which is set on his fictional southern town whose model is Lafayette County, Mississippi. It includes most of his masterpieces, like *The Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Go Down, Moses*.

56. It is interesting that, in an appendix added to *The Sound and the Fury* in 1946, Faulkner shows Caddy through the consciousness of a southern white spinster. Faulkner shows Caddy's power to subvert the boundary of gender and race through Melissa Meek:

. . . the country librarian, a mousesized and -colored woman who had never married, who had passed through the city schools in the same class with Candace Compson and then spent the rest of her life trying to keep *Forever Amber* in its orderly overlapping avatars and *Jurgen* and *Tom Jones* out of

the hands of the highschool juniors and seniors who could reach them down without even having to tiptoe from the back shelves where she herself would have to stand on a box to hide them. (337)

When Meek sees Caddy in a picture in a slick magazine, she first entered Jason's store, a "gloomy cavern which only men ever entered" to ask about saving Caddy (338), and then, as she understands that this is in vain, she goes to "the Negro residence section of Memphis" to talk with Dilsey (340). Meek unconsciously transgresses gender and race boundaries, compelled by Caddy's picture. Meek's attempt ends in failure but Faulkner, by depicting Meek's sympathy with Caddy, seems to foreground the theme of salvation by female-female bond across race.

57. Some of this section is a revision of the author's "*Absalom, Absalom!* niokeru monogatarikoui nitsuite [Narrative Acts in *Absalom, Absalom!*.]"

58. Here we can also find a striking contrast of confinement and liberation as a literary theme. Henry Sutpen had been confined in Sutpen's mansion and burned there, while Jim Bond is finally liberated from it. Jim Bond is an illegitimate progeny, repressed in and excluded from Sutpen's family line which must be constructed of the authentic white sons; however, he, "the repressed," always returns to the region of

the white and deconstructs its authenticity.

59. See Carr 167-73 and McDowell 66.

60. McCullers began to write this story in 1939, and the title was “An Army Post.” It first appeared in *Harper’s Bazaar* serialized in twice in 1940 and then was published in 1941 by Houghton Mifflin. This section is a revision of the author’s “Gurotesuku no posuto/coroniaru na tankyu: McCullers no *Reflections in a Golden Eye* wo yomu [Post/Colonial Exploration for the Grotesque: Reading McCullers’ *Reflections in a Golden Eye*],” “Yokubou to aidentiti no monogatari: Carson McCullers no *Reflections in a Golden Eye* [Desire and Identity: Carson McCullers’ *Reflections in a Golden Eye*],” and “Reflections in a Filipino’s Eye: Southern Masculinity and Colonial Subject.”

61. In the first place, the defeat of the Civil War threatened the southern masculinity. As Hale points out, “a changing political economy undermined older forms of male power” in the late nineteenth-century America and “[t]he South did not escape this failing of patriarchal authority” (114).

In fact, in many ways the loss of control over slaves, the wartime destruction of households, a generation of white men’s loss of life, limb, and will, and African American male suffrage uniquely threatened southern masculinity. (Hale 114)

It can be easily guessed that when the southerners felt like losing their authority, white supremacy offer the southern white “a firm basis of authority, grounded in a new culture of segregation” (Hale 115).

62. Wise also maintains that “the ‘Southern Renascence’ he (Tate) referred to had little room for blacks and women” (153).

63. O. Evans uses this phrase as a chapter head for his discussion of *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, explaining that “one reader remarked that in this book not even the horse was normal” (80).

64. We should notice here that “animality” is generally considered an attribute, not of the white people, but of the black people, in the South. By placing the adjective “good” before “animal,” Langdon seems to distinguish the southern white male’s animalistic masculinity and that of the other races. And it cannot be missed that the southern society primarily espouses anti-intellectualism.

65. To be sure, the military is “the most male-homosocial of institutions” and “the one where the manipulability of men is most at a premium,” and therefore male homosexuality is always regulated (Sedgwick 222). In the army post definitely based on heterosexuality, male homosexuality is never told, is never suggested on the surface.

66. McCullers does not describe about Weincheck’s sexuality

obviously, as Richards points out (174). Gleeson-White argues that the Weincheck's violin playing, described as "the naked melody" in the story is "a knowing wink, a secret signal, and the 'knowing' reader must be 'in the know' to know what the secret is" (*Strange Bodies* 39-40). At any rate, critical difference between the two effeminate men, Penderton and Weincheck is that the former has married with a woman. Marital status is a mask for Penderton to hide his desire. Then his wife is essential to Penderton in two points. One is to keep his relationship with Langdon by offering his wife; the other is to construct his heterosexual identity externally.

67. "They [Imperialists] thought that the experiencing of holding colonies would create the kind of martial character so valued in the nation's male citizens and political leaders, . . . and that, in so doing, it would prevent national and racial degeneracy" (Hoganson 139).

68. Kimmel's citations are from Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. (New York: Viking, 1989).

69. Here, it is worth noting that Langdon does not see their relationship as a heterosexual one, no matter how much time they spend together.

70. Alison is the only one who witnesses Williams entering Penderton's house as well as Penderton stealing a silver spoon.

Richard M. Cook argues that Alison is “the only person to possess sufficient intelligence and detachment to look at the events and the people on the post critically” (50).

71. This section is based on my article written in English published in Japanese journal, “Taming of the Tomboy and Her Queer Resistance: Reading the Unspoken Fear/Desire in *The Member of the Wedding*.<sup>72</sup>

72. See also Abate 164-66; Byerman 25; Gleeson-White, *Strange Bodies* 33–34; and Westling 131.

73. Sedgwick also discusses this scene as that of “enforced sexuality” (10). However, she argues that, while the attack of Scarlet by the black man is interpreted as “rape”— the truth is that the black hands fumbled between the white breasts because he knew that it was where the money was hidden, namely, his purpose was not to rape but to rob the money, “[w]hen it is white hands that scrabble on white skin, its ideological name is ‘blissful marriage’” (10). She also points out that “[t]he sexual predations of white men on Black women are also a presence in the novel, but the issue of force vs. consent is never raised there” (10). There seems a striking difference on the view of sexuality and race ideology in the South between Frances Newman and Margaret Mitchell who were contemporaries born in Atlanta.

74. Besides, it cannot be missed that homosexuals were also

considered danger, as they were “outsiders who were not part of either family or society” (Rowbotham 218).

75. On tolerance of tomboyishness, see Halberstam 155–56.

76. Here, it is also important that in Frankie’s imagination, heterosexuality is linked to the color white through the name of the town where the wedding would be held, Winterhill, and the snow itself.

77. Lily Mae Jenkins was a character that was first intended to appear in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*. See the outline for “The Mute,” its original title, in McCullers’ *The Mortgaged Heart* (140–41). Bringing Jenkins back into her novel, McCullers hides the theme of homoerotic desire under the text of the female coming-of-age narrative.

78. See Rachel Adams 109 and Lori J. Kenschaft 228–29. As for Mary, we cannot miss the difference between the novel and the play *The Member of the Wedding*. At the end of the novel, Frankie is to move into a new house with Mary, while in the play, Barney is asked to join her and Mary. At this point, Thadious M. Davis claims, “Although the world of the theater might well provide a more accommodating stage for the dramatization of Frankie’s repressed homosocial desires, it could not in the aftermath of World War II do so only within the boundaries of ‘normalcy’” (“Erasing” 216). In shifting from Mary to Barney, the play revises Frankie’s entry into

adolescence as heterosexual.

79. Looking at the autobiography and biographies of Carson McCullers, we recognize that while conceiving *The Member of the Wedding*, the theme of Frankie's homosocial desire fluctuates in the author's mind. In her unfinished autobiography, *Illumination and Night Glare*, published in 1999 but believed to have been written in the 1960s, McCullers explains how she found the inspiration for the story, which she had struggled with for a long time. One day in 1940, while walking outside with her housemate Gypsy Rose Lee, McCullers felt her head clear and suddenly said to Gypsy, "Frankie is in love with the bride of her brother and wants to join the wedding" (32; emphasis added). "Until that time," she also explains, "Frankie was just a girl in love with her music teacher, a most banal theme . . ." (32). Before her autobiography was published, McCullers' biographers wrote that Frankie was in love with "her brother and the/his bride" (O. Evans 98; Carr 121; Josyane Savigneau 78). Savigneau also claims that the story's genesis lies in "her [McCullers'] childhood despair at the departure of her piano teacher, Mary Tucker" (64). In the same manner, the descriptions of the original title of the novel also lead to confusion; O. Evans calls it "The Bride of My Brother" (98), and Savigneau, "The Bride and Her Brother" (64). Carr's explanation is probably valid:

she writes that the title was, around 1939, “The Bride and Her Brother” (93), but later, McCullers called it “The Bride of My Brother” (138). The replacement of the preposition and pronoun shows that in the conception of the story, the focus shifts from Frankie’s obsession with her brother and his bride to an obsession with the bride herself. This compels us to interpret Frankie’s words, “I love the two of them so much.” (*Member* 57) as a pronouncement of her latent homosocial/homoerotic desire toward her brother’s bride, and makes it possible to consider Mary Littlejohn as another bride with whom she can go everywhere.

80. This section is a revision of the author’s “Shisen, isou, jenda ekkyou: *The Ballad of the Sad Café* ni okeru ‘kuia na me’ [Gaze, Cross-Dressing and Cross-Gender: Queer Eyes in *The Ballad of the Sad Café*]” (Copyright © 2004 THE AMERICAN LITERATURE SOCIETY OF JAPAN All Rights Reserved) and “Shisen wo kaitai/saikouchiku suru: McCullers, Arbus, furikusu [De/Reconstructing the Gaze: McCullers, Arbus, Freaks].” “Queer Eyes” will be published on the Internet soon.

81. In this regard, I was provided with a beneficial opinion by Prof. Cathy Fussell.

82. The etymology of “queer” is thought to be traceable to the German word *quer*, which means perverse and oblique (“Queer,” *Oxford*), or the Low German word *queer*, which means “oblique,

off-center” (“Queer,” *Online*).

83. Regarding Miss Amelia as a phallic woman, see

Gleeson-White, *Strange Bodies* 101-02. Gleeson-White argues that “the phallic/uncastigated/masculine Miss Amelia becomes the castrator of Marvin Macy: she denies him the position of having the phallus in order to save her own phallic position” (*Strange Bodies* 102).

84. Kimmel explains how the traits of the mythic cowboy figure are regarded as “manly” (150). “He is a natural aristocrat” and “is free in a free country, embodying republican virtue and autonomy” (150-51). Also, Kimmel points out that “he is white” (151).

85. Clare Whatling points out that “Amelia’s physical strangeness is exaggerated only when she attempts to conform to feminine norms” (239).

86. “For a while the fighters grappled muscle to muscle, their hipbones braced against each other. Backward and forward, from side to side, they swayed in this way” (*Collected* 249).

87. Lawrence Graver sees the narrator as being female.

However, it seems that Graver identifies the author with the narrator, or simply thinks that if the author is female, then the narrator is female. See Graver 25.

88. For example, Kahane argues that Amelia is “left a woman, gender-locked in a decaying house” (348). Paulson says that

“[l]ike blacks in the Southern community, Amelia is victimized by white males. She is *womanized* and *feminized* . . .” (194).

See also Westling 126; Gleeson-White, *Strange Bodies* 110; Carvill 38-39.

89. By this ending, McCullers might also desire to show that in a world in which visionary discrimination is dominant, gaze functions as a form of repression, but voice and sound function as a form of liberation.

90. Regarding the relationship between Mencken and the South, see Hobson. Hobson explores how Mencken’s argument on the South affected the southern social and literary movement at that time, arguing that “it is incontestable that Mencken forced the issue of tradition versus modernism in the South of the 1920s and that furthermore any thoughtful, sensitive Southerner would be caused to turn inward, to examine his tradition and values, when one so powerful and so eloquent had dismissed them so readily” (4).

91. See their manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand*.

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