Ikuko Fujihira, Noel Polk and Hisao Tanaka (eds.),
History and Memory in Faulkner’s Novels.


Reviewed by MORI Arinori, Chukyo University

This book, published in October 2005, is a collection of twelve essays originally presented
at the 2004 International Faulkner Symposium hosted by the William Faulkner Society of
Japan at Chuo University in Tokyo. The publication of this book commemorates the 50th
anniversary of Faulkner’s visit to Japan and his memorable Nagano Seminar in 1955 (9).

As one of the coeditors Hisao Tanaka points out in the “Preface,” the 2004 symposium
and this collection follow in the footstep of the first International Symposium held in Japan
in 1985, the year of publication of the collection Faulkner Studies in Japan by Kenzaburo
Ohashi, Kiyoyuki Ono and Thomas L. McHaney. In this sense, this book attests to the
achievements of the so-called “second generation” of Japanese Faulkner scholars and well
reflects the advanced state of Faulkner studies in Japan.
Another coeditor Ikuko Fujihiira tells us in the “Introduction” that the purpose of this project is, especially for Japanese contributors, to answer the question “what is Faulkner for . . . anybody who is not a Southerner, nor even American” (4). This book is unique in that most of the contributors are from other countries than the United States, though all of them aim to see how the writer’s “history and memory are woven into the web of our [the readers’] mind” (8) through various critical approaches.

To the reviewer, the intended purpose of the Tokyo symposium and this collection is realized successfully in that each article in the volume explores, to borrow the coeditor Noel Polk’s phrase in the “Afterword,” “the irreparable historical irruptions that Faulkner returns to time and again” in his attempts to write his books “to step outside of time, to start over” from the point “memory may believe before knowing remembers” (272). Although the methodologies and approaches may differ, each essay probes the matter of memory in Faulkner in historical contexts of the South, the United States, or in broader international contexts.

The collection contains three parts, each of which has four essays. Part I: “Memory and History” pursues the theme of “the difference between memory and history” (10) in Faulkner’s comparatively early works. In Part II: “Reading History,” the four contributors analyze Faulkner’s narrative strategies and narrators’ functions in historical contexts. In Part III: “Collective Memory,” although the contributors take different approaches, their essays share a concern with “history and collective and/or communal memory.”

Part I begins with Hisao Tanaka’s “History, Memory, and ‘Rememoration’: Faulkner’s Civil War Spectrology and Quentin Compson.” Through the whole argument, Tanaka shows the reader memory’s prevailing power over history in Faulkner. Surveying previous studies on the relationships and differences between history and memory, Tanaka explores “memory’s dynamic tension with history” (15) in Faulkner’s early Civil War trilogy. Focusing on the confrontation of the younger generations with their great ancestors and major Civil War heroes in Sartoris [Flags in the Dust], Tanaka points out Faulkner’s “drive in opposite directions, to indict [the past sin of the South] or to escape [from that sin]” (20), but he also detects in Light in August the writer’s achievement of a certain detachment from the object of narrative, which is necessary to “integrate and internalize both drives into a consistent characterization of Hightower” (21). In Absalom, Absalom!, Tanaka sees Rosa Coldfield’s obsessive narration as an act of mourning her traumatic memory of Thomas Sutpen, although Quentin, another narrator and “indicter of and mourner for the Sutpen kingdom” (26), brings about “what Houston Baker calls ‘critical memory’” (27), which “prevent[s] communal as well as regional amnesia . . . from sweeping away the memory of the tainted and tragic history of Southern culture” (26).
In his “The Waste Land’ and Reproduction: The Creation of Flags in the Dust’ Toshio Koyama argues that Faulkner successfully “transformed his personal memory into history” and “sublimated ‘the actual into apocryphal’ to create ‘a cosmos of his own’” (44). Koyama starts his argument with a close examination of the intertextual relationship between Faulkner’s fictional cosmos and that of T. S. Eliot, the contemporary literary critic and poet. Koyama argues that the key to the author’s “creation of the aesthetic” is “his ‘reproduction’ metaphor” (32). Noting the “contrapuntral or symphonic structures” (33) Faulkner borrowed from Conrad Aiken, Koyama points out that in the early stage of literary creation the writer kept in mind the “polyphonic music form” and “a successful attempt to synthesize musical reactions with abstract documentary reaction” (34). Koyama also evidences the influence of Eliot on Faulkner’s early works, especially in Flags in the Dust. In the novel, as well as in Eliot’s The Waste Land, the “rotation of the four seasons and human life-death-rebirth cycle” are ironically “coupled with the wasteland and dust imagery” (40). Here Koyama sees “Faulkner’s reproduction or recreation of the aesthetic . . . as of memory and artistic imagination” (45) in his unique uses of metaphors.

In her “Memory and the Past in The Sound and the Fury: Narrative of Loss, Desire, and Death,” Hee Kang discusses the agony of remembering the lost sister Caddy, who centers the memories of the Compson brothers. Focusing on the Quentin section, Kang argues that the eldest brother Quentin suffers a “conflict between the impossibility of his desire for her [his sister Caddy] and his terrifying angst toward” (54) her sexual desire, till he reaches the “maddening disintegration of his self” (50). For Quentin, suicide by drowning means a symbolic consummation with Caddy, whose sexuality is “the unnameable” (58) and the maternal. The suicide signifies the verification of the “irreplaceability of Quentin himself” (58) as well as of Caddy; at the same time, his attempt to transcend time by death finally ends up in “its meaninglessness” (65), through which Faulkner attempts “to meditate on the relation between ‘modernity’ and past/memory/history, with the inescapable sense of loss/grief/melancholy” (66).

Based on the Freudian concepts of “the uncanny” Michael Zeitlin’s “The Uncanny and the Opaque in Faulkner’s Historical Memory” analyzes Absalom, Absalom! Zeitlin points out that the Sutpen people stand out among many characters in Faulkner in their uncanny nature. For example, their uncanny characteristics are reified in the figure of Thomas Sutpen the patriarch, “both in its [Sutpen’s] clayish opacity and bizarre, robotic movements,” which indicate “the determinism by which human beings . . . are transformed into things” (80-81). Noting Sutpen’s metaphorical proximity to his slaves and that of his first son Charles Bon to Haiti, Zeitlin regards Bon as “proof of the Real” of “the historical existence of slavery . . . rendered in opaque forms” (83-84).
Employing an Oedipal framework, Zeitlin interprets the fall of Sutpen “who outraged the land” (89) that once used to belong to no man but now has come to be personal property “through time and history” (90), in terms of the Southern Myth. As his “phallic ‘watchfulness’” (85) over other people neatly exemplifies, Sutpen is personification of “order and the rule” (87) of the Southern patriarchy and thus inevitably the point of “the convergence of the narrative’s general modes of derision, degradation, and violence” as well as the target of personal hatred of other characters, all of which finally bring about the fatal disaster of Sutpen’s Hundred. In this process of filial vengeance, Zeitlin sees Sutpen’s rage against the landowning system of Southern capitalism, which is shared both by Quentin, the heir of the Compsons and inheritor of the Southern legacy, and by Faulkner.

In the first essay of Part Two, which is titled “A Historical Reading of Thomas Sutpen’s ‘Morality,’” Takuya Niiro offers a new and stimulating interpretation of the motive of Sutpen’s mysterious repudiation of his first son Charles Bon. Dismissing the simple moralistic accusation of Sutpen given by some critics, Niiro suggests that the legal and racial differences between colonial Haiti and the antebellum South force him to repudiate Bon. On this point, Niiro’s argument is quite unique; perceiving Sutpen’s “hidden feeling as a father” (115) to his black son, Niiro foregrounds “the ‘personal’ agonies of the characters in tragic conflict with the social and the historical” (120). Beyond Sutpen’s “economic ambition” (116) to establish his “impregnable . . . dynasty” Niiro sees his “domestic commitments to become a father who will ‘pass on’ his kingdom to his son” (116). What prevents him from the completion of his design is the legal and racial codes of the South that regard Sutpen’s first wife and their son Charles, both of whom are legally regarded as his family members in Haiti, as no more than his black mistress and her partly-black child, thereby forcing Sutpen to divorce in order to leave them “free” (114). However, this decision later leads him to utter ruin of his design when the discarded Bon visits him as the friend of heart of his white son and fiancé of his own daughter. Tormented by the personal and parental feeling, Sutpen chooses, though unconsciously, self-punishing and self-destroying renunciation of the black son. Though polemical, Niiro gives a very insightful interpretation based on historical researches that subvert the traditional understanding of Thomas Sutpen as a disastrous ghouls.

In “History and Memory in Faulkner’s ‘Carcassonne’ and ‘Black Music,’” Eiko Owada attempts to de-/re-contextualize Faulkner. In the context of Christian invasions, Owada intertwines the past and present of the United States with the history of Christian Crusade. To examine “Faulkner’s use of historical frames of reference” in her analysis of the two short stories, Owada utilizes what she calls “the ‘imaginary palimpsest’” (123), i.e., historical indexes erased but coming up from beneath to the surface of the texts. In “Carcassonne,”
through the surface narrative Owada sees traces of the massacre of Christian heretics during the Albigensian Crusade, which later is “transformed into the concept of ‘Manifest Destiny’” (133). Tied together with each other, those images bring about critical views of the history of “the United States’ imperialist invasion” (133) of the Caribbean and “suppression of other ethnic groups” in North America. In “Black Music,” such revisionist views are reinforced in the use of two pieces of Roman architecture—a fictional building, Van Dyming’s community house, and the historical Monticello, which was planned by Thomas Jefferson. The former, appearing on the surface of the text, functions as imaginary palimpsest to remind the reader of some historical knowledge of the latter, which suggests Jefferson’s compromising life as Founding Father and slaveholder. In this way Owada evinces Faulkner’s critical attitude not only to the history of the South but to the United States.

Takaki Hiraishi’s “From Darl Bundren to Quentin Compson: Faulkner’s Clairvoyant Narrators” examines Faulkner’s use of clairvoyant narrators from *As I Lay Dying* to *Absalom, Absalom*. Pointing out that the clairvoyant narrators are “at once subjective and objective, personal and impersonal, fragmentary and inclusive” (144), Hiraishi argues that their clairvoyance is “deterministic and omniscient by definition,” though it often makes them mad, as in the cases of Darl and Doc Hines. For them, “[g]odliness is not only a matter of religion, but of narratology, of the possibilities of the omniscient point of view as well” (149), although as a result they inevitably lack self-consciousness and motivation to tell their stories.

In *Absalom, Absalom!*, Faulkner manages to balance “the narratology and the psychology” of the characters by making peer narrators of Quentin and Shreve, which renders the story “sufficiently realistic and impersonal” (157-58). Remaining “rather a listener and an insightful seer” (159), Quentin avoids having “fallen into madness,” while his partner Shreve becomes “a spokesman-like narrator substituting for Quentin, making use of Quentin’s motivation and power of clairvoyance, while retaining his own detached interest in the story” (161). Hiraishi concludes that “the idea of clairvoyance is . . . innately related to Faulkner’s themes of the South, determinism and modernism” (162), for Faulkner there first achieved how to integrate all-penetrating omniscience and private subjective self in one human character. Hiraishi shows to the reader a new mode of interpreting the Faulknerian narration which outlives historical determinism and maddening memory.

Noel Polk’s “Reading Blood and History in *Go Down, Moses*” is also polemical but highly original both in its topics and insights. Polk starts his argument by opposing the traditional interpretation that “Isaac McCaslin’s renunciation of birthright” (163) is carried out as his moral judgment against the sin of slavery, and instead proposes another
interpretation, namely, that Isaac desperately tries to obliterate the potentially scandalous facts of the incestuous, mixed-blood and homosexual relationship among his forefathers. Carefully examining the fear of “the loss of difference” (172) by blood contamination “in the Western patriarchal tradition” (169), Polk traces back Isaac’s hidden anxiety that his family may “share ancestors with the slaves and their descendants” (172). We even see an overt example that love “cuts across all racial divides” (173) in the figure of the little son of Isaac’s nephew and his mistress in “Delta Autumn.”

In the latter part of the article, Polk suggests that Isaac fears the twin possibility that he may inherit his father’s (and his uncle’s) homosexuality and be partly black through the analysis of “Was” and the fourth section of “The Bear,” in which Isaac’s traumatic memory of his uncle Herbart Beachamp living with a black “nursemaid and nanny” (179) is narrated. Actually, hints of “the genetic mix” (179) of black blood are scattered throughout the text of Go Down, Moses. Polk concludes that Ike renounces his property because he wishes to be set free from the dual burden of miscegenation and homosexual incest, i.e., from the “tainted heritage” (183) of the history of the South. Definitely this is one of the most challenging articles in the collection; at the same time, it is the most direct attempt to confront the racial trauma of the South.

The first paper in Part III, Takako Tanaka’s “Funeral Procession in As I Lay Dying and Go Down, Moses,” deals with the “conflict of meanings arising out of loss and grief” in the funeral processions in the novels. Seeing the young Faulkner’s ambivalent desire to win the approval of “the Southern Father” and “to surpass the Father” (188) in Soldier’s Pay, Tanaka observes the development of this ambivalence into overt renunciation of the patriarchal order in As I Lay Dying. In the argument of As I Lay Dying, Tanaka suggests that Addie Bundren’s grotesque funeral journey performs “her pledge of loyalty to her phallogocentric father” (191), though her last challenge to her husband Anse ends up an ironical failure and Anse outlives her in the “clean, law-abiding community” (192) of “modern commodity culture” (191) where no real paternal authority exists.

In her discussion of Go Down, Moses, Tanaka relates communal memory to “the matter of slavery” (194), focusing on Issac McCaslin in “The Bear” and Samuel [Butch] Worsham Beauchamp in “Go Down, Moses.” Isaac, for whom white paternal figures are no more than the signs “of rapacity and the sin of slavery,” wishes to be “away from a capitalist economy” and “the history of slavery . . . by communing with the wilderness” (195-96), but his own patriarchal bigotry does not permit him to accept its mixed-blood nature. In “Go Down, Moses,” Tanaka argues, “the symbolic recovery of the lost child” (197) is performed through the “public funeral procession” of orphan-like Butch, even though it is a mere compromise between white and black communities. Emphasizing the challenging aspects
of funeral processions in these novels, Tanaka perceives Faulkner's ethical acts of writing "against a patriarchal authority" and for "the repressed individual, and also for the repressed race if possible" (201).

In her "The French Architect as lieu de mémoire: The Circulation of the Memory of French History in 'Evangeline,' Absalom, Absalom! and Requiem for a Nun," Nicole Moulinoux discusses the importance of the figure of the architect according to what historian Pierre Nora calls "lieu de mémoire, i.e., a locus of memory" (204) for French history as well as for Faulkner's "dream of military and artistic grandeur" (205). Moulinoux emphasizes Faulkner's metaphoric and allegorical approach to France in his works. In Absalom, Absalom!, the writer describes the French architect as a figure wearing "the costume of the Parisian artist" (210). Although a mere "patchwork of incongruous, heterogeneous composites" (204), he becomes "a reminder of the failure of the plantation system" (210) as well as that of colonial France's "long erring quest of the Acadians in North America" (207-08).

In Requiem for a Nun, the same French architect gains "a domineering authority over" Jefferson. He indicates two "conflicting ideologies" (213) of imperial France and of Napoleon that are seen in the design of Jefferson's courthouse and of the town. Moulinoux observes that Napoleon's figure becomes a "commemorating site" of "the French nation's historical traumas" (215) in Faulkner. Moulinoux further links a metaphorical phrase "a squeeze-out tube of paint" in "The Jail" with "Elmer Hodge the painter" (Elmer 110) and young Faulkner's dedication to art and his later-day despair of it in the age of "uncontrolled replication and mass production" (217) as another reminder of the writer's ardor for his French memory. As Moulinoux points out, the "function of a lieu de mémoire is thus to enable collective memory to dismiss the past and make room for the living" (219), while it also serves to degrade history into legend before sending it into oblivion" (219) and lays bare "the rupture between national history and memory" (220).

Thadious M. Davis "The Race for Memory: Raced Property as Monument in Go Down, Moses" proposes "a way of rethinking the memorializing ... [of the] raced property at the center of the novel" as "a textual monument," both "external [that is, as a monument of Faulkner's black servant and ex-slave Caroline Barr] and internal [i.e., the memories that white characters share] in the text" (226). Davis defines Go Down, Moses as "a narrative of shame" (229) of the white heir Isaac McCaslin having lived in an ex-slave state. The shame works as a memorial of slaves and slave-masters as well as of Faulkner and young Carothers the character. Davis further traces back signs of slavery to Faulkner's dedication to his nanny Caroline Barr, which "functions as a monument to raced property" (235-36) as well as reveals Faulkner's hidden but irrevocable desire to remember and repress African-
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Americans in Mississippi.

For Ike, the white inheritor of the sin of slavery, black female bodies are also "the sources of shame that is racial and familial" (238). In the guise of the seemingly anti-racist "refusal of patrimony and ownership" (239), he unwittingly tries to escape from the bondage of white privilege and sin of slavery only within his "interior space" of "narrated memory and familial history" (241). In this predicament between the impossible ideal and the reality of raced property, Ike "constructs the collective memory of the 1940s," just as "Faulkner's containment of Callie Barr in memory and in Go Down, Moses" is his attempt "to survive [the] shame" (242), the negative heritage of the South. Through the whole argument, Davis shows an acidulous view of the escapist attitude of both Ike the character and Faulkner the writer to the history and memory of the slavery.

Last but not the least is Ikuko Fujihira's "The Theater for Forgotten Scenes in Requiem for a Nun." Focusing on the three female characters Temple Drake, Nancy Magonnie and Cecilia Farmer, Fujihira explores how collective memory comes to be exclusively forgotten in the novel. Noting the conjuring effect of Nancy's "magical language" that "produces Temple Drake the hysteric as her daughter" (253), Fujihira pays particular attention to the function of Temple's hysteric body as "a theater for forgotten scenes" (254). When Temple "voluntarily chooses" (255) to "tell her story [of the past] at the center of the stage under male eyes" (256) in a conversation with the Governor Gavin Stevens, her "ecstatic confession deviates . . . away form Gavin's patriarchal moral standard" (258) as if the repressed memory comes back to the theater of her body. Through this process of unconscious confession, Temple gradually lays bare "forgotten scenes in Jefferson's history" (262).

Another symbol of forgotten scenes is Cecilia Farmer, who is commemorated as a Civil War legend and related to the Jefferson's prison house but whose identity is both of "a demon-nun" and "an angel-witch" (265). Her Janus-faced identity overlaps that of Temple's and Nancy's. For Temple and Nancy, both of whom are "failed mother[s]" (267), Cecilia's story is a counterpart of their "sense of guilt" (265) about their lost babies, which is repressed in Temple's memory. Thus symbolized, Temple's body becomes the theater of forgotten scenes at which a drama of the community's "repressed memories" is performed.

The essays introduced by the reviewer are without doubt the finest achievements in Faulkner studies in Japan today. Although most of the essays in the book focus on major novels written in comparatively early phases of the writer's career, this collection still succeeds well in deepening our understanding of Faulkner. However, this book might well include more articles dealing with Faulkner's later and/or less popular works such as the Snopes trilogy, Pylon, If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem, and A Fable; no doubt such studies would
have further enriched this project. Of course, I admit that this collection contains several exceptions like Owada’s, Moulinoux’s and Fujihira’s that deal with such texts, which are most unique and important contributions to this book.

Ironically, while most essays probe the relevance between Faulkner and the memory and history of his country, few articles put the matters of memory and history in relation to the writers’ own native countries nor in international contexts (again, Molinoux and Owada, both of whom connect Faulkner’s texts to French history, are the exceptions). If the collection had emphasized the locality of the 2004 symposium, that would have given another interesting twist to this important contribution to Faulkner studies both in the variety of themes and the sophisticated arguments. Nevertheless, I will not hesitate to admit that the collection should be highly valued not only among Faulkner scholars in Japan but in the international arena of Faulkner studies. Not only for the professional Faulknerians but for novice Faulkner scholars, this collection is a must-read book.

Takayuki Tatsumi, *Full Metal Apache: Transactions Between Cyberpunk Japan and Avant-Pop America*


Reviewed by TAKEMOTO Noriaki, Nara Women’s University

*Full Metal Apache* chiefly deals with numerous fictional works created through the mutual understandings, which largely include misunderstandings, between Japan and the United States. The stereotypic misunderstanding of Asia by Europe and America leads to orientalism, and likewise occidentalism can be recognized when Asia fails to understand Europe and America correctly. In *Full Metal Apache* Takayuki Tatsumi evaluates what has been acquired through deconstructing orientalism and occidentalism, that is, through revivifying the creative aspects of exoticism. Tatsumi calls it “new exoticism”. He examines how Japanese and American fictional works inspired by new exoticism succeed in evading clichés, and opening up exciting possibilities. These works are not based on the correct understandings of the other country but on the creative misunderstandings that can highly stimulate the readers’ imagination. In studying the mutual cultural influences between Japan and the United States, Tatsumi takes notice of the unique mentality upon which the postwar Japanese culture has been built up. The mentality is called “creative masochism”. It is a paradoxical mentality. Owing to creative masochism Japanese willingly abandon