HOMAGE TO FAULKNER
(1897-1997)

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"Can't you talk without pointing that thing?" Faulkner, Chandler and *The Big Sleep.*

His stature - only just over five feet - was often a problem for him and a certain fondness for heroic stances was perhaps the compensatory result; to some extent this explains his youthful decision to join the British armed forces in the First World War. His literary experiments after the war included poetry in a late-Romantic, pre-Raphaelite vein. However, widespread fame came to him with the publication of a best-selling novel about sex and violence in a world of gangsters and their victims. It is interesting to note that a personal obsession with physical cleanliness corresponded to a literary fascination with environments of dirt and squalor. Despite this pessimistic vision of corruption and decay, however, a chivalric code remained a kind of reference point for him - a code that was clearly anachronistic and even absurd in a world of rapidly changing values.

Many of his novels were the result of a complicated process of tying together several earlier short stories, a practice which sometimes explains the convolutions of the plot. Financial security came with the call of Hollywood; several of his novels were filmed and he himself became a highly-paid screenplay writer, whose credits include some of the finest films of the period. However, his relations with Hollywood were never easy and were often aggravated by his drinking problem, It is possible that his mastery of a colloquial style helped him to succeed in the film-world; in his fiction this colloquial language was often wrought or forged into a prose of deliberate ornateness; one of the central paradoxes of his style is this curious marriage between ultra-realism and flamboyant artifice.

Who am I talking about? Well, I would contend that the subject of these two paragraphs could be either William Faulkner or Raymond Chandler.

Now it is true that I have forced things a little; the "biography" is a highly selective one and almost every statement calls for further qualifications: *Sanctuary* is not *The Big Sleep,* and Faulkner's southern baroque is not Chandler's Californian art-deco. And one or two of the details, of course, would apply to many other American writers of the age - the drinking problem, for example, was almost *de rigeur* for every novelist who lived through Prohibition. Indeed, the numerous objections that could be raised to this exercise might suggest that it is, in the end, little more than that: a literary parlour game.

However, there is something that perhaps justifies this parade of parallels, and that is the fact that the literary careers of the two writers did, thanks to Hollywood, come into close contact at a certain point. The result was the film *The Big Sleep.* Directed by Howard Hawkes and starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, it is generally considered one of the finest of its period (it came out in 1946), and the most faithful of all the Marlowe-movies to the spirit of Chandler. But it is my contention that the affinities between the two writers can be more easily seen in the original screenplay; this is different from the film in various respects, but in many ways it is even closer to the spirit of Chandler than the film is - and also to that of Faulkner.

Thus this essay is really about a film that never got made. Of course, this could seem like ingratitude, given the quality of the film that did make it to the screen; it is also, of course, to a certain extent speculative, since there is no knowing how the script would have actually worked on screen: the reasons why Faulkner's original screenplay' was not accepted are several, including censorship problems, but one of the most cogent was Howard Hawks's awareness of the special gifts of his starring actors. But speculation is, at worst, a harmless activity and always has its own fascination: what song *did* those sirens sing? how good would Verdi's *King Lear* have been and how satisfactory Dickens's solution to *Edwin Drood*? We will never know the answers, but

wondering about them may help us to understand the subject of the questions better.

I think it is also fair to say that the film as we have it is great but not perfect. If it is a masterpiece, it is a flawed one. The plot is impossibly complicated;[2] this is true to a certain extent of the novel as well, but the latter is rather more coherent. In particular, there is a problem of motivation in the film, for example, we are not given enough evidence to understand why Philip Marlowe persists with his investigation once he has cleared up the blackmail business; there seems no real reason why he should be so concerned as to the fate of Shawn Regan[3] (Dusty Regan in the novel).

In the novel there is more justification for his behaviour. In particular we are made to appreciate the nature of Marlowe's relationship with General Sternwood, which involves something of military respect; Marlowe correctly interprets the General's unspoken desire to be assured that Regan (his son-in-law in the novel, though not the film) has not betrayed his trust. In the film the General appears only once[4] at the beginning; it is a fine performance by Charles Waldron, but it remains a cameo-role. In particular, despite Bogart's sweat-soaked shirt, we miss the wonderful account of the hot-house atmosphere: "The air was thick, wet, steamy and larded with the cloying smell of tropical orchids in bloom. [...] The plants filled the place, a forest of them, with nasty meaty leaves and stalks like the newly washed fingers of dead men."[5] The description of the General's head, with his "few locks of dry white hair [clinging] to his scalp, like wild flowers fighting for life on a bare rock",[6] manages to suggest both his dependence on this air of corruption (he needs the heat to live) and his ability to remain aloof from it (despite the damp, his craggy head remains stubbornly dry). Marlowe can both see and condemn the environment (and we are shown the decaying oil-sumps that surround his sham-castle of a house), and like and respect the man.

The film is more economical in its effects; it does not show us (as Faulkner's script does) Marlowe arriving at the mansion and surveying it in its squalid setting. We go straight to the doorbell and his first encounter with the General's butler and then with his

nymphomaniac daughter, Carmen. In general, the film manages to overcome the problem of incoherence and lack of motivation by sheer energy: we are simply never given time to puzzle over such matters. Energy and style: everything is up to the performers, in particular, of course, the great couple, Bogart and Bacall. It is *their* film; what counts is *their* relationship. Everything else is secondary. It partly explains why the original script was dropped, or, at least, heavily rewritten. They had worked brilliantly as a couple in *To Have and Have Not* (another Faulkner-scripted work that Hawks is said to have made in order to prove to Hemingway that he could make a successful film from his worst novel - he had not, of course, written *Across the River and into the Trees* at that time), and they were beginning to form a successful couple in real life as well. (The film was advertised with the slogan: *"A story as violent as their Iove!"*) No director could be expected not to cash in on such favourable circumstances.

The film is full of delightful natural touches that one can only presume were unscripted - the spontaneous result of their natural interaction: Bogart's casual "Go ahead and scratch", as Bacall touches her leg; Bacall's failure to open the door of his office, prompting his remark, "I didn't do it on purpose"; the graceful but casual bow of her head when he looks in on her singing at the casino. An entire scene was added at a later stage to give extra zest to the relationship: the scene in the restaurant with the highly suggestive conversation about "horse-riding" ("It all depends who's in the saddle..."); this scene is entirely irrelevant from the point of view of the plot, but contributes greatly to the impression of underlying sensuousness that is so important in their love-making.

All of this transformed the original dark script into a much lighter one: film noir is here wedded with romantic comedy. It is great romantic comedy, but it is very different from the atmosphere of the novel - and from Faulkner's interpretation of Chandler's novel. In particular, it changes the character of Marlowe. Marlowe is, by his very nature, a loner: he is the solitary frontier-hero transported to the metropolis, and he cannot be entangled in love affairs. When he does get so entangled (in Chandler's last two novels, *The Long Goodbye* and *Playback),* the writing suffers. In

particular, *Playback* deteriorates into lamentable sentimentalism ("Almost immediately the telephone started to ring again. I hardly heard it. The air was full of music."[7]). In the novel he was working on when he died, Marlowe is actually married; it is difficult to regret that the novel remained unfinished.[8]

In Faulkner's screenplay, the romantic entanglement is there: by Hollywood rules it could hardly have been omitted. But it is not central and it is by no means this that dominates our final impression of the script. In the screenplay, as in the novel, Vivian (the character played by Bacall) is one of four important female characters, the others being her sister Carmen, Mona Mars and Agnes. In the film, these other characters - like so many of the male characters too - are greatly reduced in importance. Mona Mars makes a very brief and rather bewildering appearance in the penultimate scene; many of the actions she performs in the novel (where she is known as "Silverwig") are taken over by Vivian: it is Vivian who cuts Marlowe's ropes and saves him from the killer, Canino.

The greatest reduction is in the role of Carmen. And it is here that Faulkner's script suffers its greatest change. Carmen is, of course, the murderer: just the first of many such deadly females in Chandler's novels. (Interestingly, the only one without a woman as the murderer is the weak *Playback;* it seems that when Chandler's misogyny failed him, so did his literary genius.) It is perhaps no surprise that Faulkner responded to this picture of treacherous womanhood, and what is interesting is that he actually darkened the picture. Faulkner's Carmen is, if anything, more sinister than Chandler's - and thus gets correspondingly harsher final treatment.

In the novel Carmen's dangerous instincts are revealed at the very end when she attempts to shoot Marlowe, with a pistol he has filled with blanks; after this failure and her collapse into an epileptic fit, he tells her sister that he knows Carmen killed Rusty Regan in pique at his resistance to her charms; he adds that she needs to be taken into care. His decision not to inform the authorities is due to his respect for the General - but the awareness that justice has not been done contributes to the bitter cynicism of the book's ending:

> What did it matter where you lay once you were dead? In a dirty sump or in a marble tower on top of a high hill? You were dead, you were sleeping the big sleep, you were not bothered by things like that. Oil and water were the same as wind and air to you. You just slept the big sleep, not caring about the nastiness of how you died or where you fell. Me, I was part of the nastiness now. Far more a part of it than Rusty Regan was. But the old man didn't have to be.[9]

The film similarly lets Carmen off scot-free - but the revelation comes in the middle of a show-down with the gangster, Eddie Mars. Carmen is not present and her reputation is spared entirely for the sake of Vivian. The General is not mentioned. At no point do we ever feel that Carmen is truly dangerous. An excessively sinister Carmen would have affected negatively the charm of her sister. Thus for all practical purposes the murder of Shawn Regan becomes a side issue. Carmen remains essentially a comic part, a butt for some of Bogart's more flippant lines: "You're not very tall, are you?" - "Well, I tried to be"[10], and the running joke of Doghouse O'Reilly (the false name Marlowe flippantly gives her at the beginning of the film).

Faulkner's script definitely bestows on Carmen her just deserts: Marlowe, of course, cannot shoot a woman himself but he can fix things so that she gets shot. Alone with her in the dead blackmailer's house, he allows her to reveal her evil nature (as in the novel) by firing the pistol filled with blanks at him; then he lets her leave the house, walking into the trap that the gangster, Eddie Mars, had set for him. "As she opens the door and steps through it, he snaps off the light. There is a brief pause - - and then gun fire."[11]

Interestingly Chandler liked the idea of the new ending and was disappointed to find that it had been dropped from the film: "Perhaps the boys wouldn't write it or couldn't. Perhaps Mr Bogart wouldn't play it. You never know in Hollywood. All I know is, it would have been a hairraising thing if well done. I think I'll try it myself some time."[12] Otherwise his praise mostly goes to the first half of the film, in which the novel is followed closely.

Of course the real problem was one of censorship. There were certain things that just couldn't be done. In his book on Faulkner's films, Gene D. Phillips states: "The censor would not

sanction the movie hero's taking the law into his own hands in this fashion, even to save his own life. In the Furthman conclusion, Carmen is taken to a sanatorium instead of going to her death..."[13] This rather misses the point, since in the new conclusion Marlowe pulls exactly the same stunt - but on a gangster rather than on a beautiful woman: it is Eddie Mars who is tricked into running out of the door to get shot down by his own men. It seems that Hollywood did allow its heroes to take the law into their hands - but only with certain categories (and sexes) of criminals.

In any case the result was a diminution of Carmen's role. In the novel she is disturbing rather than simply comic right from her first appearance: "She came over near me and smiled with her mouth and she had little sharp predatory teeth, as white as fresh orange pith and as shiny as porcelain. They glistened between her thin too taut lips. Her face lacked colour and she didn't look too healthy."[14] The suggestions that lie behind the cliché-word "vamp" are here given literal life; her real character is expressed only in those menacing teeth. She is described as behaving in a continually childish fashion - sucking her thumb, giggling and looking coy; however, we are made aware from the start that this immaturity is by no means innocent. Even the thumb-sucking is made to seem sinister, with the description of the odd defect: "It was a curiously shaped thumb, thin and narrow like an extra finger, with no curve in the first joint. She bit it and sucked it slowly, turning it around in her mouth like a baby with a comforter."[15]

According to one critic, Chandler has here united two stereotypes of American fiction: "the blonde, a favourite sexual provocateur of American melodrama," and "the succubus, an archetype that dates to the Middle Ages"[16] The succubus was marked by some physical deformity and by limited mental powers; sleeping with such a creature inevitably led to the loss of one's soul. Chandler also makes her an epileptic, apparently following the unscientific theories of Cesare Lombroso which identified epilepsy as the disease of criminal degenerates.

Indeed, Chandler so effectively suggests her dangerous nature that the final revelation of her murderous role is less than a surprise; this, of course, is in keeping with Chandler's own belief in

the way the detective story should work: "The mystery novel must be credibly motivated both as to the original situation and the denouement. It must consist of the plausible actions of plausible people in plausible circumstances [...] This rules out most trick endings and the so-called 'closed circle' stories in which the least likely character is forcibly made over into the criminal without convincing anyone."[17]

An interesting example of the difference between the novel's Carmen and the film's Carmen can be seen in the scene in Joe Brody's flat; the key-variance between this scene in the novel and in the film (both in Faulkner's script and the film as shot) is that in the latter Vivian is present. In the final version her presence (Bacall at her coolest) helps to turn the scene into pure comedy, with no real sense of danger. (Danger comes only at the end, after Vivian has left, with the unexpected murder of Brody.) One lovely touch that serves to create this light mood and which also defines Vivian's character is the impatient gesture with which she casually pushes aside Brody's gun: "Can't you talk without pointing that thing?" (Perhaps nothing so clearly defines Marlowe and Vivian as their ability to talk without pointing such things: Marlowe's repartee *is* his gun.) This lightness of tone affects the characterisation of Carmen as well: she is the last to enter, holding a gun and demanding that Brody give her back her photos. The film turns this moment as well into comedy; we never feel she is really likely to shoot, and she is disarmed with little trouble by Marlowe. She, too, has one marvellous and almost farcical gesture: the spontaneous upward-slam of her handbag into Brody's face as she leaves the room; we almost feel inclined to cheer.

In the novel her entrance is far more sinister: "Carmen Sternwood pushed him back into the room by putting a little revolver against his lean brown lips."[18] (The gun in the film is pointed far less suggestively at his stomach.[19]) There is every suggestion that she might shoot: "Carmen's face had a bony scraped look and her breath hissed." Even after she is knocked to the floor, she does not become absurd: "Carmen was crawling on her hands and knees, still hissing. The metal of her little revolver

glistened against the baseboard over in the corner. She crawled towards it relentlessly [...] There was a little froth at the corners of her mouth. Her small white teeth glinted close to her lips." When she is finally bundled out of the flat she reverts from wild animal to provocative vamp: "She touched my cheek with her fingers as she went by. 'You'll take care of Carmen, won't you?' she said [...] Then she whispered: 'Can I have my gun?'"[20] The gun is thus closely identified with her sexual menace.

Faulkner's script, while including Vivian in this scene, does not emphasize the comic aspect. Carmen remains a sinister figure, both because of the hint of mental imbalance and her determination to seduce Marlowe. Faulkner reproduces the coy demand for her gun and the kiss she imposes on Marlowe as she leaves. Indeed, Faulkner's script is in general most interesting in its response to the sexual danger that she represents. It is her role as succubus that seems to stimulate Faulkner and it leads him to create the most strikingly original new scene in his script, one that takes its hint from Chandler but pushes the suggestions of the original novel to extremes. In the end, of course, it turned out not be in keeping with the mood that the film had assumed and so was not adopted.

The scene in question is the one where Marlowe finds Carmen in his own flat. Of course, censorship made it impossible to reproduce certain key features from the novel, such as the fact that she is actually found naked in his bed. (Similarly, earlier on, it had been impossible to present her in Geiger's house dressed only in a pair of "jade ear-rings", as in the novel.) The film as finally shot, however, reduced the importance of the scene yet further, turning it into something perfunctory and almost irrelevant: Marlowe finds Carmen sitting in his armchair (fully dressed, of course), and after a short exchange of wisecracks she tries to bite his hand, upon which he angrily bundles her out of the apartment. End of scene.

In the novel this is perhaps the single most striking episode - and certainly the one that has attracted most critical attention. It is the final lines of the chapter, in particular, that have aroused most commentary:

> I went back to the bed and looked down at it. The imprint of her head was still in the pillow, of her small corrupt body still on the sheets.
> I put my empty glass down and tore the bed to pieces savagely.[21]

The unbridled revulsion that is shown here seems out of keeping with the coolness that Marlowe had shown towards Carmen's nakedness earlier; when he finds her in Geiger's flat he states: "I looked her over without either embarrassment or ruttishness. As a naked girl she was not there in that room at all. She was just a dope. To me she was always just a dope."[22] Indeed, we could suspect that this over-emphatic indifference is a studied pose. Certainly the wisecracking responses he makes to her provocations in the bedroom-scene seem a form of self-protection:

> 'I'm all undressed,' she said, after I had smoked and stared at her for a minute.
> 'By God,' I said, 'it was right at the back of my mind, I was groping for it. I almost had it, when you spoke. In another minute I'd have said "I bet you're all undressed." I always wear my rubbers in bed myself, in case I wake up with a bad conscience and have to sneak away from it."[23]

And when she actually throws the bedclothes aside, revealing herself "as naked and glistening as a pearl", this pose is maintained:

> I pulled a shred of tobacco off the edge of my lower lip.
> 'That's nice,' I said. 'But I've already seen it all. Remember? I'm the guy that keeps finding you without any clothes on.'[24]

Marlowe's quipping is his main method of defence; even when it is forced or not especially witty, it keeps danger at bay by its sheer unremittingness. Here the danger is one of sexual violation rather than physical violence but the protective screen is no less necessary. He is finally compelled to threaten her with physical action himself, saying, "I'll give you three minutes to get dressed and out of here. If you're not out of here by then, I'll throw you out by force. Just the way you are, naked." The use of violence proves unnecessary - or rather, more to the *point*, he does not actually have to enter into physical contact with her, since, with

chattering teeth and animal-like hissing, she dresses and leaves. This is in contrast with the film where her sudden biting forces him to manhandle her towards the door; however, the tussle is brief and unsuggestive.

In the novel, what drives Marlowe to his threat is, he tells us, his sense of invaded privacy: "But this was the room I had to live in. It was all I had in the way of horne. In it was everything that was mine, that had any association for me, any past, anything that took the place of a family. Not much; a few books, pictures, radio, chessmen, old letters, stuff like that. Nothing. Such as they were they had all my memories." But the extraordinary violence of his reaction once she has left suggests that the violation is not only one of physical space; there is a sense that the woman's body is itself a source of corruption for a true knight, such as Marlowe. And the image of the knight is deliberately suggested with the reference to the chessboard, which Marlowe glances at during his exchange with Carmen: "I looked down at the chessboard. The move with the knight was wrong. I put it back where I had moved it from. Knights had no meaning in this game. It wasn't a game for knights." The denial, as so often in Chandler, is an ironic confirmation of Marlowe's true hankerings.[25]

This is the first important (if rather unsubtle) reference to Marlowe's beloved chess; in his script Faulkner picks up the suggestions and uses them brilliantly. The scene he creates reveals just how stimulating enforced limitations can sometimes be; denied the possibility of nudity and even of the image of the bed, Faulkner finds another way of suggesting the charged atmosphere: after a moment of surprising tenderness, during which Carmen seems to be trying to confess something, she clings to Marlowe's hand and says: "You've got funny thumbs. Can I bite it?" Before she can do so, he yanks his thumb from her mouth and says, "Stick to your own thumb. Hasn't it carried you all right all your life?" Carmen pretends to obey, but then says, "giggling": "It's not my thumb. See?"[26]

> She removes the object from her mouth and holds it up for him to see. It is the white queen from his set of chessmen. Marlowe stares at her for a moment, then he slaps her terrifically across the face, rocking her back. The

> chessman falls from her hand and she stares at Marlowe, frightened now, as he walks toward her. [27]

This episode manages to suggest Carmen's almost schizophrenic combination of childishness (the thumb-sucking) and sexual vampirism. However, most of all it gives us Marlowe's sense of violation: it is a violation of his privacy (the chess are almost his own *lares* and *penates)* and of his honour (as knight to an ideal and intangible queen). Such standards cannot remain untarnished if thrust into contact with Carmen's all-too receptive lips and teeth.

But it is the intensity of Marlowe's reaction that surprises, particularly after she has left the room; it goes even beyond that described in the novel. In place of the violently unmade bed, Faulkner gives us the following scene:

> He turns and crosses the room rapidly to the bath while she still beats on the door, and washes his hand savagely with soap and water, his face now actually beaded with sweat. The KNOCKING CONTINUES. He examines his hand, is still not satisfied, jerks open shaving cabinet, looks at the innocuous bottles of mouthwash, etc., [...] goes to the kitchen [...] jerks savagely from the shelf his last bottle of whiskey. It is about half full. He jerks the stopper out, flings it away and pours a dollar's worth of expensive Scotch over his hand, flings the bottle away, returns to the living room [...] and while the KNOCKING CONTINUES, he kneels at the hearth, lays the delicate chess piece on it and with a heavy fire-dog hammers the chess-piece into dust, still beating even after the piece has vanished, his blows at last drowning out the SOUND of the knocking on the door.[28]

This is an extraordinary passage. Faulkner is here clearly responding to the original passage, even to the extent of repeating the adverb "savagely" twice.[29] Of course, we can have no sullied sheets; in their place we have this ritual of cleansing, carried out with the only appropriate purifier: the masculine drink *par excellence*, whiskey. It is even emphasised that it is an expensive brand and his last drop: no sacrifice is too great in such circumstances. And then we are given the amazing spectacle of the detective, the traditional representative of methodicalness and ratiocination, kneeling by the hearth, symbol of calm and security, and destroying a chess-piece, symbol of order and reason. Only

thus can the sound of the woman's unrelenting pursuit (the persistent knocking) be obliterated. In his bitter vehemence, his warped response to sexual allure, Marlowe here appears to have become Quentin Compson.

It is not surprising that a scene of such intensity should have been dropped from the film. It hardly fitted in with the cool character that Bogart had established in such films as *Casablanca* and *To Have and Have Not.* And yet, although taken to extremes, it undoubtedly reflects something that is present in Chandler's novels. What makes the self-consciously witty style of Marlowe so interesting is the fact that we sense that it is in a way a cover; he creates his vivid similes and his forced patter to disguise an inner emptiness, which at heart is fear. As Peter Conrad suggests, the technique "is the same as that of Art Deco, and Chandler's Los Angeles is the capital city of that style. He said that Los Angeles had as much personality as a paper cup, but the purpose of Art Deco was to wish a personality on items as disposable and meretricious paper cups."[30] The style is a necessary front, to conceal the yawning void - and also to keep the foulness and corruption of the world at bay. And for the honourable frontier hero, nothing can be fouler and more corrupting than a blonde temptress, who represents everything the frontier-myth seeks to deny: urban sophistication, emotional ties, responsibilities - all of which might be summed up in the simple word, SEX. Marlowe may seem to have a pretty sophisticated wit himself, but, as already pointed out, the banter is merely an updated version of Natty Bumppo's long-rifle.

Faulkner responded to the emotional insecurity that lies beneath the sparkling surface of Chandler's wit, creating a scene of almost excessive sexual tension. Interestingly he did so using the imagery of the chessboard, which he was to develop in more suggestive fashion in a detective story of his own, some three years later, "Knight's Gambit". In this novella, chess represents a system of order and rationality, but the figure of the knight itself takes on a more equivocal significance, as Faulkner plays with the notion of the tricksy movement of the chess-figure. "Knights had no meaning in this game," says Marlowe. "When did they ever have a simple straightforward meaning?" Faulkner seems to ask. The great

advantage of the knight, it would seem, is his ability to overleap problems, and the story contains several horses, bounding with energy - but dangerous, even murderous energy. The story is not entirely satisfactory, but it reveals a more ambivalent attitude towards knightly virtues than Chandler showed.

Having indicated the special links in spirit between Faulkner's original screenplay and Chandler's novel, I feel it is only fair to conclude by conceding that the film nonetheless does reflect one important aspect of Chandler: because if the film, for all its incoherence of plot and inconsistencies, succeeds brilliantly, it is, as I have already said, purely a question of style - or stylishness. The two stars carry everything through by their marvellous performance, which is a perfect blend of almost dandyish poise and easy naturalism; they are backed by a cast of equally accomplished co-stars. While it is true that Chandler's style resonates because of the depths that we sense it serves to bridge, there is no doubt that it is the polish that first grasps our attention. And the film splendidly catches and reflects that surface glitter.

And here we do come do a basic difference between Chandler and Faulkner. It is impossible to imagine the latter author ever declaring, like Chandler: "In the long run, however little you talk or even think about it, the most durable thing in writing is style, and style is the most valuable investment a writer can make with his time."[31] It is true that in the same letter Chandler goes on to say: "Preoccupation with style will not produce it. No amount of editing and polishing will have any appreciable effect on the flavour of how a man writes. It is the product of the quality of his emotion and perception..." But nonetheless the mere emphasis on the idea of style, as something of overwhelming importance, is clearly far from Faulkner's way of conceiving his art. Despite having one of the most characteristic prose styles of the century (one that proved wholly inimitable, which is certainly not true of Hemingway), he clearly never conceived his manner of stating and presenting his themes as ever being separable from the nature of those themes themselves. The surface depended entirely on the depths. With Chandler, depths may, as I have suggested, be hinted at, and may often trouble the surface, but it is also possible to

admire the surface for itself. In the end this is, of course, the distinction between a brilliant minor author and a major one.

1 Of course, Faulkner was not the only author of the screenplay, the film credits indicate Faulkner, Leigh Brackett and Jules Furthman as joint writers. However, my interest is in the original version which was written by Faulkner and Brackett only, Jules Furthman having been brought in at the end to streamline the later scenes, and to provide an alternative ending (see *Fiction, Film, and Faulkner* by Gene D. Phillips, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1988, p. 49) There is no way of easily attributing the contributions by Brackett and those by Faulkner; nonetheless, I am assuming that Faulkner, as senior writer, was responsible for the overall structure and choice of scenes. For the sake of convenience I will continue to refer to Faulkner alone as the writer

2 One of the famous stones connected with the film concerns the murder of the chauffeur; Hawks recounts that nobody was able to work out who had killed him, and when they asked Chandler, his only answer was, "The butler did it" (See *Fiction, Film, and Faulkner, cit,* p 48.) The story is confirmed in Chandler's letters (See *Raymond Chandler Speaking,* edited by Dorothy Gardiner and Kathrine Sorley Walker, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1962, p. 205-6.)

3 One of the curiosities of the screenplay is that the list of characters at the beginning includes Shawn Regan. This is rather like seeing Godot's name in the cast-list of a theatre programme.

4 I am speaking of the distributed version of the film, and not the restored version of last year, which includes some missing scenes; I have not had a chance to see this, but whatever extra scenes it may have, it does not use Faulkner's original ending, which is the main point at issue in this essay

5 Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep,* Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966, p. 13.

6 Ibid., p. 14.

7 *Playback.* Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1961, p. 158.

8 In 1989 Robert B. Parker, the author of a series of novels about a wearisomely political-correct private eye (who beats up and shoots the criminals - but then confesses his guilt-feelings to his even more tedious feminist girlfriend, completed the novel; *Poodle Springs* (London, MacDonald, 1989) is a worthy attempt but ultimately unconvincing.

9 *The Big Sleep, cit.,* p. 220.

10 The choice of Bogart as actor meant that this obviously had to be changed from the novel's original lines "Tall, aren't you?" "I didn't mean to be." (*op. cit.,* p. 10.) (It is interesting how few indications we get in the novels of Marlowe's actual appearance Marlowe is always the eye by which we see other people, rarely do we get mirror-glimpses of hrmself)

11 *Film Scripts One,* ed by George P. Garrett, O. B. Hardison. and Jane R. Gelfman, New York, Irvington, 1989, p. 323.

12 Phillips, *Fiction, Film, and Faulkner, cit.* p. 49-50.

13 *Ibid.,* p. 49.

14 *The Big Sleep, cit.,* p. 10.

15 *Ibid,* p. 11.

16 William Marling, *Raymond Chandler,* Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1986, p. 86.

17 "Casual Notes on the Mystery Novel" In *Raymond Chandler Speaking, cit.,* p. 55.

18 *The Big Sleep, cit.,* p. 86.

19 Faukner's film-script, as published, reads: "Carmen Sternwood pushes him back in the room using a tiny revolver which she pushes against his hips" *(Film Scripts One, cit.,* p. 216.) One can hardly fail to wonder if that last word is simply a misprint.

20 *The Big Sleep, cit.,* p. 88.

21 *Ibid.,* p. 55. It is difficult to read this passage, with its description of the imprinted pillow and the imagery of corruption, without making a connection with "A Rose for Emily", one wonders whether part of the stimulus for Faulkner lay in a similar recollection, whether conscious or not.

22 *Ibid.,* p. 40.

23 *Ibid.,* p. 151.

24 I*bid.,* p. 151.

25 The image of the knight recalls a moment from the very beginning of the book, where Marlowe describes the hallway of the Sternwood mansion "Over the entrance doors [...] there was a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armour rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair. The knight had pushed the vizor of his helmet back to be sociable, and he was fiddling with the knots on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree and not getting anywhere I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him. He didn't seem to be really trying "(p. 9) The tone is purely facetious here, and helps to establish Marlowe's male credentials, however, the sentiments expressed contrast with those revealed whenever any genuine, rather than stained-glass, female flesh threatens.

26 *Film Scripts One, cit.,* p. 266.

27 *Ibid.,* p. 266.

28 *Ibid.,* p. 267.

29 The word is, of course, a resonant one for Faulkner: In *Light in August,* for example, even the summer sunlight of the title is "savage" (see Chapter 19) And its "shameless savageness" invests not the hunted criminal but the men of law on his tracks.

30 Peter Conrad, "The private dick as dandy", *Times Literary Supplement,* January 20th 1978.

31 *Raymond Chandler Speaking, cit.,* p. 67.