

A Study of *The Reivers*: William Faulkner's Finale

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The Reivers: A Reminiscence (1962) is Faulkner's last novel, for he died one month after its publication. In referring to the novel, most Faulkner scholars give very negative assessments because *The Reivers* is comical and it does not seem to provide readers with Faulkner's total vision of life. For example, Irving Howe writes that *The Reivers* is "an excursion into the pleasure of fantasy, an act of comic praise to the refreshments of mischief," and less "ponderous" than other late Faulkner novels.¹⁾ Also Edmond Volpe says critically, "To dramatize this philosophy of acceptance by an elite male character, Faulkner had to write a didactic fairy tale, ignore reality and create a sentimental, make-believe world."²⁾

Neither does *The Reivers* seem to be his last book: "the Doomsday Book, the Golden Book, of Yoknapatawpha County" of which Faulkner told Jean Stein in the winter of 1955-56, "My last book will be the Doomsday Book: the Golden Book, of Yoknapatawpha County. Then I shall break the pencil and I'll have to stop."³⁾ According to Blotner, after Faulkner finished *The Reivers*, he said he was not working on anything, adding, "I won't work until I get on something,"⁴⁾ which shows that he did not intend to finish his career at all.

Although as James B. Carothers indicates that Faulkner conceived *The Reivers* around 1940, a number of elements altered from the 1940 outline, and one of the most notable differences is the character of Ned McCaslin, who is far from being "in his second childhood."⁵⁾ And if we pay special attention to Ned McCaslin and assume that he makes a Christ figure, then we find the novel to be Faulkner's proper finale. By redeeming Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin, Ned saves Ike McCaslin, who represents

Text: *The Reivers*. Vintage, 1962. All subsequent references to this book will be identified in the text by the abbreviation *R*, followed by the page numbers.

1) Irving Howe, "Time Out for Fun in Old Mississippi," *New York Times Book Review*, June 3, 1962.

2) Edmond Volpe, *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1964), p. 344.

3) James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate, eds., *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner, 1926-1962* (New York: Random, 1968), p. 255.

4) Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 2 vol. (New York: Random, 1974), p. 1804.

5) "The Road to *The Reivers*," *A Cosmos of My Own*, ed. Doreen Fowler and Ann J. Abadie (Jackson: U of Mississippi, 1981), p. 101.

the writer, from his problem of racial heritage, specifically from his persistent obsession with blood and race. Consequently the aim of this paper is to scrutinize how Faulkner reconciles himself with his problem at the last stage of his life.

Lucius Priest, now Grandfather, tells his experience at the age of eleven to his grandson. Lucius accompanies Bon Hogganbeck who steals Lucius's grandfather's car, the first car in Yoknapatawpha County, to Memphis to court a prostitute. Ned has hidden in the car before they start, and he trades the car for a racehorse and devotes himself to racing the horse in order to win enough money to save his relative and help out with Boon's courtship and bring Lucius back to his grandfather. The story was based on two important incidents in Faulkner's own life: his grandfather's purchase of a car, and the occasion when Faulkner took his youngest brother Dean, then just twelve, on a visit to a Memphis brothel.⁶⁾

In addition, some of the members of Lucius's family and the workers in a rough way match actual members of Faulkner's household and workers in his livery stable. For example, Lucius is one of four brothers, as was Faulkner. The duties of Lucius are similar to those of Faulkner when he was eleven during the holidays in his father's livery stable.⁷⁾ Lucius's grandfather, like Faulkner's, is a banker. Uncle Ned Barnet who, like Ned William McCaslin, was his grandfather's servant, and Aunt Callie is apparently based on a Faulkner family servant of the same name. Boon is like Faulkner's childhood companion who also worked for his father on his farm outside Oxford.⁸⁾

As a summarization of the whole work, the world Faulkner created in his earlier stories is reflected in *The Reivers*. Readers re-encounter familiar characters of Faulkner's: Colonel Sartoris, Lucius Priest, Colonel John Sartoris from *Sartoris* (1929); Miss Reba, Mr. Binford, Minnie and the Memphis brothel from *Sanctuary* (1931); "a Baptist minister named Hightower" (R 73) from *Light in August* (1932); "Thomas Sutpen's doomed baronial dream" (R 70) from *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936); Boon Hogganbeck and his wild shooting and the McCaslins and his black descendants from *Go Down, Moses* (1942); Christian's drugstore and Doc Peabody and Judge Stevens, whose office is "just down the gallery from Doctor Peabody's" (R 18) from *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Knight's Gambit* (1949), *The Town* (1957) and *The Mansion* (1959); the "Chickasaw kings, Issetibbeha, Mocketubbe, and the regicide-usurper who called himself Doom [Ikkemotubbe]" (R 70) from *Requiem for a Nun* (1951); Flem Snopes "the banker, murdered ten or twelve years

6) Judith Bryant Wittenberg, *Faulkner: The Transfiguration of Biography* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1979), p. 242.

7) *Faulkner: A Biography*, 2 vols., p. 117.

8) *Faulkner: A Biography*, 2 vols., p. 1793.

ago by the mad kinsman” (R 26), Major Manfred de Spain and his “red E.M.F. racer” (R 27) from *The Hamlet* (1940), *The Town* and *The Mansion*.

Moreover, readers encounter some of Faulkner's beliefs or ideas expressed before in his works. For example, the idealistic relationships of the love between men and horses also appears in *A Fable*. The resiliency of women as mentioned by the narrator, old Lucius: “They [Women] can bear anything because they are wise enough to know that all you have to do with grief and trouble is just go on through them and come out on the other side” (R 105), is also echoed in the examples of Granny Millard in *The Unvanquished* and Miss Habersham in *Intruder in the Dust*.

Consequently, as Michael Millgate points out, Faulkner's nostalgia in *The Reivers* is for his own early work as well as for his own early life.⁹⁾ And it is not too much to say that we can expect to elicit some of Faulkner's very personal problems from it.

In *The Reivers* Ike (Isaac McCaslin), one of the major characters in *Go Down, Moses*, who is “young then but already the best woodsman and hunter this county ever had” (R 15) and “lived alone in a single room over his hardware store” (R 54), seems to be the other self of the writer. In fact Faulkner is in favor of Ike thinking that Ike has fulfilled his destiny by learning serenity and wisdom from Sam Fathers and the other men.¹⁰⁾

In the first place, the theological conception expressed in the fourth section of *Go Down, Moses* by Ike parallels what Faulkner says, for example, in “Address to the Graduating Class Pine Manor Junior College Wellesley, Massachusetts, June 8, 1953.” Both point out as referred below that we should live in humility according to His will. Furthermore, both continue to show that the decisive human fault is human arrogance in response to God's grace and man has to fight against it.

Because He told in the Book how He created the earth, made it and looked at it and said it was all right, and then He made man, . . . to hold the earth mutual and intact in the communal anonymity of brotherhood, and all the fee He asked was pity and humility and sufferance and endurance and the sweat of his face for bread.¹¹⁾

In the beginning, God created the earth. He created it completely furnished

9) Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (New York: Random, 1966), p. 253

10) *Faulkner in the University: Class Conferences at the University of Virginia, 1957-58*, ed. Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner (Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1959), p. 54.

11) William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses* (New York, Vintage, 1973), p. 257.

for man. . . . And He demanded of man only that we work to deserve and gain these things—liberty, freedom of the body and spirit both, security for the weak and helpless, and peace for all—because these were the most valuable things. He could set within our capacity and reach.¹²⁾

Secondly, both Ike and Faulkner have the same problem of racial heritage. As Lillian Smith writes that by slavery white slaveholders yielded to the temptation when juxtaposed to natural and vigorous dark women in the backyard and black women were subjected to the whims and desire of white men.¹³⁾ As a consequence quite a few mulattoes, offsprings or descendants of White and Black persons, were born in the society. It is discussed that “By 1860 there were 411,000 mulatto slaves out of a total slave population of 3.9 million.”¹⁴⁾ Nevertheless, Faulkner’s Mississippi had as late as 1967 miscegenation laws and a marriage was void when a white person had one-eighth or more Negro blood¹⁵⁾ as Charles Bon in *Absalom, Absalom!* mentions: “we even made the laws which declare that one eighth of a specified kind of blood shall outweigh seven eighths of another kind.”¹⁶⁾ Therefore the mulattoes were left isolated. They were ghosts in the society:

The stark ugly fact is that millions of children have been rejected by their white fathers and white kin and left to battle alone the giants that stalk our culture. Little ghosts playing and laughing and weeping on the edge of the southern memory can be a haunting thing.¹⁷⁾

The tragedies are not only for mulattoes and their descendants, but also for white families due to white men’s guilt-ridden relationship with an alternative branch of the family.

At sixteen Ike discovers that his grandfather, Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin, had committed incest and miscegenation and left both white and unacknowledged black descendants. He fathered a son, Terrel (“Turl”), by a slave named Tomasina who is

12) *Essays, Speeches and Public Letters by William Faulkner*, ed. James B. Meriwether (New York: Random, 1966), pp. 135-42.

13) Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream* (New York: Norton, 1961), pp. 116-17.

14) John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* 8th edition (New York: McGraw, 2000), p. 158.

15) George Elliot Howard, *A History of Matrimonial Institutions Chiefly in England and the United States*, Vol. 2 (New York: Humanities, 1964), p. 440.

16) William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 115.

17) *Killers of the Dream*, p. 125.

herself his daughter by another slave, Eunice. Ike, deeply horrified at the discovery, assumes the sacrificial role and tries to expiate the sins of the McCaslins by giving up his property and living in voluntary poverty.¹⁸⁾ As Arthur F. Kinney denotes, what distinguishes the McCaslin family is its persistent recognition of and confrontation with matters of race.¹⁹⁾

As for Faulkner, according to Joel Williamson, beginning just before the Civil War, Colonel Falkner maintained a black “shadow family” within his household, consisting of a light-skinned mulatto mistress and, in all likelihood, fathered at least two daughters with her:

In the Ripley Cemetery there are other Falkners to whom the Colonel seemingly never publicly claimed blood kin. Less than fifty yards distant to the right and slightly to the rear of the marble man, are the remains of three members of the slave family, “the shadow family” that lived in his yard in 1860.²⁰⁾

Though their relationship does not seem the same as the conventional image of the wealthy planter sexually exploiting his helpless female slave, one cannot help but wonder what, if Faulkner had ever known about the shadow family, his ambiguous feelings might have been toward Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin and the influence he caused.

Whether Faulkner knew the existence of his black family or not, it is undeniable that just like Ike McCaslin, Faulkner is also obsessed with racial heritage, more precisely with slavery's legacy of miscegenation, the mulatto. He describes the tragedies derived from the problems of mulattoes, especially in *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Light in August*. In the former, Sutpen repudiated his first wife Eulalia when he discovered she had Negro blood. To ease his conscience Sutpen leaves her and the son in considerable wealth, but refuses to say “my son” to his son, Charles Bon. In the end Henry, Sutpen's son with his second wife, Ellen, kills his half-brother Charles Bon because of the miscegenation that would occur if Charles were to marry his sister Judith--- “it's the miscegenation, not the incest”²¹⁾ which Henry cannot bear. In *Light in August* Joe Christmas, one of the

18) The fundamental facts of the McCaslin family, rested in *Intruder in the Dust* (1948) and extended through the Priest line in *The Reivers* (1962), are set out most fully in *Go Down, Moses* (1942).

19) *Critical Essays on William Faulkner: The McCaslin Family*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1990), p. 3.

20) Joel Williamson, *Faulkner and Southern History* (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), p. 64.

21) *Absalom, Absalom!*, p. 356.

most tormented characters in Faulkner's world, dies a tragic death because of the mere suspicion of his Negro blood.

Among mulatto descendants, Charles Bon, his son Etienne Saint Valery who rebels against his heritage, and Clytemnestra (Clytie), Thomas Sutpen's daughter by one of his Negro slaves who sets fire to the big house and perishes in it along with the invalid Henry, are the most tragic examples.

A third similarity between Faulkner and Ike is with regard to the solution for the mulattoes. Like Ike, who says to the mulatto girl with a child by Roth in her arms, that under the situation of that time she should go back North and marry a man of her race, Faulkner envisions that only in a distant future is the problem to be solved. He urges all those who would compel immediate and unconditional integration to "go slow," to give the Southerner time to see that "nobody is going to force integration on him from the outsides," and that he himself must correct the moral and physical condition of his land.²²⁾ Furthermore, since Faulkner thinks the solution will take time, his obsession with racial heritage, as Ike's, is furthered.

Thus investigating the similarities between Ike and Faulkner, one of Faulkner's greatest problems is clarified. In fact he is so poignantly preoccupied with the guilt of such racial heritage that in his work Faulkner presents a Christ-like figure, who (as has been discussed in reference to Jeremy Taylor) assumes a sacrificial role in order to redeem the sinners.²³⁾ Here in his last novel the final treatment of his personal pains can be seen through his Christ figure.

In *The Reivers* the Christ figure can be found in a mulatto, Ned William McCaslin, Grandfather Priest's black coachman, born in the "McCaslin backyard" in 1860, descended from the Priest's white forebear, Lucius Quintus Carothers, a distant cousin of Ike, the son of Tennie and a black slave.

First, in spite of the fact that Ned is not educated enough, seems a rogue and trickster and has the reputation of being a lazy town nigger, he has his own self-pride and dignity. Ned never lets the people forget the fact that he is a McCaslin. At crucial moments in the story he expresses his name invoking the place of his birth as well, "Ned William McCaslin Jefferson Mississippi" (R 128, 163, 245, 246).

22) Charles D. Peavy, *Go Slow Now: Faulkner and the Race Question* (U of Oregon, 1971), p. 76.

23) "Salvation for Temple Drake: A Study of *Requiem for a Nun*," *Sociology Department Studies* 82 (Kwansei Gakuin University, 1998), pp. 59-71; "Faulkner's Ultimate Gospel: A Study of a Christ Figure in William Faulkner's *A Fable*," *Sociology Department Studies* 83 (1999), pp. 41-57; "A Study of a Christ Figure in *Pylon*, William Faulkner's *Waste Land*," *School of Sociology Journal* 89 (2001), pp. 135-48; "A Christ Figure in William Faulkner's *Light in August*," *Language and Culture* 11 (Kwansei Gakuin University Language Center, 2008), pp. 77-89.

Ned intuitively senses the truth of reality and copes with it. When Lucius lies to him to cover up for secretly going away on the trip with Boon, Ned has recognized the scheme already. While Boon is tough, faithful, brave and completely unreliable (*R* 25), and in spite of his white blood is looked down upon by both the white and black men, Ned is intelligent and sensitive enough and senses the worth of people and how to appreciate them accordingly. Of Sam Caldwell Ned says, "Mr Sam Caldwell was some Sam Caldwell" (*R* 161), and he appreciates Miss Reba's acute insight into reality by saying, ". . . you doing all right" (*R* 122).

Ned is modest in the sense Jeremy Taylor defines the virtue: that he does not inquire into the things which are too hard for him, but learns modestly to know his infirmities and abilities; neither does he inquire into the affairs of others that concern him not.²⁴⁾ While Ned never likes the new invention of an automobile and only once rides in it, "Ned never to speak in scorn or derogation of its ownership and presence" (*R* 38).

Ned's words are full of consideration and quiet confidence;

"Calm yourself," he [Ned] said. (*R* 153); "You go with Lycurgus and get some sleep," Ned said. . . . "You can eat your breakfast afterwards," Ned said. (*R* 158); "Hold up, Miss," Ned said. "I'll handle it." (*R* 169); "I done fixed that," Ned said. (*R* 206); [Ned said,] "Now you quit worrying. . . . I'll tend to all the rest of it" (*R* 207), etc.

Ned has supernatural intuition in his inventing a scheme of swapping the car for the horse. The particular horse that Ned chooses is a horse over which Ned has the power of control, as he had over his mule with "magic Ned had found or invented to make the mule run completely unlike any known mule" (*R* 116-7). He tells Boon, "I can make this horse run. Only don't nobody but me know it yet" (*R* 121). When Ned arrives at Miss Reba's with the horse, he does not give it a name. While others call it Coppermine, Ned and Sam Caldwell name it "'Forkid Lightning'" (*R* 153) only after Ned works his miracle of getting the horse into the empty boxcar. Since then Lucius consistently calls the horse Lightning. It seems that Coppermine has been empowered by Ned and becomes Lightning.

It is miraculous that Ned can make Lightning win the final heat while he lets Lightning lose the first one. In the second heat, in which Ned and Lucius manage to race

24) Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living and Holy Dying* (London: Longman, 1801), p. 79.

Lightning, Acheron outruns Lightning, but it didn't try to jump the rail at all, running straight out into the pasture. As a result, Lightning is the only one to cross the legal finish line. However, following the suggestion by Acheron's owner, it is decided that the winner of the next race will be declared the winner of the second and the third races. In that accidental heat three, Lucius, on the homestretch with Lightning slightly behind, following Ned's instructions pulls his mount far enough to the side so that Lightning can see Ned only, who is standing just beyond the finish line with "a sour dean" (R 267) in his pocket. The "sour dean" (sardine) symbolizes the supernatural power of the Savior since the fish has been a symbol of Christ, signifying "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior" in Greek [Ichthys].²⁵ As a result Lucius wins the race, and Ned receives enough money to clear the debt as well as getting back Boss Priest's automobile despite all their other troubles such as the confusion about the ownership of the horse.

Ned has the overwhelming power of will almost like faith to carry out what he has planned: "He was not rushed, hurried; he was just rapid" (R 223), "polite and calm but dogged and insistent, too" (R 249). Ned has made Lucius prepare for the race deliberately, first by giving him, an empowered "clean heavy wool sock and a piece of string" (R158) and giving a distinct instruction not to lose it (R 192). Later when he is being taken to jail, Ned gives Lucius his tobacco sack with sardine in it. Again he commands Lucius with conviction, "Hide it and keep it. Don't lose it. Just remember who it come from: Ned William McCaslin. Will you remember that? Ned William McCaslin Jefferson Mississippi" (R 223). Even during the ordeal, Ned "had carried the load alone, held back the flood, shored up the crumbling levee with whatever tools he could reach" (R 283). With his clear plan, as Lycurgus says, "When Mr McCaslin make up his mind to do something, he do it" (R 213). Therefore it is this humble figure with a halo-like "fringe of hair embracing his bald skull" (R 32) and "a sour dean" in his pocket who conceives and elaborates the entire plan to rescue Bobo and bring Lucius home. As the whorehouse parade to Memphis seems to be Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Ned by taking risks and through his self-sacrificial deeds becomes a seeming redeemer.

And it is Lucius who is the witness of Ned's Christhood. As Lucius's guardian, Ned is supportive to Lucius all the time, reminding him of the values of home to which he belongs. When Boon is recklessly driving the country folk Priest around at Ballenbaugh's, Ned admonishes Lucius humorously by saying, "He better be sho proud Boss Priest aint standing here too, He'd show his of" (R 74). At Miss Reba's Lucius witnesses that Ned

25) *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Tradition*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1992), pp. 451-52.

tried to rescue Lucius from the maliciousness of Otis, the "money-mouthed runt boy" (*R* 153) who seems to see everything in terms of money. In addition, Lucius witnesses that Ned tries to save another descendant of Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin, Bobo Beauchamp, a country boy who is tempted by big money and has fallen into drunkenness and gambling, from his debt. Thus Ned endeavors to protect both a white and a black nephews from the city of Memphis, the fallen world below Hell Creek.

Moreover, since Boss Priest has arrived at the race, Ned has to win the race by all means to justify the car-stealing and the horse-and-car exchanging. Ned, even after winning the race, looks bad and anxious. However, he does not have to explain everything to Boss Priest as there is no conflict between them. Instead, Boss Priest himself proves to be a living witness of the transformation of Lucius.

It is true that Lucius has been transformed by the redeeming power of Ned. Beginning with a lie that he stays at Ike McCaslin's, Lucius involves himself in the large scheme of unexpected events. Feeling "that same exultant fever-flash which Faustus himself must have experienced," Lucius knows he is the active member of the scheme-- "I realized, felt suddenly: that of we two [Lucius and Boon] doomed and irrevocable, I was the leader, I was the boss, the master" (*R* 53). At that moment he does not need Ned, to whom Lucius says, "I don't need anything from you" (*R* 54). What he wants is to be out of time, as he says, ". . . If I had to be something, I wanted it to be *was*. I said, and I believed it" (*R* 57). In the midst of the scheme "grey with dust from toes to eyelids" (*R* 90), Lucius feels enormous solitude like an island surrounded by alien faces. He seems to be overwhelmed by the fear of awareness of sin, confessing ". . . I was more than afraid" (*R* 164), and he is ashamed of the deeds.

Lucius has come to be attracted by the power of Ned, confessing, "Ned was right" (*R* 176, 205). He knows he was protected by him and cannot do without Ned, saying, "I'm going to wait for Ned, . . . I can't go without him" (*R* 243). As jockey in the race Lucius has blind faith and follows Ned's instructions "only by making Lightning run and run fast" (*R* 260) to finish the trouble they have started.

To be in time, "to be back home where they belonged" (*R* 241), Lucius, hearing a rooster as Peter does in the Bible (*R* 152), admits his willingness to participate in the sin: "I was a child no longer now; innocence and childhood were forever lost, forever gone from me" (*R* 165). Thus kept safe by Ned in the moonlight, finally Lucius returns home.

Cleans Brooks says, "This coming back into the community is an essential part of

redemption.”²⁶⁾ Lucius has altered spiritually with acquisition of some of the basic “facts of life” -- “There are things, circumstances, conditions in the world which should not be there but are, and you can’t escape them” and “you would not escape them even if you had the choice,” because “they too are a part of Motion, of participating in life, being alive” (R 146).

For Faulkner, “Time is a fluid condition which has no existence except in the momentary avatars of individual people.”²⁷⁾ Time is man’s substance, and man cannot get out of time. According to the narrator the way to deal with time, is like the way women handle death: they “just flank it, envelop it in one soft and instantaneous confederation of unresistance like cotton batting or cobwebs” (R 47). Time becomes, “already de-stingered and harmless, not merely reduced to size and usable but even useful” (R 47). Only when by Ned’s help there is this frank and total acceptance of time can the commitment of Lucius in turn be a responsible one.

Because Boon and Lucius steal Boss Priest’s car and Ned steals the car and a race horse, these three are the reivers. (According to Faulkner, “The Reivers—it’s an old Highland name for a robber.”²⁸⁾) However, there are other reivers, too, since in Faulkner’s works, the exploitation of the land and the people are one of the major problems which ail the southerners. One of the most obvious sins was committed by Lucius Quintus Carothers, Old L. Q. C., the first of the McCaslins who came to Mississippi from Carolina in 1813 with slaves and foxhounds and settled on the place and exploited the land and the people.

In *The Reivers* Faulkner links the McCaslin family to the Priest family through L.Q.C. Priest’s marriage to one of Isaac’s cousins; “he and the kinsman[McCaslin] even had the same baptismal names: Lucius Quintus Carothers--and found one (kinsman) in the person of a great-granddaughter named Sarah Edmonds and in 1869 married her” (R 266). In fact Boss Priest says, “I’m a McCaslin too” (R 269). The connection to the Priest connotes the ties with Christ who is called “a merciful and faithful high priest” (Hebrew 2:17) in so far as to suggest the redemption of Isaac McCaslin.

It seems that a miscegenated black-white, Ned William McCaslin Jefferson Mississippi who claims his mother is, “the natural daughter of old Lucius Quintus Carothers himself and a Negro slave” (R 32), redeemed Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin. Since as the Bible says, “because he [the Savior] poured his soul to death, and was numbered

26) Cleanth Brooks, *The Hidden God* (New Haven and London; Yale UP, 1963), p. 39.

27) *Lion in the Garden*, p. 255.

28) *Lion in the Garden*, p. 279.

with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12), Ned is numbered with the reivers, yet he bears the sin of Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin.

Ned seems to have followed Christ's piety according to his proportion which Jeremy Taylor writes in *Holy Living and Holy Dying*:

As Christ is pleased to represent to His Father that great sacrifice as a means of atonement and expiation for all mankind, and with special purposes and intendment for all the elect, all that serve Him in holiness; so He hath appointed that the same ministry shall be done upon earth too, in our manner, and according to our proportion. . . .²⁹⁾

After the publication of *The Reivers* Faulkner would say, "Usually I puzzle readers with what's inside my books. This time I just puzzle them with the title!"³⁰⁾ Faulkner who emphasizes his origin in Scotland, uses the word "reiver," which seems to show his act of returning, not just to his ancestors from his own blood, but to something original to the peace with God, the source of being, at the end of his life's journey.

Only in *The Reivers* does Faulkner willingly integrate a mulatto family member into his fictional white family. Instead of struggling to get away from the obsession of the phobia of what might have been, to accept the past as it has been, and redeem the past in the present moment as a responsible man open to the future, is the way to cope with time. That is the solution Faulkner reaches at his last stage of life.

Though socially the problems of the mulatto have not been solved yet, Faulkner is at least ready to cope with whatever the future brings. Indeed *The Reivers*, which Faulkner dedicates to the five children of Victoria, Malcolm and Jill, is an account of his frank and total acceptance of his home as it has been since a gentleman "can live through anything," and "accepts the responsibility of his actions and bears the burden of their consequences" (R 282).

Therefore *The Reivers* is the story of the redemption of the McCaslins, or the Falkners. It reflects the dissolving of Faulkner's struggle with the result of blood-mixture, which is coincident with a time when his own personal life had become stable. As his daughter Jill thought, "Pappy really changed . . . He became so much easier for everyone to live with—not just family, but everybody. . . . he was a different man. . . . He

29) *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, p. 214.

30) *Faulkner: A Biography*, 2 vols, p. 1801.

was enjoying life.”³¹⁾

Hence *The Reivers* makes Faulkner's suitable finale. Making Ned a Christ figure, Faulkner has come to terms with his long personal struggles with the obsession of racial heritage and the resulting moral obligations and responsibilities.

31) Joseph L. Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1 vol. (New York; Random, 1984), p. 671.

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