

Nothing Is as It Seems: Reading Deviance in Faulkner's *Sanctuary* and McCullers'

*Reflections in a Golden Eye*

by

Amanda R. Johnson

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. William Brantley, Chair

Dr. Laura Dubek

This thesis is dedicated to my Grandmother, Helen Campbell Johnson, and my Mother, Debra Johnson, the women without whom my love of literature could have never blossomed; my father, without whom I could never have gotten through any of this; my Aunt Shirlea Pemberton, whose ears were always ready and open for deviant discussion; my friends, who most surely endured me at my most trying moments; and, finally, my professors, without whose passion and gentle guidance I never would have gotten over my hatred, caused by fear, of southern writers in general.

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## ABSTRACT

Both William Faulkner and Carson McCullers question distinctions between deviance and normalcy through characters that challenge parameters of socially accepted behavior. In *Sanctuary* (1931) Faulkner presents the seedy underworld of a Memphis brothel; he entices readers into this social abyss while prompting them to investigate the crimes presented and to ponder the cloudy sources of deviant behavior. In *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1941) McCullers portrays a commonplace world—that of an army base—in opposition to its commonplace depictions; in the process, she transforms readers from mere voyeurs into voyeur creators. Although McCullers, the younger writer, was influenced by Faulkner, she did not slavishly imitate his ideas. Instead, she employed a process of narrative inversion that expands upon Faulkner's own manipulations of the detective genre. When read together, the two novels highlight ways in which presentations of voyeurism, deviance, and normalcy extend the range of the modern southern grotesque.

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## Preface: Re-Reading William Faulkner and Carson McCullers

Faulkner is known for his lengthy and complicated sentences, but also for deep thought summed up in a few simple words. His ability to carve out pictures and stories with words is well-known, and he has even been mentioned in modern TV dramas, such as *NCIS*. The character Ziva proclaims, “Yes! It was worth learning English just for *The Sound and the Fury*, or that chapter in *As I Lay Dying*. You know, the one with the five words where Vardaman says “My mother is a fish!” (“One Last Score,” 8.17, May 2011).

McCullers’ novels are less complicated in terms of sentence structure. Louis Rubin even claims that “McCullers is in certain important ways a writer for young readers, and one has to be young to receive what she offers. She speaks not to the intelligence so much as to the untutored emotions.... If you like the experience of fiction to be complex and subtle, she is probably not for you” (3). Despite her immediate accessibility, Carson McCullers must not be relegated to adolescent fiction. In his biography Oliver Evans explores the seeming dismissal of her novels when speaking specifically of *Reflections in a Golden Eye*:

There is... a *surface* realism – uneven, to be sure, for the parable manner does show itself on occasion – which has the power to deceive the hasty or the impatient reader who, dissatisfied with that much, does not take the trouble to determine whether there may not be more of a different kind. This problem... which involves more than the matter of language and style, has prevented [McCullers’] work from being appreciated as widely and as fully as it deserves to be. (75)

Despite the fact that McCullers' novels may be more accessible linguistically than Faulkner's, McCullers is not a simple writer. Her projects and questions are similar to those of Faulkner, and though her novels may require less work from her readers, McCullers' novels, like those of Faulkner, also present deviance in a way that invites readers to question conventional conceptions.

McCullers was familiar with Faulkner, who influenced both her and other Southern writers. In an article written for *Decision* in 1941 called "The Russian Realists and Southern Literature," McCullers says that modern Southern writers have

transposed the painful substance of life around them as accurately as possible, without taking the part of emotional panderer between the truth as it is and the feelings of the reader. The "cruelty" of which Southerners have been accused is at bottom only a sort of naïveté, an acceptance of spiritual inconsistencies without asking the reason why, without attempting to propose an answer. Undeniably, there is an infantile quality about this clarity of vision and rejection of responsibility. (258)

McCullers points specifically to Faulkner's presentation of the facts of a story without delving into the personal or emotional motivations of his characters. Readers encounter this avoidance in *Sanctuary*.

McCullers, like Faulkner, belonged to this school, and both wrote about their surroundings. McCullers writes:

No matter what the politics, the degree or non-degree of liberalism in a Southern writer, he is still bound to this peculiar regionalism of language and voices and foliage and memory.... When Faulkner writes about the R.A.F. and France, he is somehow not convincing—while I'm convinced in almost every line about Yoknapatawpha County. ("Flowering" 279)

McCullers obviously admired Faulkner and read his works, delving into them enough to note his convincing Southern settings and less compelling international dalliances.

Faulkner also knew of McCullers and acknowledged her brilliance, stating that "[she had] done some – some of the best work in [his] time" ("Edward" 5).

Both authors looked at the world around them, this "painful substance of life," and put what they saw and imagined into words during the most downtrodden moments in their lives. *Sanctuary* was written when Faulkner desperately needed money. Using news and the style of the movies of his time, the Southern novelist best known for *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury* attempted to create a thriller for a mass audience. Joseph Blotner notes that in 1926,

Faulkner heard... a story told by a young woman who talked freely about her life, about moving from her village... to Memphis, where she had taken up with a rising young gangster. (He was probably Neal Kerens "Popeye" Pumphrey, a veteran criminal at twenty-three.) Although the gangster was said to be impotent, he still persisted in having relations with women, and he had raped one with a particularly bizarre object and kept her in a brothel. (176)



When speaking to an undergraduate literature class at Virginia, Faulkner also acknowledged that writers pull from every situation they find themselves in: the writer “will store that away, and at need, maybe ten or fifteen or thirty years later, he will find that he needs something that he got then. He is omnivorous and amoral. He will take everything he sees, with no judgment, no discretion” (6). Faulkner’s comments on writers echo McCullers’ comments on Southern writers in “The Russian Realists and Southern Literature.” *Sanctuary* was written when, according to Norman Denzin, “organized crime was quickly adapted to a ‘cycle of tersely directed urban gangster films which exploited armed violence and tough vernacular speech in a context of social alienation’” (22). Based on the popularity of the cinema and its subject matter, Faulkner’s *Sanctuary* would have fit into the subject matter at the time.

Like Faulkner, McCullers also wrote most convincingly of settings that mimicked her own habitats. McCullers wrote *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, set on an army post, while living in Fayetteville, North Carolina at Fort Bragg in 1939. Money was a constant worry, and as Oliver Evans notes, “[McCullers] began to perceive that she had idealized Reeves,” her husband, and “the attraction she felt for him had come to be chiefly physical” (59). The breakdown of her own marriage may have led McCullers to create her adulterous and suffering main characters, but Evans also notes that McCullers drew her main event from the story of a Peeping Tom at Fort Bragg (60).

Both Faulkner and McCullers struggled to make a living from their writing and produced many great works while at great lows. Despite the fact that Faulkner claimed on many occasions that he wrote *Sanctuary* for money, the novel is not merely a potboiler.

*Reflections in a Golden Eye* may evoke *Sanctuary* due to their similarities, but McCullers did not create a thriller simply hoping for a big payday either. Both novels may shock, but both invite criticism of society and engage readers at a deeper level than the dime-store potboiler.

Published for the first time in 1931, *Sanctuary* presents Temple, a beautiful college girl, and deposits her into the seedy underworld of Memphis. She first endures a night in a dilapidated farm surrounded by disreputable men. She is then a witness to a murder and a victim of rape before being whisked away to a brothel and held captive by her rapist. She is cared for by two motherly figures during her stay, but she must also suffer the deviant sexual advances of Popeye, her captor, and his demand to watch her with Red, the stud presented by Popeye, who is later killed because of her. All the while, readers try to piece together this bizarre review of the events, as does Horace, another principle character, the lawyer. The trial for the murder and rape does not go as planned, although it accords with expectations. Somehow the reader is left with the inverted world set straight: Popeye is dead and Temple has been returned to her family.

Like *Sanctuary*, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* also presents a crime, but McCullers focuses on what leads up to the murder and the characters instead of the aftermath, trial, and facts. McCullers introduces two couples, the Pendertons and the Langdons, as well as a servant and a voyeur. The Pendertons are Leonora and the Captain, who suffer from marriage to one another. The Langdons are the Major and Alison, who are also married, but seem to have once been happy. Alison suffers from ill health and depression and is cared for by a Filipino servant, Anacleto. These two couples are neighbors on an army

post in the south and spend much time at the Penderton home, outside of which the voyeur, Private Williams, creeps. After sneaking into the Penderton home on multiple occasions, Private Williams is caught in the bedroom of Lenora Penderton and shot by her husband. Where *Sanctuary* ends with a righted world and two trials complete, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* ends with the murder. No trial is depicted.

Because Faulkner began his career before McCullers and because he has always been such a major and influential Southern writer, McCullers was very familiar with him and with his works. Surprisingly, however, Oliver Evans is one of the few scholars to note Faulkner's influence on McCullers, most specifically on *Reflections in a Golden Eye*:

*Reflections in a Golden Eye* is a Gothic novel, and the so-called Gothic school of Southern writers may be said to have begun with the publication, in 1934, of *Sanctuary*, which had a kind of *succes de scandale*. Voyeurism, it will be remembered, plays an important part in Faulkner's novel, as it does in Mrs. McCullers's. Faulkner was probably the first of the Southern novelists to concern himself with this aberration, just as Mrs. McCullers was the first of them to write openly about homosexuality. Mrs. McCullers had read and admired *Sanctuary*, and I think it is quite possible that in *Reflections in a Golden Eye* she was striving for an effect of shock similar to that which Faulkner's novel had been so successful in producing. She wanted to do more than that, however, for she did not want her book to be merely sensational. (60)

Upon closer examination, Faulkner's influence is easily perceived, but McCullers did not slavishly imitate this one source of her inspiration; McCullers extended Faulkner's points in *Sanctuary*. Where Faulkner encourages readers to become investigators with Horace to determine the true events between Temple, Popeye, and Tommy, McCullers provides a full view of the events that she depicts and instead invites the readers to create past and future events. Both invite readers to question socially accepted parameters of deviance and normalcy, especially with regard to sexuality.

Oliver Evans saw connections to the literary world as well as to McCullers' personal life when delving into *Reflections in a Golden Eye* and its possible influences and inspiration, including superficial connections to D.H. Lawrence's "The Prussian Officer" (60). The second influence, although "less obvious," is the connection that Evans noted to Faulkner's *Sanctuary*:

*Reflections* is a Gothic novel, and the so-called Gothic School of Southern Writers may be said to have begun (if we except Poe) with the publication, in 1934, of *Sanctuary*, which had a kind of *succes de scandale*.

Voyeurism, it will be remembered, plays an important part in Faulkner's novel, as it does in [McCullers']. Faulkner was probably the first of the Southern novelists to concern himself with this aberration, just as [McCullers] was the first of them to write openly about homosexuality.

(60)

Establishing McCullers as a literary descendent of Faulkner, Evans goes on to note that she was familiar with and appreciated *Sanctuary*, but reminds readers that "she wanted to

do *more* than [strive for an effect of shock]... for she did not want her book to be merely sensational” (60, emphasis mine).

The South is a region separate from the rest of the United States for reasons of history and traditional economic focus. Even before the Civil War, the South had a separate identity in literature, as traditional values such as those linked to family and agriculture were prominent. During and following the Civil War, the South’s identity continued to drift further from that of the rest of the country. For Barbara Ewell, this separation lies fundamentally in the South’s resistance to change while the rest of the United States marched forward after the war (163). Matthew Guinn claims that Southern literature began to shift in the 1920s through the 1950s when Southern writers “reached into their past for material” and “in some instances this past was not portrayed as entirely glorious. Works of high modernist poetics (like Faulkner’s novels) used the Civil War as a historical backdrop or counterpart for the concerns of the early twentieth century, and historical events were accordingly imbued with twentieth century uncertainty” (Guinn “Introduction” xvii).

Another pattern also emerged in Southern fiction: the grotesque. For Alan Spiegel, the grotesque “always appears in Southern fiction as either a physically or mentally deformed figure” (428). Modernism brought a new value system to the South, and the result of the tension between the old and the new was the grotesque (431). In opposition to the repression of the Old South, “the grotesque gesture takes place within society in the daylight setting of ordinary communal activity” (433). Spiegel asserts that readers find the grotesque figure sympathetic and significant despite his deformity (428-

9); he is an outcast whose “punishments always exceed his crimes” (429). The way the fictional world treats the grotesque figure bolsters reader sympathy. “In a like manner,” Spiegel asserts, “the writer may now question the distinction between the normal and the abnormal, between sanity and insanity” (430).

The grotesque is a kind of deviance that can be either mental or physical, and the grotesque figure can be a minor or major character. William Faulkner and Carson McCullers were familiar with the grotesque character and the Southern setting. Faulkner and McCullers use their settings to draw the readers into a world they do not know firsthand. Voyeurism, cross-dressing, homosexuality, self-mutilation, rape, and prostitution are only some of the deviances shown in their works. Through characters with deviant behaviors, Faulkner and McCullers show readers that outcast behaviors exist on a continuum. Some deviant characters are presented as Spiegel discusses the grotesque: in ways that encourage sympathy; however, not all deviant characters are easily forgiven for their transgressions against societal expectations. Readers are rendered off kilter and must create stories which fill in narrative gaps left by the authors. In this way, the reader begins to acknowledge a deviance continuum and observe that some outcast behaviors are fairly harmless when compared to others.

Although James Cox accurately asserts that “the family is utterly central to Faulkner’s imaginative construction of his south” and that Faulkner’s idea of “region and family are identical” (2), Robert Jackson posits that

Faulkner systematically strips the visible trappings of modernity away from the South, bringing humans into crushing contacts with the elements

in order to dramatize the fundamental crisis of their existence and to invite them to their own sort of redemption.... This approach, paradoxically, also enables Faulkner to explore the nature of modernity itself in more complex ways. (561-2)

In this exploration, Faulkner has his readers question commonly held ideas such as those of deviance and normalcy. Jackson's description above can be clearly applied to many of Faulkner's novels, including *Sanctuary*. Temple is stripped of her entire known world and thrust into the underworld; the victim of rape and kidnapping, Temple does actually lose her self as she morphs into a deviant character, seemingly in reaction to her circumstances. While this change in Temple calls into question where deviance begins, it also questions the very notion of normalcy.

Despite the fact that Temple is not physically grotesque, her deviant actions show a type of mental grotesqueness; however, her trials and endurance establish her humanity. Readers may not be sympathetic when first introduced to the spoiled daughter of the judge, but she may gain sympathy as she endures her torturous trials. When speaking at the University of Virginia, Faulkner was asked what he thought might make people laugh. His answer explains our feelings of satisfaction when Temple succeeds in escaping her imprisonment:

I would like to think it is – is joy in seeing that man can really survive his predicament. His predicament is represented by the – the horrible, the outrageous things that might happen to him, yet he survives them. I would like to think that is what makes people laugh. That it is not to see your –

your fellow man slip on a banana peel. It's to see him slip on that banana peel, and yet he survives. (3)

Though Faulkner does not place this white Southern woman on a pedestal, he does allow her to return to her rightful place with her family. The traditional position of the white southern woman, though tarnished, remains somewhat intact.

Whereas Faulkner reveals the deviance of the South both by showing that which has been ignored in Southern literature and by subverting the traditional cultural values, McCullers exposes both the physical and psychological deviance of individual characters. Deviance can, in her world, exist without traumatic events.

Melissa Free argues that "McCullers generates a plethora of grotesque imagery, which is metonymically linked to the queer and plays against the idea that deviance is visible" (429) Where Faulkner usually presents normal characters and thrusts them into crises to present deviance, McCullers presents characters who simply go against the conventions of normalcy and are not as extremely deviant. McCullers also avoids extremity in her language and setting, yet the outcome is similar. Free argues that McCullers "makes abnormality the norm" and, in her novels, "it is the normal that hovers around the edges of the unusual, rather than the deviant who roams the perimeter" (443). This subversion of the expected position of normal and deviant typifies *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. Though Private Williams hovers around the edges, he does enter the Penderton home. The deviance already present makes his entrance only a violation of space, as his deviance is not a violation of normalcy in this space. The post itself seems to



harbor deviance with the reader as the norm, outside the gates, hovering around this hotbed of deviance.

To broaden Free's idea is to focus on her assertion that McCullers "plays against the idea that deviance is visible" (429), which can be seen specifically in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. Members of the armed forces are expected to adhere to conventional notions of normalcy. They are expected to meet certain societal expectations, as are their families. Outwardly, there is nothing abnormal about the characters in this novel save Anacleto; however, Anacleto, as flamboyant as he may seem, appears, in the end, to be the most normal. His obvious homosexual stereotyping aside, he has not been involved in the deviant activities other characters in the novel have been engaged in, such as voyeurism, murder, breaking and entering, adultery, theft, or animal abuse or murder. By positing the most flamboyant character next to seemingly normal characters and then permitting the normal characters to engage in deviant acts, McCullers challenges the notion that deviance can be readily perceived. Normalcy is also challenged when roles are switched in this manner.

Both Faulkner and McCullers engage in conversation with their readers, encouraging them to question their ideas of deviance and normalcy. Through exploration of both *Sanctuary* and *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, this thesis shows how these novels present inverted worlds in order to highlight the inadequacy of conventional ideas. By putting these words into conversation with one another, I suggest that Faulkner and McCullers challenge traditional Southern values despite a lack of admiration for the Old South on the part of McCullers that is present in Faulkner.

Chapter 1 shows how Faulkner encouraged his readers to question deviance and normalcy by enticing them into investigating the crimes in the novel with Horace. By presenting the narrative in this manner, Faulkner invites readers to build their own understanding of the events before providing more information about the cardinal voyeur, Popeye. Once this back-story has been provided, readers must again interrogate not only their ideas of deviance and normalcy but also their conception of how deviance is formed.

Chapter 2 connects *Sanctuary* and *Reflections in a Golden Eye* by showing their similarities and then using *Reflections in a Golden Eye* to inform readings of *Sanctuary*. This chapter shows how McCullers uses deviant and grotesque characters to question accepted conventions of normalcy and posits that this questioning is invited not by putting normal characters in abnormal situations but also by acknowledging the deviance which lies inside accepted realms of normalcy.

This thesis links these novels in their approach to deviance and normalcy and shows that this approach reveals another dimension of the grotesque. The conclusion suggests future explorations in modern Southern literature with these inverted expectations in mind.

## Chapter 1: The Reader as Investigator in Faulkner's *Sanctuary*

Critics such as Elizabeth Binggeli, Florence Dore, John Matthews, and Sarah Mahurin have discussed Faulkner's omission of a pivotal scene of *Sanctuary*. Binggeli believes that Faulkner "relies on what could be described as cinematographic strategies of elision" because readers are given the scene of Tommy being shot while left to create the rape itself, for "Faulkner quickly cuts away from the action" by "[placing] the impending rape at the end of a chapter, drawing a curtain over the violent scene *in medias res* before fading up to a new scene at the beginning of the next chapter" (97). The absence of scenes of violence can also be connected to films of this era: by 1909, a censorship system had been put in place for film. This system included "a list of subjects to be avoided by filmmakers, including all obscene subjects... all crime pictures showing gruesome details or tending to teach the techniques of crime" (Denzin 18). With this code of conduct, artists had strict guidelines to follow to avoid being censored or banned. This tool of omission is present in the cinema of the 1930s. Because of the descriptions of the violations and near violations before the actual rape, Matthews asserts that "we are not surprised, then (and *perhaps we do not notice*), that the assault is never described" because "the language of *Sanctuary* pre-enacts the violation of Temple, making her deflowering a passage that can be presented only as already accomplished" (261, emphasis mine). The absence of the rape scene both haunts and horrifies readers, who are left to piece together what happened.

Mahurin maintains that "Faulkner's novels are as famous for what they conceal as for what they reveal," noting that "Faulknerian interpretation demands that the reader

decipher not only speeches and actions but also silences and absences—the novels’ narrative holes” (33). Dore cites the constant repetition of the events surrounding the scene of the rape: “In seeming contrast to the anticipatory temporal frame, the narrative is also conspicuously repetitious,” for readers are reminded of the events at the Old Frenchman Place multiple times (81). Even though Faulkner mentions the events constantly – “the rape, for example, is invoked no less than six times... by various characters” – readers are never given the event’s details in particular; the rape is never exactly described, so, “in this novel, it turns out rather to mark an unsaying” (Dore 81). Because “the repetitive references to the rape do nothing...to rectify the paradoxical fact that it is not ‘there’” (Dore 81), the readers must put together the events piece by piece as Faulkner reveals details. This narrative device turns readers into investigators, much like Horace, Goodwin’s lawyer.

Faulkner’s narrative lapses invite readers to investigate and create the events at the Old Frenchman Place as well as the brothel. Laura Tanner observes that “in Faulkner’s *Sanctuary*... the reader’s presence as not only an observer but a participant in the novel’s violence is obscured by a literary screen that assures the reader of his or her distance from the act of violence even as it affords an entry into that violence” (560). For Tanner, Faulkner’s omissions and delays “[shift] the burden of creation away from Faulkner and toward the reader,” and thus Faulkner “relies upon [the] readers to create the scandalous story of violation that [the novel] only suggests” (561). Though the novel begins with a scandalous act, Faulkner centers most of the remaining action of the novel

on Horace's attempts to find the truth for the trial. Tanner focuses on the imaginative work that Faulkner requires of his readers:

By indirect reference the reader is made to interpret the appearance of the cob, to transform paint into human blood; he or she has thus not read about a bloodied cob but has imaginatively created one. Having bloodied the cob, the reader has no difficulty in envisioning its function as the rape weapon; the narrative's failure to provide logical connections and accurate representations encourages the reader actively to construct the District Attorney's case. This technique of requiring the reader to image the violence, making the reader do his work for him, is characteristic of Faulkner's approach throughout *Sanctuary*. (Tanner 569)

Mahurin, Matthews, Dore, and Binggeli as well as Tanner all focus on the reader's relationship to the rape in *Sanctuary*. Tanner argues that "by emphasizing the literary quality of this rape, Faulkner invokes the distance of reading as a screen that obscures the reader's awareness of his or her own participation in the scene of violence" (571). Indeed, Faulkner does more than force the reader to imagine the details of the rape. Faulkner invites the reader to investigate the crimes with Horace and to create the events of the story through this investigation throughout the novel.

In *Sanctuary*, Faulkner provides a place filled with characters that either only marginally fit or don't at all fit into the setting. From the fragments, readers must then form a picture of the events which may be shocking and disturbing. By filling those empty spaces, the reader, in effect, creates his or her own versions of the truth. Because

of the descriptive nature of the text surrounding and leading up to the narrative lapses, the reader's imagined scenes may fit seamlessly into the images depicted by Faulkner, making the reader only half aware, if at all aware, of his or her creations, of his or her active relationship with the text. This is the process by which readers become investigators in Faulkner's *Sanctuary*.

Faulkner sets his story in the underworld, including a brothel and the home of bootleggers, thus putting readers in a curious and awkward position. Faulkner then subverts conventional ideas of normalcy and deviancy through his characters. Where Popeye is shown as a completely deviant character, the Madame of the brothel, Miss Reba, is one of the more honorable citizens. The brothel, in fact, can be easily overlooked or forgotten, as it seems more like a hotel or family home than a den of prostitution, gambling, and drinking. Faulkner presents an entire chapter with Fonzo and Virgil, two characters completely ignorant of the true vocation of their hotel, which reinforces the appearance of the brothel as a safe haven rather than a doorway to illegal activities and a hotbed of immorality and sin. Jeffery Folks points out the inverted nature of Faulkner's world view: "Faulkner's treatment of prostitution is that behavior that appears to be immoral serves as a touchstone for virtue while figures of apparent virtue and honor are often revealed to be truly disreputable" (31). In *Sanctuary*, Faulkner uses a brothel as his main setting for Temple, but Temple looks like the deviant character because of her situation and connection with Popeye. Temple is supposed to be the well-bred daughter of a judge, the rich college girl, but Reba and Minnie seem to be the more honorable characters in this sanctuary-prison. Miss Reba and Minnie, madam and prostitute/maid,

are the mothering figures to the well-bred girl who has become an alcoholic and a prisoner of Popeye, and the first time the reader is introduced to Miss Reba, her “maternal voice” is brought to attention (*Sanctuary* 144). Folks proposes that “if, in Faulkner’s thinking, prostitutes could be deemed sacred, then so-called respectable women could be and often were depicted as defiled and corrupt” (36). Faulkner’s treatment of Reba, Minnie, and Temple can be seen in this light. While Faulkner depicts the brothel as more of a hotel, he exposes the justice system as equally corrupt. His narrative sequence and use of omission and delay urge readers to investigate and create the story, which requires delving deeper into this contradictory world and questioning conventional ideas of normalcy in the process.

Faulkner opens *Sanctuary* with Popeye watching Horace. Popeye, however, does not want to see the book in Horace’s pocket, but asks for Horace to explain it: “Don’t show me... tell me” (*Sanctuary* 4). This request sets up a storytelling situation, positioning the readers as Popeye and Faulkner as Horace. Faulkner may posit Popeye initially as the reader to encourage sympathy for the member of the underworld, sympathy which may immediately be revoked once readers become aware of Popeye’s character and then, perhaps, at least partially returned at the end when Popeye’s story is revealed. Faulkner presents the principle characters and places in the first six chapters, much as a detective would present a case. First, Popeye and Horace meet at the creek. Popeye and Horace return to the Old Frenchman Place, the scene of the crime, and then Horace returns to Jefferson, the scene of the trial. Faulkner later introduces Gowan and Temple. Gowan is a college man from a decent family, but Faulkner shows him as an

irresponsible drunk. The daughter of a judge, Temple is also in college. Though Faulkner presents her as a beautiful and simple girl, he hints at her deviance and highlights repeatedly that she is always the object of someone's gaze.

Chapter Seven invites the reader to watch Temple through a woman's eyes. Ruby and Temple are from completely different backgrounds, but both appear to be viewed by society as whores. Ruby accepts her station and looks down on Temple, whom she sees as playing the whore while claiming to be a righteous girl: "'Oh I know your sort,' the woman said. 'Honest women. Too good to have anything to do with common people. You'll slip out at night with the kids, but just let a man come along'" (*Sanctuary* 57). Faulkner calls Ruby "the woman" throughout this section, highlighting not only Temple's but also the conventional view of women such as Ruby as beneath Temple's station by not bothering with her name. Ruby also warns Temple of her current situation: "'Do you think you're meeting with kids now? kids that give a damn whether you like it or not?'" (Faulkner 58-9). For Ruby, and later for Horace, Temple is a problem. Ruby does not question the motives and actions of the men, but of Temple. Later, when Horace discovers Temple's presence at the scene of Tommy's murder, Temple becomes the source of investigation rather than Popeye. She is the one out of place. Ruby knows that Temple is out of her league and tries to warn her, but Gowan does not want to leave, so Temple stays. In this section, the reader sees Temple through different eyes, watches Temple in a different light. She has been objectified by men; however, through the eyes of Ruby, Temple's actions can be seen as risky. At this point in the narrative, the reader as investigator senses the doom in store for Temple.



Faulkner presents Temple in constant motion. In the room given to her for the night at the Old Frenchman Place, she removes clothes, puts on clothes, checks the time, and even primps: “watching her motions in the tiny mirror, she spread and fluffed her hair with her fingers and powdered her face and replaced the compact” (*Sanctuary* 71). Though these motions may suggest nervousness, the fact that Temple looks at herself in the mirror and adjusts her appearance also hints at her knowledge of herself as an object. Her actions also give rise to the idea of her already present scopophilia. Later in this chapter, Popeye first stands over Temple in bed, which he does again, presumably many times. Thus far, Popeye has only watched Temple when given the opportunity, but Tommy sees Popeye’s actions and begins following him as if to make sure he does not harm Temple.

Although Faulkner has presented Ruby in opposition to Temple, Ruby also proves to be motivated by a desire to protect her. Because of Ruby’s position with the men, as Goodwin’s woman who follows orders and cares for the men present, Ruby is unable to go outwardly against them in order to protect Temple, so she must wait for darkness and for the men to leave. Ruby listens in the black room. Because readers are rendered blind due to the darkness in which Faulkner places Ruby, readers must piece together the events in the dark through information of what Ruby hears and smells. Ruby is inside the doorway of the room in which Temple and Gowan are sleeping, but Ruby’s ears give readers more than just the sounds of Gowan’s snoring and Temple’s silence. Ruby can hear the men “moving about, on the porch and in the hall and in the kitchen, talking,” though “their voices [are] indistinguishable through the door” (*Sanctuary* 79). Ruby is

unable to protect Temple because the door does not have a lock, but she is witness to the events that unfold. The other men are noisy, and Ruby “could tell all of them by the way they breathed” (*Sanctuary* 80). Despite the darkness, Popeye is able to sneak in without her immediately knowing: “without having heard, felt, the door open, she began to smell something: the brilliantine which Popeye used on his hair” (*Sanctuary* 80). It is not sound that gives him away but smell. Ruby is blind in the darkness, yet Popeye seems to be able to see Temple and his way around the room. Faulkner may privilege the male gaze over female sight or want to bolster the reader’s view of Popeye as a voyeur by highlighting the power of his vision. Only after she smells Popeye leave the room does Ruby make her way over to the bed and sneak Temple out of the house and into the barn where Ruby believes she will be safe.

Although Faulkner has allowed readers to watch the scene, much as Popeye, the cardinal voyeur in *Sanctuary* has witnessed it, Faulkner has also limited the viewing plane enough to invite creativity and imagination in the investigative process. Unlike films of his era, when Faulkner’s literary camera cuts between scenes or pans around a room, the reader is cut off from what is not directly in Faulkner’s vision. Providing few wide shots which include all of the action entices readers as investigators into speculative creation. Faulkner has not provided a wide shot with full details of the events of the night; however, readers know of no real harm that has come to Temple, as all readers have done is watch men watching her, though it is possible there have been roving hands. This information, however, is unsubstantiated at this point.

Faulkner encourages readers to question the motives of all the male characters up to this point with regard to their intentions with Temple, but he gives no back-story for possible outcomes to be determined or motives to be realistically evaluated. Gowan seems unconcerned, and Tommy creeps around following and watching Popeye, who quietly follows Temple. Goodwin also follows Temple, staring at the barn where Temple is hiding. Goodwin does not tell Popeye who is in the barn when asked, and this lack of information piques Popeye's interest. Popeye enters the barn and because he is able to move about so quietly, Tommy is unable to hear him enter the loft above where Temple hides. Tommy seems to be standing guard at the door, though he also makes statements which could incriminate him: "Lee says hit wont hurt you none. All you got to do is lay down" (*Sanctuary* 100). He does not realize that Popeye has snuck behind him and into the room in which Temple has locked herself. Only Temple hears Popeye: "[Temple] heard Popeye cross the floor of the loft, then his foot appeared, groping gingerly for the step. He descended, watching her over his shoulder" (*Sanctuary* 101). What happens next is unclear, as Faulkner is not explicit in his depiction. The sharp sound and later the sight of a gun somehow results in Tommy's murder. Popeye's rape of Temple is even less clear. In this empty space left by Faulkner, the reader is left to assume that Popeye rapes Temple in the traditional sense rather than with a corncob, which is what she has probably assumed would happen with dangerous men lurking around her, watching her, the whole time. Although Faulkner does not use the word rape, the novelist affirms that both Temple and the reader should have seen something coming: Temple screams, "I *told* you! I *told* you all the time!" (*Sanctuary* 102, emphasis mine). Faulkner then returns to Horace, the lawyer whose job is to tell the jury a story that will bring a verdict of not

guilty for Goodwin. Even with all of the narrative lapses, Faulkner has provided enough detail for readers as investigators to be fairly confident that Popeye, not Goodwin, murdered Tommy. The truth, however, seems unattainable to the judge and jury because of Horace's inability to mention Popeye's presence at the Old Frenchman Place.

Although Faulkner has provided evidence of Popeye's power throughout the novel, readers are introduced to Popeye's position in the underworld in Chapter Seventeen. Goodwin will not admit that Popeye was ever on the land of the Old Frenchman Place. Horace wishes Goodwin would, all but begs for Goodwin to admit it, for this admission would cause reasonable doubt. Without acknowledgment that Popeye was present, the jury will conclude that Goodwin is guilty of murder and rape. Goodwin's criminal record as a bootlegger and murderer could be presented as proof of criminal history, as the repetitive nature of criminal behavior is both documented and part of common lore. Knowing the inevitable outcome, Goodwin still voices his concerns about letting anyone know of Popeye's whereabouts on the night in question: "Just let it get back to Memphis that I said he was anywhere around there, what chance do you think I'd have to get back to this cell after I testified?" (*Sanctuary* 132). Horace naively believes Goodwin has "law, justice, and civilization" on his side, but Goodwin replies that he only has those if he "[spends] the rest of [his] life squatting in that corner yonder," speaking of the jail cell (Faulkner 132). Still, Horace holds some hope that Goodwin will be found innocent, for he is only guilty at this time of moon shining.

As Faulkner presents him, Popeye seems to have both eyes and ears everywhere. He is a voyeur of at least two levels: as an individual and as the head of an organization.

This power makes him a true criminal voyeur on a much grander scale. Popeye's power as a voyeur explains Goodwin's fear. Unfortunately, without Popeye's presence known, there is no other way for the trial to end. This omission in the trial frustrates and angers the reader as investigator, who may desire more information as to what type of power Popeye must wield, who his minions are, and how he has risen to the top. The reader's desire for Popeye's back story is fueled by a sense of helplessness as Goodwin – a good man who cannot win – gives in to his fate.

Faulkner provides enough information about the events of the brothel, where Popeye has taken Temple, for readers to acknowledge that Popeye did rape Temple: Popeye stands in the doorway and Temple watches him come in, “[shrinking] into the bed, drawing the covers up to her chin” (*Sanctuary* 158). The reader watches her cringe at his touch; even the “flesh beneath the envelop of her loins [cringes] rearward in furious disintegration like frightened people in a crowd” (*Sanctuary* 159). Popeye creeps closer until he begins to “[make] a high whinnying sound like a horse” as he cries. Faulkner again leaves the graphic events to the reader to piece together, as Faulkner shifts attention to Miss Reba's cursing outside the room (*Sanctuary* 159). What exactly happens in that room? The reader as investigator must piece this together.

Faulkner then draws the reader's attention back to Horace and his concern for Temple, whom he has discovered was at the Old Frenchman Place during the time of Tommy's murder. Faulkner reminds readers of Popeye creeping in on Temple, and Horace, as lawyer and investigator, repeatedly attempts to get confirmation from Ruby that Temple was alright: “‘But that girl,’ Horace said. ‘She was all right. You know she

was alright when you left the house. When you saw her in the car with him. He was just giving her a lift to town. She was alright. You know she was alright”” (*Sanctuary* 160). Ruby does not confirm this statement, for she is surely certain Temple was not alright. Instead of questioning the motives of the men at the Old Frenchman Place, Ruby blames Temple and Gowan for any negative outcomes. Her answer indicates as much: “Lee has told them they must not bring women out there, and I told her before it got dark they were not her kind of people and to get away from there” (*Sanctuary* 161). Instead of aiming the blame at the whole group of men, Ruby places the blame on “that fellow that brought her,” for “he was out there on the porch with them, still drinking” while Temple should have been leaving (*Sanctuary* 161). The fictional Ruby thus does what many rape defense lawyers do in this situation; she blames the victim: “If she’d just stopped running around where they had to look at her. She wouldn’t stay anywhere. She’d just dash out one door, and in a minute she’d come running in from the other direction” (*Sanctuary* 162).

Ruby’s statement voices a question investigators may have had the whole time: why did Temple continue to run around knowing the men there were dangerous and watching her? Readers may easily blame Temple, for she acted just as Ruby says, running around and bringing constant attention to herself. The investigator may wonder if Temple has become accustomed to this type of attention, for Faulkner has set readers up for this reaction: in the town, the men stare at her constantly as well. The underworld, though, is a completely different setting, and this difference is what Ruby tries to explain to Temple the night before the rape. After her explanation to Horace, he repeats his

assertions, for he simply must believe that Temple was unharmed: “‘But that girl,’ Horace said. ‘She was all right. When you were coming back to the house the next morning after the baby’s bottle, you saw her and knew she was all right’” (*Sanctuary* 164). Whether Horace can admit it or not, both readers and Ruby know that Temple was most assuredly not alright.

Faulkner fuels the reader as investigator’s imagination through Horace’s encounters with Clarence Snopes. This character is supposedly on the side of the law, but he reeks of corruption, and his physical appearance is only one implication of his duplicity: “The tie was of blue polka-dots; the very white spots on it appeared dirty when seen close; the whole man with his shaved neck and pressed clothes and gleaming shoes emanated somehow the idea that he had been dry-cleaned rather than washed” (*Sanctuary* 186). In fact, “Snopes’ family originated somewhere near Frenchman’s Bend and still lived there. [Horace] knew of the devious means by which information passed from man to man of that illiterate race which populated that section of the country” (*Sanctuary* 205). Frenchman’s Bend creates a correlation by name to the Old Frenchman Place, and so the connection of Snopes and the underworld, at least for readers, exists from birth. Still, Horace listens to the information provided, no matter how Snopes has acquired it, and follows the lead to “a Memphis ‘ho’-house” to find Temple (*Sanctuary* 206). Little does he know, though he might have suspected, that Snopes plans on following him to Memphis to that very whore house.

By permitting Temple to tell her story in a way that solicits the reader’s participation as a creative investigator, Faulkner suggests that not all of the details have

been given about the events at the Old Frenchman place. Temple's story forces readers to imagine and reconfigure the sequence of events, in a sense to relive the rape. Both Miss Reba and Horace listen to Temple and work to coax the story out of her. The story she provides lacks coherence, thus inviting more creative speculation. Temple does not appear to care about Goodwin or Ruby and her baby at all; rather, Temple is only concerned with telling her own story:

Temple told him of the night she had spent in the ruined house, from the time she entered the room and tried to wedge the door with the chair, until the woman came to the bed and led her out. That was the only part of the whole experience which appeared to have left any impression on her at all: the night which she had spent in comparative inviolation. (*Sanctuary* 215)

When "Horace would attempt to get her... ahead to the crime itself... she would elude him and return to herself sitting on the bed, listening to the men on the porch, or lying in the dark while they entered the room and came to the bed and stood there above her" (*Sanctuary* 215). Temple's story seems to blend the house and the crib where the murder and her rape occurred, and readers must rummage through what is told to find the truth, if there is any, of the whole situation. Temple continues on, though, and "Horace [realizes] that she [is] recounting the experience with actual pride, a sort of naïve and impersonal vanity, as though she were making it up, looking from him to Miss Reba with quick, darting glances like a dog driving two cattle along a lane" (*Sanctuary* 216). By providing just enough to provoke creative curiosity, Faulkner guides readers just as Temple guides Horace and Miss Reba.



The actual events at the Old Frenchman Place remain unclear. Temple introduces more contradiction and disjointedness, blending her reflections with actual events: “I was looking at my legs and I’d try to make like I was a boy. I was thinking about if I just was a boy and then I tried to make myself into one by thinking” (*Sanctuary* 216). Temple highlights her own naivety by presenting the idea that as a boy she could not have been raped. This ignorance of the ability to rape both sexes also presents another side of the conventional ideas of deviancy and normalcy; Temple’s lack of awareness of this possibility and her position as a well-bred daughter of a judge suggest that the status quo as presented in Temple’s world does not include the hint of deviance such as male rape but does present the deviance of female rape.

Although her story is muddled and confused, perhaps from her overconsumption of alcohol and under-consumption of food in the days leading up to Horace’s interview, Temple makes it quite clear that she was violated: “Then it touched me, that nasty little cold hand, fiddling around inside the coat where I was naked” (*Sanctuary* 218). The remainder of the story, the tale of the rape and the murder of Tommy, still eludes Horace and he is again left with nothing about the murder for which his client is on trial. Instead of including her true violation, Temple simply ends the story as Ruby takes her to the crib. Florence Dore agrees: “Temple Drake’s... [narrative] fails spectacularly, giving way to an anxiously eschewed ‘reality’ ... despite a determination to escape mention of rape, Temple’s story has the disappointing tendency to symbolize” (86). Temple’s attempt to transform into a boy symbolizes her innocence and naivety in that she believes men or boys are safe. This belief also symbolizes her position in a patriarchally driven society,

highlighting the helplessness of women among men. The only way to escape this helplessness is to transform into a man. This belief may also point to the reason Temple does not leave the Memphis whore house where Popeye keeps her, as well as why Miss Reba asks Horace, a man, to take Temple away instead of whisking Temple away on her own.

After Temple's monolog, Faulkner returns to Horace, the fictional investigator trying, like the reader, to piece together Temple's telling of the story by putting himself in her shoes. Florence Dore and others have seen this passage as Horace envisioning the culmination of his desire for his step daughter, Little Belle; however, Horace's encounter with Temple, her description of the shucks, and her elusive reaction when questioned about the crime and her departure from The Old Frenchman's Place read in conjunction with Horace's section may lead readers to believe Horace creates what might have happened to Temple. His experience weaves in and out, much as hers does. Horace

plunged forward and struck the lavatory and leaned upon his braced arms while the shucks set up a terrific uproar beneath her thighs. Lying with her head lifted slightly, her chin depressed like a figure lifted down from a crucifix, she watched something black and furious go roaring out of her pale body. She was bound naked on her back on a flat car moving at speed through a black tunnel, the blackness screaming in rigid threads overhead, a roar of iron wheels in her ears. The car shot bodily from the tunnel in a long upward slant, the darkness overhead now shredded with parallel attenuations of living fire, toward a crescendo like a held breath, an

interval in which she would swing faintly and lazily in nothingness filled with pale, myriad points of light. Far beneath her, she could hear the faint, furious uproar of the shucks. (*Sanctuary* 223)

Horace weaves in and out of at least two scenes of Temple's story: how she left the Old Frenchman Place and the rape itself. Horace knows she was violated and no longer believes that Ruby saw her in the car on her way off the Old Frenchman Place. Now he imagines she was bound naked and perhaps on a train. Though the passage can be interpreted in at least two ways, the salient point is that, through Horace, Faulkner positions the reader as a creative investigator who perhaps is made ill, like Horace, by experiencing his own interpretation of the information given regarding the rape he believes occurred.

Faulkner provides proof that Temple bribes her surrogate mother, Minnie, into letting her escape the brothel for at least a moment. As investigators, readers are left to piece together why Temple does not run away when she has the chance in Chapter Twenty Four. Temple gives Minnie ten dollars to permit her to leave, for she is held per orders from either Popeye or Miss Reba – the text does not specify which. More likely, it is Popeye's ruling, as Miss Reba has already told Horace to take Temple away due to her incompatibility with the underworld. Instead of running away when she has the chance, however, Temple makes a phone call to Red: "She turned into the drug store at the corner and went back to the telephone booth. Then she returned to the house" (*Sanctuary* 228). Readers do not know whom she calls until later that night, which is another delay of information by Faulkner. While she is out of the house, she encounters "a man in a cap"

who seems to be watching her (*Sanctuary* 228). Popeye now proves what has been heavily alluded to: he has eyes beyond his own.

These extra eyes keep Temple chained to the brothel. Popeye enforces her imprisonment by using his minions as watchmen while he is away on business. When Popeye shows up later, readers are left to assume that the man in the cap was paid by Popeye to watch the brothel and Temple's movements. Could these minions be considered voyeurs? Or should readers even consider them voyeurs at all? After all, they are watching for a job, not for pleasure. If these employees of Popeye are considered voyeurs, all investigators would be considered voyeurs. Because this is a job required of them and because voyeurs generally watch for the pleasure it brings, Popeye's workers should not be considered voyeurs based on the limited information given. Faulkner presents them as workers doing a job. Because of these minions, Popeye already knows that Temple has made plans to meet Red, and he also knows the location of this meeting.

In the car ride to the Grotto, Faulkner presents the truth of the events inside the bedroom in the brothel. Temple is not raped in the manner Miss Reba may have originally thought, nor does she have sex with Popeye every night. Readers find that Popeye is "not even a man" because he "had to bring a real man in to" perform the act (*Sanctuary* 231). Instead of leaving the room, Popeye "[hung] over the bed, moaning and slobbering" (*Sanctuary* 231). Though Temple is the prisoner here and is at the mercy of Popeye, she continues to torment him about his inability to perform, which forces him to watch, to be a voyeur: "Don't you wish you were Red? Don't you? Don't you wish you could do what he can do? Don't you wish he was the one watching us instead of you?"

(*Sanctuary* 232). Popeye is a criminal voyeur, for he rapes the object of his gaze, but he has turned Temple and Red into scopophiliacs, for they know they are being watched. Temple even seems to now enjoy being watched, for she suggests Red watch her with Popeye. Faulkner provides enough information for the reader as investigator to piece together the events inside the room at the brothel, but the reader is left to wonder about the changes in Temple. She has changed from a girl who runs back and forth, trying to avoid the hands of men, to a woman who almost demands sexual acts from more than one man in the same night. Faulkner's portrayal of Temple's promiscuity suggests that she has always had scopophilic and sexually deviant tendencies. If not, readers are left to wonder, not only how this change occurred but also to create the character's thoughts about these actions.

Faulkner introduces another narrative lapse with the death of Red. Readers are left passing four men with Popeye on the road and directed straight to Red's funeral. Readers do not see how Red's murder happens, but Faulkner leads his readers as investigators to assume that Popeye or one of his minions simply walked up to Red and shot him at close range in the head, for Red's wound is a hole in the forehead, plugged with wax, which falls out when his coffin overturns and his body tumbles to the ground, face down. Faulkner does not return to Red's murder for a full explanation or any more delayed details. Perhaps this fictional crime would go unsolved or assumed to be an organized crime related murder much as some murders were assumed to be mob related or gangster related in Faulkner's time. The reader may wonder, however, if there was an argument or a cold execution. The answer is left for the investigator to ponder.

Faulkner informs readers of Miss Reba's connection to Red when she attends his funeral. Whether Miss Reba knew Red before the events in her brothel or not is unclear, but Miss Reba does seem quite upset about the whole situation. Her conversation with her friend, Miss Myrtle, sheds some light on Miss Reba's side of the underworld and her ideas on how people, and women in particular, should act: "A woman that wants to fool with more than one man at a time is a fool,' Miss Reba said. 'They're all trouble, and why do you want to double your trouble? And the woman that can't stay true to a good man when she gets him, a free-hearted spender that never [gives] her a hour's uneasiness or a hard word...'" (*Sanctuary* 254). Miss Reba's message is unclear. Is she talking in general, about Temple and Popeye, or about her man who died? Though it seems as though she believes Temple has betrayed a good man by getting involved with Red, the conversation shifts to explain a bit of what has been going on, confirming what readers may already have pieced together: "Minnie said the two of them would be nekkid as two snakes, and Popeye hanging over the foot of the bed without even his hat took off, making a kind of whinnying sound" (*Sanctuary* 258). Not only does Red appear to be "a stud" for Temple, Popeye's girl, but it seems as though there has been a lot of fighting going on upstairs at Miss Reba's brothel:

There was a Chineese robe she paid a hundred dollars for—imported, it was—and perfume at ten dollars an ounce; and next morning when I went up there, they was all wadded in the corner and the perfume and rouge busted all over them like a cyclone. That's what she'd do when she got

mad at him, when he'd beat her. After he shut her up and wouldn't let her leave the house. Having the front of my house watched... (*Sanctuary* 256)

If readers were unsure about the relationship between Temple and Popeye from the start, and after the hints provided later, this information from Miss Reba explains what readers have missed: Temple and Popeye do not actually have a relationship; she is more like a prisoner or property. Though Temple has a lot of nice things, she sees them as an extension of Popeye and treats them poorly or destroys them. Red is introduced by Popeye, and Temple becomes attached to him. Once she becomes too attached, Popeye removes that temptation by killing him, and Miss Reba turns against Popeye because of the events with Red and Temple.

At this point, the narrative returns to Horace and the trial of Lee Goodwin. Throughout the court proceedings, Faulkner, through the lawyers, tells more of the events at the Old Frenchman Place, and the townspeople become enraged. The townspeople turn into a mob because of what they have seen painted by Temple and the lawyers. Temple seems to lie to protect Popeye, so the “truth” the mob creates from the information given is in fact “untruth,” and the “justice” Goodwin meets with is just another bit of misinformation given by the underworld. There is, however, a hint of truth in the mob, for they question the manhood of a man who would have used a corncob on Temple: “I saw her. She was some baby. Jeez. I wouldn't have used no cob” (*Sanctuary* 294). This assertion further implicates the males in the mob as voyeurs, for they have been watching Temple, and they have obviously imagined the events of Temple's stay at the Old Frenchman Place by piecing together the “facts” as readers have. The mob has a different

kind of justice. One man says, “he wouldn’t a never got to trial in my town” (*Sanctuary* 294). Three kinds of justice are on display: legal justice, which we may or may not see; corrupt justice, which is depicted heavily; and mob justice, which ends Goodwin’s life.

Faulkner presents what readers as investigators may see as corrupt justice in the place where legal justice should take place. Temple appears to blame Goodwin for Popeye’s crime; however, Joseph Urgo claims that Temple’s perjury is “true justice,” for the root of the problem is blamed, the ultimate cause of the crime is punished. Urgo argues that Temple blames Goodwin because she was “hiding from Goodwin in the crib, not from Popeye,” so “as far as Temple is concerned, Goodwin is responsible for her rape because he terrorized her into the crib” (440). Whether she is lying or pointing a finger at the root cause, the man innocent of this rape and murder is put to death, murdered by the mob. Without the inner thoughts of Temple or the conversations she has had with her father, a judge, since the trial began, investigators are left to create and decide which truth to believe.

For the first thirty chapters, Faulkner has been concerned with the events at the Old Frenchman Place and less concerned with the motives of his characters. As a result, investigators are left with a pile of “facts” but little insight on the why of the principle event and the resulting actions of the characters. Readers have not been given additional information about Temple which would not be known by the town. The information Faulkner provides about Lee Goodwin is that which any investigator would discover by digging into his life to prove his guilt. The motives of his past crimes are never given. Ruby’s history seems reactionary, as if she acted only in response to Lee Goodwin. Why



she stayed with him is as much of a mystery as why Temple tried to run away to another member of the underworld. Until now, Faulkner has not justified any of the actions of his characters; he has only provided the facts. By telling Popeye's tale in Chapter Thirty One, Faulkner justifies Popeye's actions and delves into the motives of the most deviant character in *Sanctuary*.

Faulkner shows Popeye as a somewhat dutiful son by having him arrested on the way to see his mother, who raised Popeye after being left by his drifter father. Though his father married Popeye's mother, he left before Popeye was born. At first, Popeye was different: he "was born [on Christmas Day]," and "they thought he was blind. Then they found out he was not blind, though he did not learn to walk and talk until he was about four years old" (*Sanctuary* 304). The fact that Popeye is not blind and now appears as the eyes of a criminal organization as well as a criminal voyeur himself is significant. Could stories of his possible blindness have pushed him into a fetish with looking, watching? Popeye's birth on Christmas day is ironic as well. Faulkner may be subverting the savior motif by positing a seeming sociopath in the place of the social expectations and religious connotations of Jesus. Calling the novel *Sanctuary* also subverts this religious idea of safety, as the sanctuary in the novel is actually a brothel serving as a prison. However, Popeye could be looked at in a deviant way: he has saved Temple from her ordinary life filled with drunk college boys and sneaking out at night.

Popeye's back-story raises more questions than it answers. His health problems, for example: were they caused by the fire started by his grandmother, or did he always have them? Faulkner also emphasizes that Popeye was raised by women who had been

left by men. Is this the reason he has trouble with relationships? He also kills animals as a child, a sign of mental instability and criminal tendencies:

on the floor lay a wicker cage in which two lovebirds lived; beside it lay the birds themselves, and the bloody scissors with which he had cut them up alive. Three months later, at the instigation of a neighbor of his mother, Popeye was arrested and sent to a home for incorrigible children. He had cut up a half-grown kitten the same way. (*Sanctuary* 309)

In that “home for incorrigible children,” Popeye appears to have learned to play the game of normalcy, most likely by watching how others acted in public and mimicking them. The home let him out, “his behavior having been impeccable, as being cured” (*Sanctuary* 309). It seems as though Popeye was able to control himself at one point, but once he joined the underworld, his violent and voyeuristic tendencies were given ample opportunity to prevail.

In a reversal of argument, Faulkner defends Popeye rather than provide the facts and allow the investigator to see Popeye as a monster. Faulkner entices readers to question the motives of all of the men at the Old Frenchman Place. He then provides more pieces of information that narrow the suspects down to three: Tommy, Lee, and Popeye. Because Tommy is dead, those who have not been privy to Faulkner’s narrative, i.e. the judge and jury, determine that Lee is the only suspect in question who could have committed the crimes of murder and rape. Until Lee Goodwin is put to death by the mob and that trial is finished, Faulkner provides only some information to the reader, and an even more limited number of facts are available to the judge and jury. Faulkner has

Popeye arrested in a town he has never visited for a crime he could not have committed. Ironically, he was in a different town killing Red. Readers as investigators watch the trial and attempt to piece together how it came to this. Could Temple's father, the judge, be using underworld tactics here to get Popeye convicted of a murder he couldn't have committed? This possibility, however, is unsubstantiated, for Faulkner gives readers no proof. Faulkner appears to have been on the side of justice for Temple and Tommy until the trial is over. With the final section on Popeye's history, Faulkner delves into an explanation of why, though he does not provide this motivational back story for the rest of his characters.

In this way, Faulkner indirectly challenges deviancy and normality. By giving a picture of Popeye's father, Faulkner may be postulating that some deviance comes from nature rather than nurture. By characterizing Popeye's family life as far from typical, Faulkner may be suggesting that some extreme deviance, as with Popeye, is a result of both genetics *and* upbringing, not choice. In this case, Faulkner could be saying that what happened at the Old Frenchman Place is not quite Popeye's fault, for he was deviant from the womb and made more deviant by his abnormal home life in adolescence. In this sense, Popeye's deviant nature is natural, even logical.

Faulkner further provokes his readers by signposting those characters who may have initially appeared outwardly abnormal as normal and vice versa. These depictions of deviancy and normalcy so closely aligned and blurred give rise to avid questioning of the socially accepted parameters of both deviance and normalcy. This questioning of these parameters does not leave the novel with the inverted world. Faulkner returns readers to

their expected moral position by punishing Popeye and returning Temple to her family. Faulkner provided *The Paris Review* with an explanation of the “thesis [he was] always hammering at: that man is indestructible because of his simple will to freedom” (4). Temple has endured her imprisonment and has again gained her freedom. The reader, however, may feel unsatisfied with this result, for Lee Goodwin and Tommy both die for nothing, or so it seems. Who is ultimately responsible for these crimes? If readers blame genetics and upbringing for Popeye’s crimes, then how do readers judge future cases of deviance? Faulkner not only highlights deviance but also proves that it is here to stay.

Though the most deviant character in the novel, Popeye, has been explored through genetics and upbringing, Temple’s deviance has not been explained. Are readers to assume that Temple’s deviance comes from circumstance? Does this mean all people, despite genetics and upbringing, have the capacity for at least some deviance? Faulkner challenges the separation of those considered deviant and those considered normal by presenting Popeye and Temple. Popeye is a member of the deviant outcasts, and Temple is the normal well-bred daughter of a judge, a college girl next door; however, Temple is also capable of deviance well outside the realm of conventional normalcy. Faulkner does not, however, judge for the reader. This may be because Faulkner believed that “life is not interested in good and evil.... Since people exist only in life, they must devote their time simply to being alive. Life is motion, and motion is concerned with what makes man move – which is ambition, power, pleasure” (*The Paris Review* 13). It is not man himself that decides to make the choice between good and evil, but societal expectations. Because Faulkner does not make the choice, and his characters live in both the deviant and normal

realms without discussion of good or evil of either, readers must investigate their own beliefs about deviance and normalcy. By challenging conventional ideas and the creation of both, Faulkner positions his reader as investigators and catapults them into this questioning realm.

## Chapter 2: The Reader as Voyeur Creator in McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye*

Faulkner's *Sanctuary* follows the cinematic rules of his time, and his narrative sequence pigeon-holes readers as investigators due to narrative lapses; the reader has a limited scope of vision. With *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, McCullers presents a narrative sequence which invites creativity, yet presents scenes in full to readers and thus allows the reader to engage in creative voyeurism while questioning the traditionally accepted parameters of deviance and normalcy.

Much like deviance, voyeurism, according to Anil Aggrawal, presents itself on a continuum, ranging from what is called a pseudovoyeur to a criminal voyeur (131-2). A voyeur is one who watches: "a literal translation would... be 'seer' or 'observer' with pejorative connotations... The thrill of a voyeur comes mainly from a constantly impending fear of being caught while watching" (Aggrawal 127). Like other deviant behaviors, "all voyeurs [exist] on a continuum with the most innocuous voyeur (or the one who takes minimal risks for his activities and tends to break the law to the least possible extent) to the most dangerous (who takes substantial risks, breaks laws, and often harms the victims, too)" (Aggrawal 130-1). Beyond voyeurism, there is scopophilia, referring to voyeurism if the watched is aware of the observation (Aggrawal 132).

Clay Calvert believes that popular voyeurism in society today (as epitomized in reality TV) started just before and during Faulkner's time with yellow and jazz journalism: "Notably, the tabloids of the jazz journalism of the 1920s and 1930s were heavily image based in the voyeuristic tradition" (39). That "the voyeur holds power over

the observed individual should be clear,” according to Calvert: “The feeling of power that accompanies the voyeur’s privileged vantage point may be inherently rewarding” (69).

Norman Denzin also discusses criminal voyeurism: these criminal activities “place the voyeur under threat of harm; his or her life may be endangered. At the same time, these activities produce instabilities in the personal life of the voyeur, a life which is already unstable because of the voyeuristic position he or she has assumed in society” (55).

Pseudovoyeurs, opportunistic voyeurs, and criminal voyeurs are the main focus in *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. Pseudovoyeurs “merely have erotic fantasies involving witnessing the sexual performances of other persons,” and opportunistic voyeurs will watch if given the opportunity. Criminal voyeurs, however, are “the most dangerous of all voyeurs” because they break laws in order to view their objects of desire (Aggrawal 131-2). These voyeurs can be presented in fiction and seen in reality. The voyeurism of the reader, however, happens on a different plane: the imagination. Referencing viewers of TV shows and films, Clay Calvert asserts that “we watch [the lives of others]... from the safe, comfortable confines of our apartments and homes, without fear of ever having to meet, interact, or talk with the people we are watching” (5-6). In the same manner, readers are separated from characters in a novel. This separation, which also protects readers and viewers from criminal prosecution, is required, for readers need freedom to investigate, watch, and create without characters, or any others for that matter, having knowledge of the act of voyeurism. Because the characters in the novels are fictional, readers of McCullers go one step further than Calvert’s voyeurs who watch reality TV: though separation is necessary, the reader’s additional separation comes from the fact that

the story is fiction. As in films and on TV, “the monster or murderer is off-screen, watching from a distance. It is the ‘inability to see what is now shown [that] heightens the power of the image to horrify’” (Calvert 45). Like Faulkner with *Sanctuary*, McCullers leaves out bits of information; however, omissions are of past events in general, and present scenes are fully “seen” by the reader. Norman Denzin observes that a “camera’s gaze [creates] an invisible place for the spectator. It [makes] voyeurs out of viewers” (26). McCullers uses words to guide the camera of the readers’ eyes and to create voyeurs out of readers. Much of what is left out or not said – the truth in some cases – is “dependent on the viewer’s interpretive framework,” as with films (Denzin 27).

McCullers creates worlds that bring readers into creative voyeurism. Readers imagine the missing details, the left out parts in order to see and live the whole story. Laura Tanner, writing about film, asserts that “art invites the audience’s participation in its created worlds while offering that audience the comfort of aesthetic distance; that distance allows the reader or viewer to accept the work’s invitation to titillation without appearing to become implicated in its trafficking with violence” (560). In film, the director must use specific camera angles, but the writer must use the text to engage the reader. Tanner asserts that “reading appears to offer the opportunity for voyeuristic perception without actual participation; the distance between reader and text seemingly affords the opportunity to enter imaginatively – and without impunity – into fictional universes of violence and sex” (571). Though the outcome of voyeurism through text or screen seems similar, the act of creative voyeurism is much more involved than simply watching what is on the screen or imagining what has been told. In *Reflections in a*



*Golden Eye*, the reader is never told what to imagine, for the story begins in the middle of the lives of the characters, after major events have occurred; therefore, the reader must create images of past events to complete the stories and stand in the characters' shoes. McCullers sets the stage for voyeurism through her narrative sequences, which allows readers to look into places regularly inaccessible, such as a military post. Using this setting and the characters within, McCullers is able to set the stage for creative voyeurism. This act of creating images turns a reading voyeur into a voyeur creator, thus deepening the connection and involvement in the subject matter.

Despite her best intentions, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* received mixed reviews. The novel first appeared in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1940 before publication by Houghton Mifflin in early 1941. Initially, critics were not receptive to McCullers' new work, as they "felt it did not satisfy the expectations aroused by the first novel," *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (Evans 72). Critics mentioned her grotesque curiosity and seeming obsession with strange and deviant people and behaviors. Robert Littrell even mentioned "the novel's inversions and mutilations and nastiness," and Frederick T. Marsh called it "over-hastily written" (qtd in Evans 72). Almost immediately after the novel's publication, Rose Feld noted that McCullers was likened to Faulkner and went on to say that *Reflections in a Golden Eye* appeared to mimic or try to mirror Faulkner's morbidity at extremes (cited in Evans 73). Hubert Creekmore claimed that McCullers needed to "learn how to write, how to build characters that are more than a pathology diagnosis, how to move them for her story, and how to be interesting without the abnormal" (qtd in Evans 74). Basil Davenport, however, believed McCullers could actually write, but that

“the story [was] a viper’s-knot of neurasthenic relationships among characters whom the author [seemed] hardly to comprehend, and of whose perversions she [could] create nothing” (qtd in Evans 74). After the novel was published in England, *The Times Literary Supplement* claimed that it left readers “with the feeling that everybody is frustrated in one way or another, but for the rest there seems insufficient point in this collection of arbitrary psychological vividness” (qtd in Evans 75). Evans blamed the fact that so many read “McCullers on a realistic level” for this misunderstanding of the novel (75). This realistic reading was due to McCullers’ “realistic rather than abstract” language (75).

Beginning with Tennessee Williams in 1950, McCullers’ work saw a new course of criticism and study. Frank Baldanza, John B. Vickery, and Ihab Hassan focused their studies of *Reflections in a Golden Eye* on love, and Irving Malin focused on narcissism. Chester Esinger believed that “McCullers’ purpose in the novel is to show the incompleteness of human beings” (Evans 78), whereas Mark Schorer focused on “self-engrossment, malice, contempt, or sheer stupidity of the characters” (Evans 79). Louis D. Rubin claims that McCullers works as a whole, including *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, center on loneliness and that she focuses more on setting than characters: Rubin believes there is a “preoccupation with the setting in which the characterization reveals itself” and that “character is not for McCullers” (9). Though critics may agree that loneliness is one of McCullers’ chief themes, the idea that characters were not something important in her works is quite absurd. Both setting and characters were quite important, and the use of both and their interaction with each other is part of what engages her readers in

questioning not only the conventions of society in the novel but also of the society in which they live.

Since Oliver Evans published his Biography in 1965, McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye* has been studied for its understanding of sexuality and the grotesque. This focus is, of course, what her early critics reflected on as a *problem* with her work. Once queer studies became a study of academia, McCullers began to be read for sexual stereotyping, homosexual love, effeminate male characters, and tomboy female characters, as well as her adolescent characters who do not fit the mold of feminine and masculine. Critics have focused on deviance of a specific type, which is arguably a direct route from the focus on love and self-love in the 1950s.

McCullers begins *Reflections in a Golden Eye* with the principle characters, all of whom reside on an army post in the south. While military installations may seem to be very organized and disciplined, readers are presented with areas in which deviancy seems to run rampant: "the setting is important, for the monotony of peacetime army life encourages the neuroses of the various characters at the same time that it allows them the leisure in which to express them" (Evans 61). The most obvious of these deviancies is the voyeurism of both Private Williams and Captain Penderton. In addition to being a voyeur, Captain Penderton is a kleptomaniac kept in check and a closeted homosexual: "When [Mrs. Penderton] married the Captain, she had been a virgin. Four nights after her wedding she was still a virgin, and on the fifth night her status was changed only enough to leave her somewhat puzzled" (*Reflections* 16). This possible homosexuality can be

seen not only through Captain Penderton's actions with his wife but also through his stalking of Private Williams later in the novel.

McCullers reminds readers of the military setting by constantly referring to Captain Penderton as "The Captain" and Major Langdon as "The Major." In the military, officers are held in high esteem because of their positions of power over enlisted men and the length of time and study taken to obtain the position. In contrast, McCullers always refers to Private Williams with his rank and last name, for his name would be required with his rank due to the high number of Privates present on any post. The only time an officer's rank is looked down upon in the novel is when Captain Penderton aches to join the enlisted men. The Captain goes so far as imagining himself as Private Weldon Penderton, and "these words, with the associations they engendered, aroused in the Captain a perverse feeling of relief and satisfaction. Instead of dreaming of honor and rank, he now experienced a subtle pleasure in imagining himself as an enlisted man" (*Reflections* 110-111). This desire can also be seen as deviant; rarely, if ever, does an officer revert to an enlisted rank unless for severe punishment purposes. This example of Captain Penderton's deviance lies in the possibility that he wishes to be anonymous, perhaps so he can stalk Private Williams more conspicuously. There is a possibility, however, that his life has made him yearn for a completely different identity.

*Reflections in a Golden Eye* explores a variety of deviant acts: voyeurism, homosexuality, kleptomania, and self mutilation are all present, as well as adultery, which is constantly referred to by the narrator of Captain Penderton's wife and other men, including Major Langdon. Another major character and disturbing event mentioned

in the novel circles around the grief from the loss of a child. Mrs. Langdon is so distraught that she cuts off her own nipples with gardening shears when the shears prove to be too dull to pierce her heart. In the background, Private Williams sneaks around the post, occasionally without a shred of clothing, and breaks into the Penderton home to watch Mrs. Penderton sleep.

McCullers presents a world of order and discipline: a military installation. In this place, deviance would be expected to be suppressed, but McCullers presents many deviant characters and acts in this space. In the barracks, Private Williams “slept badly, disturbing the room with nightmare mutters. No one, however, gave any thought to his oddities. There was much behavior in the barracks far queerer than this” (*Reflections* 122-3). McCullers goes on to share some of this odd behavior, including a soldier who writes “a letter every night to Shirley Temple,” a suicide over beer, hypochondria, and anorexia (123). Knowing that McCullers spent time on army posts, readers may wonder about the source of these characters.

McCullers does not simply use the characters to remind readers of the setting; she underscores the (dis)order of the institutional setting with descriptions of the physical space: “The general plan of a fort in itself adds to the monotony – the huge concrete barracks, the neat rows of officers’ homes built one precisely like the other, the gym, the chapel, the golf course, and the swimming pools – all is designed according to a certain rigid pattern” (*Reflections* 3). This rigid pattern makes the deviance of the characters that much more noticeable. McCullers’ focus initially on the grid-like pattern of the post leads into the slightly less rigid home of the Pendertons: “The house, like all the houses on the

block, was new, so that there had been no time for shrubs to grow in the yard” (*Reflections* 26-7). The absence of shrubs gives the house a temporary or unsettled appearance. Readers then view the Captain’s “house, an eight-room two-story building of stucco, [which] was identical with all the other houses on the street except for the distinction of being an end house” (*Reflections* 6). The way that readers are brought into this personal space resembles the introduction of the main voyeur, Private Williams. First he lives in the rigid grid of the enlisted men and views the outside of the Penderton house when he clears the space behind it. Finally he enters the house, though uninvited.

McCullers presents a voyeur in *Reflections in a Golden Eye* who can easily be compared to Faulkner’s Popeye despite the fact that Private Williams is a soldier and Popeye is of the underworld. Both Popeye and Private Williams are silent in movement and very cool-headed. Notwithstanding that readers know Popeye has beaten Temple, Faulkner does not depict his violent acts; readers must create the violence alluded to by Reba and Minnie. The worst readers see is Popeye covering Temple’s mouth when she begins to scream. Though McCullers mentions violence committed by Private Williams, she presents it in a manner which seems out of the ordinary, and most of the violence occurs when Private Williams denies himself his nightly visits to the Penderton residence. Both Private Williams and Popeye watch women in bed.

McCullers presents Private Williams’ violence as caused by his suppressing his deviant behavior. By considering this point and returning to Faulkner’s Popeye and Temple, we may be supplied with a deeper understanding of those characters. Popeye was most likely punished for his deviant behavior as a child and this may be why he

acted violently toward the lovebirds and cat. Furthermore, when Popeye is let out of the home for incorrigible children because he has been cured, readers must assume that he has suppressed or at least hidden his deviant behavior for some time. He then enters a life of violence and deviance: the underworld. Conversely, when Temple is forced into the underworld and forced to go beyond her previously comfortable realm of slight deviance as the spoiled daughter of a judge, she reacts violently. Though she *does* display deviance, Popeye does not allow her to go out at night and party without him. When forced to conform to his ways, which do not match her own desires, she responds violently by trashing the room. Both Faulkner and McCullers, while questioning the conventions of deviance and normalcy, may also be making a point about human nature: violence may be a reaction prohibitive behavior that seems natural to the offender.

McCullers indicates that Private Williams has been terrified into celibacy: “From his father, who ran a one mule farm and preached on Sunday at a Holiness church, he had learned that women carried in them a deadly and catching disease which made men blind, crippled, and doomed to hell.... Private Williams had never willingly touched, or looked at, or spoken to a female since he was eight years old” (*Reflections* 18-19). Private Williams is later shot by Mr. Penderton before he is able to take steps beyond rubbing Mrs. Penderton’s hair or nightgown between his fingers, the first time since the age of eight that he had “willingly touched” a woman.

McCullers also presents a criminal voyeur with Private Williams; however, Private Williams begins as an opportunistic voyeur and later escalates to a criminal voyeur. Based on the information given, Faulkner’s Popeye has been a criminal voyeur

perhaps since his release from the home for incorrigible children. Both die, but Popeye dies for a crime unrelated to his criminal voyeurism, and Private Williams dies because of his breaking and entering in order to appease his desire to view Mrs. Penderton. He also dies without a trial, without a judge to determine his fate: “The soldier did not have time to rise from his squatting position. He blinked at the light and there was no fear in his face.... The Captain was a good marksman, and although he shot twice only one raw hole was left in the center of the soldier’s chest” (*Reflections* 126-7). Ironically, Popeye dies after a trial with false evidence; his trial is a mockery of the justice system. When readers consider the death of Private Williams, death on the spot without questions, and then return to Faulkner and Popeye, similarity presents itself clearly. The town judges Popeye as guilty before the trial and asks no real questions. Their deaths are, therefore, similar; however, Faulkner continues the tradition of the trial and the justice system. Despite their different approaches, both McCullers and Faulkner suggest that the justice system is, at best, flawed, and, at worst, a complete farce.

Though McCullers lists Faulkner as one of those “who has influenced [her] work” (“Flowering” 278), she does not create another Popeye in Private Williams. McCullers creates a criminal voyeur who is much more separated from crime than Popeye. She also presents the history of this character from the beginning, and throughout the novel, she allows readers insight into the characters. Through these insertions of his background, readers may be able to at least minimally understand Private Williams’ actions from the beginning and thus sympathize with his position and motives from early in the novel. When looking from *Reflections in a Golden Eye* to *Sanctuary*, readers may see that



though the questioning of deviance and normalcy are similar, Faulkner upholds accepted parameters more than McCullers, as he separates Popeye so much more from his readers. McCullers presents a character that readers can immediately sympathize with, whereas sympathy for Popeye may come only in his death near the end when Faulkner takes the time to explore his childhood. Faulkner presents the other who may corrupt those who do not belong to the underworld, such as Temple; however, McCullers presents characters who are members of normal society, not the other, and shows that these members of normal society can also exist with deviance.

Private Williams was raised by a religious man and without a mother. His puritanical upbringing ensures his supreme avoidance of women until the night he spies Mrs. Penderton in the “sharply lighted vestibule” (*Reflections* 19). Instead of walking through the underworld, Private Williams is a child of nature and an animal lover, whereas Popeye is afraid of birds and kills animals. Private Williams spends most of his time with or caring for animals or alone in nature. Whereas Popeye is a voyeur with many eyes, Private Williams is an introvert and has only his own eyes. Popeye’s web of power causes most of his mystery, for no one knows where his eyes will be. Private Williams’ mystery is due to his reclusiveness and quiet demeanor in the company of others, as well as his avoidance of the normal activities of soldiers:

Private Williams did not smoke, drink, fornicate, or gamble. In the barracks he kept to himself and was something of a mystery to the other men. Most of his leisure time Private Williams spent out in the woods surrounding the post.... Except for riding, Private Williams cared for none

of the sports available to enlisted men. No one had ever seen him in the gym or at the swimming pool. Nor had he ever been known to laugh, to become angry, or to suffer in any way. (*Reflections* 4)

McCullers presents Private Williams as an emotionless outsider relatively powerless in both his personal and professional life. Unlike Popeye, Private Williams does not create a feeling of fear in the object of his gaze. His obsession, on the contrary, is completely oblivious to his watching.

Captain Penderton is the other major voyeur of *Reflections in a Golden Eye*.

Though an officer of the military, Captain Penderton shares traits with Faulkner's Popeye as well. Both Captain Penderton and Popeye are voyeurs, but Captain Penderton is merely an opportunistic voyeur. He does not break into any places to watch Private Williams, though he does stalk him at every opportunity: "One afternoon [Captain Penderton] drove before the barracks and saw the soldier resting alone on one of the benches. The Captain parked his car farther down the street and sat watching him" (*Reflections* 96). Later on, McCullers informs readers that

Captain Penderton had formed the habit of walking each afternoon before the quadrangle where Private Williams was quartered. Usually he saw the soldier sitting alone on the same bench. Walking on the sidewalk, the Captain would pass within two yards of the soldier and at his approach Private Williams would get up reluctantly and give a lazy salute.... [The Captain] knew that the soldier must now realize these afternoon walks were made on his account. (111)

Is the Captain hoping that Private Williams knows and becomes enamored with him? Or is he, like Popeye, looking to control with his gaze? “It even occurred to the Captain to wonder why the soldier did not evade him and go elsewhere at this time. The fact that the soldier clung to his habit gave to these daily contacts a flavor of assignation that filled the Captain with excitement” (*Reflections* 111). The Captain revels in the fact that the soldier knows he is being watched but does not change his habits. Whether the Captain believes Private Williams to be rebellious, stubborn, or solicitous of his feelings is left for the voyeur creator to decide.

Captain Penderton’s instabilities seem to be kept more in check than Popeye’s, which may be due to his military career. Captain Penderton also exhibits sexual abnormalities. His deviance may be caused by his homosexuality, but readers are only told of his wife’s confusion and his obsession with her lovers and with Private Williams. McCullers calls Captain Penderton’s homosexuality “a symbol of handicap and impotence” (“Flowering” 276). The Captain is also a kleptomaniac and has killed a kitten without remorse:

The Captain came upon a tiny kitten hovered in a doorway. The kitten had found shelter and made itself warm; when the Captain leaned down he found that it was purring. He picked up the kitten and felt it vibrate in his palm.... The Captain [took] the kitten with him down the street. On the corner there was a mailbox and after one quick glance around him he [opened] the freezing letter slow and squeezed the kitten inside. Then he [continued] on his way. (*Reflections* 12)

Though not killed as violently as Popeye's cat, the two voyeurs share this need to destroy. Captain Penderton's violence, like that of Private Williams, Popeye, and Temple, may indicate that he defies his own nature, for McCullers has presented him as a suppressed homosexual. Furthermore, he is a very solitary person, much like Private Williams, though probably because of his cowardliness and his penchant for strange studies and discussions. Despite his military training and his status as a kitten killer, Captain Penderton is a weak coward. His attempts to control his wife, Leonora, fail miserably:

He ran trembling after her. "I will kill you!" he said in a strangled voice. "I will do it! I will do it!" He crouched on the second step of the stairway as though ready to spring up after her. She turned slowly and looked at him with unconcern for a moment before she spoke. "Son, have you ever been collared and dragged out in the street and thrashed by a naked woman?" The Captain stood as she had left him.... From his throat came a rasping sound like a sob, but there were no tears on his face. (*Reflections* 15)

Unlike Popeye, Captain Penderton is capable of emotional but private displays, almost as flamboyant as those of Anacleto. These traits also remind readers of his membership not in a corrupt and deviant underworld but in normal society.

McCullers creates a Temple-like character in Leonora Penderton, a woman who finds her pleasure elsewhere because she is tied to a man who cannot please her. She is married to the Captain and is the object of Private Williams' voyeuristic obsession. Both

Popeye and Captain Penderton know of the lovers of their women but display different reactions: Popeye watches and then kills when Temple becomes too captivated; Captain Penderton “[has] a sad penchant for becoming enamored of his wife’s lovers” (*Reflections* 11). Popeye is unable to perform sexually, and Captain Penderton seems unable or unwilling to engage in sexual acts with his wife. Both women seem committed to their lovers, which is no secret. The difference lies in the setting of each. Faulkner’s underworld is full of deviance, and Red is also a member of the underworld. McCullers has presented characters of relative normalcy who live in a world similar to the reader, where most men and women marry by the age of the Pendertons and Langdons, so of course Leonora’s lover has a wife, just as she has a husband. Leonora is the source of Private Williams’ criminal voyeurism and the reason for his death. Leonora, like Temple, is dimwitted and sexual in nature, and, much like Temple, stands in the middle of an awkward triangle: Private Williams watches her and her husband watches Private Williams. Private Williams is watched by Captain Penderton, which he knows, but none are aware of Alison Langdon’s eyes.

Alison Langdon, much like Ruby, is blind to many things, but can see others clearly. Ruby sees many things and is seemingly punished by being thrown out into the street for having seen both the underworld and the corruption of the justice system. Alison, on the other hand, is punished for seeing Private Williams watching Leonora. Her account of Private Williams’ voyeurism is not believed by others, and she is therefore dismissed as crazy and relegated to a mental health facility, which drives her to death. Alison is punished for seeing the voyeur’s gaze and meeting it the night that Captain

Penderton fears following her suggestion and going to his wife's room. Looking back to Faulkner with the knowledge of Alison's death highlights the lack of information about Ruby once the trial is over. The child has been compared to Popeye; Popeye's mother was relegated to the home of Popeye's crazy grandmother and mad herself. In the face of the truth of their surroundings, both go mad, according to the rest of the world, and in a sense die.

In contrast to the female mother figures of Miss Reba and Minnie in *Sanctuary*, Anacleto is the mother figure to Alison Langdon. Anacleto saves Alison on many occasions. When he and Allison come home early from an out-of-town visit, Anacleto stops her from going into the house: "Anacleto rushed down the steps with such a horrified face!... 'You must not go in there now, Madame Alison'" (*Reflections* 45-6). Anacleto cares for Allison's mental well-being, but he also concerns himself with her physical well-being. One separation from Faulkner's mothering figures in *Sanctuary* lies in the gender of Anacleto. Though he is male, McCullers presents an incredibly feminine character. In stark contrast to Leonora, who seems unable to reside in the feminine realm comfortably and yet is a sexual object for the male gaze, Anacleto relishes his femininity and Alison encourages Anacleto to be himself. McCullers, in presenting Anacleto as a very feminine mothering figure, provides another deviant, though without explicitly stating his deviance. Anacleto is the most outwardly homosexual character due to his feminine characteristics, yet Captain Penderton is the character obsessed and in love with another man. McCullers presents a possible connection between these two, though they are separated by hatred of each other. Considering McCullers' gender bending, readers

may better see how Faulkner did the same with Miss Reba. Though she is obviously a woman and has motherly instincts, she is a woman who has a very powerful place in the underworld. Her “husband” died, yet she remained in charge of her brothel. This view is not without its faults; however, her masculinity is a point worth making. Miss Reba is perhaps the most masculine of all of Faulkner’s females in *Sanctuary* despite her position as mother.

The connections between the characters in *Sanctuary* and *Reflections in a Golden Eye* lead to other comparisons. Faulkner and McCullers provoke readers through set up, delay, and avoidance of certain details and events. At first, readers may believe Alison Langdon is a hypochondriac and depressed due to her husband’s adultery and her knowledge of it. Due to McCullers’ delay, readers may believe Alison harms herself because of her sadness:

Suddenly Mrs. Langdon...left the room and ran over to her own house.

The Major did not follow her immediately, as he was comfortably stupefied with whiskey. Then later Anacleto, the Langdon’s Filipino servant, rushed wailing into the room with such a wild-eyed face that they followed him without a word. They found Mrs. Langdon unconscious and she had cut off the tender nipples of her breasts with the garden shears.

(*Reflections* 31)

McCullers interrupts the telling of this past event to return to the main story in the Penderton home and does not return to Alison’s self mutilation for a full explanation at all. Two pages later, the reader is told of the death of Alison’s child. After another page,

readers discover that Alison feels an immense amount of shame due to her self-mutilating actions. Though the facts of Catherine's death are revealed piece by piece, page by page, the connection between Alison's mutilation, Major Langdon's adultery, and Catherine is left to the voyeur creator.

Outside the room where the Pendertons and Langdons reside, Private Williams creeps and watches. McCullers begins this section with him: "On the twelfth night the soldier walked through the woods even more slowly than usual. From a far distance he saw that the house was lighted... In his right hand there was a pocket-knife and he had changed his clumsy boots for tennis shoes" (*Reflections* 30). This announcement comes after McCullers mentions Private Williams' trances and that he has done four things in his life "of his own accord" (28). Of these events, she explains, "each... had come about very suddenly and without any conspicuous planning on his part. Still, in a curious way, he had planned for them" (29). With the comment on the tennis shoes and the knife, McCullers leaves Private Williams at the window and does not return to what he will do with that knife until pages later, leaving the voyeur creator to ponder why he has a knife and tennis shoes on this trip. This delay does not, however, give the reader a blank section to create. In fact, this example of narrative sequence highlights the fact that McCullers and Faulkner present the action differently. Readers of *Reflections in a Golden Eye* know that Private Williams will remain outside until all of the lights are out. Faulkner, however, shifts from action *in media res* in order to provoke his investigators to create the action from the evidence.



McCullers also keeps Private Williams' awakening from the reader until the end of Part One, though the voyeur creator may have already guessed it had happened. When Leonora removes her clothes and threatens to beat her husband after Private Williams trims the tree in the back yard, Private Williams stands outside the house, though the Pendertons and readers are unaware. McCullers does not return to Private Williams' spot outside until the action in the Penderton house is finished. Indeed, she tells readers that "the four people at the table had not been alone" for he had "not found it in him to go away" since he "glanced into the sharply lighted vestibule" and "had indeed seen Mrs. Penderton as she left the hearth and walked upstairs to her bath" (*Reflections* 18;19). McCullers hints that Private Williams has trances, but she does not explain what these trances may mean until much later in the novel: "The expression of his mute face had not been changed by his experience, but now and then he narrowed his gold-brown eyes as though he were forming within himself some subtle scheme" (*Reflections* 19). Once Leonora is removed from his sight through the window, "the soldier walked like a man weighted by a dark dream and his footsteps were soundless" (*Reflections* 19). McCullers hints at these trances which precede some events in Private Williams' life, but she does not explain what this look may mean until after his nightly visits have begun.

McCullers also delays details of these events from Private Williams' past. Based on the information given, the reader is to assume that the knife and the tennis shoes could be unconscious preparation for a new crime. In the list of four events, McCullers explains that "the third...was a crime which he committed and successfully concealed" (29); however, the reader must wait until page 90 to discover that this crime was the murder of

a man “over a wheel barrow of manure”: “he had stabbed a Negro to death and hidden the body in an abandoned quarry.” He is never caught for this crime, and it seems as though he will not be caught for his criminal voyeurism.

Captain Penderton, the coward, kills a man at the close of the final scene. Though readers know he is a good marksman and he is in the military, there is no indication throughout the novel that he has ever taken a life. As a coward, how does this act leave him? In the aftermath of the murder, does he lose his obsession with Private Williams or, due to the truths which should have been discovered, does he become more obsessed? Do the Captain, the Major, and Leonora ever discover how long this obsession has been going on? Is Captain Penderton’s longing for enlisted status based purely on his obsession with Private Williams? For the answers to these questions, the voyeur creator must continue to create beyond the pages of the novel. Because Captain Penderton has killed the object of his voyeuristic desire, one is to assume that the obsession dies with Private Williams; however, Captain Penderton, as depicted by McCullers, does not seem to be the kind of man who forgets. Rather, McCullers presents him as a man who lingers; for example, he is unable to forgive Alison for seeing his kleptomania and, because of his connection with her, he detests Anacleto. He is reminded of this embarrassment every time he sees either Alison or Anacleto.

Captain Penderton’s wife, the only “witness” to the death of Private Williams, is not the kind of woman to linger. McCullers has presented her as someone brave and simple. Leonora is left sitting up in bed, “only half-awake,” “[staring] about her as though witnessing some scene in a play, some tragedy that was gruesome but not

necessary to believe” (*Reflections* 127). These last words may give a clue to Leonora’s reaction to the event. Perhaps Leonora will find it hard to believe that Private Williams came into her room more than once. She may not even recognize him from the stables, though surely even an officer’s wife would recognize the man who cares for her beloved horse. Will her husband’s courageous, protective response change her opinion of him? It is more likely that Leonora will speak quietly as she did around the sickly Alison and try to forget the whole affair.

McCullers ends the novel, unlike Faulkner’s *Sanctuary*, without a trial. What becomes of the dead body? Does the military conduct an investigation, or is Captain Penderton taken at his word and the case closed? If one is to assume that the post is a place where intruders may be shot whether armed or unarmed, then the case is closed: Private Williams entered a home uninvited and was discovered in the room of an officer’s wife. The Private’s presence leads to another possibility: Captain Penderton may believe that Leonora has moved on from the now mourning Major Langdon to the object of the Captain’s desire, Private Williams. How would this misunderstanding affect their relationship? It may become more strained than before. The Captain has now killed a man not in war and that man happened to be his obsession, his beloved. Believing that Leonora was having an affair with this particular man could lead him to turn his gun on his wife, were he to lose his cowardliness.

Leonora’s relationship with Major Langdon has also changed since Alison’s death:

She had been dismayed by the death of her lover's wife. The sight of the dead body in the coffin had so fascinated her that for several days after the funeral she had spoken in an awed whisper, even when ordering groceries at the Post Exchange. She treated the Major with a sort of vacant sweetness and repeated any happy anecdotes concerning Alison that she could remember. (*Reflections* 116)

Instead of Alison's death causing the end of the Penderton marriage, it seems as though it has caused the end of Leonora and Major Langdon's affair. This end may lead Captain Penderton to imagine an affair between Leonora and Private Williams. Would Major Langdon also imagine this affair? Leonora and Major Langdon may continue their relationship after a period of mourning, but it is quite clear that there is and will be a period of mourning, and the discovery of Private Williams in her bedroom may cause Major Langdon to believe Leonora has moved on to another lover quickly. The already distraught Major may detach himself from the Pendertons completely, rejected by Leonora and left widower by his wife.

Despite his adultery and their unhappy marriage, Major Langdon is in no way relieved by the death of Alison as he was by his daughter's death. The Major was distraught at having to send his wife to a mental institution, but now that all three of Alison's naysayers have seen that she was right, how will Major Langdon respond? He may feel guilty for sending Alison away, or he may feel as though he was the cause of her death. Major Langdon not only mourns the loss of Alison but also of Anacleto. Though he constantly spoke ill of Anacleto and treated him with disdain, he now sees the

value of this mother figure. Susie's brother replaces Anacleto, but "the Major did not feel the satisfaction he had anticipated. He missed Anacleto in many ways and felt concerning him the most uncomfortable remorse" (*Reflections* 113). Though Major Langdon seemed to hate Anacleto, his presence would now offer comfort. Is this due to Anacleto's similarity to Alison? McCullers has mentioned that Anacleto and Alison are alike, almost identical, and the Major was previously annoyed by their voices being mirrors to one another. Anacleto would obviously be a comfort to the Major in his grief.

Anacleto's whereabouts are also a mystery, "for Anacleto had left the sanatorium the morning after Alison had died and no one had heard of him since. He had repacked the luggage and put all of her things in order. Then he had simply disappeared" (*Reflections* 112). Major Langdon and the voyeur creator may wonder to where Anacleto escaped, but Captain Penderton believes "it was a pity the nasty little Filipino hadn't been carried off by a heart attack also" (*Reflections* 113). Even in Alison's death and despite their mutual homosexuality, the Captain hates Anacleto so much that he wishes for Anacleto's death as well. When considering Anacleto's disappearance, Ruby's disappearance in *Sanctuary* can be revisited. Anacleto was dedicated to Alison much as Ruby was dedicated to Goodwin. Ruby followed Goodwin no matter where he went, with the exception of war. Anacleto does the same with Alison. McCullers highlights this bond between Alison and Anacleto with more clarity than Faulkner does with the *heterosexual* relationship between Ruby and Goodwin. Looking at Faulkner via McCullers sheds light on the deep bond they must have shared.

While McCullers provides understanding of characters as people with pasts and motives, she depicts her characters with few facts, whereas Faulkner dwells on facts and events in *Sanctuary* without always accounting for the motives that determine behavior. In *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, each character's depth depends on his or her personality. Leonora Penderton and Major Langdon may seem the least developed, but they are also the most shallow characters, the most primitive and physical. Anacleto displays greater depth than Leonora, and this reflects his more complex interior. Allison Langdon and Captain Penderton require the most back story and internal dialogue for explanation, as they are the most complex characters. Although Private Williams is the criminal voyeur, McCullers also spends time developing his past and presents it throughout the novel, allowing voyeur creators to build an understanding of his actions. McCullers provides readers with something that Faulkner does not provide for all of his characters: motive.

The characters in *Reflections in a Golden Eye* have been battling with their separation and with hiding their deviance in their normalcy. Their deviance causes rifts: Captain Penderton's sexual deviance causes a rift in his relationship with his wife, Alison's depression over the death of her daughter sucks the happiness out of her marriage, Major Langdon's adultery spurs Alison's thoughts of divorce, the acceptance of Anacleto's deviance by Alison deepens her husband's disdain, Anacleto's deviance separates him from the other men, and Private Williams separates himself from the world as much as possible. All of them, though, strive to belong, which is obvious in their constant gathering. Readers watch each character seek connection through his or her own way, but each character fails spectacularly. They all hide or ignore their deviances, and

thus may be so absorbed in themselves that they are unable to connect with each other. Has the status quo of conventional normality put up road blocks between them?

*The Times Literary Supplement* claimed that *Reflections in a Golden Eye* leaves readers “with the feeling that everybody is frustrated in one way or another” (qtd in Evans 75). Perhaps *The Times* had the initial feeling correct: all of McCullers characters are frustrated throughout the novel for one reason or another, and all that remain at the end are left suspended in time with an event that can go at least two ways.

What readers create after the story McCullers presents is over, however, depends on the internal workings and questions of the reader, not necessarily on the characters that McCullers has presented. McCullers presents the characters with enough depth to guide voyeur creators, but she has also created them with enough breadth for choice. The voyeur creator must take what McCullers has presented and not only finish the story but also determine the relevance of the conventions of deviance and normalcy. None of the characters presented are “normal,” as Oliver Evans skillfully notes in the title of his chapter on this portion of McCullers’ life – “Not Even the Horse is Normal” – but McCullers presents these characters in a way that allows them to walk and live seemingly normal lives. If these fictional characters were real-life neighbors, would their deviance be perceived so readily?

Faulkner’s novel is more like a closed case, whereas McCullers leaves readers with a cold case: enough facts to close the case, but no real satisfaction in knowing exactly how it ended. Whereas the bulk of Faulkner’s novel focuses on the discovery of the truth by Horace because of his legal case, McCullers avoids the events after the

murder. In this way, McCullers pushes her voyeur creators further than Faulkner does. This focus on the characters and events leading up to the finale may owe something to McCullers' writing process. She tells us that she "[becomes] the characters [she] writes": "I am so immersed in them that their motives are my own" ("Flowering" 277). Perhaps this is why McCullers so subtly molds her voyeur creators; she becomes a voyeur creator in writing. She becomes the characters she is writing, gets inside their heads, and creates the stories in which they exist, for "writing is a wandering, dreaming occupation" ("Flowering" 277). McCullers wanders inside the world of other people that she has created, and allows them to guide her as she watches them walk through life. She is herself a voyeur creator who writes to create that same experience within her readers.

McCullers conveys a larger scale agenda. She pushes her voyeur creators not only to the darker side of their characters but she also prompts an internal dialog about human nature. Through the story of relatively normal people, McCullers challenges the whole idea of the normal. Many of Faulkner's deviants are acknowledged as such: a Madame and her brothel, moonshiners and bootleggers, murderers, and a rapist. These characters exist on the fringes of society and are looked down upon by nearly all. When readers enter into this realm, they may feel dirty and disgusted. Readers must be pulled out by Faulkner's righting of moral order and elimination of deviant characters. In *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, however, deviance exists in a much less extreme realm: an adulterous wife, a man hiding his sexuality, an extreme introvert who becomes a criminal probably due to his abnormal upbringing, an eccentric housekeeper, and a mourning, heart-broken



woman. These characters, though deviant, can be considered more “normal” than the characters from the underworld.

By molding readers into creative investigators and voyeur creators, Faulkner and McCullers not only question the nature of normalcy. They also question the nature of deviancy. The voyeur creator enters the world of deviance and becomes a deviant through the process of creation. Read intertextually, *Sanctuary* and *Reflections in a Golden Eye* enable readers to confront the possibility that normalcy operates on a continuum.

### Coda

In Faulkner, characters such as Temple are seemingly normal, though their foundations may be weak. Thrust into extraordinary situations and stripped of herself, Temple must endure. During such times, characters engage in deviant acts. L. Edward Wells questions how “people come to engage in certain behaviors which are categorized as deviant” (197). With *Sanctuary*, the questions of history and motive remain: how does Temple, a relatively normal, well-bred daughter of a judge become the woman who begs for sexual favors from two men in the same night? In such questioning, the events that Temple endures may be pinpointed as to why.

McCullers, however, presents characters who do not simply engage in deviant acts after traumatic events, but live deviant lives. For Wells, the question here is not how the person came to perform deviant acts, but “how persons come to be known or categorized (labeled) in certain terms, and what the effects of such identification might be” (197). The question is not of events but of societal labeling, of the status quo. Louis Rubin claims that

McCullers focuses upon her maimed, misfitting, wounded people not as a commentary upon the complacent “normality” of the community which would term them freakish, but as exemplars of the wretchedness of the human condition. It isn’t that freaks are commentaries or criticisms on normality; they *are* normality. Their physical grotesquery merely makes visible and identifiable their isolation and anguish; “normal” people do not confront these on such immediate and inescapable terms, perhaps, but they

are really no better off, no happier. Everybody that is human is on the chain gang; on some the stripes and chains are more readily visible. (6)

Despite his dismissal of McCullers' novels as most suitable for young readers, Rubin's explanation of McCullers' normal "freaks" fits with this exploration of *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. The deviance presented is a foil for normalcy, and the shocking connection jars readers into interrogation of those parameters.

By presenting characters and settings which invert reader expectations, Faulkner and McCullers encourage critical analysis regarding the origins and formation of labels of deviance and normalcy. By questioning first how deviance occurs, readers are then led to question how normalcy occurs as well. Subverting reader expectations in this manner can encourage a more sympathetic understanding of deviance as on a continuum with shades of grey. While this goal exemplifies Alan Spiegel's idea of the grotesque, it is expanded by highlighting the fact that this deformed or grotesque figure is not, in fact, separate from the rest of society; the deformity lies *within* society. The deviant exists in the grey spaces between the black and white world of the socially accepted parameters of deviance and normalcy.

Faulkner and McCullers, while presenting stories which on the surface seem bizarre, actually present a much less stratified and binary view of the world, and thus pull readers in and then encourage them to question their own surroundings and traditionally accepted ideals.

Not only has this study highlighted the deviance in Faulkner's *Sanctuary* and McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, it has also highlighted the types of deviance, the types of grotesque, that may be studied further in Southern literature. By studying deviant characters and deviant acts in Southern literature, scholars may highlight that literature in a different light, showing that Southern authors challenge both the myths of the Old South and its lingering traditions and traditionally accepted parameters in place by which society judges all characters, both fictional and not.

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