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# “Where niggers crop on shares and live like animals”

*Racialized Space in William Faulkner’s Light in August and Go Down, Moses*

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## Abstract

This thesis sets out to explore the production of social space, with a particular focus on how these spaces are racialized, in two major works by William Faulkner, *Light in August* (1932) and *Go Down, Moses* (1942). By examining how different characters interact with various spaces appearing in the narratives, the thesis aims to illustrate how the racially segregated aspect of culture in Faulkner's postbellum Mississippi plays a significant role in both individual and collective space production. Henri Lefebvre's monumental work on the production of space has in this thesis served as an entryway into the discourse on social space. The thesis further considers insight gained from the concept of heterotopia, introduced by Michel Foucault. The thesis seeks to revitalize, and shed new light on, the discourse concerned with the intersection of space and race in Faulkner's works, by considering and applying the more recent theory of Paul Outka on nature and race. To put these theorists in dialogue with Faulkner's *Light in August* and *Go Down, Moses* enables an analysis of both the political and phenomenological aspect of space in Faulkner's works. A division between interior and exterior spaces has been made for structural reasons, resulting in a total of four analytical chapters at the core of the thesis. In these four chapters the thesis contributes to already firmly established scholarly discourses, e.g. relating to Ike McCaslin's environmentalism and the construction of Joe Christmas's racial identity, while simultaneously aiming to bring previously overlooked characters and scenes into focus, as for instance Uncle Ash's experience of nature and the several instances of lynchings and executions of black men.



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# 1 Introduction

The effects of the history of slavery and racism on the postbellum South is perhaps the most overt, overarching, and essential Faulknerian theme, if not the most defining aspect of the civil war ridden South in general. The civil war defeat, and the consequent abolishment of slavery in the South, seems to be *the* overarching historical event in William Faulkner's work. The popular interpretation of the American Civil War is often reductive, with a positive focus on the alleged progressive outcomes that appeared in the wake of the war's conclusion. In the history of racial tension in America, the civil war is popularly highlighted as a monumental event, where the abolitionist Abraham Lincoln and his "Yankees" eventually triumphed in both the physical and ideological war, leading to the emancipation of the African-American slaves. Paul D. Escott claims, in a more nuanced and thorough analysis of the ideological circumstances surrounding the Civil War, that "in matters of race, the Civil War signaled a future of segregation and racial exploitation rather than equality, a future that soon became reality" (Escott XV). In spite of the significance of the civil war for Faulkner's works, Faulkner should not be categorized as a war writer (although some of his narratives, as *The Unvanquished* (1938) and *A Fable* (1954), are both occupied with issues of war), but is better classified as a writer concerned with the sociological, political and cultural effects within a conservative community forced to adapt to impulses from a rapidly changing outside world, as portrayed in some of his most highly acclaimed works, e.g. in *Go Down, Moses* (1942), *Light in August* (1932) and *As I Lay Dying* (1930). My reading of Faulkner's works complement Escott's claim that the Civil War failed to fully emancipate the black population, as the color line is firmly maintained in Faulkner's postbellum Mississippi through Jim Crow segregation and several instances of lynchings appearing in the novels.

I am concerned with how racial categorization and segregation, both results of the subjugation of the African-American slave in the antebellum South, contribute to the production of both political space and the phenomenological experience of these spaces. In this thesis I will argue that the production of social space in *Light in August* and *Go Down, Moses* is fundamentally related to racism and segregation. I will support this claim by examining a range of spaces appearing in the novels, that will all be interpreted as relating to the overarching theme of racialized space in significant ways. To clarify the purpose of this thesis it might be helpful to divide my research interests into two key fractions, which both

attempt to illuminate how space is racialized in Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County. Although I will give an in-depth justification for my theoretical approach in Chapter 2, some introductory key points will perhaps prove helpful.

Firstly, I decided to examine racialized spaces after "Faulkner and slavery" was announced as the theme for The William Faulkner Society's annual conference in Oxford, Mississippi for 2018. As a scholar wanting to contribute to the already extensive and quite overwhelming body of research that exists on Faulkner, following the suggested theme made sense. I had also recently encountered a quite original and enlightening book through my interest in ecocriticism, Paul Outka's *Race and Nature from Transcendentalism to the Harlem Renaissance* (2008). In his book, Outka illustrates how the African-American population has historically been excluded from the altered mode of experience related to the transcendental sublime, which has been a white privilege. However, Outka does not apply his theory to the works of William Faulkner. This sparked my interest in how different racially categorized characters relate to space, the sublime landscape in particular, in Faulkner's works.

Secondly, I want to avoid reducing racialized space to something purely relating to experience, as the overarching political backdrop is clearly instrumental in Outka's theory. In this thesis, race is conceptualized as a social category, similar to gender and class in its constructiveness and performative nature. Thus any notion of essential and biological racial categories is rejected, which today might seem obvious, but is worth mentioning in the context of the historical period of which the novels I am analyzing are cultural artifacts. To introduce a focus on the political aspect of space, and its racialization, thus seems plausible, as the combination of these approaches applied to racialized space (the phenomenological and political) will offer a more comprehensive, thus less reductive, notion of how space is racialized in Faulkner, than a narrower focus would have. Henri Lefebvre, with a particular focus on the fundamental theory he establishes in *The Production of Space* (1974), will be one of the cornerstone theorists in this thesis, as his theory is a more universal and comprehensive one than Outka's. However, similarly to Outka's notion of a landscape racialized through the production of white sublimity and black trauma through individual experiences of it, Lefebvre has a similar and compatible theory of how space is produced, which I will illustrate more thoroughly in chapter 2.

The quote I use in the title of my thesis, "where niggers crop on shares and live like animals" (Faulkner 258) may at first glance seem inappropriate and appalling by some

readers, and I shall therefore take a moment to address these concerns properly. Firstly, I did not choose the quote for the title in an attempt to be controversial, but rather since it brilliantly illustrates the essence of my thesis, as to “crop on shares” is a practice associated with a political space, and to “live like animals” is both a phenomenological and political aspect of space (as animalization, which will be illustrated in chapter 2, is a political process with phenomenological consequences for the subject). The quote is taken from one of Ike McCaslin’s, one of the protagonists in *Go Down, Moses*, reminiscences at the end of the chapter titled “Delta Autumn”, a reflection on how the dilution of racial binaries in America has led to confusion and unnaturalness. The consequences of slavery and racism, which is one of Ike’s obsessions, is at the center of my research, both in relation to how this has effected the political production of space, but also how different characters relate to these racialized spaces, as illustrated in the Ike McCaslin quote.

Secondly, regarding the use of the word “nigger” in quotes in my thesis, I have chosen to leave this word uncensored. The debate on the use of the “n-word” in literature appeared perhaps most recently and famously in relation to Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, which eventually ended up being published in a censored edition, where the word “nigger” had been replaced by “slave”. This was a matter of great controversy which created an important debate on issues relating to authorial authority, freedom of speech, and literature as a historical document. The main critique of the censorship seemed to concern how the text as a testimony of a specific historical time and place was reduced through this censorship, as the word was very significant in defining the society it portrayed. Similarly, the word “nigger” is used 85 times in *Go Down, Moses* and 148 times in *Absalom, Absalom!*, and the word is an important aspect of both characterization and the historical context of these novels. Language is powerful, and the presence of offensive words forces the reader to deal with the problem, in this case racism, up front. However, I am writing my thesis in a different context than Faulkner, and a scholarly work has to be more considerate in its word choice and terminology than a work of fiction, so I have chosen to use the words that are least offensive to divide characters in relation to the binary racial categories they were subjugated to under Jim Crow segregation. “Black” and “white” are perhaps the terms illustrating the binary categories in Yoknapatawpha the best, but I also use terms as African American, Chickasaw (a Native American tribe of the Southeastern Woodlands), and Mexican, throughout my analysis.

The two novels I have chosen as the focus of my research, *Go Down, Moses* and *Light in August*, are admittedly among the obvious choices when analyzing race in Faulkner.

*Absalom, Absalom!* and *Intruder in the Dust* are arguably the two Faulkner novels that are equally overtly and thoroughly occupied with racial themes as the two novels that will be the focus of my analysis, but I have found it necessary to exclude them as central focus points in this thesis. Published in 1932 (*Light in August*) and 1942 (*Go Down, Moses*) the two novels at hand were also written at the peak of Faulkner's abilities, in the period commonly known among Faulkner scholars as "the major years", spanning from the publishing of *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929 to the publishing of *Go Down, Moses* in 1942. I can therefore not claim originality in my choice of primary texts for the theme of this research, as this thesis will present no analysis of obscure, newly discovered Faulkner texts. However, this thesis will claim its originality by means of the research question itself, applying the fairly recent theory suggested by Paul Outka, regarding the racial character of sublimity in the South, to works by William Faulkner, which Outka does not do himself, and which has not, as far as I know, yet been done.

Since the aim of this thesis is to contribute to both the scholarly discourse on Faulkner's literary works and the philosophical discourse on space, a brief introduction to both topics may prove helpful for readers mainly concerned with one of the two discourses. I will hence in the following paragraphs offer a brief introduction to the two novels this thesis is concerned with, before offering a thorough exposition and demonstration of Lefebvre's, Outka's and Foucault's theories in the next chapter.

First of all, a few remarks on the structure of *Go Down, Moses* seems appropriate. The reader will notice that I often refer to three chapters of the novel as the "hunting trilogy" (consisting of "The Old People", "The Bear", and "Delta Autumn"), which might seem unconventional as the term is usually applied to a series of three separate books. The term is, however, in this analysis applied to these three chapters as their interrelatedness is indisputable. The hunting trilogy is focalized through Isaac "Ike" McCaslin, and portrays his changing relationship to the wilderness and the activity of hunting, from childhood in "The Old People" to old age in "Delta Autumn", with "The Bear" bridging the gap in offering a wider scope of Ike's development.

An ongoing and popular discussion among Faulkner scholars is the genre of *Go Down, Moses*, which is usually either classified as a novel or a collection of short stories (with new variations, as "short story cycle" and "short story composite" appearing throughout the history of the discourse). The genre of the book is significant. as an analytical focus on single

short stories/chapters is justified in relation to short story collections, while focusing on a single chapter of a novel, without considering the chapter in relation to the larger entity of the book, will in most cases lead to an incomplete and reductive analysis of the text. This thesis supports the classification of *Go Down, Moses* as a novel, as the “analyses of individual stories are doomed to be incomplete and possibly even erroneous” (Tick 68), and will thus consider all the chapters of the novel as relevant for my analysis.

In *Go Down, Moses* the racial aspect of space becomes evident in both exterior spaces as the forest, and interior spaces as houses. The novel’s centerpiece, “The Bear”, and its prequel and sequel, “The Old People and “Delta Autumn”, does however to a large extent focalize on exterior spaces, the wild woods in particular. The hunting party in “The Bear” consists of characters with various racial identities, e.g. the socially black but dominantly Chickasaw Sam Fathers, the white Ike McCaslin, and Boon Hogganbeck, who is socially white but has some Chickasaw blood in him. However, one of the most significant characters in the analysis of racialized space in the hunting trilogy, is the marginal character Uncle Ash, who is the camp cook. In relation to interior space, particular attention will be paid to the black abode at the McCaslin plantation belonging to Lucas and Molly Beauchamp (“The Fire and the Hearth”), as well as Rider’s house (“Pantaloon in Black”).

*Light in August* is arguably the Faulkner novel most upfront in its portrayal of segregated space. The novel begins and ends with the story of Lena Grove, a pregnant Alabama woman who has decided to make her way to Jefferson in pursuit of the lover who abandoned her, Lucas Burch. However, the majority of the novel is concerned with the racialization and identity crisis of Joe Christmas, an orphan with ambiguous racial ancestry. The character development of Christmas takes place in ch. 3-19, as the disjointed narrative shifts from Christmas’s childhood at the orphanage, to his coming of age at the McEachern (his adoptive parents) farm, before ultimately portraying his erotic relationship to Joanna Burden, a white spinster and patron of the black community, whom he ultimately murders, leading to his own arrest and execution. This section of the novel does, however, contain the various sub-stories of other significant characters, as “(1) Joe’s partner, Brown (or Burch), of (2) Joanna Burden, the benefactress and mistress murdered by Joe Christmas, of (3) the Hineses, grandparents of Joe, and of (4) Hightower, the unemployed, discredited preacher” (McElderry Jr., 201). In my analysis of racialized space in *Light in August*, which is quite naturally centered around Joe Christmas, The Hineses, Joanna Burden, and Gail Hightower

will all function to illuminate the racialization of both Christmas's identity, as well as the racialization of the social spaces he encounters.

In contrast to *Go Down, Moses*, *Light in August* is mainly occupied with town communities and the political spaces they produce. In my analysis of *Light in August*, I will focus on spaces as the orphanage, the church, as well as Joanna and Hightower's houses. However, although preoccupied with the spaces created by community and human dwelling, the novel includes a variety of racialized exterior spaces, as the black quarter "Freedman's Town", and even a scene resonating strikingly well with Outka's theory, when Christmas ascends a hill. As both novels seem to contain a selection of racialized spaces both relating to interiority and exteriority, I have made a structural division between my analysis of interior and exterior spaces for both novels, resulting in a foundation of four analytical chapters in this thesis.

## 2 Space factory: Three significant contributions to the theoretical discourse

### 2.1 Introduction

My theoretical approach in this thesis is not based on a single theoretical position, but incorporates both formalist and historicist methodology in an attempt at illustrating Faulkner's relevance in a wider, interdisciplinary discourse. The discourse I want to contribute to is the overarching philosophical discourse on spatial production, perhaps most significantly established by Henri Lefebvre in his monumental book, *The Production of Space* (1974). Lefebvre's theory is an all-encompassing thesis on how space is politically produced and maintained, which includes both sociological, political, phenomenological and anthropological processes. While a strict formalist analysis of the works of literature at hand might provide a narratological analysis of spatial production within the text itself, formalism will in this thesis rather function as an analytical tool enhancing the politically and historically grounded theme of the thesis. Thus formal analysis will be applied at various points in my analysis to pinpoint how the literary aspect of the novels at hand contributes to the thematic focus on spatial production.

In this thesis, Faulkner's literary works will not be considered historical documents in and of themselves, as attributing intentionality and biographical facts to the analysis of literature suppresses the autonomy of the text and too easily slips into speculation. However, a stance arguing for the radical autonomy of the text is not my position, as I suggest that a work of literature is always produced by individuals existing within a cultural context at a historical moment. For instance, in Faulkner's case it seems plausible and fruitful to attribute some historical validity to his portrayal of the South in Yoknapatawpha County, as the culture portrayed correlates with non-fictional historical documents, for instance in regards to segregation and class division. Faulkner's works are, however, not historical novels (except a few possible exceptions as *A Fable*) portraying historical events in themselves, but rather portrays fictional plots in a relatively accurate historical context.

To build upon Lefebvre's theory on spatial production by focusing on the racialized aspect of space production, I have devoted particular attention to Paul Outka's analysis of

how, in the South, the phenomenological relation between the individual and nature historically has been determined by race. This racialized experience of space is epitomized in the sublime experience, from which the African and African American slave was excluded in the antebellum South, an exclusion that carried on into the postbellum and Jim Crow South Faulkner is generally preoccupied with. Outka's theory narrows down Lefebvre's overarching theory to a specific focus, how racial categorization and its consequences have effected how space has been phenomenologically produced in the South. By utilizing these two theorists in an analysis of space in Faulkner, I hope to contribute a fresh and illuminating analysis of two milestone novels in American literature.

## **2.2 Trauma and sublimity: The phenomenologically deprived slave**

At the core of Paul Outka's illuminating analysis of the race/nature intersection is the notion that "the profound interlinkage between sublimity and trauma suggests that sublimity may in fact be a sign of, or repression of, trauma" (Outka 23). Outka relates this to the Southern racial binary by pointing out how, while the white population historically has had the opportunity to experience the sublime from a point of relative safety (which is a famous Kantian prerequisite for experiencing sublimity):

For African Americans moments of instability between self-identity and the natural world have historically often been violently reductive, producing the traumatic inverse of white sublimity, rendering both the subject and nature abject, commodified, subaltern. (Outka 24)

This excerpt illustrates the essence of a more elaborate argument on how sublimity historically has been a white privilege in the South, as African-American experience of nature was reduced to the "traumatic inverse" of sublimity through bondage and conflation with animality and the Southern pastoral. As a result of this conflation the white population could freely distance themselves from the landscape they encountered, thus enabling a sublime mode of experience, while slaves were denied access to such a distance, as they were conflated with, and inseparable from, the very landscape containing the phenomenological potential of sublimity. For instance, to illustrate this anecdotally, we shift our attention to the potential experience of the woods. To experience the woods through leisure activities as



hiking, riding, or hunting, which were activities associated with freedom, i.e. whiteness, is a distinctly different experiential foundation than experiencing the woods through forced labor or during a dangerous escape from a plantation, which was the reality for African Americans during slavery. This consequently leads to a racialized branching of paths, as whiteness becomes a prerequisite for a sublime experience of nature, reducing blackness to a categorical traumatic experience of the same landscape.

In terms of the production of political space, Outka's theory suggests that political space is not restricted to the cultivated and "conquered" landscape, but extends the notion of political space to the wilderness. Although wilderness may appear as an extratextual and pure space, sheltered from the consequences of human intervention, Outka's racialized phenomenology suggests that the moment an individual produces a space through interaction with it, which I later will explain as Lefebvre's notion of "representational space", the space is politicized, for instance by alluding to the extreme contrast in experienced space by black and white individuals during slavery in the South. This is not in contrast with, or an extension to, the theory of space production put forth by Lefebvre, but rather a confirmation of the theory. Thus, in relation to Lefebvrian spatial theory, Outka rather illuminates the theory already established, by illustrating the significance of representational space in power structures, rather than challenging or modifying it.

It should, now in relation to Outka, again be pointed out that the ideas at hand do not base themselves on essentialist racial theory, but on constructivism. This is significant in relation to Outka's theory, as it suggests that there are no biological aspects of the black characters analyzed leading to the reduction of phenomenological capacity, but rather the circumstances and political reality within which they exist. Thus, the reduction of African American experience to the traumatic inverse of the sublime in the South is an analysis of how a group belonging to a social category was subjugated during a particular historical period within a particular culture. Hence, since Outka's analysis seems equally applicable in an analysis of slavery in general, his core theory seems to be concerned with the consequences of bondage and master-slaver power structures, which in the specific study that Outka presents happens to be focused on the specific instance of this phenomenon appearing in the antebellum South. Outka's analysis naturally illustrates various aspects and peculiarities arguably quite distinct for the South, and there should be no doubt that the historical moment and location Outka has chosen for his analysis is particularly relevant, but I still suggest that his foundational idea of the link between the sublime and the traumatic in a

master-slave community is a core theory plausibly applicable to an analysis of similar contexts.

At this point in my argument it should be clear that the synthesized aim of this thesis is to illustrate how space is both phenomenologically and politically shaped by racialized culture. Outka generally uses black authors, especially slave narratives such as *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), to illustrate the trauma experienced during slavery, while drawing upon white Lost Cause writers, as Joel Chandler Harris, George Bagby, and Thomas Nelson Page, when illustrating the white imaginative reconstruction of the original trauma into the nostalgic. Thus an obvious question must be addressed, namely, why is William Faulkner, a privileged white individual, relevant to the discourse on racialized phenomenology, i.e., the exclusion of black people from sublimity?

It seems far-fetched to read Faulkner overarchingly as a Lost Cause writer. Although attributing a similar nostalgia to the life on an antebellum plantation admittedly appears in *The Unvanquished* (1938), Faulkner is, first of all, more concerned with the postbellum South, rather than the antebellum culture Lost Cause writers reimagine. Faulkner creates a politically nuanced portrayal of antebellum and Jim Crow southern culture, where the focus has, in contrast to Lost Cause nostalgia, shifted to the pressing issues related to the new economy and racial milieu in postbellum Mississippi. Faulkner is, at least in the two novels I will be analyzing, not creating a stylized idyll, but rather a complex matrix of issues arising in the wake of the antebellum horrors.

Faulkner's relevance as a contributor to the discourse on racialized sublimity and trauma can be rationalized following an argument similar to the one Outka makes for the inclusion of postbellum writers in his analysis. Outka bases his argument on trauma theory, and the claim that since trauma is not fully experienced in the present, but rather through a delayed reaction of flashbacks to the original event (Outka 20), trauma is not fully expressible, obscuring the line between which representations of trauma should be considered authoritative. Although Faulkner was not witness to antebellum slave trauma himself, Outka utilizes Cathy Caruth's notion of trauma's "contagion", which suggests that trauma is not limited to the original witnesses of the traumatic event, but is experienced by listeners through recollection and representation, leading to a cultural, collective trauma. Outka nuances this claim by stating that, although extreme traumatic events can create a collective and cultural trauma, thus enabling representations of trauma not based on memory of the traumatic event

itself to appear, we should consider some representations “more real” than others (Outka 83). In light of Outka’s analysis of authoritative representations of trauma, I postulate that Faulkner’s authority should be considered somewhere in the middle of the spectrum in his portrayal of postbellum racialized trauma. Although he is representing a cultural trauma, he does not have first-hand experience of black experience in the South. However, as I will illustrate in my analysis, as e.g. in Joe Christmas’s failed attempt at sublime experience, the racialized aspect of Southern trauma and sublimity is not present in original representations of actual memory, as in slave narratives, alone, but also in texts, such as Faulkner’s that are based on being part of a cultural trauma. Consequently, Faulkner is not reimagining and reconstructing a distorted version of the original racialized trauma, as Lost Cause authors arguably were, but is rather strengthening and elaborating upon the original trauma portrayed by black, traumatized writers themselves.

### **2.3 Conceptualizing, conceiving and living: Yoknapatawpha’s social spaces**

In a similar fashion to Paul Outka’s concept of the racialized experience of nature, Henri Lefebvre established a related theory on the production of social, i.e. political, space, through our lived and conceived experiences of it, in his monumental and pioneering book *The Production of Space* (1974). However, as alluded to in the introduction to this thesis, Lefebvre’s theory is a more comprehensive and overarching one, than the one Outka establishes. While Outka focuses on a narrow experiential mode, namely the sublime/traumatic experience of nature, and how this phenomenological relation is subjugated by racial categories, Lefebvre argues for a universal theory on the nature of space itself. In spite of the obvious differences in their approach and ambition, the two theorists complement each other in significant ways, which has urged me to base the approach of this thesis on a coalition of these two illuminating theorists in an attempt at introducing new perspectives on the two Faulkner novels at hand. While a Lefebvrian approach provides my analysis with a bird’s eye view of the social spaces produced and maintained in the novels, Outka’s theory functions as a magnifying glass focusing on a particular aspect and moment of spatial production.

Lefebvre is dialectically opposed to the Euclidean notion of space, which is space geometrically conceptualized as the container of energy and physical objects (Lefebvre 1). In contrast, Lefebvre poses that space is a social product (Lefebvre 26) produced from nature as “raw material” (Lefebvre 84). Further, all spaces we encounter are ultimately social, as the moment we conceptualize or conceive them they are incorporated in the social and political practices we either collectively or individually engage in. Thus, the only non-social spaces are spaces not yet conceptualized or conceived by humans, which naturally eliminates them as subjects of spatial analyses. Lefebvre raises the rhetorical question of whether we can form a picture of nature before it was ravished by human intervention (31), a question answering itself in the context of his theory, as a human perception of nature has already ravished the “purity” of the space through the history, tradition and culture the individual naturally carries into the phenomenological encounter with nature, what Lefebvre categorizes as “representational space” in his analytical model.

A key concept for Lefebvre is the idea of space as a product of social processes (34). Two aspects of space are hence that (1) space is not extratextual or “pure”, but is produced through human intervention, and (2) space is not produced in an instant, but rather through a process. These concepts are central for Lefebvre’s theory as a whole, and its application to my thesis, and should thus be discussed in greater length.

Firstly, the most fundamental and “applicable” aspect of Lefebvre’s theory is perhaps the triadic analysis he applies to the process of spatial production. This triad consists of three indistinguishable layers of spatial production, namely *Spatial practice* (or lived/perceived space), *representations of space* (or conceptualized space) and *representational space* (or conceived space). In this thesis I will use both the technical, Lefebvrian terminology (in italics) and the more colloquial terminology (in parentheses), as they, although referring to the same concepts and theory, unavoidably slightly differs semantically. As the three layers of space are inseparable and interconnected, the layer we direct our initial focus to is not of any real importance, hence I will continue with illustrating the function of representations of space, before moving on to representational space and spatial practice.

Representations of space are spaces conceptualized by professionals, as for instance scientists, city planners, architects and urbanists (Lefebvre 39). It is consequently the “dominant space in any society” (ibid), as it incorporates the production of space ideologically conceptualized (116). For instance, the way a city is planned is ideologically

relevant in the multifaceted process of space production, as questions of which buildings should be centralized, the location of marketplaces and factories, etc., is established. Uncharted territory is arguably not political (but can also not be represented, thus excluding it as the object of spatial analysis), but is made social as soon as it is charted. Representations of space are significant in their conception of the physicality of space, and is not symbolic or imaginary as the second aspect of Lefebvrian space, which is representational space.

In the concept of representational space Lefebvre is at his most phenomenological, as this aspect of spatial production is occupied with the interaction of individuals and groups with physical space, i.e. how the phenomenon of space is produced through how we symbolically and imaginatively alter it through our cultural, historical and traditional filters. Further, Lefebvre writes that representational space “overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (39), thus placing it in the symbolic realm, rather than in physicality itself. Representational space is of particular interest in my analysis of racialized spaces in Faulkner, as many of these spaces are not merely racialized on the conceptual level of city planners and politicians, but also in the conceived and lived experience of space by individuals. Representational space is further a relevant concept in Outka’s discourse, as the racialized experience of nature is not inherent in nature itself, or the representation of it on a map, but rather resides in the representational spaces individuals produce through their encounter with nature. In the previous chapter I claimed, on the basis of Outka’s theory, that the sublime is political and cultural, not merely a “pure” phenomenological mode of experience, which in essence suggests that the sublime experience is part of the representational production of space.

The third and last constituent of social space is spatial practice, or perceived space. This element of space plays an important role in the maintenance of established social spaces, as it relates to our daily life and experience of space, lived space. Lefebvre branches spatial practice into two associated aspects of perceived space, namely daily reality (which concerns our daily routine) and urban reality (which concerns the spatial networks linking different social locations) (Lefebvre 38). Spatial practice can essentially be characterized as the deciphering and gradual appropriation of social space.

I have now established the concepts of Lefebvre’s analytical method, but it still remains to illustrate the relevance of this theoretical approach to the two Faulkner novels at hand. Lefebvre poses that every society creates its own space (32), and that “in space, what

came earlier continues to underpin what follows” (229). This establishes the notion of the autonomy of social space to a given society, but also how social space is affected and underpinned by the history of the location it spatializes. Further, and this is particularly relevant for spatial analysis of Faulkner, Lefebvre claims that “each mode of production has its own particular space, the shift from one mode to another must entail the production of a new space” (46), and further that “a revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its new potential; indeed it has failed in that it has not changed life itself, but has merely changed ideological superstructures, institutions or political apparatuses” (54). If Lefebvre’s claim is valid, that new social relationships in the wake of a change in modes of production, or in the wake of a revolution, creates a new social space, Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County is in many ways the antithesis of this claim, or at least an example of a community failing to create a new social space.

Although not a revolution, the conclusion of the American Civil War had the potential of a revolutionary production of a new social space in the South. This new space was undeniably also to some degree created, as the South saw a change in their modes of production. Slavery was abolished, and African Americans became a paid labor force. Still, the subjugation and oppression of blacks carried on into new forms of racism, through the introduction of Jim Crow segregational laws, lynchings and scientific racism. Consequently, when it comes to the racialized aspect of social space in the South, the representational space remained quite intact after the war, and spatial practices remained productive of racialized space. As seen in e.g. Faulkner’s *Freedman Town*, space was also racialized on the conceptual level of city planning. Yoknapatawpha’s inability to create a new social space, and the conservative resistance towards it, is one of the Lefebvrian themes I will examine in my analysis of *Light in August* and *Go Down, Moses*.

In this discussion on Lefebvre’s theory of space my ambition has been to establish the necessary foundational concepts and terminology in order to enable an unfamiliar reader to follow the overarching argument and purpose of this thesis. Lefebvre’s theory is vast and extensive, with a limitless number of possible applications, thus a variety of significant aspects and potential applications of Lefebvre’s theory has been left out in the discussion above. Although perhaps reductive, isolating and abstracting certain theoretical elements has been necessary for the purpose of this thesis, as my approach is both confined to a particular thematic focus and the discipline of literary science. Thus, my overarching goal is not to

challenge Lefebvre's theory philosophically, but rather applying it as an illuminating tool in literary analysis.

## 2.4 Foucauldian space: Heterotopia

Foucault made a brief, but significant, contribution to the discourse on space in his essay "Of Other Spaces" (1986), which outlined a specific type of social space, heterotopia. Foucault seems to be in agreement with Lefebvre's overarching notion of space, as he for instance notes that we do not live in "a homogenous and empty space" (Foucault 23) and that "a society, as its history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in very different fashion" (25). The first claim affirms Lefebvre's critique of Euclidian space, while the second claim alludes to Lefebvre's notion of the process of spatial production, and how social spaces are unique to a specific culture.

The essential idea in Foucault's essay is the notion of heterotopic spaces, which are separate, non-hegemonic spaces in a society. Foucault establishes six principle characteristics of heterotopia. Some of these principles seem to be defining of every heterotopic space, as in the second principle that constitutes the plasticity of heterotopia, how these spaces are changed and produced by society progressing through time (25). On the flipside, some of the principles seem to illustrate specific kinds of heterotopia, as "crisis heterotopia" (24) and "heterotopia of illusion" (26). The heterotopias I will pay particular attention to in my analysis is, however (1) the first principle, heterotopias of deviation (as for instance manifested in the prison and orphanage in *Light in August*), (2) the fourth principle, heterochronic heterotopia, or heterotopia's relationship to time (which is particularly relevant in the analysis of part IV of "The Bear"), as well as (3) part of the sixth principle, which is the heterotopia of compensation, which is a perfect space, "as well arranged as ours is messy" (27), which will function as an illuminating point of departure in my analysis of wilderness in *Go Down, Moses*.

As the discussion on the two previously mentioned theorists was based on comprehensive books, while the theoretical implications I subtract from Foucault is based on a very brief essay, it makes sense to devote less space to Foucault in my theoretical discussion. While Outka and Lefebvre has laid a rich theoretical foundation for the analysis I

am to perform, Foucault's concept of heterotopia will function as illuminating terminology, a specific social space deserving of particular attention in a Lefebvrian analysis. At the outset I did not attend to implement Foucault in my thesis, as his monumental stature in 20<sup>th</sup> cent. philosophy would have demanded a discussion similar to the one I have written in relation to Lefebvre, to be justified as a foundational theory for my thesis. However, the same status disabled me from excluding him from my thesis as well, which has led to Foucault functioning in a supplementary way in this Lefebvrian analysis of racialized space.



### **3 The Yoknapatawpha color line: Segregated interior spaces in *Light in August***

#### **3.1 Introduction**

*Light in August*, first published in 1932, is one of Faulkner's most celebrated and studied novels, and is arguably the beginning of Faulkner's preoccupation with issues of race in his narratives, as his preceding publications, e.g. *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying* never address the issues arising from the Southern color line as directly and upfront as *Light in August*. However, Joe Christmas's racial heritage is never firmly established and only based on the assumptions of his surroundings. *Light in August* appears to be more concerned with white racial paranoia than black experience, which is arguably first portrayed through the focalization on Lucas Beauchamp in *Go Down, Moses* (Ladd 135). As this thesis will examine racial issues related to space in *Light in August*, it should be pointed out that it is not the African-American experience of Joe Christmas I want to explore here, as I believe classifying him as an African American is quite debatable at best, but rather how the racial uncertainty and instability both attributed to, and experienced by, Joe Christmas, arises through movement in social space. Christmas's tragic and calamitous downfall seems to unfold as a consequence of his lack of an established racial identity in a heavily segregated community.

#### **3.2 Institutional spaces: The orphanage**

As an infant Joe Christmas is found on the doorstep of an orphanage on Christmas Eve (383). The orphanage was, as most institutions in the South at the turn of the nineteenth century, a racially segregated social space politically formed by the color line established by the Jim Crow laws of the late 19th century. This is evident by the events that follow the toothpaste scene, where Christmas accidentally startles Miss Atkins and the intern during a sexual encounter, as Miss Atkins and Doc Hines conspire in trying to get Christmas transferred to "the nigger orphanage" (129) by informing the orphanage's matron of Christmas's racial heritage, which they both have constituted on speculative evidence established by Hines. The remarkable aspect of this incident is how the nurse seems to label

Christmas as black as a defense mechanism, as she calls him “nigger bastard” (122), in order to both devalue a potential accusation by Christmas and in order to more drastically exclude him from the social space of the orphanage which is a segregated space. The “coloring” of Christmas, and his consequential exclusion from white institutional space, is suggestive of the vulnerability of orphans in the Jim Crow South, as their genealogy is potentially more ambiguous and plastic than children with parents who can confirm and protect their racial identity.

However, when Doc Hines sneaks out with Christmas at night in an attempt to hand him over to the orphanage for children considered being black according to the “one drop rule”, the orphanage rejects Christmas as a black child, calling the police and ultimately returning Christmas to the white orphanage (133). In the meantime, Miss Atkins has informed the matron of her suspicion regarding Christmas’s racial identity, ultimately leading to Christmas being adopted by the McEacherns. The fact that the black orphanage is equally rejective of Christmas as the white one suggests that, in the segregated South, black social space is equally exclusive as white social space.

The fact that Christmas is rejected by both the black and white orphanage is the first instance of what will become one of the driving forces in Christmas as a character, his inability to fit into strict racial categories, thus disabling him from dwelling in the racialized social space of the South, constantly meandering and being on the move. Christmas’s racial ambiguity is thus connected to his relation to space, as his ambiguous racial identity hinders him from inhabiting a certain *role*, which might be considered to be more expected of someone statically partaking in a community through dwelling, than the more dynamic spatial relations of a wanderer. The uncertainty that arises in the orphanage when rumors of Christmas’s racial identity are being spread is also evidence of how the strict racial binary in the South is being challenged by the introduction of new racial identities, as suggested by Leigh Anne Duck in “Peripatetic Modernism, or, Joe Christmas’s Father” (Duck 269). Late in the novel we learn that Christmas’s father was potentially of Mexican origin, although Mr. Hines claims that the Mexican was actually black, thus placing the alien racial identity of the Mexican within the established, binary categories of Jim Crow segregation. The racial identity of Christmas’s father is, however, never convincingly and unambiguously established, as both Doc Hines and Milly have an interest in the racial categorization of Christmas’s father, leaving the reader with no objective evidence towards the one or the other. However, due to

the death of Milly and Christmas's father it is Doc Hines's version that dominates, as there are no oppositional forces to contradict him.

Since Eupheus "Doc" Hines, as both illustrated above and in the continuation of this chapter, plays such a crucial part in the outcome of Christmas's life and in the shaping of his identity, a closer look at this character, who Charles M. Chappell argues may be Faulkner's most villainous villain (Chappell 67), might prove fruitful in the analysis of racialized spaces in *Light in August*. Doc Hines, who first appears as a mysterious janitor in the chapter on Christmas's time at the orphanage (chapter VI), is later in the novel revealed as Christmas's maternal grandfather (chapter XVI). From Christmas's birth to his adoption by the McEacherns, Mr. Hines is the driving force for both which spaces Christmas encounter and the racialized character of these spaces. By this I am not claiming that Doc Hines is the reason for racially segregated space in Yoknapatawpha County, but he rather brings an underlying racial tension to the surface while destabilizing perceived racial categories by playing on Southern racial paranoia. Firstly, Doc Hines is the source of Christmas's ambiguous racial identity, as he is the one who plants the seed in the minds of the children at the orphanage:

Then the Lord said to old Doc Hines, "You watch now. Watch my will a-working." And old Doc Hines watched and heard the mouths of little children, of God's own fatherless and motherless, putting His words and knowledge into their mouths even when they couldn't know it since they were without sin yet, even the girl ones without sin and bitchery yet: Nigger! Nigger! In the innocent mouths of little children. (382)

From the above excerpt it becomes clear that Doc Hines was the one who first introduced uncertainty regarding Christmas's racial heritage through the children at the orphanage. Doc Hines is not only the source of Christmas's own racial uncertainties, and the ambiguous status society attributes him, but is the source of the rumor and uncertainty itself. By killing both of Christmas's parents (one directly and one indirectly), Doc Hines leaves Christmas's paternal lineage and genealogy unresolved. Although Milly, Christmas's mother, claims that Christmas's father was a Mexican, Doc Hines claims that he "could see in his face the black curse of God Almighty" (374), thus not only causing instability regarding Christmas's racial heritage, but establishing a fact based on claims of divine inspiration.

The orphanage, being a public institution, is a space produced by representations of space, or "perceived space", as the orphanage is part of a political plan and formation of

space. Being an institution, the orphanage will in addition most likely enforce government laws and norms more strictly than a flexible private space, where the experienced and imagined space may deconstruct the official representations of space (as for instance seen in the way Joanna Burden and Gail Hightower challenge the representation of white space, by introducing black people to their houses in unconventional ways). Christmas is attributed a racial category by the social space of the orphanage, a racial category that takes five years to firmly establish, as the experienced space is gradually racialized as the rumor of Christmas's racial heritage spreads from the children at the playground to the matron. The ultimate consequence of labeling Christmas as black is that he no longer corresponds with the social space of the orphanage, although the late construction of Christmas's racial identity might suggest that the racialized social space of the orphanage is an imagined space, as the lack of genealogy, that in many cases follows being an orphan, leaves their racial identity up to the imagination, and other orphans might very likely have a racial heritage similarly uncategorizable to that of Joe Christmas. As Christmas's racial identity is constructed by the social space of the orphanage, he is no longer compatible to dwell in the racialized space represented by the governing politics, resulting in Christmas being excluded from the public responsibility of the orphanage to the private space of his adoptive parents, the McEacherns.

### **3.3 Institutional spaces: The prison**

Towards the end of the novel, Christmas will again find himself behind the walls of an institution, this time in prison. Lucas Burch, the father of Lena's coming child and Christmas's bootlegging partner, spends an extended period of time in prison while Christmas is on the run, and we also learn that Mr. Hines has been imprisoned at various occasions (372). The prison strikingly seems to be the only institution in the novel that is not racially segregated, although the racial aspect of the space becomes evident when Burch, realizing that he himself is suspected of the murder of Joanna Burden, informs the sheriff of Christmas's racial background (97). Christmas and Burch have strikingly different experiences in jail, which I postulate can be attributed to the difference in how they are perceived in terms of race.

Lucas Burch is treated relatively liberally in jail, as he is permitted to join the pursuers in the search for Christmas (100). One of the purposes of a prison is the compulsory isolation from society, serving as a heterotopia of deviation. Foucault himself uses the prison to exemplify this type of heterotopia, which functions as a space where “individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed” (Foucault 25). This is positive for the function of a society, as the production of an ideal and normalized social space is supported by the isolation of deviating behavior.

The purpose of the prison space seems to be resignified as the police authorities shift their focus from Burch unto Christmas in their investigation of the murder of Joanna Burden. In contrast to Burch, Christmas is properly isolated and imprisoned after his arrest in Mottstown (345). The visibility of the body becomes an important aspect of Christmas’s imprisonment, as he is isolated from the public gaze. Traditional punishment preceding the establishment of modern prisons has typically consisted of a public display of the body, as for instance executed by the help of guillotines, gallows and pillories. However, the prison is contradictory to this public display, as the prisoner is isolated from the vision of the crowd. Mr. Hines’s reaction to Christmas’s imprisonment, demanding that he be hung right away (354), is a demand for the traditional form of punishment. The prison is thus a space represented and established by the official political government, while the streets are part of the experienced, representational space of the public. As the crowd outside of the jail demands that Christmas should receive no fair trial and be hung right away, the sheriff proclaims his responsibility as a public servant to provide so that all of Christmas’s rights should be maintained, as for instance being given a fair trial (354). The tension between the crowd on the streets and the sheriff on the doorstep of the jail seems to be a tension between the isolated space of the prison, a social space represented and planned on the basis of political structuring of society, and the experienced space of the crowd, who are denied witnessing the prisoner. But the crowd is ultimately denied the public execution of the convict, as Christmas manages to escape and is killed by the fascist Percy Grimm in the private space of Hightower’s house. By being executed in a private space Christmas escapes the demands of the two social spaces at tension: the official space of political society, which is founded on rule of law expressed in certain civil rights as the right to a lawyer, and the public representational space, demanding spectacle through exhibiting the body of the criminal. I will later examine this demand for spectacle in the paragraphs on Hightower’s

house and in the spatial dynamics of lynching during the *Go Down, Moses* analysis of this thesis.

### **3.4 Institutional spaces: The church**

The third and last institutional space I want to explore in this chapter is the church. Churches in *Light in August* are, similarly to orphanages, racially segregated spaces. The character most closely linked to the African-American churches in Yoknapatawpha County is Doc Hines, who has dedicated himself to interrupting the services in black congregations in order to preach white supremacist propaganda:

That this white man who very nearly depended on the bounty and charity of negroes for sustenance was going singlehanded into remote negro churches and interrupting the service to enter the pulpit and in his harsh, dead voice and at times with violent obscenity, preach to them humility before all skins lighter than their, preaching the superiority of the white race, himself his own exhibit A, in fanatic and unconscious paradox. (343)

The church is a symbolically and culturally complex space, as it contains a second, spiritual layer of space beyond the physical space of the church building, a representational space maintained through rituals and sacraments. However, Hines' intrusion of the service alters the space of the church, as he interrupts and reshapes the format of the expected service, thus interfering with the lived spatial practice of the church community. Further, the black congregation's reaction to Doc's intrusion is quite significant in an analysis of the political space constituting the church, and the power relations it contains:

The negroes believed that he was crazy, touched by God, or having once touched Him. They probably did not listen to, could not understand much of, what he said. Perhaps they took him to be God Himself, since God to them was a white man too and His doings a little inexplicable. (343)

The fact that the congregation is not scandalized by Doc's intrusion, but rather mesmerized, is a striking instance of the power relations in the segregated Jim Crow South.

The most interesting aspect of their reaction is perhaps, as the narrator suggests, that they might have taken him to be “God Himself, since God to them was a white man too” (ibid). The congregation’s notion of a white God plays upon a long artistic tradition of depicting biblical characters as white, although they probably (due to the geographical setting of the biblical narratives) must have been, if we consider them to be actual historical personas, Middle Eastern and African. This is evidence that what must be interpreted by the reader as a quite scandalous intrusion by Doc Hines, is perhaps not considered equally scandalous by the black congregation, as they are subjugated by the ideologies established in favor of white power structures, e.g. the depiction of biblical characters as white, thus sanctifying whiteness. The discourse on the color of God reappears in Hines’s narrative of the time at the orphanage, where he narrates how Christmas asks “is God a nigger too?” and just afterwards tells a black man that “God ain’t no nigger” (383). This illustrates how not only the physical representations of space are segregated, but how the representational space of the imagined theological spaces and realities have equally suffered from white dominance and segregation. I think this is illustrated well by one of Hightower’s reflections

It seem to him that he has seen it all the while: that that which is destroying the Church is not the outward groping of those within it or the inward groping of those without, but the professionals who control it and who have removed the bell from its steeples. (487)

It is thus according to Hightower not the experienced or representational space of the church that seems to be its problem, but the representations made by its professionals, i.e. those in power. By removing the “bell from its steeples” the clergy has made the church an exclusive and closed space, as the bell functions to call out and gather the community for service and mass.

Doc Hines’s intrusion into the black church is mirrored by the dramatic intrusion Joe Christmas makes in a black church while he is on the run. The mirroring of the two scenes is striking, and of particular significance as we learn that Hines is Christmas’s grandfather. While the black congregation receives Mr. Hines with astonishment, comparing him to God Himself, Joe Christmas is received as the devil, as “Satan himself” (322). Christmas is neither labeled as black or mixed race by the congregation, but as white:

Then they saw that the man was white. In the thick, cavelike gloom which the two oil lamps but served to increase, they could not tell at once what he was until he was halfway up the aisle. Then they saw that his face was not black, and a woman began to shriek, and people in the rear sprang up and began to run toward the door (...) (322)

What produces these two polarities of reaction? If we examine the differences between Mr. Hines and Christmas, the most significant difference in the framework of the novel is Hines's undisputed racial identity as white, while Christmas has a more uncertain racial identity. As analyzed previously in this essay, God is considered to be white by the black congregation, leading to Christmas's ambiguous racial identity preventing him from fulfilling the criteria for being perceived as God, which his grandfather fulfills. But Christmas is also "not black", and is thus a threat to the congregation, which furthers the theme of Christmas's inability to fit into strictly racialized spaces.

Hightower's Presbyterian church differs from the churches encountered by Doc Hines and Christmas, as it is a white congregation not challenged by racial "intruders". However, the church is more subtly challenged by racial norms, as Hightower's wife fails to fulfill the expectations related to whiteness, which in Yoknapatawpha is hegemonically considered the "pure" race. This can be seen for instance in the presence of the K.K.K. (73), the discourse on the color of God (as illustrated above), and the fear of miscegenation most overtly demonstrated by Doc Hines, but also at several moments by Christmas, as we for instance learn from his encounters with prostitutes in the North that "he did not know until then that there were white women who would take a man with black skin" (225). Hightower's wife fails to live up to the expectations attributed to her racial category, which is inherent in virtues as faithfulness, religious devotion and communal service, that are all virtues of civilization and culture, which the idea of whiteness paramounted in opposition to the degraded notion of blacks being conflated with nature and the animalistic and beastly. This failure of conformity eventually leads to both her own and Hightower's exclusion from the church community. It should, however, be pointed out that the expectations attributed to Hightower and his wife are connected to a more complex matrix of social categorization than just race, as for instance gender and class. I do however believe that class and gender act as sub-categories in this instance, as gender and class norms were tightly connected to racial categorization in this community. A black woman would for instance historically be closely associated with sexuality in the South, as e.g. apparent in the novel when Christmas and boys from the surrounding farms take turns having intercourse with a black woman in a barn (Faulkner 156).



### 3.5 Private spaces: Hightower's house

As we shift our focus from public institutional spaces as the orphanage, prison and church, to the function of the interior spaces encountered in private houses in *Light in August*, a contrasting space seems to appear. While the institutional spaces previously analyzed in this chapter proved to be heavily segregated, the private sphere of Hightower's house seems to serve as a liminal space where racial categories and hierarchies are deconstructed. Marginal private spaces are, however, not exclusively radical in their production and resignification of space, as Joanna's house conserves segregated racialized space in her interactions with Christmas.

According to Abdul-Razzak Al-Barhow, "*Light in August* dramatizes the process of social change by demonstrating the vulnerability of the southern "structure of ideas" at its margins" (Al-Barhow 53). This is exactly the function, and the perceived threat, of Hightower's house. When Hightower decides to settle down permanently in Jefferson after he has been defrocked by the Presbyterian church, the town community expresses to Byron "the consternation, the more than outrage, when they learned that he had bought the little house on the back street" (Faulkner 70). While the institutional spaces in *Light in August* all proved to be heavily segregated, with a paranoiac racial instability, Hightower's private house seems better fit to reconstruct racial binaries than the backwards and conservative realm of the public.

From Hightower's reflections we learn that his father was an abolitionist who "would neither eat food grown or cooked by, nor sleep in a bed prepared by, a negro slave" (Faulkner 467), hence refusing to take advantage of slavery. Hightower thus, similarly to Joanna Burden, has a family history of challenging the hegemonic laws and norms of the South. A major theme in Faulkner is the inherited sin of one's forefathers, perhaps best portrayed in *Go Down, Moses* and *The Sound and the Fury*, but a similar theme is overtly present in *Light in August*, although the function is reversed. While Ike McCaslin and the Compsons are experiencing the decline and responsibility of the southern plantation aristocracy, Hightower and Joanna are both descendants of anti-slavery abolitionists. It is striking how the reversed ethical scenario of the Compsons and the McCaslins also lead to tragedy, as Joanna is

murdered and Hightower excluded from the community. But while Joanna ends up dead, Hightower survives, which might be attributed to their actions: while Joanna continues the progress and work of her father, Hightower is nostalgically stuck in his imagination of the past. This might be what in the end saves him, as the “activist” Joanna is murdered, while the “thinker” Hightower survives.

Although Hightower’s house is a racialized space in itself due to its location in a segregated community, what makes it a particularly interesting object for analysis is not its geographical location, but rather the events that take place in the house during the course of the novel, which brings the racial aspect of the space to the surface.

After his wife’s death, Hightower keeps the cook in his house, a black woman. Although she had been their cook all along, “as soon as his wife was dead, the people seemed to realize all at once that the negro was a woman, that he had that woman in his house alone with him all day” (Faulkner 71). Apparently, it is the combination of gender and race that leads to the community’s condemnation, as the fear of miscegenation, another overarching Faulknerian theme, arises from Hightower’s domestic situation. The fear and suspicion escalates after the cook quits, claiming that Hightower “asked her to do something she said was against God and nature” (Faulkner 71). Although what Hightower apparently asked the cook to do never is specified, the young men of the town reflect that “if a nigger woman considered against God and nature, it must be pretty bad” (ibid). This illustrates how the private homes in *Light in August* are supposed to be subjugated by similar segregational norms and laws as the public spaces. However, Hightower’s house is an example of how racialized space can be renegotiated when private space is at the margins of a community.

Although the situation with Hightower’s cook suggests that it is the combination of race and gender, and thus the fear of miscegenation, that is at the core of the community’s condemnation, the fact that the condemnation persists when Hightower hires a male, black cook, suggests that the racial aspect a black person brings to a white domestic space is at the core of the community’s condemnation. When the community learns that after the female, black cook quit, Hightower hired a new black cook (this time a man), they react by whipping the male cook, and then threatening Hightower to get out of town by throwing a note attached to a brick through his window, signed K.K.K. (Faulkner 71). The interesting conclusion to these dramatic events, is that the town eventually seems to lose interest:

Then all of a sudden the whole thing seemed to blow away, like an evil wind. It was as though the town realized at last the he would be part of its life until he died, and that they might as well become reconciled. As though, Byron thought, the entire affair had been a lot of people performing a play that now and at least they had all played out the parts which had been allotted them and now they could quietly live with one another. (Faulkner 72)

In the above excerpt, Byron has an interesting reflection on the character of the events that has recently taken place. Byron compares the events to a play, where everyone has played out their parts. This reflection sheds an interesting light on segregation in the South, as Byron seems to suggest that it is a construction, a performance, just like a play. This contradicts the typical rhetoric for racial segregation and racism, which is to make a division between perceived races by applying the rhetoric of the natural, that some races are both biologically different and superior to others. However, Byron's reflection seems to pierce through this illusion, gaining insight in the performative and constructed essence of Southern segregation and racism.

I have previously in this chapter examined how Christmas's punishment creates a tension between the political authorities, who safeguard fundamental representations of political space, as the prison, while the town population demands a public execution, a spectacle. In *Lynching and Spectacle* (2009), Amy Louise Wood illustrates how the visual and public nature of lynching served to maintain white supremacy and racism in the emancipated, postbellum South. As blacks were gaining civil rights during the industrialization of the postbellum South, the spectacle of a lynching served as a persuasive demonstration of white supremacy. Black men were the principal victims of these lynchings, as the concept of the "black brute rapist" appeared in Southern culture.

Christmas eventually escapes from prison and flees to Hightower's house, thus escaping both the spectacular demand raised by the lynch mob, as well as the represented space of justice and punishment, the prison and the courthouse. This is arguably the most striking incident in an analysis of the racialized character of Hightower's house. The question seems to be "why did Christmas seek refuge in Hightower's house?", a question Gavin Stevens addresses in a conversation with a visiting professor. Stevens claims that "I think I know why it was, why he ran into Hightower's house for refuge at the last. I think it was his

grandmother” (Faulkner 445). Stevens carries on by arguing that Christmas must have believed that:

somewhere, somehow, in the shape or presence or whatever of that old outcast minister was a sanctuary which would be inviolable not only to officers and mobs, but to the very irrevocable past; to whatever crimes had moulded and shaped him and left him at last high and dry in a barred cell with the shape of an incipient executioner everywhere he looked (Faulkner 448)

According to Gavin Stevens, Hightower’s house would provide Christmas with a sanctuary from both “officers and mobs”, the representation of the two conflicting spatial forces, and even serve as a sanctuary from time and the past itself. This proclaimed spatial vacuum seems to be based on Hightower’s marginal and liminal role in society, which might have provided Christmas with the racial refuge that Joanna’s house ultimately failed to create. However, although Hightower attempts to intervene as an alibi when Percy Grimm enters his house, the preacher is ignored as Grimm carries on to kill Christmas in the kitchen. Although Christmas is not lynched in a publicly spectacular way, the fact that he is castrated is a typical trait of a lynching, as this emasculates the “black brute rapist”, as Percy Grimm exclaims that “now you’ll let white women alone, even in hell” (Faulkner 464). Castrations were also common practice at lynchings as it provided the public with souvenirs. In conclusion, it seems that although Hightower’s house serves as a liminal space at the community’s margins, this liminality is purely theoretical and ideal, as Hightower’s house fails to serve as a sanctuary when push comes to shove. Mrs. Hines’s wish, that Christmas would die “decent”, “hung by a Force, a principle; not burned or hacked or dragged by a Thing” (Faulkner 445) is ultimately denied, as Christmas evades the decency of a trial, and is executed by representatives of the “indecent” lynch mob in Hightower’s house.

### **3.6 Private spaces: Joanna’s house**

Similarly to Hightower’s house, Joanna’s residence is located in the periphery of the town, in a black neighborhood. This peripheral location enables her house to function as a liminal space, a space where individuals with different backgrounds and cultural functions can interact and renegotiate hegemonic values and norms. However, what I want to illustrate

in the following paragraphs, is the complexity of the space produced in Joanna's house, as its function in relation to Joe Christmas often fails its liminal potential. Joanna's house, in spite of its history of housing generations of abolitionists, is a space conserving some of the racialized notions of space dominating in the Jim Crow South.

Motivated by hunger, Christmas breaks into Joanna's house one evening in search of food (Faulkner 229). After being caught red handed, Joanna encourages him to continue eating, which is the beginning of the complicated and symbolic relationship between Christmas and Joanna. One of the symbolic aspects of the relationship between Joanna and Christmas lies within the continuation of the dining ritual where Joanna prepares and leaves food in the kitchen for Christmas to consume alone. The kitchen is often portrayed as a black space in Faulkner, for instance seen in the presence of black cooks in Hightower's house or in the characters Ash and Jimbo in *Go Down, Moses*. By restricting Christmas's access to large portions of the house, as well as refusing to accompany Christmas for dinner, Joanna is maintaining racialized space and segregational practice.

In terms of representations of space, the fact that Christmas is not permitted to live in the main house, but is restricted to reside in a small cabin on the land, is quite clearly suggestive of a continuation of the antebellum division of black and white domestic space. If we continue our analysis of the sexual relationship between Christmas and Joanna as a reversed scenario of the more stereotypical event of white male plantation owners sexually abusing and exploiting their black female slaves (as for instance portrayed in the history of Old Carothers in *Go Down, Moses*), our analysis of Joanna's house as a plantation in miniature would be complete.

Karen M. Andrews has made exactly such an argument in relation to what is described as Joanna's "second phase" in her relationship to Christmas, her nymphomaniac phase, as she repeatedly calls Christmas a Negro during an erotic encounter (Faulkner 285). Andrews suggests that this phase demonstrates "Joanna's exploitation of Joe Christmas" (Andrews 8), and how she is unable to treat Christmas as an equal, resulting in an exoticized eroticism of the Other (ibid). In light of the various ways in which Joanna produces her domestic space as a racialized space, contradicting her patronage of the black community, the potentially liminal and radical space of Joanna's house at the margins fails. Joanna and Hightower's two houses are similarly located at the margins and they share a family history of abolition, but while Hightower's house demonstrates the potential of reconstructing the production of social space

at the margins of society, Joanna's house is evidence of how these spaces are being produced as a result of a firmly established and inescapable representational space, leading to the intrusion of hegemonic social space into the potentially emancipating and liminal space at the margins of society.

### **3.7 Summary**

The institutional spaces of *Light in August* are significantly shaped and affected by the conditions of Jim Crow segregational laws, but institutional space is also a significant force in the shaping of racial identity, as illustrated by the treatment and spatial experiences of the novel's protagonist, Joe Christmas. From his early childhood years to his death, Christmas fails to fit into established racial categories, thus constantly moving through racially segregated social spaces.

The racialization of Christmas begins at the orphanage, orchestrated by Doc Hines, a character that later mirrors the racialization of Christmas during his encounter with the black congregation. In prison, however, the racialization of Christmas is more complex, as the prison space is both a liberating space separated from the dominant, segregated space of community, while still maintaining some segregational aspects, as for instance seen in the contrasting treatment of Lucas Burch and Christmas.

In contrast to institutional and public spaces, private spaces at the margins serve a progressive role in reimagining racialized space. This is particularly true in relation to Hightower's house, as Joanna's house, although progressive and liminal at the surface, is conservative of the hegemonic racialized space of the Jim Crow South.

## 4 Traumatic vantage points: Exterior space in *Light in August*

### 4.1 On the Faulknerian sublime

In the previous chapter, I focused on how interior spaces are racialized through its represented and representational aspects, in a Lefebvrian manner. However, while the previous chapter was occupied with the cultural, traditional, and political aspect of space, I want to incorporate a phenomenological approach in this chapter, focusing on the individual characters' experiences of space. This will not cause deviation from the purpose of this thesis, or from Lefebvrian space, but will rather serve as an expansion of the previously examined spatial productions. While Lefebvrian spatial analysis is occupied with the politics of space production, and the way a community interacts, shapes, and maintain these notions of space, incorporating Outka's theory of the racialized sublime will grant access to a more overarching analysis of racialized space, as this approach shifts unto the experience of space on an individual and intuitive level, particularly through the experience of the sublime. Although the working definition of the sublime has developed and taken new forms since the foundational theories on the sublime were put forth by Immanuel Kant, it is Kant's definition of the sublime that Outka uses as a framework for his theory, and which consequently will be the framework of my analysis as well.

The sublime, however, is not a very Faulknerian term, and appears rarely, and in many novels, not at all. In *Light in August*, the word "sublime" appears two times: once in relation to Mrs. Hines, describing the "sublime and boundless faith of her kind in those who are the voluntary slaves and sworn bondsmen of prayer" (Faulkner 447) and once in relation to Percy Grimm, which is perhaps the most interesting occurrence of the word in *Light in August*, as Percy Grimm is described as having:

a sublime and implicit faith in physical courage and blind obedience, and a belief that the white race is superior to any and all other races and that the American is superior to all other white races and that the American uniform is superior to all men, and that

all that would ever be required of him in payment for this belief, this privilege, would be his own life. (Faulkner 451)

Both of these instances appear in relation to “sublime feelings”, more specifically in relation to having “sublime faith”, which, if the use of the word is to be interpreted in its traditional sense, must relate to an altered and awe-inspiring state of mind. For Mrs. Hines, this feeling occurs in relation to an experience of divinity and the religious, in her encounter with Gail Hightower. The religious connotations of the sublime are fairly overt, in the potential danger of a divine power, the relative safety felt in divine favor and grace, and the revelations and resolutions experienced by some in these moments, are all compatible with Kant’s theory of the sublime. In Percy Grimm’s case, however, the sublime experience is connected to racism and nationalism, which is interesting in relation to Outka’s theory of the racialized sublime. What is established through the narrator’s portrayal of Percy Grimm, is not only that sublime experiences are restricted to white individuals (as both Mrs. Hines and Percy Grimm are unambiguously categorized as white in the text), but that the sublime experience itself can arise from a revelation of white supremacist ideology. This does not directly relate to Outka’s analysis of how the sublime has traditionally been a white privilege in the South, but sheds light on how the sublime experience in itself can be racialized, as Grimm has a sublime faith in his racial superiority. If this sublimity arises from encounters with nature is not specified, but nevertheless I propose that Percy Grimm is experiencing sublimity, as Grimm is experiencing the cognitive reconciliation of sublimity taking form in realizing his own ability to experience the sublime, which in Percy’s case distinguishes him from what he considers to be the inferior races.

As I proceed to analyze Christmas’s failure in experiencing sublimity as a result of racism and degradation, a phenomenon put forth by Paul Outka, one might raise the question of whether, and why, Joe Christmas is relevant in this discourse. Firstly, he is not the narrator of the novel, a character unambiguously categorized as black, or a character created by an African-American author. Thus, if *Light in August* is not preoccupied with portraying and examining the peculiarities of “black” experience in the novel’s context and setting, why is it relevant in relation to Outka’s theory, which asserts the phenomenological reduction of black slaves? Christmas’s relevance lies specifically in his ambiguity, and the obvious constructedness of both his personal and public racial identity. To claim that Christmas is irrelevant in this discourse, as he most likely does not have recent African ancestry, would easily come across as an essentialist stance. On the flipside, bringing Joe Christmas into the



discourse on the racialized experience of space, and the sublime mode of experience in particular, substantiates an analysis based on racial formation theory, ascribing racial categorization to cultural and political processes. In light of this approach, Christmas embodies the constructed racial individual per se, as he is throughout the novel racially categorized through the perception of others. If Christmas is genetically “black” by African descent or not does not matter in the end, as Christmas is subjugated by the same segregational laws and social stigma, as less racially ambiguous characters who is unable to “pass” like Christmas. Thus, when Christmas’s attempt at experiencing the sublime fails, he may unproblematically be subjected to the same analysis as the individuals and characters analyzed by Outka himself.

*Light in August* is, as illustrated in the previous chapter on interior spaces, a text centered around Jefferson, the central town in Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County, and its communities. The previous chapter illustrated how social space is produced in interior spaces, as within institutions and private houses. The production of space is, however, not limited to interior spaces alone, thus I will build upon the approach already established as I examine the production of exterior political space, e.g. the black quarter, the car, and even nature. A specific scene will receive particular attention, as it inherits an especially compelling spatial dynamic for this analysis, where the protagonist, a racially ambiguous character, fails his attempt at experiencing the sublime due to the political and social character of the space produced.

## **4.2 On the segregated town: The abysmal black quarter, Freedman Town**

Before we eventually arrive at an analysis of the failure of sublimity in “the hill scene”, it seems worthwhile to examine the events preceding this climactic scene. During one of Christmas’s many Jefferson meanderings he quite randomly ends up in Jefferson’s black quarter, Freedman Town. Christmas’s encounter with Freedman Town is undoubtedly a particularly significant moment in terms of Christmas’s racial identity and struggles, although not as a resolving encounter, but rather as an encounter escalating Christmas’s identity

struggle. After wandering around the town for a while and encountering Lucas Burch/Brown, Christmas suddenly finds himself in the black quarter of the town:

Then he found himself. Without his being aware the street had begun to slope and before he knew it he was in Freedman Town, surrounded by the summer smell and the summer voices of invisible negroes. They seemed to enclose him like bodiless voices murmuring, talking, laughing, in a language not his. (Faulkner 114)

Firstly, the punctuation Faulkner uses in the first sentence is a semantically interesting one. Christmas's encounter with Freedman Town is portrayed as a revelation, as the first sentence is punctuated with a full stop, rather than a comma. This leads to the first sentence not being connected to the second one, which would have suggested that Christmas "found himself in Freedman Town". The full stop in the sentence, "Then he found himself.", suggests a more revelatory and existential situation, rather than referring merely to Christmas's geographical location.

According to Collins English Dictionary ("find oneself), to "find oneself" may be defined as "to realize and accept one's real character; discover one's true vocation", or even "to become aware of being". Thus, when Faulkner begins this defining and key scene with that particular sentence, the revelatory and existential mode of experience is established in Christmas's encounter with Freedman Town, which further continues into the hill scene. It is precisely a "finding of oneself" that takes place in Freedman Town, although what Christmas experiences is not consolatory insight, but he rather finds himself as an unresolved ambiguity, who randomly alternates between both white and black segregated space (as in Freedman Town/the rest of Jefferson, and his travels to the northern states) and black and white racial identity (as illustrated in the various occasions Christmas alternates between racial identities to distance himself from the characters he encounters). Although I will not examine this aspect closer in this essay, it is striking how Christmas almost single-handedly seems to alternate between racial categories in order to establish himself as the Other, to distance himself from established social space and dynamics.

According to Jeffrey Stayton, Freedman Town is "not simply another southern "Colored Town" where African Americans are forced to live, "it is an expressionistic landscape where a character's state of mind takes on an outward form" (Stayton 33-34). In other words, what Stayton seems to be saying, is that Freedman Town is not merely a

representation of space on a structural level, but is also representational space, space produced by the history, tradition and culture of the individuals who is taking part in the spatial production, if we translate Stayton's claim into Lefebvrian terminology. I read Henri Lefebvre's second spatial constituent in his "triad of space", as a phenomenological aspect of space, how we produce, and how space is produced in us, by our individual encounters with space. Thus it is this aspect of spatial production I want to focus on in the following paragraphs, as it complements Outka's theory of the racialized sublime.

How does Christmas produce the representational layer of space during his encounter with Freedman Town? In the beginning of the scene, as quoted above, Christmas is hearing "invisible" and "bodiless" voices, which suggests that these voices are psychologically projected upon the physical space, eventually that these voices are experienced by Christmas as a result of the symbiosis between Christmas's experience of Freedman Town and the qualities projected upon the space as a result of Christmas's state of mind and expectations. The emphasis on the phenomenological symbioses between interior and exterior space in this scene is further elaborated upon when Christmas is standing in Freedman Town, and "about him the cabins were shaped blackly out of blackness by the faint sultry glow of kerosene lamps. On all sides, even within him, the bodiless fecund mellow voices of negro women murmured" (Faulkner 114). Here, what Christmas experiences in his surroundings is internalized, as he is hearing the voices "even within". In this analysis, these paragraphs have illustrated how representational space is produced in Christmas's encounter with Freedman Town, manifested in the way Christmas individually projects the space he experiences, which becomes a representational space due to the symbiotics between experienced and projected space.

### **4.3 The antithetical sublime: The hill scene**

Christmas suffers from what might be described as a panic attack after his encounter with Freedman Town:

He began to run, glaring, his teeth glaring, his inbreath cold on his dry teeth and lips, toward the next street lamp. Beneath it a narrow and rutted lane turned and mounted to the parallel street, out of the black hollow. He turned into it running and plunged up

the sharp ascent, his heart hammering, and into the higher street. He stopped here, panting, glaring, his heart thudding as if it could not or would not yet believe that the air now was the cold hard air of white people. (Faulkner 115)

Christmas's experience of Freedman Town, and the acute anxiety that arises from it, is what leads Christmas to ascend the hill, in what I postulate is an attempt at an idyllic escape from, and sublime resolution of, his racial ambiguity and lack of identity.

According to Michel Gresset, in a Faulkner narrative "climbing a hill is an objective correlative of an approaching revelation" (Gresset 14). Such instances occur in Sarty's ascent at the end of one of Faulkner's short stories, "Barn burning", and at a later point in *Light in August*, as Byron Bunch observes Lucas Burch escaping Lena Grove towards the end of the novel (Stayton 36), to mention a few. Thus, when Christmas resorts to ascending a nearby hill after the overwhelming and anxiety-ridden encounter with Freedman Town, we should pay particular attention as, in a Faulkner narrative, a revelation might be close at hand. However, although all the prerequisites for a sublime experience seems to be fulfilled, Christmas ultimately fails in his search for sublimity and the resolution it provides. I postulate that what occurs in this scene is the result of the racialized sublime that Outka has put forth, although Christmas's racial ambiguity complicates my analysis, which will be expanded upon in the following paragraphs.

In "Southern Expressionism: Apocalyptic Hillscapes, Racial Panoramas and Lustmord in William Faulkner's *Light in August*", Jeffrey Stayton has paved the way for an analysis of the hill scene as Christmas's failure at experiencing sublimity. Stayton, for instance, points out that "Christmas merely reaches the summit of his racial ambiguity---perhaps *the* modern crisis in the Jim Crow South---instead of a sublime refuge from it" (Stayton 38) and that after escaping the black quarter in panic, "Christmas still cannot escape to a Romantic idyll or race-free zone" (Stayton 44). What separates my analysis of the hill scene from Stayton's is, however, that while we both recognize Christmas's experience at the hilltop as a race related failed attempt at sublimity, Stayton attributes this to an analysis of Christmas as a Nietzschean "New Man" (and its failure), while I attribute this failure to a result of Christmas's racial ambiguity in itself, excluding Christmas from sublime experience in accordance with the theory of Paul Outka.

While Stayton argues that Christmas inhabits the traits of the New Man in his aversion from incorporating racial categories in his identity, thus retaining his autonomy, and in his “lack of content”, due to his ambiguous genetic heritage (Stayton 50), the most striking aspect of Christmas’s character, is how he ultimately fails to inhabit the role of the modernist ideal, the New Man, and how this failure seems to be related to Christmas’s inability to fully experience the esthetics in his surroundings. The sublime is, however, not merely an esthetic experience, but in Kantian terms also an ontological and phenomenological one. Sublime experiences both apply to the individual’s experience of the world, how a phenomenon appears in consciousness, and an ontological resolution of the feelings and thoughts that arise from this encounter. The sublime experience is therefore a particularly significant mode of experience, serving as the foundation for Outka’s theory on how African-American slaves has traditionally been excluded from this mode of experience due to their living conditions and bondage, ultimately leading to a naturalized notion of ascribing Africans lesser cognitive abilities than the white races.

In contrast to sublimity, Outka introduces the notion of trauma as a related term. Outka argues that:

Trauma’s materiality repeatedly disrupts the ongoing linguistic interplay between the construction of self and the construction of world that defines what it means to be in the present. In this sense trauma inverts the Kantian framework for sublime experience found in the *Critique of Judgment*. Rather than its “truth” being found in the resolution of the flux in the subject/material other relation, a truth that rewrites the sublimity in an empowered form at the expense of that material other, trauma’s “essence” is found in its *failure* to resolve, in the repeated and shattering intrusion of that extra-subjective world into the subject’s self-construction. (Outka 22)

In light of Christmas’s failed attempt at sublime experience and resolution we may raise the question of whether Christmas is a traumatized character, i.e. a character excluded from the resolving power of sublime experience, thus ultimately being excluded from the white racial category on a phenomenological and ontological level. The traumatic nature of Christmas’s mode of experience is evident in (1) the failure of voyeurism (2) his inability to reconcile the construction of self with the construction of world, which leads to (3) Christmas’s inability to relate to the present, constantly haunted by specters from the past.

Although the hilltop objectively seems to fulfill the “voyeuristic” criterion for sublime experience by being at what appears to be a safe distance from the town, the location ultimately falls short in supplying Christmas with such a privileged space. The reason why the hilltop fails to serve this function can arguably be found in the fact that the danger of the city does not, for Christmas, rely on an objective violence (as forces of nature and the landscape), but the dangers of a social space shaped by a constructed color line. Thus, according to Stayton, the hilltop serves as an “existential vantage point for viewing one’s isolation and dread panoramically” (Stayton 40). Instead of a sublime resolution, the case may be that Christmas is suffering from trauma, or even post-traumatic stress. In that case, both Christmas’s encounter with Freedman Town and his panoramic view from the hilltop may be considered as locations triggering Christmas’s underlying anxiety and unresolved trauma.

The hilltop, as spaces in the novel in general, does not offer Christmas an experiential mode allowing him to reconcile his construction of self with his construction of world. While one could claim that wilderness is unpolitical and “pure”, a Lefebvrian approach to space suggests that all space is political, which can be understood both in “representations of space”, as even wilderness is part of maps and contains a variety of politically relevant resources, e.g. natural resources as timber and ore veins, and recreational resources as ideal landscapes for camping and sports, and in representational space, as the moment we interact with nature it is symbiotically produced as a political space in interaction with the experiencing individual. One can then raise the argument that the sublime experience is in itself political, that it is an experience achieved in search of white identity, as Outka points out that there has been a recent trend in scholarship on how the sublime has played an important role in the construction of white identity, and how wilderness has been a white-only spatial production (Outka 2). This leads to two alternative analyses of how Christmas’s failure to experience sublimity at the hilltop, a traumatic moment, is the result of his inability to reconcile the construction of world with the construction of self. The first alternative, which is based on the Kantian sublime, suggests that Christmas is unable to make this reconciliation due to the location’s failure to offer a voyeuristic relative safety to the phenomenon perceived. The second analysis, which is based on Lefebvrian spatial theory, suggests that sublimity itself is a political, rather than a phenomenologically “pure” and extratextual, experience.

Trauma may cause a distortion in an individual’s experience of the present moment, which I suggest may be relevant in Christmas’s case. However, in contrast to Quentin

Compson's (a central character in *The Sound and the Fury* and *Absalom, Absalom!*) overt obsession with time, Christmas shows few overt signs of having a similar obsession. The most overt signs in the narrative itself is perhaps the bodiless voices that seems to haunt him, as in the Freedman Town encounter (Faulkner 114), but few signs are present in Christmas's stream of consciousness sections or the omniscient narrator's portrayal of him. The argument I want to make, however, is based on the narrative structure of the novel itself, which I claim signifies Christmas's complex relationship to time. This leads the argument into a structural analysis of the novel, as I postulate that prose and fiction has a similar semantic link between form and content as that of poetry. We thus proceed with what Tzvetan Todorov calls a "theoretical attitude" to literature, which aims to uncover the abstract structure realized in a work of literature (Todorov 2024). By illustrating the non-chronological structure of the novel, or what Russian formalists would label as a *syuzhet* diverging from the *fabula* of the text, I postulate that the abstract structure of the novel influences the plot of the novel in significant ways and the reader's understanding of the protagonist, Joe Christmas.

B. R. McElderry, Jr. has in "The Narrative Structure of *Light in August*" made a convincing structural analysis of *Light in August*, which I here will rely on as this structural analysis only serves a fragmentary role in my overarching analysis of Christmas's experience of space. The most striking part of McElderry's analysis is perhaps that there is a major narratological distinction between the Lena Grove story that bookends the novel, which is narrated chronologically, and the majority of the novel (ch. 3-19) which is mostly a non-chronological rendition of Christmas's life story, as e.g. illustrated by the fact that the circumstances surrounding Christmas's birth is first narrated by the Hineses in chapter 15-16. It is however striking that while Christmas's birth is not narrated according to a chronological narrative structure, Christmas's death in Hightower's house in chapter 19 happens in accordance with the chronological *fabula* of the narrative. Lena Grove is commonly analyzed as Christmas's mirroring character, as they share traits of both being orphans, outsiders in Jefferson, and being characters in movement. However, while Christmas is received with spite and suspicion wherever he goes, Lena is received with relatively open arms by the people she meets. Take for instance how Lena is received by the Armstids and given some money before taken to Varner's store to get a pleasant ride with a wagon to town in chapter 1, while Christmas comically has to hijack a car to get a ride at the end of chapter 12. The fact that Lena's comedy is narrated chronologically, while Christmas's tragedy (in a colloquial rather than Aristotelian meaning of the word) is narrated non-chronological, suggests that the

narrative structure chosen for these two stories enhances the plot and characters they contain. Thus while the chronological narrative in Lena's story complements her steadiness and apparent harmonic mind, the non-chronological narrative in Christmas's story complements his torment and bothersome life, a life haunted by the past. The strong semantic link between narrative structure and plot thus suggests that the non-chronological narrative is an indication of Christmas's own inability to experience the present, to experience life chronologically, which is a sign of trauma.

#### **4.4 Connecting spaces: Roads and cars**

Some spaces serve a particular function as transitional spaces, i.e. spaces in motion, connecting stationary spaces. There further seems to be two categories of transitional spaces, which are 1) transportation systems and vehicles as e.g. cars and trains, which are moving spaces, as well as 2) transportation infrastructure as e.g. roads and avenues, which are spaces functioning as settings for the spatial practice of movement. The narrative present of *Light in August* is set in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and cars seem to be quite readily available to the individual, a consequence of the industrial innovation of the assembly line made by the Ford Motor Company. However, cars in the novel function as class markers and are not available to the lower social classes of society. This becomes apparent, for instance, when Byron comments that "if I could get rich enough out here to buy a new automobile, I'd quit to" (Faulkner 43), a comment made in relation to Christmas and Lucas Burch driving around in a new car. Another instance of how cars are unavailable to the lower classes in *Light in August* is apparent when Mr. and Mrs. Hines, Christmas's poor white grandparents, can't afford to rent a car to get to Jefferson:

"Three dollars," Salmon says. "I couldn't do it for no less." And them standing there and Uncle Doc not taking any part, like he was waiting, like it wasn't any concern of his, like he knew that he wouldn't need to bother: that she would get them there.

"I cant pay that," she says.

"You wont get it done no cheaper," Salmon says.



“Unless by the railroad. They’ll take you for fifty-two cents apiece.” (Faulkner 357)

There is no evidence of black characters being unable to acquire cars in *Light in August*. The acquisition of cars seems to be solely related to class and capital, as the free market even in the Jim Crow South had no formal racial restrictions on who could buy a car. On the contrary, cars served as a liberation from racialized space during Jim Crow segregation, as some of the most pronounced segregated spaces were related to transportation, as railroad cars and station waiting rooms. The car enabled black people in the South to subvert Jim Crow segregation (Sugrue, autolife.umd.umich.edu) and provided a new form of transportation based on the individual’s needs. Byron Bunch perceives Christmas’s car as “idle” and “destination-less” (Faulkner 46), which illustrates how cars introduced a new form of transportation culture, leisure transportation.

Christmas is frequently associated with cars, and even becomes the owner of one, a car which he according to Lucas Burch is given by Joanna Burden (96). He also rides to dances with Bobbie, a waitress and prostitute that Christmas has a relationship with during his time at the McEachern farm (199). Hence, in both of these phases in Christmas’s story (his time at the McEachern farm and his time in Jefferson), cars enable him to escape the racially segregated social space of Jim Crow, by producing a separate and enclosed transitional space within the car. The automobile does, however, not merely function as a leisure amenity, but also serves a practical purpose. After Christmas murders Joanna, he is in need of transportation away from the crime scene, which leads to the hijacking of a car (283). This is a distinct change in the function of the car, from the “idle” and “destination-less” to a practical tool for escape.

## 4.5 Summary

In spite of being a novel preoccupied with civilized community, *Light in August* illuminates the spatial racialization of Christmas in a significant way through the unique scene where Christmas ascends the hill. In this scene, Christmas fails his attempt at experiencing the sublime, and is hence unable to resolve his racial identity struggle. This failure, in light of Outka’s theory of sublimity historically being a white privilege, leads to Christmas’s experience of the traumatic, the inverse of sublimity. This analysis of Christmas contributes to

Outka's theory, as it illustrates the continuation of the exclusion of black people from sublimity as the South shifted from an antebellum slave community to a postbellum segregated community defined by Jim Crow laws.

The hill scene, and its outcome, is partially a result of the climactic experience Christmas has when he encounters Jefferson's black quarter, Freedman Town. During this encounter, Christmas is having an experience reminiscent of a panic attack, which might have been triggered in relation to the culmination of trauma. Freedman Town further establishes the racialized aspect of Jefferson's representations of space, as it demonstrates how the town is segregated on a structural level, as Freedman Town is a separate black quarter of the town.

*Light in August* is concerned with modernity and the introduction of new amenities on the free market, a theme thoroughly established in Faulkner's complete body of work. In relation to racialized space, the car is of particular importance, as it had the potential of producing an unsegregated space in the Jim Crow South. The spatial contrast between private transportation, as the car, and public transportation, as trains and buses, was particularly pronounced in the Jim Crow South, as spaces related to public transportation (waiting rooms, train cars, etc.) were overtly and strictly segregated. In *Light in August*, Christmas operates cars as a leisure activity, both as a simple display of wealth when he tours the town with Lucas Burch, and as a means of transportation to social events with Bobbie. The exception is when he hijacks a car to escape from the crime scene of Joanna's murder.

## 5 The heart and its periphery: Interior space in *Go Down, Moses*

### 5.1 Introduction

As illustrated in chapter 3, *Light in August* is a novel centered upon community and the tension between private, public, and institutional spaces. *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner's 1942 portrayal of the McCaslins, a once prominent plantation owning family sired by an almost mythical forefather (a defining trait for a number of Faulkner's dynasties), is in contrast to *Light in August* predominantly concerned with exterior spaces, in particular the notion of wilderness. However, although the main focus of the book, which I here will categorize, as Faulkner did himself, as a novel, is on wilderness and the land, the wilderness portrayed is in immediate and dire opposition to the modernization of the city and industrialization of the landscape.

The focus on nature and wilderness is indisputable in what is often considered the centerpiece, and thus also the most studied, part of the novel, which is the hunting trilogy consisting of "The Old People", "The Bear" and "Delta Autumn". If we extend our focus to the chapters focalized through other characters than Ike McCaslin, "The Fire and Hearth", "Pantaloon in Black", "Was" and "Go Down, Moses". a more versatile spectrum of spaces and spatial dynamics appear. Hence, although "The Bear" is commonly studied separately as an enclosed entity, or at best in relation to the other two chapters of what can be considered the "hunting trilogy" of the novel, in my analysis of racialized space it should prove more fruitful and illuminating to introduce other chapters from the novel into the discussion.

Melvin Backman, one of the few scholars who has written on the intersection between race and space in *Go Down, Moses* (although both themes have been studied extensively separately or as parts of other illuminating intersections), points out in "The Wilderness and the Negro in Faulkner's 'The Bear'" how a division can be made in *Go Down, Moses* between the chapters concerning the wilderness, consisting of the already mentioned "hunting trilogy", and the chapters concerned with the Negro, which includes "The Fire and the Hearth", "Pantaloon in Black", and "Go Down, Moses" (Backman 595). Backman attributes a particular importance to "The Bear" in the discourse on race and wilderness, as he argues that

this is the single chapter where the two themes are “strangely merged” (ibid). As nature is of particular importance in this thesis due to its contribution to Outka’s discourse on the racialized sublime, “The Bear” will naturally play a significant role in the *Go Down, Moses* section of my analysis. However, since my spatial approach is of a more general character than Backman’s, analyzing a variety of social spaces in a Lefebvrian manner, the inclusion of several other chapters from the novel might prove fruitful, since although they may not be overtly dealing with the intersectional theme of racialized wilderness, they contain an abundance of scenes and characterization relevant and illuminating in an analysis of a more general notion of racialized space.

## **5.2 Widowers, cuckolds and bachelors: Dwelling at the McCaslin plantation**

In contrast to *Light in August* which contains numerous scenes set in public interior spaces as churches, the orphanage, and the café, the interior spaces in *Go Down, Moses* almost exclusively belong to the private sphere. For instance, when Ike and Boon go to Memphis to restock on whiskey on behalf of the hunting party, we are given a lengthy description of the exteriority of city life, but no insight into commercial spaces as shops, cafés, and banks, or institutional spaces as churches and schools (Faulkner 164). The significant interior spaces in *Go Down, Moses* are rather the private abodes at the McCaslin plantation, the tents and camp buildings at Big Bottom, and the commissary which serves as the setting for some of Faulkner’s finest writing, found in section IV of “The Bear”. I will begin my analysis with considering the racialized aspect of the social spaces produced in houses and related locations of dwelling, mainly located on the land of the McCaslin plantation.

Lucas Beauchamp, the black grandson of the patriarchal Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin, is the focalizer in “The Fire and the Hearth”, which Backman has labeled as one of the chapters thematically occupied with “the Negro” (Backman 595). It makes up a considerable portion of the novel, and contains a selection of compelling social spaces for the objectives of my analysis of racialized space. The most overt spatial tension in this chapter is perhaps seen in the tension between the black cabins and the white plantation house, a tension

that arises at several moments in *Go Down, Moses*, perhaps most memorably in relation to Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy.

In “The Fire and the Hearth” the tension between the social space of the plantation house and the “Negro quarters” surfaces as Zack Edmonds’s wife dies during childbirth. In the aftermath of this tragedy, Molly (Lucas’s wife) is instantly taken in and established in Zack Edmonds’s house (36), a domestic situation that lasts until Lucas, half a year later, confronts Zack in an attempt to reclaim his wife. The cuckolded Lucas tells Zack that “I wants my wife. I needs her at home.” (ibid), that “I’m a nigger, but I’m a man too. I’m more than just a man. The same thing made my pappy that made your grandmaw. I’m going to take her back.” (37), before threateningly stating that “I wants her in my house to-night, You understand?” (ibid) as he leaves and ends the discussion. What is striking in this section in relation to space, is how Lucas pinpoints the spatiality of her return. He genuinely wants his wife back, but it seems to be connected to a restoration of the social space of their home, of the domesticated space in which he dwells, as he specifies that he wants her in “my house” and that he needs her “at home”.

The sexual abuse of slaves by slaveholders is a dark chapter in Southern history, and although the situation between Lucas and Zack over Molly takes place in postbellum Mississippi (probably in the late 1890s or in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), a similar power dynamic seems to be prevailing. Although Zack rejects Lucas’s accusation of not planning to return Molly (37), his son Roth shares Lucas’s suspicion as he reflects: “My father and a nigger over a woman. My father and a nigger man over a nigger woman” (86). The fact that Molly is unhesitatingly prepared to move into the white man’s house, and the fact that Lucas spends half a year gathering up the courage and momentum to confront the white landowner on the matter, is evidence of the prevalence and continuation of antebellum racialized domestic norms and power dynamics in Faulkner’s postbellum Mississippi.

The prevalence of racialized private spaces is also evident in the childhood experiences of the following generation, articulated through the friendship of Henry, Lucas’s son, and Roth, Zack’s son. By focalization through Roth, we learn that:

Even before he was out of infancy, the two houses had become interchangeable: himself and his foster-brother sleeping on the same pallet in the white man’s house or

in the same bed in the negro's and eating of the same food at the same table in either, actually preferring the negro house (82)

The embedded narrative of Roth's childhood experiences of racialized space starts in an idyllic mode, as the two houses are not just interchangeable, Roth even prefers Lucas's house and its "strong warm negro smell" (83). The idyll expands as the houses are described as interchangeable, meaning that Zack's house is equally open to the black Henry, as Lucas's house is open to the white Roth. In the experience of the child, racialized space seems to be something non-existent, as the concept of race and its spatial consequences quite suddenly appears in Roth's consciousness at seven years old. In the light of Lefebvre's theory on the production of social spaces, the representational layer of space is not fully realized in the child's notion of space, as young Roth is not able to fully comprehend the tradition and culture he exists and partakes in, thus being a more intuitive and unpolitical producer of space than an adult. When Roth becomes aware of racism and segregation, it is as so many other Faulknerian vices and sins related to one's ancestors:

Then one day the old curse of his fathers, the old haughty ancestral pride based not on any value but on an accident of geography, stemmed not from courage and honour but from wrong and shame, descended to him. (83)

Roth realizes that he is both the inheritor of a shameful sin and a "curse", related to his ancestors' deprivation and exploitation of the dark skinned slaves, and the continuation of this subjugation through segregation in the postbellum culture he is part of. Roth leaves Lucas's house immediately to return to the plantation house, and denies Henry to share his bed that night. When he after some time returns to the black family's home in an attempt to restore the lost idyll, the loss is irretrievable since the social space has become segregated, as the white Roth is served his dinner unaccompanied by Lucas and Henry who are staying in a separate room during his meal. In contrast to the intermingling of domestic space produced by the young Roth and Henry, Sam Fathers (a major character in the hunting trilogy) distances himself from any attempts at renegotiating racialized space.

In "The Old People", Sam Fathers decides to leave the McCaslin plantation in order to permanently dwell at the hunting camp at Big Bottom (Faulkner 124). Sam Fathers has a problematic racial identity, as he identifies himself as a native American Chickasaw, but is socially considered black by the community due to him being the son of a quadroon (119). He

has a privileged position at the plantation, as he does not have to farm any allotted acres or do any field work, like the other black people at the plantation, as he is despite living and dressing like a black man still considered “the son of that Chickasaw chief” (121). Sam Fathers, in the company of the hermit Jobaker who “consorted with nobody, black or white; no negro would even cross his path and no man dared approach his hut except Sam.” (123), creates a third racialized space at the plantation, a Chickasaw space in opposition to both the white space of the plantation house (who Ike never saw him closer to than Blacksmith’s shop) and the social black space he dwells in geographically and even partakes in by consorting with the black community and even going with them to “the negro church” (121). However, after Jobaker’s death, Sam decides to leave the McCaslin plantation to settle down in a little house in the woods at Big Bottom. Sam offers no explanation of his decision, but a possible analysis arises from the notion of social space, as the death of Jobaker drastically changes Sam Fathers’ spatial practice, and thus retreats to the wilderness in order to produce a social space not shaped and altered by the colliding white and black perceptions of space.

The McCaslin Edmonds branch of the McCaslin family tree, descending from Old Carothers’s white daughter, are in general protective of the color line and their privilege. This is evident both in relation to Cass Edmonds’s discussion with Ike McCaslin in the commissary scene in part IV of “The Bear”, where he challenges Ike’s abolitionist ideas and inherits the property Ike repudiates, as well as in the way Roth Edmonds both runs the plantation in “The Fire and the Hearth”, and the way he tries to pay his way out of his responsibilities towards the black mother of his child in “Delta Autumn”. In contrast, Old Carothers’s two white sons and his only grandson descending from the male line all show abolitionist and progressive tendencies. In comparison to the conservation of racialized space during Zack Edmonds’s time as head of the McCaslin plantation, as illustrated above, Old Carothers’s two sons, Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy, show a radical reimaging of racialized space production in their antebellum Mississippi society, as they insist on building and living in a small log cabin, while letting their black slaves live in the plantation house (186). The two brothers’ radical actions are not limited to a renegotiation of how representational and lived space produces reality out of representations of space at the plantation, which the reversal of racialized domesticated spaces entails, but challenges the very notion of captivity and bondage associated with racialized space during the antebellum era, as they have a:

gentlemen’s agreement between the two white men and the two dozen black ones that, after the white man had counted them and driven the home-made nail into the front

door at sundown, neither of the white men would go around behind the house and look at the back door, provided that all the negroes were behind the front one when the brother who drove it drew out the nail again at daybreak. (187)

This is to be considered a radical production of space, as it is in strong opposition to the dominant representational space in the South at this historical moment. The result of these radical actions is for instance that a folk-tale appears “of the countryside all night long full of skulking McCaslin slaves dodging the moonlit roads and the Patrol-riders to visit other plantations (...)” (187). It is striking how the two McCaslin brothers’ deviating space production leads to a mythical response from the community by the production of folk-tales, which illustrates the radicalism of their behavior. I will later in my analysis pick up the thread on the complexity of Ike McCaslin’s relationship to racialized space, but will for now shift my focus to “Pantaloone in Black” and Rider, who is often considered Faulkner’s most rounded black character, or as Walter Taylor puts it, “Rider, moreover, represents Faulkner’s only attempt at anything approaching a genuine African hero: the dominating male who is the reverse image of the clown of plantation propaganda” (Taylor 434).

“Pantaloone in Black” differs from the other chapters previously analyzed, as racialized private space and dwelling is inherent in the structure of the chapter rather than in the plot and setting. By this I am pointing out that while the tension between white and black domestic space is present in the plot of both “The Fire and the Hearth” and “The Bear”, “Pantaloone in Black” portrays no similar tension between black and white domestic space, which is possibly also a factor in why Taylor might consider Rider as being Faulkner’s most genuine African hero, as his home is not contrasted against a dominating white space in the first section of the chapter. The structural notion of racialized space in the chapter lies in its sectioning, as the first section is concerned with Rider’s response to his wife’s death, and how he reacts to the now lonely house (which is to some extent similar to Lucas’s experience in “The Fire and the Hearth”), while the second section of the chapter is set in the white sheriff’s house, in which he retells the series of events leading to Rider’s arrest and lynching. To place the spatial tension in the structure of the chapter, by separating the white and black private spaces in two sections, rather than in the plot, is both liberating and problematic. Firstly, by removing the tension from the first section, Faulkner is able to develop Rider as an independent hero more or less free from the dominating spatial relation to the plantation house. Secondly, and on the flipside, extracting the tension from the narrative itself and establishing it on a structural level



may also hinder the resignification of representational space, which the thematic tension in the text itself may substantiate.

### **5.3 Lynchspace: The execution of Christmas, Rider and Samuel**

My chapter on interior space in *Light in August* included a discussion on the significance of Christmas's execution by the lynch mob lead by Percy Grimm taking place in Hightower's house, and since *Go Down, Moses* includes two executions of black men, it seems appropriate to address the significance of space for executions in Faulkner's work, based on the execution of Christmas, Rider, and the previously unmentioned Samuel Beauchamp, who appears in the final chapter of the novel, "Go Down, Moses".

All three of the executed black men were guilty in one of the most common causes for a lynching or receiving a death sentence, which was murder (Buckser 15). The majority of scholarship on lynching has argued that it functioned as a mechanism in the conservation of racial inequality in the South (Buckser 11). The symbolic power of lynchings lay in the spectacular and sensational aspect of the ritual, which sometimes could gather thousands of white spectators (Wood 1). The lynching of Christmas thus deviates from one of the common traits of a practice that generally followed no established codes and regulations, as his execution and castration by Percy Grimm takes place in Hightower's private house, thus removing the spectacle from the event. Lynchings were events associated with a particular space, the public space of spectacle, thus changing the location from the public to the private, the spatial alteration changes the character of the event in itself, which leads to the classification of Christmas's execution as a lynching only being valid in a broader and reductive understanding of the practice.

Rider's execution is more ambiguous than Christmas's, as the reader is given less insight into the details of the lynching itself, as the sheriff narrating section two is more concerned with retelling the events leading up to and following Rider's arrest, than the actual lynching. The only information the reader receives of the lynching is in the opening paragraph of the section, where the narrator describes how:

they found the prisoner on the following day, hanging from the bell-rope in a negro schoolhouse about two miles from the sawmill, and the coroner had pronounced his verdict of death at the hands of a person or persons unknown and surrendered the body to its next of kin all within five minutes (...) (112)

Although the excerpt above contains no information of the actual lynching itself, as no insight into how many attended the event and how the lynching was carried out is provided, the excerpt provides significant insight into its setting and spatial character. Rider is, similarly to Christmas, lynched in an interior space, but in contrast to Hightower's private space, the negro schoolhouse is an institutional space with a particular political purpose. If we focus on the racialized aspect of the space, that it's a school for black children, the lynching takes place in a segregated space, in which the first witnesses of the lynched body would potentially have been black pupils and teachers. Further, the institutional aspect of the space, which is a representation of space established by city planners and politicians with the purpose of educating and improving the human capital of the town's black population, carrying out a lynching in a black school serves a symbolic effect of "teaching them a lesson", in an attempt at perpetuating racial segregation and white supremacy. In terms of spectacle, a common trait of lynchings, no insight is given into the number of spectators attending Rider's lynching. However, the fact that Rider is hung from the bell-rope is spectacular in a symbolic way, as the bell is a tool used to signal a potentially large number of people. Rider's execution is, although not described in detail, the execution out of those I am analyzing here most uncompromisingly inclined towards classification as a lynching.

The third execution of a black man appearing in these two novels, is the execution of Samuel Beauchamp in "Go Down, Moses". The execution of Samuel differs from the two previously analyzed executions, as it is indisputably not a lynching. The event is similarly to the lynching of Rider never explicitly described, but we learn that Samuel is executed after being given the death sentence (Faulkner 263). Samuel also received a fair trial and was defended by a good lawyer (ibid). Since the narrative is never focalized through Samuel, which differs from the focalization on Christmas and Rider, the reader generates less sympathy for the character's tragic fate. Further, since Samuel is institutionally executed by the government, in accordance with the law, this leads to a lesser sense of victimization as the ones portrayed in "Pantaloon in Black" and *Light in August*. In "Go Down, Moses", the lynch mob is absent and substituted by a relatively sympathetic white community, who donates money to the cause of returning Samuel's body to his native land. (Faulkner 266). In this

chapter, which concludes *Go Down, Moses*, the spatial tension seems to have shifted from black and white, to North and South. For a Southerner to be buried in the North in the wake of the civil war defeat (although “Go Down, Moses” takes place several decades after the defeat, one of Faulkner’s overarching characteristics is illustrating how events from the quite distant past continues to haunt the present) was considered a tragedy, and it is this aspect of Samuel’s death I postulate motivates their sympathy. When Samuel’s body eventually reaches Jefferson, it is paraded around town “circling the Confederate monument and the courthouse” (268), which symbolizes the importance of the return of the body of a Southerner to his native land. It should also be pointed out that a large crowd turns up to witness the return of Samuel’s body, but are rather silently witnessing the return of the dead man lamentably, rather than the aggressive reaction and dynamics of a lynch mob.

#### **5.4 The plantation’s solar plexus: The commissary**

Many illuminating analyses have been made of both the content and the form and style of the discussion between Cass Edmonds and Ike McCaslin in section IV of “The Bear”. However, for the purposes of my analysis, I will focus my attention on the setting of this discussion, which is in the commissary of the McCaslin plantation. Since such a climactic section of *Go Down, Moses* takes place at this location, I find it necessary and justified to pay particular attention to this specific building at the McCaslin plantation.

The racialized character of space produced in the commissary is manifested at several layers of space. At first glance, the commissary is racialized in its exterior appearance, as it is described as being:

Placarded over with advertisements for snuff and cures and chills and salves and potions manufactured and sold by white men to bleach the pigment and straighten the hair of negroes that they might resemble the very race which for two hundred years had held them in bondage and from which for another hundred years not even a bloody civil war would have set them completely free (Faulkner 182)

The advertisements placarded on the commissary are evidence of a discursive space still dominated by white people, where the form of racialized space in the South has only

shifted from an agricultural slave economy to a segregated capitalist economy. Advertising is one of the epitomes of the modern era, tightly connected to a free market economy and industrialization, as new and competing products enter the market. The advertisements of skin bleaching and hair straightening products illustrate how the racialized social space of the antebellum South has continued into the new modes of production and the social space consequently produced. Lefebvre comes to mind, and his statement that “a revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential” (Lefebvre 54). The content of the commissary advertisements suggests that the potentially radical changes that could have been made in regards to the production of racialized social space in the aftermath of the civil war defeat in the South, have not taken place, and it was thus a “failed revolution” in regards to racialized space. Although the commissary is an interior space, the advertisements are part of the building’s exteriority. If we turn our attention to the interiority of the commissary and its spatial function, Foucault’s notion of heterotopic spaces may inspire a fruitful analysis of this indisputably significant space in the novel.

Foucault’s fourth principle in his theory on heterotopia is connected to heterochronies, i.e. space that “begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time” (Foucault 26) and potentially being spaces that are “indefinitely accumulating time, for example museums and libraries” (26). I postulate that in accordance with Foucault’s fourth heterotopical principle, the commissary serves a heterotopical function in section IV of “The Bear”. This claim is perhaps most convincingly supported by the fact that the commissary is where the plantation ledgers, which contain the history of all the transactions made by the current owner of the plantation, are stored. The ledgers are containers of information related to a specific time, and are growing in volume in proportion with the passing of time, which corresponds with Foucault’s notion of a space “indefinitely accumulating time”. The commissary is peculiarly similar to a museum or a library in that manner. Further, section IV is equally fitting in relation to Foucault’s notion of heterochronies reaching “full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time”. If we step out of the text to consider it at a structural level, it seems clear that section IV is definitely distinguishable from the four other sections of “The Bear”, as it serves a heterotopical function as it “pauses” the hunting narrative developed in the four other sections and provide insight into a wide range of timelines and events in the history of the plantation, from the biblical timeline of Canaan and the Roman empire (184), to stories of General Lee in the Civil War (204). This structural break with the narrative is complemented by a spatial

break, as the narrative that mainly unfolds at the camp at Big Bottom finds a new setting in the commissary, which is described as “the solar-plexus of the repudiated and relinquished” (182). However, the sections from the ledgers included in the narrative are almost exclusively related to the transactions and lives of slaves, which further constitutes the commissary as a racialized space, as it quite specifically seems to function as a heterochrony of black history of bondage and suffering, rather than a more general accumulation of time. The time accumulated in the commissary is dominantly related to slavery and black history.

## 5.5 Hide-and-seek: Antebellum space in “Was”

“Was” is arguably the chapter in *Go Down, Moses* that has received the least amount of scholarly attention. There are many plausible reasons for this, as for instance the major characters appearing in the chapter playing a minor role in the novel as an entity (with the exception of McCaslin Edmonds, Ike’s cousin). Another plausible reason may be that in contrast to the tragic and grave focus of the rest of the novel, “Was” is comic in nature, a narrative driven by farce, which is a narrative strategy diverging from the careful development of character applied to e.g. Ike McCaslin and Lucas Beauchamp in “The Bear”, “Delta Autumn” and “The Fire and the Hearth”, resulting in a chapter arguably less rich in thematic material. What makes “Was” relevant for the purpose of this thesis is, first of all, its significance as a constituent of *Go Down, Moses*, which is considered a novel in this thesis. To exclude “Was” from my analysis of *Go Down, Moses* would thus reduce the validity of my argument, as a significant constituent would have been overlooked. “Was” additionally stands out by being the only chapter taking place in an antebellum setting, hence offering a slightly different perspective on racialized space than what has previously been analyzed in the postbellum setting of *Light in August* and the remainder of *Go Down, Moses*.

The action in “Was” is centered around the escape of Tomey’s Turl, a slave at the McCaslin plantation who is also Uncle Buck and Buddy’s half-brother. The reason for Turl’s escape is his romantic involvement with Tennie, a slave woman at a neighboring plantation. As a result of Turl’s escape, the white plantation owners initiate a hunt for the escapee, establishing the novel’s overarching theme of the hunt. In similar fashion to the annual ritual of the bear hunt at Big Bottom in “The Bear”, the hunt for Tomey’s Turl is a biannual ritual

(Faulkner 8). The biannual repetition of the hunt relates to the traditional aspect of rituals, as Turl's escape and the following hunt appears to be a consistent biannual event. However, the hunt in "Was" contains additional ritual traits, as e.g. following a structured choreography and having symbolic items associated with the event. An example of symbolic items associated with the hunting ritual in "Was" appears in the particularity of the clothing worn by Uncle Buck and Turl, as Turl is described as having a white shirt "he put on every time he ran away", while Uncle Buck "put on the necktie each time he went to bring him back" (Faulkner 25). Neckties and white shirts are not trivial pieces of clothing, but clothing associated with formality, thus elevating the event of the biannual hunt to ritual practice.

The hunt in "Was", although conceptually troubling as it portrays men hunting a man whom they consider their property, takes place within an apparent set of rules and according to a formalized choreography. This is evident in how the hunters never seem to worry about Turl permanently escaping, as they perform the hunt quite leisurely with frequent dinner breaks. Additionally, Turl shows no signs of ever feeling in actual danger. As the chapter ends in marriage, a trait of comedy which reverberates countless *opera buffa* and comic plays, the question may be raised of whether the hunt was really a game of hide-and-seek, never containing the gravity attributed to the hunt in e.g. "The Bear".

In chapter 5.3 I illustrated how the reoccurring theme of the hunt in Faulkner's works at several occasions takes form in the hunt for black men. This claim was supported by my analysis of the deaths of Joe Christmas and Rider, which illustrated how they both end up as victims of lynch mobs. In both of these instances, white people hunting black men end in tragedy and death. "Was" is of particular interest to this thesis as a contribution to this discussion. Although the tragic outcome of lynch mobs in postbellum Mississippi and the redemptive and comic outcome of the hunt for Tomy's Turl in the antebellum setting of "Was" could potentially be explained by the culture of their historic periods, this argument seems poorly supported. Lynching is not a phenomenon exclusive to the postbellum South, as an escalation in the severity of public justice, resulting in lynch mobs, took place as early as in the 1830s (Berg 23). As there is no shortage of accounts portraying the horrible punishment faced by disobedient slaves, the portrayal of antebellum plantation life in "Was" may potentially appear as an application of Lost Cause aesthetics, contributing to the mythical resignification of Southern history. I will refrain from attributing any intentionality to the idyllic portrayal of the antebellum South in "Was", as that is not the purpose of this thesis and in opposition to my theoretical position. However, by performing a structural analysis of the

formal qualities of the novel, it seems apparent that the first chapter of the novel is distinguished from the other chapters by both its comic traits and antebellum setting, thus creating a contrast between the comic antebellum culture in “Was” and the tragic postbellum culture in the remainder of the novel.

One should, however, consider the possibility of “Was” being a parody of the very genre of Southern writing it can be accused of contributing to. For although the narrative appears idyllic and comic at the surface, a parodic mode appears in the portrayal of the Beauchamp plantation, a plantation which:

Mr. Hubert’s sister, Miss Sophonsiba (Mr Hubert was a bachelor too, like uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy) was still trying to make people call Warwick after the place in England that she said Mr Hubert was probably the true earl of only he never even had enough pride, not to mention energy, to take the trouble to establish his just rights. (Faulkner 8)

This excerpt illustrates how the production of social space in “Was” is related to a representational space containing notions of aristocracy. This element of representational space does however seem to be on the decline, as Ms. Beauchamp is portrayed as an exaggerated parody of the Southern aristocratic culture. This is made evident in how Ms. Beauchamp refuses to acknowledge any other reference to her plantation than Warwick, and how the plantation is appearing as “two separate plantations covering the same area of ground, one on top of the other” (11). This quote effectively illustrates how two representational spaces results in the production of two separate complete spaces, although being physically connected to the same location. The parody of Southern aristocracy manifested by Ms. Beauchamp’s attribution of a pretentious representational space to her experience of the Beauchamp plantation has the potential of altering the classification and interpretation of the entire chapter. This suggests that the text, in contrast to the previously illustrated thematic coherence with Lost Cause literature, is a parody of the literary category it may just as convincingly be classified as.

## 5.6 Summary

Several of the themes I explored in my analysis of *Light in August* are highly resonant with the production of interior space in *Go Down, Moses*, for instance in Faulkner's continued development of the dynamics related to the execution and lynching of black men, as the focus shifts from Christmas unto Rider and Samuel Beauchamp. Nevertheless, *Go Down, Moses* gives unique insight into the domestic spaces of black characters, as Rider's and Lucas's plantation cabins, insight that is entirely absent in *Light in August*. Lucas's house is part of a spatial power structure, which subjugates it to the white plantation house. However, Lucas challenges the representations of the plantation space by reclaiming his wife, returning her to their shared home. *Go Down, Moses* further contains a heterotopical space in the commissary, that breaks with both the traditional time of the narrative, as well as with the experienced time of the two characters who inhabits the space in section IV of "The Bear", hence functioning as a heterochronic space. No such space seems to exist within *Light in August*.

In contrast to the postbellum setting and tragic plot of the majority of the chapters in *Go Down, Moses*, "Was" has a comic plot in an antebellum setting. On the surface, these contrasting factors may lead to an analysis of "Was" as a piece of Lost Cause writing, as illustrated in the analysis above. However, the delusional layer of representational space Ms. Beauchamp's attributes to the Beauchamp plantation may suggest that "Was" is a Lost Cause parody, rather than a sincere exhibit of the genre.



## 6 Hunting bears and money: Exterior space in *Go Down, Moses*

### 6.1 Introduction

Although *Go Down, Moses* explores the racialization of space in significant ways in its interior settings, the novel is predominantly concerned with exterior spaces as e.g. the wilderness and cultivated land. While *Light in August* only contains a couple of scenes depicting a (socially) black character's interaction with nature, the hunting trilogy of *Go Down, Moses*, and "The Bear" in particular, portrays the spatial dynamics and interactions within a hunting party constellated by characters with a variety of racial identities. This unique constellation offers valuable insight into racialized experience of nature, which necessitates the reintroduction of Outka's theory to supplement my overarching Lefebvrian analysis. To implement Outka's theory in the chapters on exterior space, which nature and the landscape are part of, while excluding him from the discussion on the production of interior social spaces, is logical and necessary as Outka's theory is ecocritical in nature and explicitly concerned with the racialized experience of exterior, natural space.

I further postulate that *Go Down, Moses* surpasses *Light in August* in its overarching exploration of, and discourse on, the production of racialized space, as *Light in August* never reaches the direct and upfront mode of philosophical discourse on space and property that dominates the fourth section of "The Bear", and "Delta Autumn", in particular. While racialized space in *Light in August* becomes evident through an analysis of setting and plot, *Go Down, Moses* consistently pauses narrative time in order to develop a conceptual and philosophical discourse on a spectrum of spatial themes, ranging from the false premises for the political construction of private property and ownership of the land, to the curse and degradation of the plantation pastoral in the wake of slavery, a philosophical mode of writing elevating *Go Down, Moses* to the stature of milestones in Western literature, such as Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). The philosophical discourse between Cass Edmonds and Ike McCaslin in the commissary stylistically reverberates the philosophical discussions between Alyosha and Ivan Karamazov in Dostoevsky's magnum opus.

In the following analysis of exterior space in *Go Down, Moses*, my focus will shift from a broad and general examination of how exterior spaces are racialized, and thus cursed, by the repudiating Ike McCaslin in “The Bear” and “Delta Autumn”, to a close analysis of Ash’s experience of nature on his first hunting trip, before shifting my focus back on a more overarching analysis of the production of racialized space by contrasting Ike’s experience of, and ideas about, space, to Lucas’s space production in “The Fire and the Hearth”.

## 6.2 The cursed land

In “The Bear”, the wilderness serves as an idealized space where white characters attempt to escape from both the inherited sin and trauma embedded in the history of slavery in the South, as well as the racially degraded pastoral of the present. Outka writes the following in regards to this phenomenon arising during, and in the wake of, slavery:

The natural sublime can all too easily serve to “greenwash” white identity, removing the historical and cultural context that establishes white supremacy, and substituting for it a dehistoricized white individuality and a luminous present moment of fantasized escape from culture, race, and time itself. Sublimity references purity, origin, the timeless norm: in its resolution, whiteness can assume those values. (Outka 23)

In light of Outka’s analysis of nature and sublimity providing a dehistoricized and “pure” space, the function of nature becomes evident in “The Bear” through the consistent focus on the purity and timelessness of the wilderness, as it is described as both “mythical” (Faulkner 205), “unechoing”, “inattentive”, and “eternal” (229). However, in *Go Down, Moses* the question seems to be whether the wilderness is able to produce such a privileged space, which is to be considered a utopia in the way it produces an ideal and perfect alternative space to the dominating social space of the industrialized and morally degenerated South from which Ike seeks to escape.

The abbreviated answer to the question raised above is that nature loses its ability to produce a privileged and separate space as Ike grows from a boy into a man. I have previously argued that Roth Edmonds produces a more intuitive and unpolitical social space during childhood, a result of children’s incomplete initiation into the tradition, history and culture of

the spaces they encounter. Similarly, Ike's boyhood experience of nature is stripped of the racialized and political aspect that dominates his relation to space as an adult in section IV and V of "The Bear", as well as in "Delta Autumn".

During his first bear hunt as a boy, Ike has a sublime encounter with Old Ben as he leaves camp and wanders into the woods in the middle of the night:

Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear: it was just there, immobile, fixed in the green and windless noon's hot dappling, not as big as he had dreamed it but as big as he had expected, bigger, dimensionless against the dappled obscurity, looking at him. (Faulkner 148)

Scholars commonly pay particular attention to Ike's symbolic act of leaving behind his compass and watch before encountering Old Ben, and my analysis is no different, as the representational space a person carries into the production of space, and how this serves as an obstacle when attempting to experience "pure natural space", is at no other point in *Go Down, Moses* as clearly illustrated than in this particular scene. The reason for leaving the mechanical tools behind appears in the text as being related to having to "completely relinquish" to the wilderness, and still "being tainted" due to the watch and compass (147). In an analysis of the production of social space, it is particularly interesting that Ike succeeds in his relinquishment of civilization, and is able to sublimely encounter Old Ben in harmony with his timeless and socially untainted space.

I have previously connected Ike's ability to access this mode of intuitive space production, by relinquishing his mechanical tools, to the child's distinctive production of social space. The relevance of age and maturity in the production of social space is evident in how Ike loses his untainted and sublime relationship to nature as an adult in section IV and V of "The Bear" and in "Delta Autumn". Ike's acknowledgement of how social space in the South, which includes physical space and the land, has historically been, and is presently being, produced in the context of slavery, racism, and segregation, first appears in section IV of "The Bear", for instance when Ike in dialogue with Fonsiba's husband at their Arkansas farm (which is not much of a farm) remarks how the South is cursed in the wake of racism:

"Dont you see?" he cried. "Dont you see? This whole land, the whole South, is cursed, and all of us that derive from it, whom it ever suckled, white and black both, lie under the curse? Granted that my people brought the curse unto the land: maybe for that

reason their descendants alone can – not resist it, not combat it – maybe just endure and outlast it until the curse is lifted. Then your people’s turn will come because we have forfeited ours. But not now. Not yet. Don’t you see?” (Faulkner 198)

In this excerpt the reader is given insight into Ike’s adult experience of space, which has drastically changed from Ike’s childhood experience of unpolitical and untainted space, unaware of the consequences of a culture dominated by hegemonic racism for the production of social space. As an adult, Ike is obsessed with repudiating his inherited claim to the McCaslin plantation and its acres, in an attempt to purge the racialized landscape by altering the terms of which he experiences and produces it individually. Ike believes that repudiation of land ownership may lead to such a spatial “cleansing”. The excerpt is also evidence of Ike’s conservative stance on restructuring social space in order to excavate the racialized aspect of it, which is echoed in Ike’s response to Tennie’s Jim’s granddaughter in “Delta Autumn”, as he reflects that the restructuring of racialized space should happen gradually, “maybe in a thousand or two thousand years in America” (255). Ike’s conservative standpoint on the matter of racial equality and desegregation in the South is reverberant of statements made by Faulkner himself, which James Baldwin has addressed and criticized in *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* (reprinted in Utley et al). I will however, not include a lengthy discussion on the relationship between Ike and Faulkner, in spite of the fact that illuminating scholarship has been performed on the subject, as I am overarchingly avoiding reading authorial intentionality into my analysis. However, the fact that Baldwin has critiqued Faulkner’s stance on desegregation illustrates that Ike’s stance is historically valid, and a subject of controversy.

Dorothy L. Denniston has argued that the reason for Ike’s reaction and conservative stance in “Delta Autumn” resides in his failure to outgrow his social conditioning (Denniston 41), leaving the repudiation of his inheritance as merely a play to the gallery with no actual effect in either his individual production of space, or as a revolutionary force in the larger community. This argument is supported by William E. H. Meyer Jr., who further claims that the outcome of Ike’s adult experience of a racialized social space is that “the end of nature may even justly portend the end of human history – at least of Old South race relations” (Meyer Jr., 37). Meyer Jr. highlights a moment in “Delta Autumn” where Ike almost lamentedly reflects on how perceived distinct races as e.g. Africans and Jews are breeding children, thus gradually (but not slowly enough for Ike) erasing the established racial hierarchy constituting the color line through miscegenation. What is striking in Meyer Jr.’s

claim is how he reads the end of nature as a revolutionary process, as it may lead to the end of Old South race-relations. This is by no means a modest claim, but it is nevertheless a claim supported by my reading of *Go Down, Moses*. At various moments in his analysis, Outka points out how “the conflation of blackness and nature served as the principle “justification” for chattel slavery in antebellum America” (Outka 24). This is also the basis for my support of Meyer Jr. ’s claim, as the connection between race and nature is evident both in the ideological conflation of the black slaves with the natural world, and in the phenomenologically sublime interaction with nature. Hence, the end of nature leads to both a disassociation of black people with nature, as well as the end of a privileged white space instrumental in the construction of whiteness. In other words, the melting pot of the modern city may be considered revolutionary in relation to the production of racialized social space, by its juxtaposition to wilderness and the natural, which was the foundation for the racial hierarchies in the agricultural economy of the antebellum South.

Sam Fathers’ privileged relationship to the wilderness and the natural is commonly attributed to his Chickasaw identity and the primitivism connected to a traditional Native American relationship to the land. Although this approach is often convincing, it merely brushes the obvious and overt aspects of Sam’s production of space in nature. Sam’s ability to produce a privileged space in nature, which is inaccessible to the white characters of the hunting party (except the young Ike), can even more convincingly be attributed to him as *not* belonging to a social group (and consequently its representational space), than his identity as a Chickasaw. As a result of Sam’s exclusion from white social space, he does not carry with him the race related sin and curse of the white plantation owners, which are disabling the white characters in their experience of nature, as their production of representational space is dominated by cultural racism. In juxtaposition, Sam Father’s is not solely excluded from white social space on a symbolic and cultural level, an exclusion from white representational space, but has made active effort in physically isolating himself from the white production of all three Lefebvrian layers of space: perceived, conceived and lived space.

In relation to Foucault, the way the wilderness shifts from a heterotopia to an “ordinary” social space through representations of space in *Go Down, Moses*, is striking. Foucault writes in his sixth principle on heterotopia, when describing heterotopias of compensation, that some heterotopias are terrestrial representations of space that are “another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed and jumbled” (Foucault 27), before illustrating such spaces by using the Puritan and Jesuit

colonies in the Americas in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, who structured a location into a sort of utopian social space (although obviously not a real utopia, since it is inherent in the word itself, which means “no place”, that utopias cannot really exist in the real world), as an example.

Heterotopias, and perhaps heterotopias of compensation in particular, do however possess utopian qualities, as they offer separated space from the dominant social space of a society.

The land in *Go Down, Moses* can be analyzed as historically going through three distinct periods: the land prior to the ownership shifting from Ikkemotubbe to Thomas Sutpen, the land during Ike’s childhood and adolescence, and the land after Major de Spain has sold it to a logging company. While the second phase is the phase that seems to possess qualities supporting a heterotopic analysis, the two other phases are of interest as they bookend the second phase by illustrating the genesis and end of this distinct social space.

Ike seems to idealize the land as pure and untainted prior to the sale of the land to Thomas Sutpen (the antagonistic protagonist of *Absalom, Absalom!*), as he reflects on the reductive and degenerate consequences of land ownership:

Because it was never Ikkemottubbe’s fathers’ fathers’ to bequeath Ikkemotubbe to sell to Grandfather or any man because on the instant when Ikkemotubbe discovered, realized, that he could sell it for money, on that instant it ceased ever to have been his for ever, father to father to father, and the man who bought it bought nothing (Faulkner 183)

However, according to Lefebvrian theory, the land was still a social space when it belonged to the Chickasaws. By selling the land to Thomas Sutpen, the social space of the land merely changed its form, as plantations were established on cultivated land, while the wilderness emerged as a space for leisure activities as e.g. hunting. In the wake of the white acquisition of the land, the second phase of the land begins, where nature is a separate space in contrast to the dominant social space of settlement and community.

The foundation for the change of social space as portrayed here is at the level of representations of space, as space is resignified and reconstructed as a consequence of a change in ownership and the structural changes consequently taking place. Whether the space functions as a heterotopia through representational space and spatial practice does however seem to be more ambiguous. The following paragraphs will illustrate this ambiguity more clearly, but an abstract of the argument is needed in the discussion on the heterotopic function

of nature during the second phase of the land in *Go Down, Moses*. The essence of the argument is based on the fact that although some characters, as for instance Sam Fathers and the young Ike, experience the wilderness as a heterotopia of compensation, significant aspects of the structuring of space in the dominant social space of the town is not restructured on the hunting trips to Big Bottom, as e.g. the black chef, Uncle Ash, is domesticated and restricted to the kitchen, while the other characters go on hunting trips (with one exception where Ash is brought along).

### **6.3 Black hunting: Uncle Ash**

Little, if any, attention has been directed towards Uncle Ash, the camp's black cook, in the body of scholarship on *Go Down, Moses*. Ash is admittedly a minor character who plays no significant part in the development of the narrative, but in relation to racialized space and the exclusion of black people from sublimity and recreational nature, the single scene where the narrative focus is on Uncle Ash is of great interest.

In section V of "The Bear", Ike recollects an incident from his first hunting trip as a child, where Ash plays first fiddle. When Ike returns to the camp after killing his first buck, Ash has a strong emotional reaction and becomes "unapproachable" (Faulkner 230). It is then unveiled that Ash, inspired by the young Ike, wants to experience hunting in the woods himself. Ash's motivation for suddenly wanting to participate in the hunt, after twenty years of cooking at the camp during the annual hunting trip, is never explicitly specified. However, as this incident occurs in the aftermath of Ike's first deer hunt and the rite of passage that follows, it seems reasonable to assume that Ash's sudden appeal for joining the hunt is connected to his realization that even a young white boy is capable and permitted to partake in the hunt he has been excluded from for two decades.

Ash's hunting trip is comically portrayed, and evidence of a reductive experience of nature quickly appears. While Ike's encounters with the buck and Old Ben are lavishly described and subject to a large amount of narrative space, Ash is excluded from the actual killing of the deer during the hunting trip, as Tennie's Jim and Major de Spain chase with the dogs on horseback (231). When Ash on the way back to camp is given the opportunity to

shoot a young bear, he loses his chance as he is inexperienced in handling a gun and fails to successfully fire at the bear with the correct shell:

and after a certain time Ash's gun yawed jerkily up and he said "you haven't got a shell in the barrel yet. Pump it:" but the gun already snicked and he said "Pump it. You haven't got a shell in the barrel yet:" and Ash pumped the action and in a certain time the gun steadied again and snicked and he said, "Pump it:" and watched the buck-shot shell jerk, spinning heavily, into the cane. (Faulkner 232)

After several attempts to handle the gun correctly, the young bear runs off and the failure of the hunting trip is a fact. Ash's failed attempt to properly handle the gun is indicative of his lack of initiation into the wilderness, as hunting appears as an acquired skill connected to leisure, initiation and practice. The fact that Ash is unable to properly handle the gun suggests that the black cook has not received the proper training and introduction to hunting that is required to successfully participate in the activity, which is suggestive of hunting being an activity which has been exclusive of black individuals in the South. The two cooks, Ash and Jimbo, are the only two characters in the camp unambiguously classified as black, as both Sam Fathers, Boon, and Tennie's Jim, have a significant amount of "white blood".

On the hunting trip, Ash is not able to connect to his surroundings, i.e. produce a space fully natural and potentially sublime, as he is more concerned with discussing personal matters than his surroundings. For instance, as Ike and Ash are returning to the camp, Ash engages in a monologue that drifts from their present location to the camp, food, and the new young woman next door (231). Ash is also unable to lead the way back to the camp, despite his extensive history of cooking during the annual hunting trip, and at several moments he puts Ike, at this time just a boy, in charge by passively asking him "Now what?" (231). Ash's inability to connect to the wilderness, which is evident in his discursive focus on domesticated and cultivated space, as well as his reliance on a young boy for navigating through the woods, is suggestive of the exclusion of black people from recreational nature, leading to Ash's reductive experience of the hunt.

A more nuanced analysis does however arise when we shift our focus from Uncle Ash to Tennie's Jim, who is far more initiated into nature and hunting than Ash. For instance, when the dogs chase the buck during Ash's first hunting trip, it is Tennie's Jim who chases



after the dogs with Major de Spain (231). Jim is unambiguously culturally classified as black, leading to instances of segregation during the hunting trips, as he for instance has to sit in the wagon with the camp equipment while “the men ride the horses” (126). Tennie’s Jim is a liminal character, as he is culturally labeled as black but still properly initiated to nature, just like Sam Fathers. However, when the “true hunters” are being listed, only the white characters are mentioned: Walter Ewell, Major de Spain, General Compson and McCaslin Edmonds (118).

Ash and Jim are both labeled as black in the text, but what causes their widely different experiences of nature? Two potential arguments for Jim’s apparently privileged ability to produce, and partake in, natural space seems plausible. Firstly, although Uncle Ash’s age is never really specified, the fact that he had been a cook at the camp for twenty years already when Ike was a young boy suggests that Uncle Ash is older than Tennie’s Jim, potentially much older. While Uncle Ash must have grown up during antebellum times, Tennie’s Jim was likely born during or after the Civil War. The difference in age may be suggestive of their diverging productions of natural space, as Outka’s core argument is based on the phenomenological consequences of bondage, and Uncle Ash would likely have been restricted from leisurely experiencing nature as a child. Even the name Uncle Ash is reverberating antebellum culture.

The second argument for Uncle Ash’s and Jim’s contrasting relationship to nature is based on the fact that Jim is, although labeled by society, not unambiguously black. In most cases, some percentage of white blood would not have played any role in the racial labeling of a person, as the “one drop rule” overrode any claim to whiteness made by those with black blood in their genealogy. Tennie’s Jim has however not been given ordinary “white blood” by his forefathers, but McCaslin blood. In chapter 5 I illustrated how Lucas has a privileged position at the McCaslin plantation due to his McCaslin blood, and it seems plausible that Tennie’s Jim may have been given similar privilege due to his McCaslin heritage, qualifying him to take part in the hunt.

## 6.4 Hidden treasure: The landscape as capital

Ike McCaslin, the focalizer in the hunting trilogy, and Lucas Beauchamp, the focalizer in “The Fire and the Hearth”, have juxtaposing relationships to nature and the landscape. While Isaac is concerned with conserving the wilderness and its alleged purity and pristine quality, relinquishing any claim to land ownership and abandoning the tools of civilization when encountering Old Ben as a boy, Lucas perceives the landscape as a resource for monetary gain and capitalist interests. Lucas’s pragmatic experience of the land is most apparent in 1) the utilization of the landscape in the production of bootlegger whiskey, and 2) applying modern technology in search of hidden money buried somewhere on the land.

Lucas is not running a whiskey still on the McCaslin plantation to improve his standard of living, as it is described that at sixty-seven years of age “he already had more money in the bank now than he would ever spend, more than Carothers Edmonds himself (...)” (Faulkner 27). This leaves us with two plausible motivations for Lucas’s accumulation of wealth: he is either doing it for the thrill, as an act of rebellion, or simply in order to accumulate capital for capital’s sake. The reading of Lucas’s actions as oppositional and rebellious is supported by the fact that both bootlegging and treasure hunting are unconventional forms of income, both independent of any corporate hierarchy and power structures. On the flipside, Lucas does not seem very rebellious or dissatisfied with his situation at sixty-seven, as he for instance reflects on “his status as not only the oldest man but the oldest living person on the Edmonds plantation, the oldest McCaslin descendant (...)” (Faulkner 29), and has a privileged position at the plantation (similarly to Sam Fathers). Attributing Lucas’s accumulation of wealth to the forces of capitalism and the black population’s newly acquired economic freedom seems to be the more convincing argument.

One of Lucas’s traits is his enthusiasm and interest in new innovations and technologies. His devotion to the “divination machine”, i.e. metal detector, is by far the most obvious example of Lucas’s technological enthusiasm, but he is also described in relation to farming as “taking solid pride in having good tools to use and using them well, scorning both inferior equipment and shoddy work just as he had bought the best kettle he could find when he set up his still” (33). Lucas is portrayed as a character engaging in the rise of modernity in the South, taking advantage of the technological innovations introduced to the market. In juxtaposition to Lucas’s embrace of modernity is the conservative environmentalist Isaac

McCaslin. While Lucas acquires new tools as a metal detector, Isaac relinquishes his tools when encountering Old Ben, and while Lucas accumulates capital, Isaac repudiates his inheritance and claim to the McCaslin plantation as being the sole descendant of a male genealogical line.

In the reading of Isaac as a white environmentalist and Lucas as a black opportunist, some observations made by Outka should be pointed out to support the argument. Outka pinpoints how ecocriticism and environmentalism are dominated by white individuals, as white people have not been victims to the dreadful history of the African Americans, hence not subjugated by a conflation with nature (Outka 2). What follows is a warning on how prioritizing the conservation of nature and animal species over “the survival of young blacks in our nation’s cities” is repetitive of the antebellum conflation of African Americans with nature. Outka’s observation sheds a revealing light on the analysis of Lucas and Isaac, as it suggests that Ike, due to his white privilege and the conflation of the black population with nature, is able to direct his idealism towards the conservation of the wilderness rather than the improvement of living conditions for the black population. Lucas, on the other hand, is excluded from environmentalism though his own conflation with nature, hence focusing his energy on the improvements of living conditions facilitated by technological innovation.

In relation to the production of space, Lucas’s experience of the landscape is a result of him attributing a mythical layer to representational space. Lucas is convinced that Uncle Buck and Uncle Buddy’s mythical treasure is buried somewhere on the plantation property. The location of the treasure is also a result of representations of space, as Lucas claims to be in possession of a letter indicating the location of the treasure. Ultimately the production of a representational space containing a mythical treasure is maintained through the spatial practice of searching for it with the metal detector. Evidence of the racialized landscape appears at several points in the “The Fire and the Hearth”, for instance in the description of the mound where Lucas hides his whiskey still:

The white people called it an Indian mound. One day five or six years ago a group of white men, including two women, most of them wearing spectacles and all wearing khaki clothes which had patently lain folded on a store shelf twenty-four hours ago, came with pick and shovels and jars and phials of insect repellent and spent a day digging about it while most of the people, men women and children, came at some time during the day and looked quietly on: later – within the next two or three days, in

fact – he was to remember with almost horrified amazement the cold and contemptuous curiosity with which he himself had watched them. (Faulkner 30)

The racialized landscape is most overtly evident in this excerpt through the mound being characterized as “Indian” by the white people. This fact is expressive of both the landscape produced through the representational space of culture, as the mound (which is obviously not “Indian” in its natural essence) is attributed cultural signification, as well as how the mythical treasure is a myth originating in white social space, as both the excavating treasure hunters in the excerpt above and the two men who Lucas later claims found a significant sum of money buried on the plantation ground are specifically described as white. The white treasure hunters are assumedly from the city, as they are wearing newly purchased outfits and using insect repellent, which are both results of an industrial economy, as insect repellent would be considered unnecessary and superfluous by country people. The fact that the treasure hunters, as well as the salesman later in the chapter, arouse Lucas’s curiosity in the economic potential of the land can be interpreted in both an emancipating and subjugating manner, as the white people who inspire Lucas’s treasure hunts are pioneering and paving the path for the black population Lucas is representative of, but still possessing a dominating capitalist power, as Lucas has to give a mule as collateral to the salesman in order to rent the metal detector. This is intriguing as the reader has gained insight into Lucas’s abundance of economic resources in his bank account, which raises the question of to what extent Lucas actually has access to this money.

## 6.5 Summary

Perhaps the most significant insight gained from applying the theories of Outka and Lefebvre to an analysis of exterior space in *Go Down, Moses*, is the responsiveness of Faulkner’s great hunting narrative, and the contrasting narrative in “The Fire and the Hearth”, to Outka’s theories of racialized nature, in both the reductive black experience of nature and environmentalism appearing as a white privilege. The marginality of Uncle Ash and the subsequent lack of critical attention directed towards this character has led to a gap in Faulkner scholarship, which I have attempted to draw attention to by including a thorough

analysis of the single, but yet significant, narrative event where Uncle Ash is the center of narrative attention.

## 7 Conclusion

It is in the nature of research that some hypotheses prove to be more fruitful than others. The purpose of a concluding chapter is hence to evaluate the research that has been performed in the research project, by highlighting the most fruitful and significant claims that seem plausible and justified through close and thorough analysis of the research topic. Although some methodological approaches to literary science, as formalism and structuralism, can produce “objective evidence” within the text itself, the text as object, the majority of scientific methods in literary science rely on some kind of interpretation. The degree of subjectivity and speculation in literary analysis varies, and the literary scholar should strive towards a nuanced and, if not fully objective, well supported argument to build one’s analysis on. To build a nuanced and supported argument is most effectively done by consulting and implementing other scholarly opinions, as well as highlighting sections within the primary texts themselves that logically supports one’s overarching argument. To apply more general philosophical theories to the argument, as I have done in this thesis through the focus on Lefebvre and Outka in particular, is an approach that opens up new possible interpretations and significations of a text.

My methodological strategy in this thesis has been to apply and consider the most significant and relevant scholarly contributions on issues of race and space in Faulkner’s fiction, while still generating new insight through the application of philosophical ideas not yet applied to scholarship on Faulkner. Close reading and careful interpretation of the primary texts themselves has been both the major focus and core purpose of this thesis, as it is in spite of the interdisciplinary approach a thesis in English and literary science.

What seems to be particularly striking in my analysis, which also piqued my interest during my research, is the way in which Outka’s theory on how the African-American slave has been excluded from the production of a sublime and natural space through conflation with nature, which is really a theory on the phenomenological effects of bondage and subjugation, resonates within the two Faulkner novels analyzed. Christmas’s and Uncle Ash’s reductive experience of natural space is evidence of a prevailing tendency towards a reductive experience of nature by black individuals in the postbellum South. By applying Outka’s theory to an analysis of texts by one of the most significant American author’s on issues of race, my intention has been to expand and contribute to both the scholarship on Faulkner,

ecocriticism, and critical race theory, as these discourses have been proven to illuminate each other in significant ways. By illustrating that Outka's claim is not only relevant in relation to the lived and representational space of African Americans, but also in relation to the broader notion of representational space in society as a whole, more scholarship will be needed to develop the theory further. For instance, in relation to Faulkner, it seems very compelling to obtain a more extensive picture of how black experience of nature, culminating in the sublime, is portrayed in a more complete study of his bibliography, as this thesis has applied a narrower scope on two novels, that are although highly acclaimed just a fraction of Faulkner's body of work.

Another aspect of the theory that should be illuminated, is how the notion of racialized experiences of nature unfolds in the representational spaces of our contemporary culture. Since both Faulkner and Outka only illustrate this phenomenon up until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I would be most interested in seeing scholarship examining the potential prevalence of this phenomenon in our time. Shedding light on the oppressive spaces we produce in society may potentially further a political process towards equality and desegregation.

The overarching theory, and cornerstone, of my thesis has been Lefebvre's work *The Production of Space*, which is admittedly not a particularly radical or original choice of theoretical foundation. However, Lefebvre has complemented Outka's theory in illuminating ways, since the failure of phenomenologically producing nature in a sublime manner can be attributed to a limited access to a culture's representational space, as I have argued that sublimity is a political and acquired experience, enabled through initiation. However, my analysis of "The Bear" illustrates how representational space can dominate and reduce the experience of nature as well, illustrated through how Ike's sublime experiences of nature as a boy converts into a lament of the land and bitterness towards industrializing forces as an adult.

Uncovering segregational power structures in the Jim Crow South is by no means original in itself, as this is one of the most distinctive and widely studied aspects of the postbellum South. However, Lefebvrian theory contains a set of terminology and analytical methods that enable analyses of how these spaces are produced, maintained, and potentially being changed. In light of Lefebvre's theory, segregated space is something constantly reproduced through lived space, thus consequently plastic and changeable. Hence the application of Lefebvrian theory to an analysis of racialized space in Faulkner's work has

enabled me to not merely point out which spaces are segregated, but how and why they are racialized spaces.

From the outset of this research project I was somewhat confident in the two novels' compatibility for my analysis from my previous readings of them. The narrow thematic reading that has been the purpose of this thesis did nonetheless unveil how the novels complement each other in interesting ways. This is perhaps most overtly illustrated in my thesis through the analysis of Christmas's and Uncle Ash's failure at experiencing sublimity and producing a transcendent nature space, as both characters resonates and supports Outka's theory. The execution of black men, in two instances by lynching, was also a theme established in *Light in August* that is developed further in "Pantaloon in Black" and "Go Down, Moses", in *Go Down, Moses*. However, the two novels also explore the concept of racialized social space in unique ways, which makes them irreplaceable for the argument in this thesis. For instance, *Light in August* offers a comprehensive focalization through Joe Christmas, a culturally labeled black man, hence leading to interesting insight into the paranoia, absurdity and unlawfulness arising from segregation in the South. *Go Down, Moses*, in comparison, contains black spaces of dwelling as settings, which is absent from *Light in August*, where the major private space settings are white characters' houses. *Go Down, Moses* sheds its perhaps most characteristic light on racialized space through Ike McCaslin's reflections on land ownership and the "curse" of the land, which is manifested through both interior dialogue, but also through the lengthy discussion with Cass Edmonds during section IV of "The Bear".



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