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Faulkner's *War Birds / A Ghost Story:* a Screenplay and its Relationship with Faulkner's Fiction

This brief essay is an excerpt from a project[1] which analyzes the relations between Faulkner's film work and his fiction, where I have emphasized a number of connections that point out the great importance of Faulkner's "second" career. These connections challenge many critics who consider Faulkner's production in Hollywood simply a business. It is clear that Faulkner worked differently in writing fiction and in writing for the studios, and that he was aware that motion pictures were not his own medium,[2] but he took his work seriously, nonetheless.

The analysis of Faulkner's screenplay *War Birds / A Ghost Story* emphasizes his great ability in dealing with important themes also in his "secondary" Hollywood works — themes such as peace and war, death and life, love and hate, suffering, the burden of the past, tradition, the family, and others. The script is set partly in Jefferson; its protagonists are John and Bayard Sartoris, taken from *Flags in the Dust* and several of his World War I stories; the work thus must be seen as part of the Yoknapatawpha myth. It offers us an example of how Faulkner extended and clarified themes of his major fiction in his screcnwriting.

War Birds / A Ghost Story was Faulkner's second full-length film script written for Howard Hawks during his first period in Hollywood, when he worked at the MGM. According to Bruce Kawin,[3] the screenplay was written "between late November 1932 and early January 1933" (257). This was after Faulkner had completed his third draft of the screenplay "Turn About", before it went into production under the title *Today We Live* directed by Hawks and released in 1933 starring Gary Cooper and Joan

Crawford.[4] As Kawin summarizes its history (257-58), *War Birds / A Ghost Story* was based on a diary kept by a World War I aviator, John MacGavock Grider, who served in the RAF in France and died a few months before the end of the war. This diary was edited and in part rewritten by Major Elliot White Springs, who had served with Grider. Springs first published the revised diary serially and anonymously in *Liberty Magazine* in 1926, under the title *War Birds: The Diary of an Unknown Aviator*. It was then published as a book by George H. Doran Company and sold as well to MGM. In the same year (1926), Springs and Merlin Taylor wrote a film treatment of the work for MGM, but it was apparently quite different from the book. According to Kawin, this treatment was "focused on a ludicrous love triangle" (257). Then no other treatment was written until Faulkner was assigned to adapt the work. He wrote an outline for Hawks entitled "Faulkner Story No.2", now lost. Faulkner then wrote his first and (apparently) only screenplay draft, which was first called *War Birds* and later retitled *A Ghost Story*.[5] But *War Birds / A Ghost Story* script never reached the screen. It remained unproduced and hidden in the vaults of the MGM Script Department until 1982, when Kawin published it and other screenplays from Faulkner's first period at MGM under the title *Faulkner's MGM Screenplays*.

War Birds, *Sartoris*, "Ad Astra", and "All the Dead Pilots": a Turn of the Screw

In fictionalizing the dead aviator's diary for the screen, Faulkner decided to draw on his fictional world. He returned to the Sartoris Clan and used the young generation of the Sartoris family. Bayard and his twin brother John are the main characters of *War Birds*. Faulkner had created the Sartoris family, in his third novel *Flags in the Dust*, which was published as Sartoris in 1929, had developed the earlier careers of Bayard and John in two short stories "Ad Astra"[6] and "All the Dead Pilots".[7] But in *War Birds* they reappear with some changes in their genealogy, their nature, and their attitude towards life. Faulkner contrived to bring together this

enormous amount of material in *War Birds* and succeeded in creating it and in creating a new fictional world, where characters have new lives and new destinies. Telling again the story of the Young Sartorises, Faulkner reconsidered themes he had developed in the novel and in the two short stories, among them the return of the warrior, the loss of the sibling, John's meaningless war, the living dead and "the victory born from defeat."[8] In *War Birds*, Faulkner changed the Sartoris genealogy and gave a turn of the screw to the themes just mentioned.

The first important change is young Bayard's survival: he did not die testing an experimental plane, about a year after the end of the war, as in *Flags in the Dust,* rather he lived through the tragedy of war and of his twin's loss and his despair. In *War Birds,* Bayard connects again all the pieces of his fragmented self[9], regaining his lost unity through a newly-founded community. He accepts the ineluctability of loss as part of human life and the necessity to face up to defeat as a new possibility, to live with tragedy as an intrinsic part of life. This new community is founded upon paradox and antithesis. In the novel, all the characters are oblivious to human ambivalence: love excludes hostility, words exclude doing, past excludes present, and so on. They have built a system of absolutes, which does not accept the cohabitation of the antithetical elements of life. Then and Now are irreconcilable, just as another kind of love is impossible, since love has been cancelled by a devastating loss. In *War Birds,* however, Bayard reconciles under the same roof loss and tragedy, love/hate, life/death, peace/war; in short, all the antithetical notions coexist in the same house.

In fact, the more significant change is that Bayard lives in the same house, the Sartoris home in Jefferson, with John's widow, Caroline; with John's son, Johnny; with John's murderer, Dorn, a German pilot who killed John a few months before the end the war; and with John's French lover, Antoinette. We must admit that this is a very strange family, but this combination implies a very strong positive choice for life. Indeed, Bayard has found a place within the community of Jefferson, within the Sartoris family and its myth. Thus he has found a spatial and temporal place where he may live through tragedy. He survives war and his terrible return,

and, just like the subadar in "Ad Astra", having touched the other limit he "sees further looking out of the dark upon the light" (409). Moreover, he has gone beyond the subadar's consciousness of being one of the "living dead" in "Ad Astra", of being trapped "within that line of demarcation not air and not water, sometimes submerged, sometimes not"(408). Bayard is not immured alive within that line, the limit. He has found his way out, as he has tried to live the paradox and the antithesis of life. He is able to see the two sides of the same wall, that architectural entity which is a limit with two faces, one face inside and the other out. Bayard has transcended such antithetical limit living within the Sartoris house, but also by building his community with his twin's killer, his twin's lover, and his twin's wife and son. In this way he has been able to think about both sides of the wall, what is here and what is on the other side.

This is a paradox. It is very difficult, but this solution opens a door to a positive choice of life and the possibility of rejecting revenge. It permits Bayard to acknowledge the words inscribed on Colonel John Sartoris's graveyard monument: "Pause here, son of sorrow; remember death" (*SAR* 375). He accepts the existence of death as part of our life, as the wall, of the separation, the demarcation of life. Above all, he accepts the defeat of life. Thus, Faulkner's characters in *War Birds* have found a way out of the Sartoris Game and from the patterns of doom into which all the Sartorises fell, repeating tradition, in the novel. In addition, in *War Birds* this new generation has gone out from the enclosure created by the Sartoris myth and has founded a renewed myth, one which recounts episodes of modern heroes — young Bayard, John, the tragicomic hero Spoomer, Dorn the German — and of modern warfare. In the first and in the last scenes of the script we see Bayard galloping a horse with the same dignity as Colonel John Sartoris, the creator of the myth and the founder of the Sartoris domain. In such scenes, the deteriorated myth and the empty ritual the reader finds after the end of World War I in the novel regain its glamorous splendor.

Caroline White, Johnny, and Bayard and John Sartoris

In *War Birds,* Caroline White is John's widow and not Bayard's first wife as in the novel, and her child is a thirteen-year-old boy, John's son. In the novel, both Caroline and the unnamed baby die on October 27, 1918; in the screenplay they live. Bayard is childless now. Narcissa and her son Benbow do not appear. The child is called Johnny, as Aunt Jenny wished at the end of the novel in her attempt to repeat tradition, doubling and redoubling the names and the Sartoris myth. But the Caroline White of the screenplay is quite unlike the Caroline White —Bayard's wife— in the novel. She is no longer the "modern" woman, born in New York, described as "a girl with a bronze swirling of hair and a small, supple body in a constant epicene unrepose, a dynamic fixation like that of carven sexless figures caught in moments of action, striving, a mechanism of whose members must move in performing the most trivial action, her wild hands not accusing but passionate still beyond the veil impalpable but sufficient" *(SAR* 55-56), or the girl who lived with Bayard "the magical chaos... for two months, tragic and transient as a blooming of honeysuckle and sharp as the odor of mint" (S*AR* 48). On the contrary she is more like Narcissa Benbow, whom also marries in the novel, a woman with an "aura of grave and serene repose in which she dwelt" *(SAR* 30). Furthermore, in the screenplay Caroline does not come from New York but from Jefferson as does Narcissa. Likewise, Bayard in *War Birds* has traits largely associated with John in the novel. There, John is mischievous, merry, a good hunter, liked by all, whereas Bayard in the novel seems always trying to match his twin John's feasts and failing.

In the novel, Bayard gives an account of that morning flight when John died in his attempt to kill Plöeckner;[10] one of the best German aviators, and a "pupil of Richthofen's" *(Flags in the Dust* 40),[11] who killed him instead. Bayard witnessed the meeting between his twin and his final limit, death. Bayard explains that he could not prevent John's going up, "he was drunk... or a fool" *(SAR* 44-46). Despite Bayard's frantic efforts to save his brother, after his jump in the air from his machine on fire, John disappeared

in the sky, leaving no corpse. Like a shooting star he is consumed in his brief orbit: a conflagration leaving no "scoria". John reappeared in "All the Dead Pilots" and he was depicted here as a man who "had a working vocabulary of perhaps two hundred words" (514). But, in *War Birds*, John, as the author of the diary, is necessarily more articulate, reflective, and thoughtful, and we understand why he acts foolishly, what brought him to his death. Moreover, the hyperbolic characters of the short story —John, Captain Spoomer and his dog— are seen more profoundly in the tragedy of war, as Faulkner, grafting sections of the short story onto the screenplay, revisited the rather ridiculous dispute John had with Spoomer and his dog. John and Spoomer compete over two women, one in London and the other, Antoinette, in Amiens, in France. The winner of the two rounds is Spoomer and John's penalty is to fly Camels at the front and later, even more dangerously, during the night. "You can't send him up there on those rotten machines," Bayard tells Spoomer in the screenplay. "Don't you know they are losing two or three men a week. It will be murder" (333), and John says, "It is a joke, isn't it? Sending me to a Camel Squadron, when I never could fly Camels" (334). Spoomer does not play fair in this war, as he his protected by his uncle, a General in London. When John in an air battle succeeds in shooting down a Hun by diving between Spoomer and the enemy, Spoomer lies in his report, saying he himself got the "Hun two-seater." This is yet another offence John is not able to tolerate. John is not able to be a pure man of action because he still has feelings and ethics. He believes in honor. John acts to show he is a good pilot, a good man, and is able to kill the enemy heroically. We follow his path of glory trying to conquer the sky leaving aside all the feelings that had troubled him till then. He has moved beyond the world of women and he even tries to forget his wife. Indeed, John has passed to the world of pure fight; he knows he will never see home again. But he is not completely able to put aside his feelings. In modern warfare, a good soldier has to fight not alone, but within a group such as the flight of Camels even though the war of the air is more similar to the classical idea of war where a single hero fought another single hero.

In the screenplay, John is aware that he is the bad side of the double and Bayard is the good one; he fights and dies, but with the awareness that Bayard and himself form a single man. The way out is to kill the bad side so that the good man can survive. Thus, John acts as a hero, and through the words of his diary bestows completeness on his twin. The last scene depicts Johnny, Antoinette, and Dorn watching Bayard ride home. Bayard jumps the gate with his horse and behind him "IN DISSOLVE there passes... the ghost of John's ship. John looking down at them, his face bright and peaceful. The ship goes on dissolve; sound of an engine dies away." (*War Birds* 420).

Rejection of revenge

Bayard's revenge is told in Bayard's first account of his brother's death to old Bayard in *SAR,* and in the short story "Ad Astra". In the former, Bayard pursued his brother's killer for four days, while in "Ad Astra" he took eight days to catch the Hun with the markings of a skull and bones on his plane. In *War Birds* Faulkner expands Bayard's hunt even more, as he spends his last three months of war in search of revenge. On Armistice Day Bayard shoots down the German at ten minutes to eleven, just before the Armistice. But here the German pilot, Dorn, does not die; Bayard meets him in the *estaminet* in Amiens on Armistice Night and they end up drinking together. When Bayard realizes that this is the killer of his twin, he immediately takes out his pistol and points it at Dorn, who "clicks his heels, salutes, holds it, looking at the pistol, his face calm" *(War Birds* 398). But Spoomer is also there, and when a riot begins, in the uproar of the mob, Bayard fights with Spoomer, whom he considers the real killer of his brother, the one who intentionally caused his death. A bayonet is aimed at Bayard but Dorn saves him, taking the blade in his left arm. Later, Dorn attempts to talk Bayard out of revenge, arguing that both have lost something, Bayard has lost his brother and Dorn his wife, his son and his country. Dorn speaks as a prophet of the Old Testament:

> You have that man who did not die in your power and at your mercy. But unfortunately the circumstances in which that man became the slayer of your brother and the object of your vengeance have passed away, ceased. And worse than that, that man was enabled to do you a small service in the matter of an ill-directed bayonet. That man believed that this favor might counter balances his debt to you, thinking you were perhaps that sort of man. So he told to you what he did in order to remove that counter balance, free your hand. (*War Birds* 407)

At this point Bayard throws his pistol at the window. It causes a hole in the shape of a star, and it "begins to glow faintly as daylight begins behind it" *(War Birds* 409). Shortly after this, we see the last page of the diary that John wrote on the day of his death and which foresees his future being beyond the final limit, where

> [n]o bullet will ever kill me .... Someday I will just get beyond all loving and hating, and I will just fly on away somewhere and vanish, like Guynemer.[12] did. Well, I have got beyond the loving and hating. And so who knows? Maybe the next time when I go up will be the time when I will fly on away into some sky without either air or gravity, where I will cruise on forever at about fourteen fifty, watching my shadow on the clouds and not even remembering how I got there. (*War Birds* 409)

Thus, in *War Birds,* Faulkner discovered a positive choice for life which he was to develop later in "An Odour of Verbena" in *The Unvanquished* and in *A Fable.* In the former, Colonel John Sartoris decides to confront his enemy Redmon unarmed and Redmon kills him. His son, (Old) Bayard, future grandfather of the twins Bayard and John in our works, does not take his revenge. He does not confront Redmon with the pistol which Drusilla offers him. In *A Fable,* as Bruce Kawin points out in an article *"War Birds* the Politics of Refusal", Faulkner discovered a "positive choice for life that can transform the politics of refusal from the path of morose narcissism to that of peace and vision".[13]

John Sartoris fulfils the demands of "Sartorisism,"[14] a mode of behavior which is recognized by the family and the community of Jefferson. "Sartorisism" was established by Colonel John Sartoris and Carolina Bayard and has influenced the lives of all the generations that follow. Colonel Sartoris fought courageously in

defense of the community in the Civil War, through his actions and his words, and after the end of the war, he again defended his community, constructed the railroad, rebuilt his house burnt by the Yankees, and conquered eternity. Carolina Bayard introduced unpredictability, recklessness, and a desire for pure actions; always courting danger he was remembered for his foolish death, killed by a cook while he was stealing the Yankees' anchovies. Bayard apparently had no political conviction; he fought in the war for adventure and even fun. Like both his ancestors, through his wartime death John has also conquered word, time, eternity, and the possibility of living on as the spirit of Colonel John Sartoris in the novel. In the screenplay, Bayard becomes the new *genius loci*, founding a new community within the old boundaries of the Sartoris house. All the members of the new community are the islands of an archipelago;[15] which is an irreducible plurality, where the single elements cohabit as they are inevitably separated but linked by what separates them. These words define eloquently the Sartorian new home and their dwellers. Such plurality is particularly meaningful and seemingly insurmountable at first —Caroline is astonished by Bayard's proposal in the beginning— because traditional assumptions and the moral code reject an open and unlimited community. But in the screenplay this is the only way to make suffering endurable. The codes and concepts our ancestors created make existence intolerable but without them Bayard in the novel stood defenseless and confused. Indeed, in the screenplay Faulkner offers this unique way to survive disruption and destruction to renew lives and to endure. Together, they may face fate and chaos. They do not shirk enlightenment and do not resist awareness. They do not erect barricades between themselves and the shattering realities.[16]

The Limit and War

War Birds offers important variations on Faulkner's Sartoris story as told in *Flags/Sartoris* and in the short stories "Ad Astra" and "All the Dead Pilots." It also anticipates later works on the same

theme, such as *The Unvanquished* and *A Fable.* These themes may be seen in three different phases in Faulkner's work.

At this point it is useful to explain the concept of limit. There is a constant idea that appears throughout the novel, the short stories and the script. The characters continually, over and over again, and anxiously, enter or go out through doors. They also sit at the front doors as Old Bayard does in the novel, or they live trapped within the line of the boundary "as bugs in the surface of the water, isolant and aimless and unflagging. Not on the surfaces but in it, within that line of demarcation not air and not water, sometimes submerged, sometimes not" (408) as in "Ad Astra", or they reestablish new boundaries to live in *(War Birds).*

At this point, it is worth highlighting something about the space and the subject. Carlo Sini[17] in "The Subject and the Space" analyzes the relationship between the subject *'and'* the space; namely he argues about the "and", which is between them, or rather the limit zone, the boundary between them. He approaches the topic in a roundabout way. He talks about the mask at first considering it a linking transformation, a sign, a sign of the limit. The mask creates a relationship between the man and another being, a dual relationship. It is a sign with a dual face, just as a boundary or a limit is. In addition *"limen"* literally means threshold, but also means house and home or dwelling. Thus the mask is the limit, the *"limen".* Sini continues by arguing about the *"limen"* as that *"and",* that line of demarcation, which is the place where we find the realization of an event of a threshold, of two sides on the same line, the place of a separation.

Then Sini considers another important image: a wall as an architectural entity. The wall is the original architectonic work, being a boundary with two sides, just as Wittgenstein, too, talks about a limit. To set a limit to the thought, Wittgenstein used to say, means to be able to think both sides: what lies on one side and what lies on the other. But this is the enormous paradox. This is the difficulty.

Somehow, these words explain Faulkner's effort to create the image we are arguing about. He sees the double face of the wall, what is on one side and what is on the other, but above all the

conflict that establishes the limit, the wall; the conflict between the inside/outside, up/down. But, mainly, to consider the relationship between the subject *and* the space, or rather the conflicting limits and the relationship Faulkner's characters have with them.

These themes of war and the limit have their origins and their first development in Faulkner's early stories of Yoknapatawpha and its myth, in which he draws on the Civil War and World War I. Colonel John Sartoris establishes the limit by which all his descendants have to live. In the novel, Faulkner illustrates the impossibility of challenging the limit, since on the other side all you may find is death. But it is also impossible to live "within" the limit without seeing the conflicts between the "inside/outside". The Old Colonel determines the deeds of the generations to come and the spatial boundaries, the territory, within which they have to live —the house, the railway, the Sartoris domain. Colonel John Sartoris and Carolina Bayard create a code of behavior, a tradition of conduct, which the future generations have to emulate. Faulkner sets up to the two poles of history: the Civil War acted out by these two founders of the code, and World War I, illustrated by the Sartoris twin. Young Bayard and John each have difficulty coming to terms with the Sartoris myth. Their grandfather, old Bayard, has found a precarious equilibrium: he has chosen to live within the past, enclosed within the Sartoris domain which has lost its previous splendor. John dies, in keeping with the myth of Carolina Bayard, but Young Bayard cannot find either peace or equilibrium after his return from World War I. He searches for a place within the established limits, within the Sartoris family and its myth. He is trapped in this afterlife, lost without his twin John, and thus constantly challenges the limit in his reckless behavior. His frightening speed in the automobile, his mad ride on a wild stallion, his daring actions that led to the death of Old Bayard, and finally, the dare-devil ride in an experimental airplane, all dramatize Bayard's attempts to conquer the other side of the limit, to demolish the "wall".

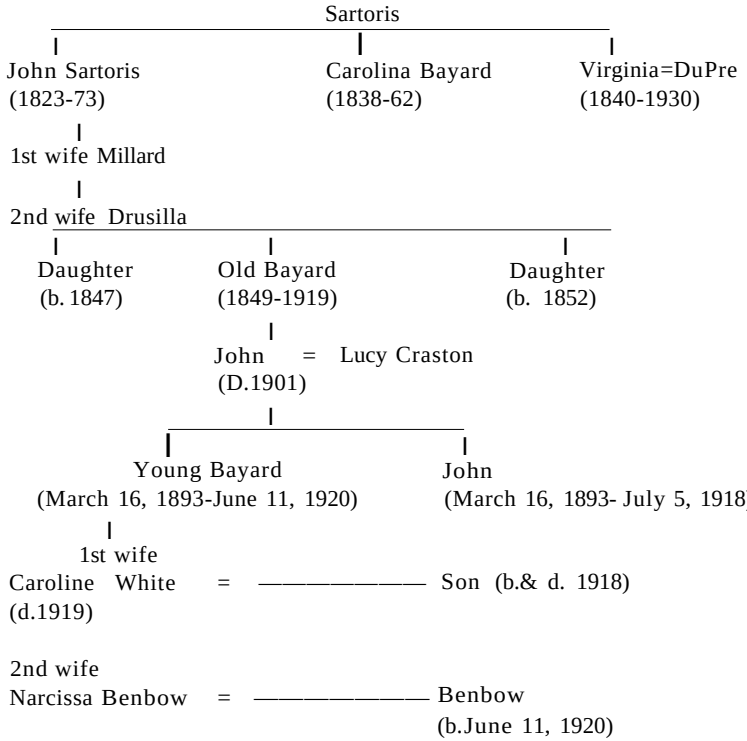
In the second phase, illustrated by the short stories "Ad Astra" and "All the Dead Pilots", the attention is focussed on the new generation of the Sartorises at the end of War World I. The aviators have lived close to the final limit and near the end of the war they

feel trapped within that separation which is the boundary between life and death. They are "Dead Pilots". But the *subadar* in "Ad Astra" has reached the awareness that "a man sees further looking out of the dark upon the light". He rejects idealism and recognizes his destiny is to be among the dead.

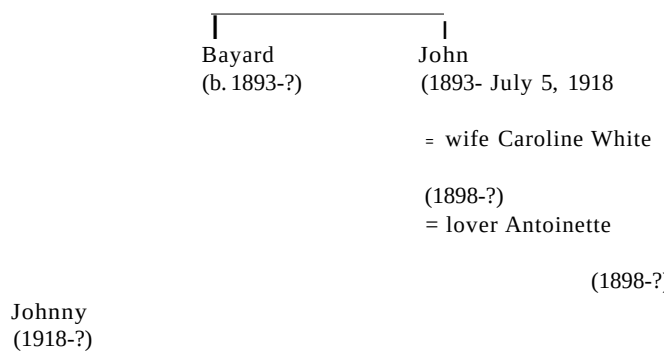
In the third phase, in *War Birds,* Faulkner finds a way out of the "game outmoded, and played with pawns shaped too late and to an old dead pattern, and of which the Player Himself is a little wearied." There is no more "death, [...] and a glamorous fatality, like silver pennons downrushing at sunset, or a dying fall of horns along the road to Roncevaux" (FD 370). Bayard has survived his return from war and faces his loss and suffering, but within the Sartoris domain. Indeed, he and the other inhabitants of the house, the new Sartoris family, have accepted the existence of the double face of the coin, the fact that the antithetical elements of life can coexist within the same realm. Bayard in *War Birds* refuses to take revenge upon his twin's killer and instead welcomes him into the Sartoris family and house.

The Sartoris Genealogy

A. In *Flags in the Dust/Sartoris.*



B. In *War Birds/A Ghost Story*



1 Graziella Fantini, *Faulkner's War Birds. The Limit and War.* Dissertation, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, 1997. Unpublished.

2 A conversation between William Faulkner and Jean Stein, which took place in New York City, early in 1956. Published in Malcom Cowley ed., *Writers at Work. The Paris Interviews,* London, Sacker & Warburg, 1958, 126.

3 Bruce Kawin, *Faulkner's MGM Screenplays,* Bruce Kawin ed., Knoxville, The University of Tennessee Press, 1982, 257-258.

4 See about "Turn About/ Today We Live": Joseph Blotner, "Faulkner in Hollywood", 261-303, in W.R. Robinson ed., *Man and the Movies,* Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1967; Bruce Kawin, "A Faulkner Filmography", *Film Quarterly* 30, 4, Summer 1977, 12-21; Bruce Kawin, "Turnabout: Faulkner's Films" in *Faulkner and Film,* New York, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977, 68-*125; Faulkner's MGM Screenplays,* introduction and commentaries by Bruce Kawin, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1982, introduction to *Turn About/Today We Live,* 101-127; Gene Phillips and Jerry Wald (fwd), *Fiction, Film, and Faulkner: The Art of Adaptation,* Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press., 1988, 16-19.

5 See William Faulkner, *Faulkner's MGM Screenplays,* edited with an introduction and commentaries by Bruce F. Kawin, (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1982). In the introduction and notes (xxxii-xxxv and note 12) Kawin explains that the screenplay held at MGM is entitled *War Birds* but that another, shorter script owned by the Howard Hawks estate has the title *A Ghost Story.* Kawin argues that they are not different drafts but only two different copies of the same script. *War Birds* is a 143 page script while *A Ghost Story* is only 100 pages in length, but the former was typed by MGM Script Department while the latter was typed by Faulkner himself, with the original title *War Birds* struck out and the new title entered above. In addition, Faulkner's typescript *A Ghost Story* had no scene numbers, whereas the Script Department version was broken into 323 scenes. Finally, on the first page of the *War Birds* script published by Kawin, the identification "File Copy" has been crossed off and "Vault Copy" has been stamped on it. "Vault Copy" is usually the original or the best copy which is preserved, while "File Copy" refers to one that might circulate. Thus, it seems likely that Faulkner wrote only one version of the screenplay but at least two copies of it exist, each with a different name.

6 "Ad Astra" was first sent to *The American Mercury* on 7 March. It was rejected and then sent on 25 March 1930 to the anthology *American Caravan,* which published it (New York, Macauley 1931). It was also included in Faulkner's first collection of stories, *These 13,* also in 1931, placed in the first section along with other world War I stories with "Victory", "All the Dead Pilots", and "Crevasse". In 1950, it was published as the first story in *The Collected Stories of William Faulkner,* in the section entitled "The Wasteland", together with "Victory", "Crevasse", "Turnabout", and "All the Dead Pilots". M.E. Bradford remarks in his article "The Anomaly of Faulkner's World War I Stories" *(Mississippi Quarterly,* Vol. XXXVI, Summer 1983) that this story "was apparently composed by 21

December 1927" (244); Hans Skei suggests the same date in his study *William Faulkner: The Short Story Career* (Oslo, Universitaetsforlaget, 1982, 36-37). T. Nordanberg in *Cataclysm as Catalyst. The Theme of War in William Faulkner's Fiction* (Stockolm, Uppsala Universitet, 1983) adds in note (46, p. 37) that "Ad Astra" had already been rejected by the *Saturday Evening Post* by December 1927.

7 "All the Dead Pilots" first appeared in *These 13* in 1931. Faulkner sent a short story with the title "Dead Pilots" on 23 April 1931 to *Woman's Home Companion* and perhaps to *Collier's.* (R. Mamoli Zorzi in *I racconti di Faulkner,* Brescia, Paideia Editrice, 1976, note 40 p. 29). T. Nordanberg in *Cataclysm as Catalyst* affirms that this short story was originally entitled "Per Ardua" and was rejected by five different magazines in 1930-31. Finally it was published in *The Collected Stories* as the last of the group entitled "The Wasteland".

8 In "Ad Astra" the German and the subadar have reached a deeper awareness of their situation than the other aviators have. These two appear as outside the group: they do not drink, they talk, and they "talk quietly of music, art, the victory born of defeat", whereas the others are enclosed in their "inescapable isolations, reiterant, unlistened to by one another." (C.S. 413)

9 Dexter Westrum in his article "Faulkner's Sense of Twins and the Code: Why Young Bayard Died" (in *Arizona Quarterly,* 40, Winter 1984, 365-76) points out that "Faulkner sees twins as complementary parts which need each other in order to exist as a whole" (370). Westrum finds evidence in the novel to establish that Johnny and Bayard have contrasting character traits while maintaining a profound attachment to each other. Consequently, Westrum feels that "Bayard dies in hopes of forming again a whole with his complementary twin" (376). But Westrum also argues that "we have no textual evidence that Bayard feels inferior to or hates his brother" (366). John S. Williams in his article "Ambivalence, Rivalry, and Loss: Bayard Sartoris and the Ghost of the Past" *(Arizona Quarterly,* 43, 2, Summer 1987, 178-92) analyzes Bayard's complexity also from a psychoanalytic point of view. When Williams considers the relationship between the two twins, he examines the comparisons other characters like Narcissa or the McCallums make between the twins. "Such comparisons have tended to favor Johnny. The clear implication is that Bayard is jealous of his brother, his thoughtfulness, his generous nature, his spontaneity, and his warm sociability. Such comparisons are frequently made among siblings, by others as well as by themselves, and the consequent rivalry and jealousy among them is well known. Identical twins have even closer ties than do other siblings, frequently developing dyadic ego structures. The intensity of love and hate, of narcissistic involvement and jealous rivalry, is greater..." (190). Williams also analyzes the causes of Bayard's guilt and writes: "It is ... hardly unreasonable to suggest that Bayard's intense guilt over his twin's death —his irrational conviction that he didn't do enough to prevent the fatal plane crash, his actual feelings that he killed Johnny— had its origins in these very jealousies and intense rivalries, resulting in a death Wish, albeit unconscious to Bayard because it was too dangerous to admit about one loved as intensely as his twin brother" (190). But this lack of

completeness does not explain sufficiently Bayard's overwhelming sense of guilt at the death of his twin. He has an ambivalent feeling towards him, as he loves him but at the same time he hates him. He rejects him and he seeks him as a man who has lost his lover.

10 Robert Harrison in *Aviation Lore in Faulkner* (Amsterdam-Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1985) reports a note about Richthofen and it is very interesting to point out the likeness between Johnny Sartoris' and Richthofen's lives. Both come from gentry families, their lives are centered around guns and horses —just like the protagonists of the Sartoris myth, and, finally, both are "born hunters". In addition we have to stress Richthoven's unique friendship with his dog Moritz which reminds one of Spoomer's dog.

> Manfred, Freiherr von Richthofen (1892-1918). The Richthofens were minor Prussian gentry, the sort of people who lived in solid, square houses with dark varnish on the wainscoting and elk and deer antlers in hallways, and whose lives centered around guns and horses. Manfred, the eldest son, followed the family custom and became an officer in the Uhlans. At the outbreak of war he joined his regiment in Alsace; then, realizing that the days of the horse cavalry were numbered, transferred to the infantry, then to the air service, where he was trained as an observer.
>
> He got his baptism to the air war on the Russian front, riding with an insane, terminally-ill pilot who tried on every outing to commit suicide by ramming any enemy machine that came to his way. Following a terrible crash, Richthofen got himself reassigned to Germany and retrained as a pilot. He showed little aptitude for flying —aeroplanes, unlike horses, could not be mastered by force of will alone— but after serving for a while as a two-seater pilot, he succeeded in persuading Oswald Boelcke into accepting him into the elite pursuit squadron he was forming at the time.
>
> By November 1916 Richthofen had eight victories; on the 23rd Lanoe Hawker became his eleventh; by the year's end he had his own squadron and a Blue Max. In the spring of 1917, when the RFC was suffering its heaviest losses of the war, Richthofen's gaily-painted Albatri seemed to be everywhere, and June saw the birth of Jagdgeschwader I, the famous Circus.
>
> Richthofen was a cold, austere man, born hunter. He never relaxed, seldom smiled, and had no friends save his dog Moritz. After the victory over Hawker he began going to the scenes of his victims' crashes and bringing back trophies with which he decorated his room. After each kill he would order from his jeweler in Berlin a little silver cup, engraved with the date and type of aircraft destroyed. There were eighty of these before his tum came, in April 1918. Flying a scarlet Fokker triplane, he was killed at the controls by a Canadian Camel pilot named Roy Brown. The following day a British aeroplane flew over his aerodrome at Cappy and dropped a message reminiscent of the one Richthofen had dropped after downing Hawker... (69)

11 Only in *Flags in the Dust* and not in *Sartoris.*

12 Robert Harrison in *Aviation Lore in Faulkner* reports: "Seen over the years, George Guynemer (1894-1917) seems more a character out of fiction than a real person. Frail, aflame with tuberculosis, driven by a passion for glory, he was turned down twice for military service in 1914 before he finally succeeded in becoming an aircraft mechanic. At once he began to plead with his superiors to let him apply for flight training, evidently with great persuasive power, because he soon became one of the first Nieuport pilots and a member of the elite *escadrille de chasse,* the *Cicognes* (Storks)... He flew over 600 combat missions, destroyed 53 enemy aircraft, and was himself shot down seven times before meeting his end on 11 September 1917, in single combat near Poelcapelle. He was reported missing. Stories were circulated that he would arise from the dead. Apparently Guynemer and the Spad he was flying were obliterated by artillery shelling after falling into no-man's land, but the fact that his body could not be found only added fuel to the myth. French schoolteachers told their charges, "He flew so high, on and on in the sky, that he could never return to earth again" (126).

13 Published in *Critical Essays on William Faulkner: The Sartoris Family,* Arthur Kinney ed., Boston: Hall, 1985, 274-89. Quote from 280.

14 Beatrice Hans, "A Future for Sartorisism?", *English Studies: A Journal of English Language and English Studies,* Nijmegen, Netherlands (ES). December 1983, 64, 6. As she points out the term was first used by Walter Everett in *Faulkner's Art and Characters,* New York, Woodbury, 1969, 84.

15 This paradox is used by Massimo Cacciari in his book *L'arcipelago,* (Milano, Adelphi, 1997).

16 See P. R. Broughton, *William Faulkner: The Abstract and the Actual,* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974.

17 Carlo Sini, *Pensare il progetto,* Milano, Tranchida Editori, 1992. Carlo Sini is professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the State University of Milano.